

## Part 5: Modular frameworks for taught courses

### Section 18: Framework for postgraduate taught courses

#### Scope

- 18.1 These regulations are applicable to all taught courses leading to a postgraduate award of the University at level 7<sup>1</sup>. Any courses seeking exemption from these regulations, or from specific provisions of these regulations, must do so at the point of validation or review, and such exemption will normally only be granted in order to meet the requirements of external professional bodies.
- 18.2 These regulations will also be applicable to all taught postgraduate awards validated by the University but delivered under a collaborative arrangement with a partner institution, unless otherwise agreed at the point of validation or in accordance with normal procedures for making any change.
- 18.3 These regulations are applicable from the start of the 2017/18 academic session in respect of students studying at level 7.

#### General

- 18.4 The University uses the Office for Students (OfS) conditions of registration as a reference point for setting, delivering and maintaining the academic standards of its validated awards. The regulatory framework starts with the premise that qualifications should be awarded on the basis of achievement of positively defined learning outcomes (demonstrated through assessment against a standard) rather than duration of study. This applies to all postgraduate awards validated by the University of Westminster, including those delivered by Partner Institutions.
- 18.5 All postgraduate credit bearing awards are expected to align with the UK reference points for academic standards as set out in the the Office for Students ([OfS](#)) [Condition B4: Assessment and awards](#). This will be considered by University Validation Panels, who act with delegated authority from Academic Council when considering proposals for new course validation or for the periodic review of existing awards.
- 18.6 Where an award has been validated by the University to fulfil the requirements of a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB), the University still maintains the responsibility for the academic standards of that award, even where the PSRB influences the design, approval, monitoring or review of that award.
- 18.7 All awards, and consequently the courses that lead to them, will be assigned, at the point of validation, to a Level of the Sector-recognised standards as published by the Office for Students (OfS) in accordance with the national system of levels and awards stated in Table 1.
- 18.8 The Awards of the University that may be conferred under this scheme are as stated in Table 1 below:  
*Table 1: The national system of levels and awards as it applies to the University (Level 7 Postgraduate)*

<sup>1</sup> Integrated Masters awards, although at Level 7, are regarded for many purposes as undergraduate awards and are governed by the provisions of Undergraduate Framework.

Award Type	UoW Award
Master's degrees	MA MArch MSc MBA LLM MMus MFA MRes
Postgraduate Diploma	PgDip
Postgraduate Certificate	PgCert
Postgraduate Certificate in Education	PGCE
University Diploma in Special Study	UCertSS
University Certificate in Special Study	UDipSS

- 18.9 To be eligible for an award a student must achieve a specified volume of Credit, at specified Levels, as detailed in the section 'Awards and Classifications'. Students achieve Credit by undertaking and satisfactorily completing Modules. Modules are the building blocks of Courses and Awards.
- 18.10 Each course is described in detail in the Programme Specification, which must be approved at the point of validation. The Programme Specification describes, amongst other things, the structure of the course and the modules which the course comprises, including details of any optional modules. It also describes the pathways that might be available, and the award title(s) to which the course can lead.

## Framework Structure

### Modules & Credits

- 18.11 Each module is described in detail in the Module Descriptor, which must be approved at the point of validation<sup>2</sup>. The Module Descriptor describes, *inter alia*, the structure of the module, the amount and type of teaching and learning activity, the learning outcomes for that module, the assessment criteria for that module, the ways in which the module will be assessed, and the relative weightings of the assessment activities.
- 18.12 Each module will be assigned a Credit Level and a Credit Volume. Together these constitute the Credit Value of that module.
- 18.13 The Credit Level will reflect the depth of learning involved and the intellectual demand of the module, and will be assigned with reference to the qualification descriptors prescribed by Office for Students (OfS) in its [Sector-recognised standards](#), and stated below in Table 2:

Table 2: Generic Credit Level Descriptors (source: OfS [Sector-recognised standards](#))

Level	Learning accredited at this level will reflect the ability to:
Level 7	A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice. A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline. Conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline and to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and,

<sup>2</sup> Procedures for approving additional modules or amending existing modules will be contained in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook.

	where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses. Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences. Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level. Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.
Level 6	A systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline. An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline. Conceptual understanding that enables the student to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline and to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline. An appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge. The ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline). Apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects. critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions – to a problem. Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

- 18.14 The Credit Volume will reflect the amount of learning expected for the typical student to achieve the learning outcomes of that module. The Credit Volume is based on an estimate using the idea of *notional hours of learning*, which includes not only formal classes and contact time, but also preparation time, independent study, reading, revision, assessment, the undertaking of course work, online learning, field trips, and all other self-directed learning. One credit represents 10 *notional hours of learning*. Credit Volume therefore defines the module size.
- 18.15 The standard credit size would normally be multiples of 20. However other sizes may be permitted, subject to approval at validation.
- 18.16 Where a programme involves a major project, dissertation module or equivalent, the normal expectation will be that such a module will have a weighting of 60 or 40 credits although variants may be approved by a University Validation or Review Panel.
- 18.17 Credit Volumes used by the University are consistent with those used throughout the UK Higher Education sector. Note that across much of the rest of the European Union, and other collaborating European countries, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation Scheme (ECTS) is used. The United States HE sector operates a different credit system again. 20 University of Westminster credits equate to 10 ECTS credits and 5 US credits.

## Course Structure

- 18.18 Students must take modules of prescribed credit volumes, as defined by Table 3 below:

*Table 3: Course structures – Levels & Prescribed Credit Values - target awards only (OfS level 7)*

Award Name	Volume of Credit to be taken	Maximum amount of L6 credit to be included in the award
Masters in Fine Art	240 credits	20 credits
MArch	240 credits	120 credits

LLM MA MSc MRes MBA MMus	Minimum 180 credits Maximum 240* credits	30 credits
Postgraduate Diplomas	120 credits	20 credits
Postgraduate Certificates	60 credits	20 credits
University Diploma in Special Study	40 credits	-
University Certificate in Special Study	20 credits	-

*\*Credits over and above 180 applies only to students undertaking a credits for a placement module as defined by the Programme Specification for that course. Students on such a course will take 180 credits at the University, and will then take an additional 60 credits during the placement year. Such additional credits are taken at Level 7 only, and do not contribute for the purposes of progression requirements (see paragraph 18.113 – 18.114 below) and do not contribute to any award calculation (see paragraph 18.123 below).*

- 18.19 Students may not take more than the stated credit volume at each level except where seeking to recover failed credit (see regulations 18.87 – 18.92 below).
- 18.20 The Postgraduate framework allows for a maximum of 20 credits at level 6, thus formalising an element of introductory work that some courses might wish to include at the start of the programme of study.
- 18.21 Where a taught course incorporates one or more credit level 7 modules with joint teaching at credit level 6, a student who has successfully completed that module or a direct equivalent as part of an undergraduate programme of study will nonetheless be required to successfully complete the postgraduate level assessment. The decision as to whether they are required to attend the module will be taken by the relevant member of academic staff as part of programme planning.
- 18.22 Modules can be designated as either core or option according to their importance in enabling students to achieve the learning outcomes for the course as a whole and, where applicable, meet professional body requirements. Individual modules do not have an intrinsic status as core, option or elective, but are designated as such in relation to a particular course. It is therefore possible for a single module to be core in relation to one (or more) course(s) and an option in relation to another (or other) course(s).
- 18.23 Core modules are those which serve a fundamental role within the curriculum, and for which achievement of the credits for that module is essential for the achievement of the named award. Core modules must therefore be taken, and passed, in order to achieve the named award. They are associated with, and validated as part of, a specific course (or courses), and are listed as core modules in the programme specification.
- 18.24 Option modules are those which are in the same subject area as the course of study and are offered to students in order to provide an element of choice in the curriculum and from which students are able to select. They are associated with, and validated as part of, a specific course (or courses), and are listed as option modules in the programme specification.
- 18.25 The Programme Specification for each course shall list, by Level, all modules which are available to students on that course, including both core modules and, where applicable, option modules.

#### **Guidance: Student Responsibilities – Module Registration**

- a) Students are responsible for compiling their programme of study and ensuring that it complies fully with the framework regulations and with any course specific regulations.
- b) Students must register their option module choices by deadlines to be determined annually and published by the Academic Registrar's Department. Students should seek advice from their Campus Registry.
- c) In the event that a student fails to register module choices, the University reserves the right to assign modules on the student's behalf.
- d) Students seeking to change a module registration must do so in accordance with procedures and deadlines determined annually by the Academic Registrar's Department. Students should seek advice from their Campus Registry.
- e) A student will not normally be permitted to change a module selection once delivery of that module has started.
- f) Where the procedure for a change of module registration is not followed, or a request is not accepted, the student will remain registered on the module, and will be subject to the assessment requirements of that module.
- g) Requests to change a module registration submitted after the published deadline will only be considered where:
  - i. the module cannot be accommodated within the validated course structure; or
  - ii. a part-time student has a verified conflict between a selected module and work obligations; or
  - iii. the University acknowledges that the published module information is misleading.

### Mode of Study

- 18.26 The Programme Specification, as agreed at the point of validation or review, will state whether a course is available in Full-Time (FT) mode, Part-Time (PT) mode, or both. Where a course is validated in both FT and PT modes, students must state their intended mode of study at the point of application to the course.
- 18.27 The normal requirement for each Full-Time year of postgraduate study is 180 credits for a Master's degree, 120 credits for a Master's with Fine Arts, 120 credits for a Postgraduate Diploma and 60 credits for the Postgraduate Certificate with attendance. Any student taking fewer than 120 credits in an academic year will be regarded as a Part-Time student.
- 18.28 A student wishing to change mode of study may normally only do so before the start of the next semester.
- 18.29 With the exception of a module retriever, a student may only undertake a course in the mode for which that course has been validated.

### Enrolment

- 18.30 Students are required to enrol on a named course of study and must re-enrol annually in accordance with procedures laid down by the Academic Registrar's Department. An eligible student who fails to complete their enrolment by the published deadline will be deemed to have withdrawn from their course and will normally have their enrolment terminated.
- 18.31 The maximum periods of enrolment for a course, including any periods of interruption or suspension, are as stated in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Maximum periods of enrolment<sup>3</sup> - target awards only

Course	Standard (Minimum) Period of Enrolment Full-Time (notwithstanding RPEL & Credit Transfer)	Maximum Period of Enrolment (Full-Time Course)	Maximum Period of Enrolment (Part-Time Course)
LLM MA MSc MBA MMUS MRes	1	4	5
LLM with placement year MA with placement year MArch with placement year MSc with placement year MBA with placement year MMUS with placement year MRes with placement year	2	4	-
MArch	2	4	5
MFA	2	4	5
PgDip	1	2	4
PgCert	1	1	2
University Diploma in Special Study	-	-	2
University Certificate in Special Study	-	-	2

- 18.32 Where a student changes mode of study during their course, or transfers into the University in accordance with RPEL or Credit Transfer regulations, the maximum period of enrolment shall be determined by the Academic Registrar, or nominee, on a pro rata basis.
- 18.33 The purpose of maximum periods of enrolment is to ensure the currency of knowledge, the competencies of degree holders and the quality of degrees for the awards we make. An extension to the maximum period of enrolment may only be granted in exceptional circumstances and normally for one academic year at the discretion of the Academic Registrar or nominee. An extension should be requested as soon as it is apparent that one would be needed or within one month of the publication of results.
- 18.34 Students who exhaust the relevant maximum period of enrolment without achieving the final award will, where an extension has not been granted, have their enrolment terminated. Such students may be eligible for an exit award (see regulations 18.132 – 18.133 below).

#### Guidance: Student Responsibilities – Enrolment

- Students must enrol annually in accordance with procedures determined and notified by the Academic Registrar's Department.
- A student who fails to complete enrolment within two weeks of the prescribed deadline, without good cause and without informing the University, will be deemed to have withdrawn from the University and will normally have their enrolment terminated.
- Students should ensure that they are aware of the maximum period of enrolment for their desired award, as stated above, and should ensure that they do not exceed this maximum period.

<sup>3</sup> These are the overall time limits for courses with the substantive mode of attendance indicated above. They include any periods for the suspension of studies or the retrieval of failed modules. The time limit for any programme of study not listed above shall be determined by the relevant University Validation Panel.

## Course Transfers

- 18.35 A student wishing to transfer from one course to another within the University must do so in accordance with the published procedure and:
- a) Must normally do so within the first two weeks of the academic year or, in the case of a continuing student, do so at the end of the academic year.
  - b) must gain the approval of the Course Leader or nominee of each of the current and proposed course.
- 18.36 A student transferring to another institution shall be regarded as a withdrawal (see regulations 18.47 – 18.52 below)

### **Guidance: Student Responsibilities – Course Transfers**

- a) Students wishing to transfer must follow the published procedures, and;
- b) Students should be aware that there may be course fee and funding implications following a transfer. Students should contact the Student Advice Service, or the Student Loans Company / Student Finance England as appropriate, for further information. For students on a Tier 4 visa a transfer may also have implications for the visa. Where relevant, your Campus Registry will notify Student Finance England and the Home Office about any transfer.

## Interruptions

- 18.37 An interruption is an extended period of authorised absence from the course.
- 18.38 A period of interruption may be:
- a) taken by a student at that student's discretion; or
  - b) required by the University on grounds of the student's health and/or well-being.
- 18.39 Where the University wishes to require a student to interrupt on grounds relating to the student's health and/or well-being, the procedure as described in the University's *Fitness to Study Policy* shall be observed.
- 18.40 The University may only require a student to interrupt where the University is satisfied that a period of interruption is in the best academic interests of the student. Under no circumstances shall such action be taken as a punitive measure.
- 18.41 Students who seek or are required to interrupt their studies on health grounds will be required to provide evidence, to the satisfaction of the Course Leader or in accordance with the *Fitness to Study Policy*, as appropriate, that they are fit to resume their studies before they rejoin the course.
- 18.42 An interruption is not to be confused with, or used as a substitute for, deferral of an assessment due to mitigating circumstances (see regulations 18.58 and 18.65)
- 18.43 An interruption will not normally be permitted for a period of less than one semester.
- 18.44 Where a student commences a period of interruption once a module has started but before completing all the assessment requirements for that module, no credit will be awarded and the student, upon their resumption of studies, will normally be required to re-join at the start of the uncompleted module(s). Where a student commences a period of interruption once a module has started but interrupts their studies after the assessment deadlines have passed, the module will be presented to the Progression and Award Board for consideration.
- 18.45 The maximum period of enrolment (see regulation 18.31 above) includes any periods of interruption.

- 18.46 During a period of interruption a student is not normally entitled to access any of the University's services or systems, including IT, library, workshop or social facilities, beyond such access that is permitted to members of the public.

**Guidance: Student Responsibilities – Interruptions**

- a) Students wishing to interrupt their studies must contact their Campus Registry and complete the appropriate documentation.
- b) Students wishing to return to their studies from a period of interruption in accordance with regulation 18.38 ii, must seek permission from their Course Leader, and will be required to demonstrate that the personal reasons that necessitated the interruption are no longer relevant.
- c) Students interrupting their studies should be mindful of the maximum permitted period of enrolment for their course and should be aware that they risk having their enrolment terminated if they exceed the maximum permitted period.
- d) Students should be aware that there may be course fee and funding implications for them following a period of interruption. Students should contact the Student Advice Service, or the Student Loans Company / Student Finance England as appropriate, for further information. For students on a Tier 4 visa an interruption may also have implications for your visa. Where relevant, your Campus Registry will notify Student Finance England and the Home Office about any interruption. Students are advised to seek advice from the Student and Academic Services department.

## Withdrawals

- 18.47 Any student who is fully enrolled and absent from their studies without authorisation or good reason for a period of at least two weeks (10 consecutive working course days or more), including non-attendance of timetabled on-site classes, may be deemed to have withdrawn from their course and, at the discretion of the Deputy Registrar (Student Administration), may, provided that notice and an opportunity for the student to make representations has been given, have their enrolment terminated.
- 18.48 A student whose enrolment is so terminated may only be re-instated upon appeal to and at the discretion of the relevant Head of College, or nominee. There shall be no further right of appeal.
- 18.49 A student who wishes to withdraw from their studies should notify the University in accordance with procedures determined annually by the Academic Registrar's Department.
- 18.50 Where a student withdraws from their studies before or without completing all of the assessment components for a module, the student will be withdrawn from that module, the module will not be considered by the Progression and Award Board, and no credit will be awarded for that module.
- 18.51 Where a student withdraws from their studies after completing all of the assessment components for a module, the module will be considered by the Progression and Award Board and credit for that module may be awarded.
- 18.52 Where a student withdraws from their studies, an exit award may be awarded (see regulations 18.133 and 18.133).

**Guidance: Student Responsibilities – Engagement & Withdrawal**

- a) Students are expected to engage fully with their studies. Such engagement includes regular attendance.
- b) Students who are unable to attend due to illness, or other good cause, should notify their Campus Registry at the earliest opportunity.
- c) Students who are absent from their course for 10 consecutive working days without authorisation or without notifying the Campus Registry risk being deemed to have withdrawn from their studies and consequently having their enrolment terminated.
- d) Students who wish to withdraw should notify the University in accordance with published procedure, and should consult their Campus Registry in the first instance.



- e) Students who are withdrawn by the University or who choose to withdraw should make themselves aware of any financial implications, including liability for the payment of tuition fees and other costs. Further details can be found in the University's Financial Regulations, or through seeking advice from the Student and Academic Services Department.

## Assessment

### Assessment Structure

- 18.53 Each module shall comprise one or more summative assessment<sup>4</sup> components. These assessment components will be clearly stated and detailed in the module descriptor and may only be varied in accordance with the procedures for module modification. Where a module has more than one assessment component, the module descriptor shall state the relative weighting of each component.
- 18.54 With the exception of 'grade only' modules (see regulation 18.68 below); each assessment component will be awarded a mark in the range 0 to 100. All marks awarded for module components will be integers. The module mark and result will be determined by aggregating the marks awarded to the assessment components (see regulation 18.56 below).
- 18.55 An assessment component may be defined in the module descriptor as being a qualifying assessment component, with a qualifying mark. A qualifying assessment component is a component in which the qualifying mark must be reached in order to pass the module.

## Marking

### Assessment Component Level

- 18.56 Each assessment component will be assessed against the assessment criteria as published in the module descriptor for that module and (with the exception of 'grade only' modules) awarded a mark between 0 and 100.

The result of each component will be determined by the mark awarded according to the following table:

*Table 5:*

*Assessment component mark scheme for modules at Level 6*

Mark Range	Result
40 - 100	Pass
0 – 39	Fail
0	Defer*

*Assessment component mark scheme for modules at Level 7*

Mark Range	Result
50 - 100	Pass
0 – 49	Fail
0	Defer*

\* see regulation 18.57 below

- 18.57 Where the student has been permitted, as a result of mitigating circumstances, to present an assessment component at a later date, a mark of 0 is awarded, with a result of 'Defer'. In such cases the student will be deferred in that assessment component (see regulation 18.65 below).

<sup>4</sup> Summative assessment is assessment whose mark contributes to the module mark and thus to the award. It contrasts with formative assessment, whose primary purpose is to inform students and staff of the students' progress and to allow students to reflect on their work. Formative assessment does not contribute to either the module mark or the award, and thus it is not governed by the provisions of these regulations.

- 18.58 All students who submit or present themselves for assessment are, in doing so, declaring themselves fit to be assessed. This is known as the 'fit to sit' policy. A student may only be deferred in respect of an assessment component that they have undertaken, or in respect of a module for which they have undertaken one or more assessment components, where the student can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the University, that due to the nature of the mitigating circumstances the student was not aware that they were not fit to be assessed when deciding to submit or present for assessment.
- 18.59 Under no circumstances may individual marks be adjusted, at either assessment component, module, or award classification level, on the basis of mitigating circumstances. Where mitigating circumstances are accepted in accordance with the relevant University policies and regulations concerning mitigating circumstances and academic appeals, this will result only in the assessment component in respect of which the mitigating circumstances were submitted being set aside and a mark of 0 awarded. The student will be deferred in that assessment component and will have a right to be assessed as if for the first time (where the deferral was at the first attempt) at the next available opportunity as defined in regulations 18.75 – 18.79 below.
- 18.60 The University's Mitigating Circumstances Regulations and Academic Appeal Regulations will reflect these principles and will detail the procedures that will be applied.

#### **Module Level**

- 18.61 The module pass mark for modules at Level 6 is 40 and for modules at Level 7 is 50.
- 18.62 The overall module mark achieved by each student shall be calculated by aggregating, in accordance with their relative weightings, the student's assessment components marks (the 'weighted average'). Except where a student fails a qualifying assessment component, a module may be passed even where one or more assessment components have been failed, provided that the module pass mark is achieved.
- 18.63 However, where a student fails to achieve the qualifying mark in a qualifying assessment component, the module is failed and the overall module mark is capped and recorded at 49 in the case of modules at Level 7 (i.e. where the weighted average is greater than 49 the student will be awarded a mark of 49 for the module), or 39 in the case of modules at Level 6 (i.e. where the weighted average is greater than 39 the student will be awarded a mark of 39 for the module).
- 18.64 Where a student is deferred in one or more assessment components, but has not failed any assessment components, the student will be deferred in the module pending completion and assessment of the deferred assessment component(s) (see regulations 18.75 – 18.79 below). This applies even where the overall module pass mark has been achieved.
- 18.65 Where a student is deferred in one or more assessment components but has also failed one or more assessment components (or failed to reach the qualifying mark in a qualifying assessment component) and has failed to achieve the overall module pass mark (including by virtue of failing to achieve the qualifying mark in a qualifying assessment - see regulation 18.63 above), the student will fail the module.
- 18.66 Where a student is deferred in one or more assessment components but has also failed one or more assessment components but has achieved the overall module pass mark, the student will be deferred in the module pending completion and assessment of the deferred assessment component. In such cases the student will not be re-assessed in the failed assessment component(s).
- 18.67 Where a mitigating circumstance claim in respect of a deferral of a module is accepted, the student will be deferred in the module, and will be given an opportunity to attempt all assessment tasks associated with that module on the next occasion that that module is delivered, normally during the following academic year.

- 18.68 'Grade only' modules may be permitted where there is a requirement for modules to be assessed on a pass/fail basis. These will be clearly identified in the validated programme specification. Where a module is grade only, no numerical mark is awarded, at either component or module level, and students can only pass or fail. Such modules will therefore not count towards the calculation of any award classification.
- 18.69 The result of each module will be determined by the mark awarded according to the following table:  
*Table 6:*  
*Module mark scheme for modules at Level 6*
- | Mark Range | Result |
|------------|--------|
| 40 – 100   | Pass   |
| 0 – 39     | Fail   |
| 0 - 100    | Defer* |
- Module mark scheme for modules at Level 7*
- | Mark Range | Result |
|------------|--------|
| 50 – 100   | Pass   |
| 0 – 49     | Fail   |
| 0 - 100    | Defer* |
- \* see regulation 18.61 above
- 18.70 All marks, results and indicative grades, both at assessment component level and module level, are provisional until considered and ratified by the appropriate Progression and Award Board.
- 18.71 Where a student passes a module the student will be awarded the volume of credit assigned to that module. The award of partial credit for a module is not permitted.
- 18.72 A module that has been passed, and for which credit has been awarded, may not be repeated in order to improve a mark or gain additional credit.

## Condonement

- 18.73 Condonement is not available for any postgraduate award.

## Rounding of Module Marks

- 18.74 Module marks will not be rounded. The absolute module mark, to the maximum number of decimal places calculated and recorded by the student record system, will be used in the calculation of the award classification. For the purposes of transcripts and other records of student achievement, the published module mark will display the whole number and not decimal places.

## Timing of Assessment & Progression and Award Boards

- 18.75 Coursework (i.e. assessment other than formal examinations) shall be completed by the published deadlines.
- 18.76 All formal examinations shall normally be held during the University's designated examination period(s).
- 18.77 Where an incoming exchange / study abroad student is not required or expected, under the terms of the exchange agreement, to be available during the relevant designated examination period, alternative assessment arrangements will normally be made to facilitate the student's assessment prior to the student's return to their home institution.

- 18.78 An Assessment Period is a period which culminates with Progression and Award Boards (PABs) and the publication of results and begins either at the start of the associated examination period (where the assessment period has an exam period) or otherwise following the final permissible dissertation or coursework submission deadline. There are four Assessment Periods within the standard postgraduate academic year<sup>5</sup>
- 18.79 Postgraduate Progression and Award Boards will normally meet four times in each academic session, at the end of Assessment Period 2, Assessment Period 3 to consider Referral/Deferral results and after Assessment Period 6 following the completion of the project or dissertation. In Colleges where there is a January intake of students Progression and Award Boards will also meet following Assessment Period 1.
- 18.80 Students must ensure that they are available during Assessment Period 3 in case they are required to undertake one or more Referrals/Deferrals.

## Failure

- 18.81 A student who fails a module may, subject to regulations concerning maximum number of attempts, maximum number of credits, maximum periods of enrolment, and credit thresholds be permitted a further attempt at that module (see regulations 18.82, 18.91 and 18.31).
- 18.82 No student may be permitted more than four attempts at any module, of which only one may be a Retake. Each Referral and Retake (see regulation 18.85 below) counts as an attempt, and the module attempt number is incremented accordingly. A student who fails a module at the fourth attempt will have exhausted the maximum number of attempts. Note that where the failed module is Referred and contains one or more deferred assessment components (see 18.65 above), the module attempt number will be incremented however the attempt number of those deferred assessment components will not be incremented.
- 18.83 No student may be permitted more than two attempts at the Project/Dissertation module. Most courses will have only one such piece of work. In cases where more than one is included, the course specific regulations will specify which module is limited to two attempts.
- 18.84 Notwithstanding regulation 18.81 above, Professional, Statutory or Regulatory bodies may impose a maximum number of attempts in respect of courses which they accredit. Where that is the case, and where the PSRB's maximum is lower than the University's maximum, the PSRB's requirement shall take precedence over regulation 18.82.
- 18.85 Where a student is permitted a further attempt, the student is deemed to be re-assessed in that module.
- 18.86 Reassessment will take the form of either a Referral or a Retake (see regulations 18.94 – 18.111 below).
- 18.87 In lieu of a Retake, a student may, subject to regulations concerning maximum number of credits, maximum periods of enrolment, and credit thresholds (see regulations 18.82, 18.91 and 18.31), and provided that the failed module is not a core module or pre-requisite for a core module at a subsequent level, choose to undertake an alternative module (or modules) of the same credit value. In such cases, the alternative module will be regarded as a first attempt and, consequently, the mark will not be capped.

## Maximum Number of Credits That May be Taken at Each level

- 18.88 The standard number of credits that are to be taken by a student at each level is defined in Table 4 above. A student may only take more than the stated number of credits at that level when attempting to retrieve failure.

<sup>5</sup> Postgraduate courses with approved non-standard structures or calendars may have alternative or additional assessment periods.

- 18.89 Where a student Retakes a module (see below) the student is required to re-register for that module. The credit volume of that module will contribute to the number of credits taken with the exception of study abroad or placement modules (see paragraph 18.112 below),
- 18.90 Similarly, where a student chooses to take an alternative module rather than retaking a failed module, the credit volume of that module will contribute to the number of credits taken.
- 18.91 The maximum number of additional credits (i.e. credits over and above the standard number of credits defined in table 3) is 60.
- Therefore, a student is allowed, following failure, to Retake modules, or to take alternative modules, to a maximum value of 60 credits.
- 18.92 Where a student exhausts the maximum number of credits that may be taken at that level the student will have their enrolment terminated by the Progression and Award Board (see regulation 18.117 below).
- 18.93 Where courses include a 60-credit module, the University will publish advice to warn students that if they fail the module they may be limited to re-assessment as re-attempting the module may exceed the maximum number of credits permitted within the framework for postgraduate taught courses

### **Reassessment: Referral**

- 18.94 A Referral gives the student an opportunity to retrieve the failed assessment component(s) of a failed module without attendance.
- 18.95 A Referral will be offered where the following conditions are met:
- i. where a further attempt is permitted by these regulations; and
- In the case of all modules other than final project or dissertation modules:
- ii. where the module failure being considered is at first attempt or at Retake (i.e. a Referral cannot be offered immediately following failure at Referral);
- In the case of final project or dissertation modules:
- i. where the module failure being considered is at first attempt, and
  - ii. where the final module mark is at least 40%.
- 18.96 At Referral, the student will be required to be reassessed in the failed assessment component(s), or any alternative form of assessment at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board, provided that it is equivalent, appropriate to the module's learning outcomes and consistent with the module's validated assessment strategy.
- 18.97 Where the Referral is offered at Assessment Period 2 the student will normally be permitted to undergo assessment at Assessment Period 3. Where a referral is offered at Assessment Period 6 the student will normally be permitted to undergo the assessment at Assessment Point 1. A referral will normally comprise submission or presentation of the outstanding assessment components. A new module registration is not required.
- 18.98 Where the Referral is the second attempt at the module, the mark awarded to any referred assessment component will be capped at the pass mark (40 in the case of modules at Level 6, 50 in the case of modules at level 7). Note that where such a Referral also includes one or more deferred assessment components (see 18.66 and 18.82 above), but those deferred assessment components are still at the first attempt, the mark awarded to those deferred assessment components will not be capped. Where the Referral is the fourth attempt at the module, the overall module mark will be capped at the pass mark (40 in the case of modules at Level 6, 50 in the case of modules at level 7).

- 18.99 The marks achieved in any of that module's assessment components passed at the preceding Progression and Award Board will stand and will be carried forward.
- 18.100 At Referral, the overall module mark will be calculated by:
- i. using the highest mark achieved by the student for each component in either the first or referred attempt (subject to any mark capping in accordance with 18.96 above)
  - ii aggregating, in accordance with their relative weightings, the student's assessment components marks (the 'weighted average').
- 18.101 Where a student is deferred in a referred assessment component and does not fail any of the referred assessment components, the student will be deferred in the module pending completion of the deferred components.
- 18.102 Where a module result includes both referred and deferred assessment components (see 18.65 above), and the student fails to achieve the module pass mark at reassessment, the student will fail the module and in accordance with 18.95ii will not be permitted a further referral in the module or that assessment component.
- 18.103 No tuition fees are payable for Referrals; however, the University reserves the right to levy an administration charge.

### **Reassessment: Retake**

- 18.104 A Retake gives the student an opportunity to retrieve the failed assessment component(s) of a failed module during the next academic year and requires the student to repeat the module in its entirety, with attendance, including all assessment components that may have already been passed. The student will be liable for the appropriate tuition fees.
- 18.105 A Retake will be offered where the following conditions are met:
- i. where a further attempt is permitted by these regulations; and
- In the case of all modules other than final project or dissertation modules:
- ii. where the module failure being considered is at Referral (i.e. a student will always have a Referral opportunity before a Retake);
- In the case of final project or dissertation modules:
- iii. where the module failure being considered is at first attempt, and
  - iv. where the final module mark is less than 40%.
- 18.106 A new module registration is required for each Retake.
- 18.107 At Retake, each assessment component will be awarded a mark in accordance with the mark scheme stated at Table 5 above. No marks achieved in any assessment components previously undertaken will be carried forward.
- 18.108 At Retake, the overall module mark will be capped at the pass mark (40 in the case of modules at Level 6, 50 in the case of modules at level 7).
- 18.109 At Retake, where a student is deferred in one or more of the assessment components, but does not fail any of the assessment components, the student will be deferred in the module pending completion and assessment of the deferred assessment component.
- 18.110 Where a module to be Retaken is no longer being offered, the student will be required to undertake an alternative module.

- 18.111 It follows from the requirements of 18.95 and 18.105 above that a second attempt will always be undertaken as a Referral, a third attempt will always be undertaken as a Retake, and a fourth attempt will always be undertaken as a Referral.
- 18.112 As additional modules taken as part of a study abroad or placement year do not contribute for the purpose of progression requirements and do not contribute to any award calculation (see paragraph 18.125 below), they are not normally required to be retaken. However, where such a module is exceptionally retaken, it will not count towards the maximum number of credits that may be taken at that Level (see paragraph 18.89 above).

### **Deferred Assessment**

- 18.113 A student may only be deferred in a module as a result of accepted mitigating circumstances and in accordance with regulations 18.57 and 18.65 above.
- 18.114 Where a student is deferred in either an assessment component or the whole module, it will not count as an attempt at that module and the student will have a right to be assessed as if for the first time (where the deferral was at the first attempt) at the next available opportunity as defined below.
- 18.115 Where the student is deferred in the assessment component by the Progression and Award Board the student will normally be permitted to undergo assessment during the next assessment period. A deferral will normally comprise submission or presentation of the outstanding assessment components. The marks achieved in any assessment components previously passed will stand and will be carried forward.
- 18.116 Where a student is deferred in the whole module, the student will be given an opportunity to attempt all assessment tasks associated with that module on the next occasion that that module is delivered, normally during the following academic year. The student will be required to attend all timetabled teaching and learning events associated with that next delivery of the module. Re-attendance in these circumstances shall not count as a further attempt at the module for the purposes of calculating the maximum permitted number of attempts.

#### **Guidance: Student Responsibilities – Assessment**

- a) Students ensure that they are familiar with the assessment requirements of each of their modules. This information is available in the published module information.
- b) Students should ensure that they comply with these requirements, submit all assessments, and attempt all examinations.
- c) Students should be aware that if they undertake an assessment or present for an examination, in doing so they are declaring themselves fit to be assessed. Only in very exceptional circumstances will mitigating circumstances subsequently be accepted in respect of an assessment that a student has undertaken.
- d) Students should ensure that they are available for the next assessment period in case they undertake a referral or a deferral.

### **Progression**

- 18.117 There are no progression requirements for students registered on a postgraduate course, subject to the requirements for pre-requisites and the provisions of any course specific regulations.
- 18.118 Progression requirements for Professional Doctorates with a taught element are stated within Section D in the Research Degree Regulations and the validated Programme Specific Regulations.

### **Exclusion on Academic Grounds**

- 18.119 A Progression and Award Board will terminate a student's enrolment (exclude) on academic grounds in any of the following circumstances:

- i. Where a student has exhausted the maximum permitted number of attempts at a core module, or a module which is a pre-requisite or co-requisite of a core module (see regulation 18.82 above)
- ii. Where a student has failed more than 60 credits (see regulation 18.100 above)
- iii. Where a student has exhausted the maximum period of enrolment (see regulation 18.31 above)

18.120 Where a student has been excluded on academic grounds;

- i. there shall be no further opportunity for re-admission or re-enrolment on to the same course;
- ii. there shall be no automatic right to transfer to another course at the University of Westminster. Excluded students will be required to submit a new application for admissions as per the published procedure;
- iii. any recommendation from the Progression and Award Board to transfer to another course where an exit award is specified in the Programme Specification will not require a new application for admission.

18.121 Where a student is so excluded, an exit award may be awarded (see regulation 18.139 below).

## **Awards & Classifications**

18.122 In order to be considered for an award a student must have achieved the minimum number of credits as prescribed below and must have met any additional requirements detailed in the relevant programme specification.

18.123 Where a student withdraws from a course the Progression and Award Board will award the highest intermediate award which the student is eligible to receive. In addition, a classification may also be awarded.

18.124 Module marks at Levels 6 shall not contribute to the degree classification.

18.125 Where a student has met all the requirements for award, an average mark will be calculated. This average mark will be used to determine the student's degree classification. This average will be rounded to the nearest integer. Where a module has a credit value of more than 20 credits, for the purpose of calculating the classification, the full credit value will be used. E.g. where a module is a 40-credit module it will be used twice in the calculation of the average mark.

18.126 Additional credits taken as part of a placement year do not contribute to the calculation of any award classification. Therefore, all references to credits in these award calculation regulations exclude credits achieved as part of a placement year, which are and above the standard 180 credits taken.

18.127 In order to be considered for an award a student must have achieved the minimum number of credits at the required levels prescribed in Table 3 above and must have met any additional requirements detailed in the relevant programme specification. In addition, apprenticeship students will normally be expected to complete all the requirements as set out in the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan, including their End Point Assessment, to be eligible for the award.

### **Credit Value Requirements for Award**

#### **Award of a University Certificate in Special Study (UCERTSS)**



- 18.128 The University may award a Postgraduate Certificate of Special Study to a student who has passed a programme of study of at least 20 credits at level 7 approved as such by a University Validation Panel.

**Award of a University Diploma of Special Study (UDIPSS)**

- 18.129 The University may award a Postgraduate Diploma of Special Study to a student who has passed a programme of study of at least 40 credits at level 7 approved as such by a University Validation Panel.

**Award of a Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)**

- 18.130 To be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate, a student must have a minimum of 60 credits at level 7 (this may include a maximum of 20 credits at level 6 where validated as part of the award);

The University may award:

- i. a **Postgraduate Certificate with Merit** to a student whose marks average at least 60% across the modules contributing to the award.
- ii. a **Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction** to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules contributing to the award.

**Award of a Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)**

- 18.131 To be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, a student must have a minimum of 120 credits at level 7 (this may include a maximum of 20 credits at level 6 where validated as part of the award);

The University may award:

- i. a **Postgraduate Diploma with Merit** to a student whose marks average at least 60% across the modules contributing to the award.
- ii. a **Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction** to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules contributing to the award.

**Award of Master's of Fine Arts (MFA)**

- 18.132 To be eligible for the award of a Master's of Fine Arts Degree, a student must have obtained a minimum of 240 credits at level 7;

The University may award:

- i. a **Master's of Fine Arts Degree with Merit** to a student whose marks average at least 60% across modules at level 7;
- ii. a **Master's of Fine Arts Degree with Distinction** to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules at level 7;

**Award of Master's by Research (MRes)**

- 18.133 To be eligible for the award of a Master's by Research, a student must have:

- i. obtained a minimum of 180 credits at level 7 (this may include a maximum of 20 credits at level 6 where validated as part of the award);
- ii. attempted modules worth no more than 240 credits (see section 18.32);
- iii. attempted no more than 100 credits in taught modules; and
- iv. the final project must be a minimum of 80 credits.

The University may award:

- v. a **Master's by Research with Merit** to a student whose marks average at least 60% across modules at level 7.
- vi. a **Master's by Research with Distinction** to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules at level 7.

**Award of an Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree**

- 18.134 To be eligible for the award of an Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree, a student must have obtained a minimum of 240 credits at level 7 (this may include a maximum of 20 credits at level 6 where validated as part of the award);

The University may award:

- i. an **Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree with Merit** to a student whose marks average at least 60% across modules at level 7.
- ii. an **Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree with Distinction** to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules at level 7.

**Award of all other Master's Degrees (LLM, MBA, MA, MArch, MMus, MSc)**

- 18.135 To be eligible for the award of a Master's Degree, a student must have obtained a minimum of 180 credits at level 7 (this may include a maximum of 20 credits at level 6 where validated as part of the award);

The University may award:

- i. a **Master's Degree with Merit** to a student whose marks average at least 60% across modules at level 7;
- ii. a **Master's Degree with Distinction** to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules at level 7;

**Borderline Candidates & Discretion**

- 18.136 The arithmetical outcome of the award calculation is final, and the concept of a 'borderline candidate' is not recognised by this scheme. Accordingly, Progression and Award Board will not have discretion to vary the award or award classification derived in accordance with the above award calculation schemes.

- 18.137 Where a student commenced their studies prior to September 2017, the Progression and Award Board shall consider all students who fall within one percent of the classification boundary for possible elevation to the next classification. This application of discretion by the Progression and Award Board may be based upon strength elsewhere within the student profile such as the project or dissertation. Guidance regarding the criteria against which discretion is considered and agreed at College, School and/or course level, will normally be detailed within the course handbook.

- 18.138 Under no circumstances may an award classification be amended on the basis of mitigating circumstances (see regulation 18.59 above).

**Exit Awards**

- 18.139 Where a student:

- i. fails to achieve sufficient credits to gain the award for which they are enrolled, and
- ii. is excluded on academic grounds or as being 'timed out', or for good cause, as adjudged by the Progression and Award Board, has terminated their studies early, and
- iii. has achieved sufficient credits to gain a lower level or lower volume award

the student will be recommended by the Progression and Award Board for that lower award, provided that the award is offered by the University as specified in the Programme Specification.

- 18.140 Where a student has been awarded an exit award following exclusion from a course regulation 18.118 will apply.

## Aegrotat Awards

- 18.141 A student who completes the full period of study but is unable to complete the requirements for an award due to serious and unexpected illness or other incapacity may be eligible for an Aegrotat award. An Aegrotat award is without classification.
- 18.142 An Aegrotat award may only be conferred following application by the student or the student's representative. An application, together with supporting evidence, must be submitted to the Progression and Award Board within 12 months of the student's last date of attendance. The award will be conferred at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board.

## Posthumous Awards

- 18.143 A student who dies before completing the full period of study or the requirements for an award may be eligible for a Posthumous award. A Posthumous award may be conferred at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board.

## Double counting

- 18.144 Once an award has been conferred there will be no further opportunity for assessment or to attempt to improve the classification of that award or to attempt to gain a higher level or higher volume award. No credit which has contributed to an award may be used to contribute towards a further award.

## Transfer of Credit

- 18.145 A student may be awarded credit for prior certificated learning (RPCL) or prior experiential learning (RPEL) at Level 7 in accordance with the requirements set out in table 7 below and with the detailed regulations and procedures set out in Section 4 of the Academic regulations: RPL Regulations.

*Table 7: Recognised credit for RPCL or RPEL*

<b>Award</b>	<b>Maximum Number of RPCL or RPEL credits which may count towards the requirements of the award</b>	<b>Minimum number of credits to be achieved at the University of Westminster</b>
Postgraduate Certificate	30 credits	30 credits at credit level 7
Postgraduate Diploma	60 credits	60 credits at credit level 7
Master's Degree	90 credits	90 credits at credit level 7

- 18.146 These minima may be waived in the case of a student who has successfully passed a Postgraduate Diploma and wishes to convert it into a Master's degree, provided that the case falls within the RPL Regulations in relation to currency and relevance of the initial qualification.
- 18.147 The Programme Specification will state the processes by which academic credit for prior learning will be awarded.
- 18.148 At the time of awarding specific credit for RPL, a decision must be made as to whether the marks or grades, in their original or an amended form, will be included on the student record and so count towards the final award classification.

- 18.149 If specific RPEL credit is awarded or specific RPCL credit, which has no marks attached, or a decision has been made not to include marks, consideration of the award of a merit or distinction will be based on the marks the student achieved within the University's modular scheme.