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Academic Regulations Progression and Award

Section 4

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Section 4

Progression and Award

Originating Department:	Quality Assurance Services
Enquiries to:	gas@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
Approving Body:	Academic Board
Last Approved:	4 July 2018
Next due for approval:	July 2020
Document Type	Regulation
Target Audience:	Relevant for all University staff and students and of particular relevance to: Deans of School, Heads of Subject, external examiners and academic and professional support staff involved in Progression and Award Boards or Module Board activities.

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Section 4: Progression and Award

4.1 Purpose

This section of the Academic Regulations defines how students progress from one level of a course to the next and how students' become eligible for, and achieve, awards of the University. Additionally, it covers reassessment and repeat study for those students who fail to meet the criteria for progression or award at their first attempt.

To assure academic standards are maintained, and in the interests of student equity and fairness, this section applies to all the University's credit bearing taught courses unless variation is formally approved through the appropriate University process and clearly publicised for applicants and students in the Course Specification and Course Handbook.

The processes through which progression and award decisions are taken are covered in **Section 6 Progression and Award Boards and Module Boards**.

Module Boards confirm student module marks. Progression and Award Boards consider the module marks students achieve across the whole level and make decisions on progression to the next level of the course or achievement of University awards at the final level of the course.

4.2 General Principles of Student Progression and Award

Each level of a course is comprised of modules of study. Levels may be made up of core modules, which students are required to study, and elective modules, where there is an element of student choice in module selection.

Student learning is assessed at modular level and each module may have a number of components (separate pieces of assessment) which, when combined, form the overall module mark a student can achieve.

Modules have learning outcomes (statements of what students will have learned upon successful completion) which when brought together, demonstrate the achievement of level learning outcomes and ultimately, course learning outcomes.

Decisions regarding progression, award eligibility and award outcome are made with due regard for:

- a) the achievement of level and course learning outcomes;

- b) the requirements for progression from one level to the next, as defined later in this section;
- c) a profile of achievement for each award, as defined later in this section.

Where students have met or exceeded a defined profile of achievement, and by doing so demonstrated achievement of the level learning outcomes, they will have met the standard required to progress to the next academic level. See 4.3.3 and 4.3.5 below for defined profiles of achievement in respect of progression.

Where students have met or exceeded a defined profile of achievement, and by doing so demonstrated achievement of the course learning outcomes, they will have met the standard required for award eligibility. See 4.3.3 and 4.3.5 below for defined profiles of achievement in respect of individual qualification aims.

Students who have not met the defined profiles of achievement for progression or award eligibility at the first attempt are eligible for reassessment. Students are offered reassessment opportunities once only in those modules with an overall mark of less than 40%.

Students must submit for reassessment in modules with an overall mark of less than 30%.

Reassessment is undertaken at component level so any module component marks of 40% or more will not be subject to reassessment.

All reassessed work is capped at 40%.

Following reassessment, students who do not meet the requirements for level progression or award will be eligible for one or more of the following outcomes:

- a) Contained Award: a lower award is made based on the student's profile of achievement
- b) Failed/ Complete: failed modules are repeated
- c) Failed/ Repeat: the whole level is repeated
- d) Failed/ Withdraw: the student is not allowed to continue on the course

These decisions are a matter for the Progression and Award Board. Students' overall academic performance and/ or engagement with the course will inform the decision making process of the Board.

A Board may decide that a student's performance merits an opportunity to repeat modules. A decision of Failed/ Complete means that students retain the marks of passed modules. A decision of Failed/ Repeat means that no marks are retained.

Students at the final level of their course are not eligible for Failed/ repeat decisions and may complete failed modules once only.

Repeat module marks are not capped and students will be required to attend the university and pay tuition fees for repeat study.

Students completing or repeating a level may, subject to the agreement of the Course Director, (or nominee) choose to take different elective modules from those electives previously taken to demonstrate the achievement of level learning outcomes.

Students undertaking sandwich placements are required to perform satisfactorily and complete the prescribed work experience before progressing to the next level of study. Students who have not completed the prescribed work experience satisfactorily may repeat it (where provisions for this can be made) or transfer to a non-sandwich mode of study.

Students who fail to achieve the profile of achievement for their target award shall be recommended for the conferment of a contained award for which they have achieved the specified requirements.

Students may be entitled to one of the following contained awards:

- a) Certificate of Higher Education at level 4
- b) Diploma of Higher Education at level 5
- c) Bachelor Degree at level 6
- d) Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma at level 7

The profiles of achievement for these awards are defined in 4.3.3 and 4.3.5, below.

4.3 Student Progression and Award

4.3.1 Requirements for Student Progression

Where a Level 4 or Level 5 student has met or exceeded the following profile, and by doing so demonstrated achievement of the level learning outcomes, they will have achieved the standard required to progress to the next academic level:

- studied 120 credit points on an approved path of study at the level concerned (including any Recognition of Prior Learning);
- submitted in all specified components (pieces) of assessment;

- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 100 credit points at the level concerned;
- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied;
- achieved an overall average of 40% or more across all modules studied at this level.

Courses may exceptionally establish stages within academic levels of courses. These stages constitute groups of modules upon completion of which, student progress is considered and both reassessment and subsequently repeat opportunities may be offered.

In-level stages are normally proposed and confirmed through the course validation process. Stages are proposed with due regard for curriculum coherence, student workload, the availability of tutorial support and other support arrangements.

4.3.2 Requirements for Award Eligibility

In addition to satisfying the submission and attainment requirements for each module of study, students are required to achieve defined profiles of achievement in respect of University awards.

Non-honours degree students who have demonstrated excellent performance will be awarded a distinction or merit where they have attained a defined profile of achievement confirmed through the course validation process or, where there is no defined profile, have attained a specific average mark in assessments contributing to the final award as follows:

- 60% or more for a merit
- 70% or more for a distinction.

In addition, an award of the University will only be conferred when the following conditions are satisfied:

Registration, Fees and Financial Liabilities

The candidate is a registered student with the University at the time of their assessment for an award, and payment of all the appropriate tuition fees has been made.

Completion of Programme of Study

The candidate has completed a programme of study approved by the University leading to the award being recommended.

Recommendation for an Award

The award has been recommended by a Progression and Award Board, convened, constituted and acting under the regulations approved by the Academic Board of the University; or a duly established Appeal Panel of the University.

4.3.3 Undergraduate Profiles of Achievement

a) Certificate

The Certificate is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 60 credit points at Level 4. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- pursued a course of study of 60 credit points at Level 4 or above;
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 40 credit points at Level 4 or above;
- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied.

b) Certificate of Higher Education

The Certificate of Higher Education is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 4. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- pursued a course of study of 120 credit points at Level 4 or above (including any recognition of prior learning);
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 100 credit points at Level 4 or above
- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied;
- achieved an overall average of 40% or more across all modules studied.

c) Diploma

The Diploma is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 4 and 60 credit points at Level 5 or above. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- achieved the requirements for progression from Level 4 to Level 5 or has been admitted directly to Level 5;
- pursued a course of study of 60 credit points at Level 5 or above;
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 40 credit points at Level 5 or above;
- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied.

d) Diploma of Higher Education

The Diploma of Higher Education is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 4 and 120 credit points at Level 5. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- achieved the requirements for level progression from Level 4 to Level 5, or has been admitted directly to Level 5;
- pursued a course of study of 120 credit points at Level 5 or above (including any recognition of prior learning);;
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 100 credit points at Level 5 or above;
- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied;
- achieved an overall average of 40% or more across all modules studied at this level.

e) Foundation Degree

The Foundation Degree is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 4 and 120 credit points at Level 5. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- achieved the requirements for level progression from Level 4 to Level 5, or has been admitted directly to Level 5;
- pursued a course of study of 120 credit points at Level 5 or above (including any recognition of prior learning);
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 100 credit points at Level 5 or above;

- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied;
- achieved an overall average of 40% or more across all modules studied at this level.

f) Bachelor Degree

The Bachelor Degree is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 4, 120 credit points at Level 5 and 60 credit points at Level 6. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- achieved the requirements for level progression from Level 4 to Level 5, and from Level 5 to Level 6, or has been admitted directly beyond Level 4;
- pursued a course of study of 60 credit points at Level 6 or above;
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 40 credit points at Level 6 or above;
- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied.

g) Bachelor Degree with Honours

The Bachelor Degree with Honours is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 4, 120 credit points at Level 5, and 120 credit points at Level 6. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- achieved the requirements for level progression from Level 4 to Level 5, and from Level 5 to Level 6, or has been admitted directly to Level 6;
- pursued a course of study of 120 credit points at Level 6 or above (including any recognition of prior learning);
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 100 credit points at Level 6 or above;
- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied;
- achieved an overall average of 40% or more across all modules studied at this level.

4.3.4 Bachelor Degree with Honours: Determination of Classification

a) Bachelor Degrees with Honours are available with the following classifications:

- First Class: overall outcome of 70%+

- Upper Second Class: overall outcome of 60% to 69%
 - Lower Second Class: overall outcome of 50% to 59%
 - Third Class: overall outcome of 40% to 49%
- b) In determining the class of Bachelor Degree with Honours to be recommended, a Progression and Award Board will consider performance at both Level 5 and Level 6.
- c) The following formula will be used:

The best 100 credits of Level 5 work at 25% weighting added to the best 100 credits of Level 6 work at 75% weighting.

- d) If the final weighted average for an award is within 2% of the next classification boundary then the award will be upgraded to that classification, provided that 50% or more of the credit achieved at level 6 is in the higher classification band.
- e) Only modules studied within the University, or within the terms of an agreed University arrangement or collaboration, can be considered when establishing the classification of an honours degree.
- f) Work undertaken on the placement year for a sandwich degree cannot be considered when establishing a degree classification unless it is validated as a credit bearing module or modular component at Level 5 or Level 6.

4.3.5 Postgraduate Profiles of Achievement

a) Postgraduate Certificate

The Postgraduate Certificate is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 60 credit points at Level 7. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- pursued a course of study of 60 credit points at Level 7 or above;
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 60 credit points at Level 7 or above;
- achieved an overall average of 40% or more across all modules studied at this level.

b) Postgraduate Diploma

The Postgraduate Diploma is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at Level 7. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- pursued a course of study of 120 credit points at Level 7 or above;
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 100 credit points at Level 7 or above;
- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied;
- achieved an overall average of 40% or more across all modules studied at this level.

c) Masters Awards

Masters degrees are awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 180 credit points at Level 7. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- pursued a course of study of 180 credit points at Level 7 or above;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 160 credit points at Level 7 or above;
- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied;
- achieved an overall average of 40% or more across all modules studied at this level.

d) Integrated Masters Awards

Integrated Masters degrees are awarded for the attainment of 480 credit points: 120 credit points at level 4, 120 credit points at level 5, 120 credit points at level 6 and 120 credit points at level 7. The University awards these credit points where a student has:

- achieved the requirements for level progression from Level 4 to Level 5, from Level 5 to Level 6, from Level 6 to Level 7 or has been admitted directly beyond the first level of the course;
- pursued a course of study of 120 credit points at Level 7 or above;
- submitted in all specified components of assessment;
- achieved the overall learning outcomes for the award;
- achieved an average of 40% or more in modules equivalent to 100 credit points at Level 7 or above;

- achieved an average of 30% or more in each module studied;
 - achieved an overall average of 40% or more across all modules studied at this level.
- e) A full list of University awards, their overall credit composition and the level of the award as aligned with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications may be found in **Section 18: Definition of University Awards**.

4.3.6 Student Reassessment for Progression or Award Eligibility

Students who have not achieved the requirements for progression or award eligibility may be reassessed in order to reach the required standard, subject to the following provisions:

- Students are eligible for reassessment in all failed modules for the academic level.
- Reassessment is mandatory for modules with an overall mark of less than 30%.
- The opportunity for reassessment will be given once only in respect of any module during an academic level.
- All reassessment is at component level and marks achieved for any successfully completed components will remain unaltered and will contribute to the final average mark for the module.
- The maximum mark achievable for reassessed components is 40%.
- Reassessment may only be used for the recovery of failure. It may not be used to attempt to improve an existing mark.
- Where a student achieves a lower mark for the reassessed work than for the original submission, the higher original mark will stand.

4.3.7 Students Unable to Progress or Ineligible for Award Following Reassessment

If the standard for progression or award eligibility is not achieved following reassessment, Progression and Award Boards will consider student repeat opportunities.

4.3.8 Unable to Progress: Opportunities for Repeat Study

Following reassessment, students who have submitted in all components of assessment, achieved **50% or more** of the credit points for the level concerned but have achieved insufficient credit points required for level progression will normally receive a decision of 'Fail – Repeat Part Level' from the Progression and Award Board.

In these circumstances, students will re-enrol to repeat the failed modules for that level, attending the University and receiving full tuition. Students who receive a decision of 'Fail – Repeat Part Level' will retain credit and marks for successfully completed modules.

Following reassessment, students who have submitted in all components of assessment but achieved **less than 50%** of the credit points for the level concerned and are unable to progress will normally receive a decision of 'Fail – Repeat Full Level' from the Progression and Award Board.

In these circumstances, students will re-enrol to repeat the whole level, attending the University and receiving full tuition. Students who receive a decision of 'Fail – Repeat Full Level' will not retain any credit or marks for modules previously completed at that level.

If students' achievement of **less than 50%** of the credit points for the level derives largely from non-submission of assessed work or extremely poor academic performance such students may, at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board, be failed and withdrawn from the course. In such cases students may be eligible for a contained award and/ or the ratification of credit achieved.

4.3.9 Ineligible for Award: Opportunities for Repeat Study

At the final level of the course, and following reassessment, students who have submitted in all components of assessment but have achieved insufficient credit points required for award eligibility will normally receive a decision of 'Fail – Complete' from the Progression and Award Board.

Such students will re-enrol to repeat the failed modules for that level, attending the University and receiving full tuition. Students who receive a decision of 'Fail – Repeat Part Level ' will retain credit and marks for successfully completed modules. There is no 'Fail- Repeat Full Level' option at the final level of the course.

If students' achievement of **less than 50%** of the credit points at the final level derives largely from non-submission of assessed work or extremely poor academic performance such students may, at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board, be failed and withdrawn from the course. In such cases students may be eligible for a contained award and/ or the ratification of credit achieved.

4.3.10 Carrying Forward of Modules

Exceptionally, a student may be permitted to carry forward up to two standard modules into the next academic level. This decision is at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board and is only invoked where a student has not been able to complete the assessment or reassessment process due to confirmed extenuating circumstances.

4.3.11 Pre-Requisite Modules

Through the course validation process, a course may identify modules which must be studied in order to undertake subsequent modules within the same level or modules taught later in the course. These are known as pre-requisite modules. In such cases, students must be specifically advised of progression or award eligibility requirements which are impacted by pre-requisite modules.

4.3.12 Modules Which Must Be Passed

The University pass mark for module achievement is 40%. The Progression and Award Board may condone a failed 20 credit point module with a mark of between 30% and 39% at each level of study, if the level/ award learning outcomes are otherwise satisfied. For the purposes of progression or award eligibility, credit is awarded for condoned modules.

Through the course validation process, a course may identify particular modules which are required to be passed in order to obtain a University award. In some cases, a threshold pass mark above the university standard for module achievement may be stipulated.

These modules may be pre-requisites for future study options but need not be.

4.3.13 Students' Responsibilities

Students are responsible for maintaining an awareness of their successfully completed modules and for keeping a running total of the credit they have already achieved during the level.

Students are responsible for checking the dates of examinations and submission dates for coursework and any associated re-sits and resubmission dates. This information is made available via the University's virtual learning environment.

The scheduling of reassessment opportunities will be at a School's discretion and may be different for assessed coursework and examinations.

4.3.14 Aegrotat Awards

An *aegrotat award* for incomplete study is an unclassified *award* which may be conferred in exceptional circumstances, such as in cases where a student's ability to complete their studies is permanently compromised by severe illness.

A decision on the form and level of the award must be reached by the Progression and Award Board with due regard for evidence of an appropriate threshold standard of performance.

Before a recommendation of an aegrotat award is made, the student must have signified a willingness to accept the award and have signified an understanding that the acceptance of this award waives the right to reassessment.

A student who has been offered an aegrotat award, but who chooses instead to be reassessed, may not claim the aegrotat award in the event of subsequent failure.

4.3.15 Posthumous Awards

An award may be recommended posthumously by the Progression and Award Board and be accepted by another person on behalf of a deceased student.

In reaching decisions about posthumous awards, Boards may be guided by the trajectory of performance of the student concerned.