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Description:

These academic regulations and the procedures and principles that underlie them, are intended to ensure stakeholder confidence in the academic standards and quality of the Foundation Degrees awarded by the Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education. Approved by the Curriculum and Quality Committee, this document sets out the requirements for the assurance of academic standards and quality which includes programme regulations, admissions, progression and assessment of students. Within the context of these regulations, the 'Quality Handbook' further sets out a series of Codes of Practice which must be adhered to and which may be varied from time to time subject to the development and approval of the Quality Improvement Committee and the boards to which it delegates specific responsibilities.

These regulations should be read in conjunction with:

QAapi1.	Accuracy and Completeness of Published Information
QAArwp	Retention in Higher Education
QAARtl	Review of Teaching and Learning Higher Education
QAarts	Recognised Teacher Status (Higher Education)
QAeA.	External Examiners
QAbeAc.	Boards of Examiners: Administrative Conduct
QAWBL.	Management of Placement Learning in Higher Education
QAAss.	Assessment of Students
QAAtmcms.	Assessment Terminology, Criteria and Marking Schemes
QAPcaum.	Plagiarism, Cheating and Unfair Means
QAMc.	Mitigating Circumstances
QAeA	Ethics Approval
QAANp	Approval of New Programmes (Higher Education)
QAPr.	Periodic Review
QAAd.	Higher Education Admissions
QAAdm.	Admissions Appeals & Complaints
QAAPl	Accreditation of Prior Learning (Certificated and Experiential)
QASe	Student Engagement (Higher Education)
QAfts	Fitness to Study (Higher Education)

QAss Interruption of Study (Higher Education)
AS-compli1013 Investigation and Determination of Complaints Policy & Procedure
QAAs Academic Appeals (Higher Education)

For further advice on how these regulations work, contact the Higher Education Quality and Standards Department (Higher Education): University Centre: Rm. 3H05: (01472) 311222

Additional guidance can be obtained by visiting www.qaa.ac.uk; refer to 'The HE Quality Code' and 'The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education European Area'.

**This document is available in alternative forms
on request from the Quality and Standards Department**

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1. Introduction

- a) The following regulations apply to all Foundation Degrees and contained awards validated by the Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education (the Institute).
- b) These regulations should be read in conjunction with relevant programme specifications, which may in some cases include approved variations or exclusions of specific regulations herein.
- c) The medium of instruction and assessment for all Foundation Degree and contained awards will be English except where the subject content dictates that a part of the programme will be delivered in a language other than English.
- d) In recognition of entry to a higher education learning environment, before commencing studies for a Foundation Degree or other contained award, students will normally have reached a minimum of 18 years of age.
- e) A student who has reached the age of 17 but not 18 on the first day of the month in which their Foundation Degree commences will not be admitted except with the express permission of a member of the senior management team (with a responsibility for curriculum) and with the written authorisation of his or her parent or guardian.
- f) As part of the Institute's commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights, the Institute recognises that it must endeavour to meet its legal obligations under the Equality Act (2010) which states that institutions must work towards the elimination of harassment, discrimination and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This includes all protected characteristics and associated dimensions.
- g) Students for the award of a qualification from the Institute, must satisfy its regulatory framework and the criteria and regulations set within the specifications for a published and approved Foundation Degree.
- h) A Foundation Degree, contained award or credit will not be conferred upon a student if the student has outstanding tuition fees to the Institute or if its general and specific programme regulations are unfulfilled.
- i) Subject to the provisions of the relevant programme regulations, a student who has not met the requirements for a Foundation Degree may be deemed to be a student for a contained award provided that he or she has met the requirements of that award. A student who has been granted a contained award in such circumstances and has exhausted all assessment opportunities as specified in the regulations will not normally be permitted to progress to a further attempt at the Foundation Degree.
- j) The Progression, Quality and Standards Committee is the final arbiter of the application and/or interpretation of these regulations and associated codes of practice.
- k) The final responsibility for the academic standard of awards approved by the Institute, rests with the Quality Improvement Committee.

1.1 Powers

- a) Subject to the responsibilities of the Corporation, the Institute is responsible for the determination of its academic and other activities across its higher education provision. These will permit the Institute to:
- i determine the requirements for the admission of persons to the Institute or to any particular course or programme operated by the Institute, and to make regulations therefore;
 - ii grant and confer Foundation Degrees or other contained awards on students who have pursued programmes of study approved by the Institute and shall have passed such examinations and / or other assessments as required by its regulations, Codes of Practice and validation documents;
 - iii determine the terms and conditions, and to prescribe the regulations for the granting and conferment of Foundation Degrees, contained academic awards and distinctions;
 - iv grant and confer, subject to such conditions as the Institute determines, Honorary Foundation Degrees on persons approved by the Institute;
 - v deprive any student of a Foundation Degree or other contained award and to rescind any Foundation Degree or other award conferred to them on any grounds which the Institute shall from time to time determine to be good and sufficient cause;
 - vi provide lectures, tutorials and other forms of instruction or supervision in such branches of learning and scholarship as the Institute shall deem appropriate and to make provision for research, scholarship and the advancement and dissemination of knowledge in such manner as the Institute determines;
 - vii provide lectures and other forms of instruction or supervision to persons who are not enrolled students of the Institute, as the Institute shall from time to time determine;
 - viii approve and review programmes pursued by students to qualify for an academic award;
 - ix ensure that no test related to any of the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 shall be imposed on any person as a condition of admission to a Foundation Degree or of receiving any Foundation Degree or other award;
 - x discontinue a programme with no further recruitment due to academic issues (such as currency, progression, retention, feedback from students or external examiners, internal or external review); the compatibility of the programme with the strategic plan; or on grounds of viability or resource availability

1.2 Responsibilities

- a) In meeting its powers and responsibilities the Institute shall ensure governance over:
- i Foundation Degrees and other contained awards to ensure programmes meet the standards required as determined by the approved learning outcomes and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education as appropriate;
 - ii curriculum and Foundation Degree including arrangements for work based, related or practical training and experience;
 - iii the qualifications and experience of the teaching and support staff;
 - iv facilities and resources available;
 - v the quality of teaching and scholarship;
 - vi student achievements;
 - vii student learning opportunities;
 - viii arrangements for assessment and for the appointment of external and internal examiners;
 - ix arrangements for monitoring, sustaining and developing the standard of student performance and the quality of learning, teaching and assessment.

1.3 Use of Language

- a. **Mandatory:** denoted by the word '**must**' - there is no discretion whether to take the action in question. Failure to comply with such a clause leaves individuals/ departments/ Schools liable to sanction
- b. **Advisable:** denoted by the word '**should**' and which denotes good practice. A justification will be required for not taking the action advised
- c. **Desirable:** denoted by the word '**may**' taking the action is discretionary but evidence will be required to demonstrate that taking the action has been considered
- d. **Institute:** means the Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education
- e. **Foundation Degree:** for the purposes of determining whether a Foundation Degree is an FdA, FdEd or FdSc, each shall be deemed by the Institution's Full Approvals Panel to be an 'Arts', 'Education' or a 'Science' programme in best alignment with the sector subject codes
- f. A **Foundation Degree** shall be awarded by the Institute, to a student who has satisfactorily completed a prescribed academic programme of study, followed over a period of time, normally two years full time and three years part-time study and which is designed to ensure:
- i knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles in their field of study and the way in which those principles have developed
 - ii successful application in the workplace of the range of knowledge and skills learnt throughout the programme
 - iii an ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, and the application of those principles in a work context
 - iv knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s), and an ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study and apply these in a work context
 - v an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge in their field of study and in a work context
- g. **Contained Award:** is a lesser award than the one the student was aiming for at the time of registration on their course. A contained award will only be conferred if the student positively achieves the specified requirements of that contained award.
- h. **Module:** The Institute's awards are modular in structure and for the purposes of these regulations a module is defined as being a separately assessed unit of learning as specified in the validation document at approval
- i all students on the same module must be assessed by the same method(s) of assessment except in instances where a disability precludes a student from the same opportunities as their peers and an alternative assessment is required (Code of Practice Assessment of Students).
 - ii each module must be assigned a credit value and to a level of study as defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications; the level specifies the academic standard of that module:
- Level 3: Foundation (pre-certificate) undergraduate level
 Level 4: Certificate undergraduate level
 Level 5: Intermediate undergraduate level (Foundation Degree)

- iii before any module can become valid as leading to a Foundation Degree, the Full Approvals Panel must approve its scope, form of assessment and credit value
- i. **Credit:** a credit value must be assigned to each module indicating the total learning time, including assessment, which a student might expect to spend in achieving the learning outcomes associated with the module. Each credit should nominally represent 10 hours of learning.
- j. **Transferable Skills:** the development of transferable skills is deemed essential for all undergraduates irrespective of the nature or subject area of the particular Foundation Degree. In some instances, transferable skill outcomes may occur inherently within modules where learning outcomes are both subject specific and skills based
- k. **Generic Key Skill Outcomes:** Whilst it is recognised that different subject areas require different emphases upon transferable skills; that some programmes will facilitate intrinsic skill development; and some learning outcomes may derive transferable skills from generic criteria and external benchmarks, all Foundation Degrees awarded by the Institute must also demonstrate the development and assessment of a set of generic skills outcomes. On completion of a Foundation Degree programme, students must be able to:
 - i communicate with others in a clear and articulate manner, both verbally and in writing;
 - ii use information and communication technology to store, retrieve and produce material, which may include the use of word-processing, databases, spreadsheets and other applications as appropriate to the programme;
 - iii exercise personal responsibility for own decision making, learning, development and time management;
 - iv work with others with confidence, initiative and take responsibility for an agreed area of shared activity;
 - v show flexible, methodical, informed and creative approaches in identifying and proposing solutions;
 - vi act in a professional and ethical manner, demonstrating the ability to learn from and reflect on experiences.

1.4 Structure and Stages

- a) For the purposes of progression, each Foundation Degree programme must be divided into two stages or three stages if including a pre-certificate stage as follows:

Pre-Certificate stage	120 credits at level 3
Certificate stage	first 120 credits at level 4
Foundation Degree/Intermediate stage	second 120 credits at level 5
- b) With the approval of the Full Approvals Panel, a Foundation Degree programme may also include a Pre Certificate stage comprising the first 120 credits of a 360 credit Foundation Degree, each stage to comprise 120 credits at level of 3, 4 and 5 respectively.
- c) Part time and full time students must study modules for each semester in accordance with the instructions specified in the programme for which they are enrolled.

- d) A part-time student must not enrol for modules worth more than 80 credits during one academic year, excluding resits.
- e) A student must not be permitted to undertake more than 120 credits in a single stage other than with the express approval of the Progression Board (in accordance with these regulations) and subsequent ratification by the Progression, Quality and Standards Committee. Where such approval is granted the student shall be required to pass all credits attempted to progress to the next stage. Credits achieved over and above the 120 credits required for the stage must not be carried over and counted towards the next stage of the programme.
- f) Credits must not be awarded for a module more than once.
- g) The same credits must not be counted towards two separate qualifications unless one qualification is a stage in the normal progression to the other qualification.
- h) Where a particular first semester module is specified as a prerequisite for a module to be taken in a following semester, then the prerequisite will be deemed to have been satisfied provided that the student has been enrolled for the former module; has maintained satisfactory attendance at, and submitted all assessments associated with the module. Otherwise, to satisfy a prerequisite, the student must have been awarded the credits for the module.
- i) Where a particular module is specified as a co-requisite, the student must enrol for and maintain satisfactory attendance at the module.
- j) The principle and requirements of 'satisfactory attendance' must be published within the programme or module specifications and made available in student handbooks.
- k) It is possible, within these regulations, for students to attend individual modules and complete assessments accruing up to 40 credits from the same programme during each enrolment. This should be used only for Full Cost provision and not to draw funding by Student Finance England, or other recognised funding bodies. Following successful completion they will receive a transcript detailing the credits completed, which can subsequently be used for entry in advanced standing to programmes, subject to limitations of APL. This only applies to pre-certificate and certificate stages of Foundation Degrees and any prerequisite rules must be adhered to. With each enrolment a document should be drawn up clearly stating the modules being studied and the services the institute will provide. This should be signed off by the chair of Progression, Quality and Standards Committee before enrolment".

1.5 Employability, Work Based and Work Related Learning

- a) To support the development of employable graduates and to encourage the development of employability and the skills needed to compete in a competitive labour market all programmes must include a specific module, or part of a module (10 credits), in each stage designed to develop knowledge and skills around employability and gaining employment.
- b) Programmes which are work based must have 40 credits attributed to placement hours in real work situations. A further 40 credits designated as work related study.
- c) Programmes which are work related must have 80 credits designated as work related study.

- d) In situations where professional, statutory, regulatory bodies demand other work based/ work related criteria that may require a deviation from the criteria identified in 4.1 e, f and g, this should normally be requested at stage 2 of the Programme Proposal Approval process. Responsibility for final approval rests with the Full Approvals Panel who will determine the overall suitability of the proposed deviation ensuring that the programme is properly designed, that arrangements for its delivery and assessment have been properly planned, that it conforms to its regulations, associated Codes of Practice and policies and that, where relevant, it meets the requirements of the UK Quality Code and other relevant external reference points.

1.6 Permitted duration for the accumulation of credits

- a) Where a student is permitted to extend his/her period of study through mitigating circumstances, the grant of a non-standard extension for good cause or interruption of study, such extension is subject to the overriding requirement that each stage of the Foundation Degree must be completed within a period of three years.

1.7 Contained Awards and interim credit

- a) Subject to 4.3 (b) a student may withdraw from a Foundation Degree and be awarded one of the following contained awards:
- i A Pre-Certificate of Higher Education with at least 120 credits at level 3 or higher;
 - ii A Certificate of Higher Education with at least 120 credits at level 4 or higher.
- b) Any award under these regulations must be subject to a minimum of 60 credits having been awarded by the Institute.
- c) Any contained award with professional practice requirements must not be awarded in a named subject which implies that the student is entitled to practise that profession.

2. Approval, Validation, Monitoring and Review

2.1 Approval and Validation

- a) There are three formal stages in granting new Foundation Degree programmes or the major amendment of existing programmes:
 - i Stage 1 Validation: Strategic Planning Approval;
 - ii Stage 2 Validation: Programme Proposal Approval;
 - iii Stage 3 Validation: Full Programme Approval.

- b) Whilst for all three stages the authority to grant new programmes and major amendments rests with the Quality Improvement Committee, the Committee delegates the authority to grant:
 - i Stage 1 Validation to the Progression, Quality and Standards Committee (PQSC);
 - ii Stage 2 Validation to the Proposal Approvals Panel (PAP);
 - iii Stage 3 Validation to the Full Approvals Panel (FAP).

2.2 Stage 1 Validation - Strategic Planning Approval

- a) This establishes if there is a prima facie academic and appropriate business case, to support the development of a full proposal. Stage 1 Validation permits a strategic decision to support the development of new programmes and resources as an addition to the Institute's portfolio, or to support enhancement through major amendments of existing programmes.

- b) Applications for Stage 1 Validation must be submitted a minimum of 10 days before a PQSC. The committee must either 'Grant', 'Not Grant' or 'Defer with Conditions' the application for Stage 1 Validation. Feedback from the meeting will specify the timescale for the validation of the programme.

- c) If a Stage 1 Validation is 'deferred with conditions' the team must resubmit the application to meet the conditions within 10 days to the chair of PQSC. The decision will be noted through chairs action.

- d) Upon successful application at Stage 1 the Quality Manager Academic Registrar will send the validation and approval dates for Stage 2 and Stage 3 of the process.

2.3 Stage 2 Validation - Programme Proposal Approval

- e) This is a process by which the Institute gives approval for the full approvals specification to be developed. It provides an early check that the programme proposal is appropriate for development in terms of adherence to regulations and Codes of Practice, resources and provides an opportunity to identify any advice and guidance to support the development of the programme and its specifications. Programme Proposal Approval is mandatory for all programmes.

- f) A proposed new programme or proposed major amendment to an existing programme must not be advertised through any means unless Programme Proposal Approval has been granted by a Proposal Approvals Panel (PAP) in accordance with these regulations and associated

Codes of Practice. Following PAP approval a programme must only be advertised as 'Subject to Approval'.

- g) For a proposed major amendment to an existing programme an Existing Programme Evaluation is mandatory. The completed form must be submitted at the same time as the Programme Proposal Approval.
- h) Applications for Stage 2 Validation must be submitted on form PPA2 to the HE Quality Office. The PPA panel must convene and either 'Grant', 'Not Grant' or 'Defer with Conditions' the application for PPA.
- i) If a Stage 2 Validation is 'deferred with conditions' the team must resubmit the application to meet the conditions within 10 days to the chair of the panel.

2.4 Stage 3 Validation – Full Approvals

This is a process through which the Institute seeks to confirm that a new programme or one that has been significantly amended, is properly designed, that arrangements for its delivery and assessment have been properly planned, that it conforms to its regulations, associated Codes of Practice and policies and that, where relevant, it meets the requirements of the UK Quality Code and other relevant external reference points. Stage 3 is comprised of three sub-stages:

- i. **Stage 3a:** A full approvals document and supporting documents must be submitted to HE Quality Office who will convene a reading group

A Full Approvals Panel (FAP) must convene as a reading group (independently of the developing team) and scrutinise the full approvals documentation. The FAP reading group must provide written feedback within **10 working days** after the approvals document is submitted to the HE Quality Office

- ii. **Stage 3b:** the Full Approvals document must be re-submitted to the HE Quality Office within **10 working days** after written feedback is received from the FAP reading group.

The submission must be supported with feedback on the Full Approvals document by:

- a. a suitably qualified and experienced external academic consultant
- b. an employer involved in the development of the full approvals document
- c. feedback from students

- iii. **Stage 3c:** The Full Approvals Panel must convene for a full approvals event within **15 working days** of resubmission of paperwork.

- a. At each stage, the emphasis is on dialogue to enhance good practice in programme development, design and approval, with support and guidance being provided throughout the process
- b. Full Approval is implemented through programme scrutiny by a full approvals panel; is **mandatory** for all programmes and is a process through which a full approvals panel confirms that recruitment to and delivery of the Foundation Degree may commence

- c. Within **10 working days** of an approvals event, the chair of the Full Approvals Panel (FAP) must send a FAP report to the chair of the Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) and the chair of the Quality Improvement Committee must issue a 'Confirmation of Permission to Proceed' that is either 'Granted', 'Not Granted' or 'Deferred with Conditions'
- d. A programme is not approved until the developing team receives a 'Confirmation of Permission to Proceed' that is 'Granted'
- e. A new programme must be approved in accordance with these regulations before any student is enrolled on a programme

2.5 Amendments of Programmes

Major Amendment: amendments to an approved Foundation Degree are categorised as major according to whether or not the proposed changes are significant in intent or effect.

Major amendments include:

- i A change in programme title
- ii Change in mode of study
- iii Change of entry criteria
- iv Changes to modules which necessitates a change to the aims and programme learning outcomes
- v Changes to the programme learning outcomes which necessiate a change to the module structure, module specifications or module learning outcomes
- vi The intrduction of a new pathway(s)
- vii Restructuring
- viii Changes to major elements of teaching, learning or assessment e.g the introduction of distance delivery, change of location
- ix Professional accreditation
- x Changes to module credits
- xi The additon of a Pre-Certificate year
- xii Changes that would mean the programme would not be in accordance with the Institute's regulations

Minor Amendment: amendments to an approved Foundation Degree are categorised as minor according to whether or not the proposed changes are insignificant in intent or effect. Minor amendments require approval at PQSC and must be clearly recorded within the minutes of the Committee. Minor amendments include any changes that are not listed in 2.5 above.

2.6 Timescales for approval of programmes

- a) From the date of SPA approval, the full approvals timescale will not surpass a period of 15 months.
- b) In accordance with each of the Institute's stages of approval, should a programme not receive approval from the Chair of the Quality Improvement Committee within a 15 month period (following the date of SPA approval), SPA approval must be re-submitted and the development and approvals stages started afresh.

- c) All 'new' Foundation Degree programmes, or Foundation Degrees undergoing 'major amendments' must be fully approved by 1st July to ensure sufficient time for planning, preparation and delivery in the September of the following academic year.
- d) When an application for Strategic Planning Approval (SPA) is approved by PQSC, within the mandatory timescales set out in these regulations, a schedule of events for programme development and approval may be determined by the Chair of PQSC.
- e) Within the mandatory timescales set out in these regulations, the timeframe for the approval of new programmes and major amendments will be tailored, within reason, to meet the demands of the environment in which programmes are offered.

3. Monitoring and Review

- a) Annual Monitoring is a process of ongoing critical scrutiny of qualitative and quantitative evidence relating to the operation and performance of a Foundation Degree programme which has been validated; or of individual validated modules undertaken by the academic staff responsible for their delivery. Annual monitoring facilitates the Institute's approach to the management and safeguarding of standards and quality; promotes a continual improvement agenda through the setting of actions and contributes to sharing of practice.
- b) All Foundation Degrees must be monitored annually through the production of Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs).
- c) Review is a process of routine thematic or periodic evaluation of the accumulated evidence about a programme or group of programmes drawn from a range of sources and is conducted by a panel of academic and/or professional peers. Review may lead to the revision and redefinition of a programme and to the preparation of new programme or module specifications.
- d) All Foundation Degrees **must** be subject to a periodic programme review every six years to ensure that the programme remains current, unless the programme has undergone a major amendment.

4. Publication of Programmes of Study

- a) Foundation Degree programmes for qualifications governed by these regulations must be published and available in programme and module specifications.
- b) The Institute must make every effort to ensure that the published programmes and modules are complete and up to date, but reserves the right to make minor changes following approval by PQSC.
- c) A programme specification and module specification must not be published until a Confirmation of Permission to Proceed' is 'Granted' and the approvals document is held on file by the HE Quality Department.

5. Admissions: Standard and Non Standard Entry

- a) The Institute's Code of Practice Higher Education Admissions specifies the procedures that must be followed for all applicants.

5.1 Standard and Non Standard Applicants

- a) Standard entry refers to those applicants who obtain, or expect to obtain the specified and traditional points or qualifications needed to gain entry onto a specific foundation degree.
- b) Non-standard entry refers to those applicants who do not meet standard entry criteria, but gain entry through other criteria/ assessment.
- c) The arrangements made for considering all standard and non-standard applications for entry must ensure equality of opportunity. The criteria and means by which the eligibility of individuals for admission will be judged must be clearly published.
- d) The admission of any standard or non-standard applicant onto a Foundation Degree awarded by the Institute must occur in accordance with these regulations and the admissions criteria specified within the programme specification for a chosen foundation degree.
- e) The judgment made regarding an applicant's suitability for a particular Foundation Degree must be based on the reasonable expectation that each applicant will be able to fulfil the intended learning outcomes of the Foundation Degree concerned and achieve the standard required for the particular academic award(s) to which the Foundation Degree leads.
- f) In considering each application submitted for admission to a programme, evidence should be sought of personal, professional and educational experiences that provide indications of the applicant's ability to meet the demands and specified entry requirements of the programme. Account should be taken of relevant information which may include:
 - i The applicant's personal statement;
 - ii Assessment at interview;
 - iii Performance in written tasks or other tests set for admissions purposes;
 - iv Other evidence of the applicants performance or potential;
 - v Relevant work experience.

5.2 Applicants with English as a Foreign Language

- a) Applicants with English as a foreign language must be able to demonstrate a satisfactory command of English language in relation to reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- b) The Institute's certificated entry criteria for applicants with English as a foreign language can be found in the Code of Practice Higher Education Admissions.

5.3 Concurrent and consecutive enrolment

- a) An applicant may only be permitted to enrol for more than one Foundation Degree at the Institute to run concurrently under the following conditions:
 - i both programmes are part-time;
 or
 - ii one of the programmes is full-time and the other is part-time, and it is the declared opinion of the Programme Leader (or equivalent) for each course that the concurrent registration will not detract from the student's performance or fulfilment of any attendance requirements; in such cases a student may not subsequently appeal against poor performance on grounds of inability to satisfy the demands of concurrent enrolment.

5.4 Accreditation of Prior Learning

- a) All Accredited Prior Learning (APL) claims and approvals processes must comply with these regulations and the principles and processes defined within the Institute's Code of Practice Accreditation of Prior Learning (Certificated and Experiential) (Higher Education) .
- b) Credits for general transfer when awarded by other higher education colleges, universities or approved private institutions will be accepted for consideration for Accredited Prior Learning (APL).
- c) Credits for general or specific transfer when awarded by the Institute will be accepted for consideration for APL.
- d) The Institute will also consider applications for Accredited Prior Experiential Learning (APeL).
- e) The acceptance of applications for accredited prior certificated or experiential learning relating to a specific programme must be subject to the approval of the Board for Accreditation of Prior Learning and the following maxima.
- f) Any prior learning must be no more than six (6) years old and must have remained sufficiently contemporaneous to the subject in the time since the award was made.

5.5 APL Maxima

- a) Applicants or enrolled students must complete 240 credits at levels 5 and 5 required for the award, a maxima of no more than 180 APL credits must be permitted with a minimum of 60 credits from the final stage studied at the Institute.

5.6 Change of module or Foundation Degree

- a) A student has no given right to change a programme of study but may, following consultation and advice, change a Foundation Degree with the approval of the Associate Principal of the receiving faculty.
- b) Changes should normally be at an appropriate point in the academic year and must be subject to published restrictions.
- c) Students are responsible for complying with the requirements for a change of programme in force and published at the time of change.
- d) A student may, subject to timetable, published and programme restrictions, change a choice of module with the approval of the Associate Principal responsible for teaching the module.
- e) No withdrawal from a module must be permitted once any assessment process specified for the module has been completed.

5.7 Interruption of study

- a) A student has no given right to a period of interruption of study (suspension of studies) but may, following consultation and advice, interrupt a period of study with approval.
- b) Students must apply for a period of interruption of study (suspension of study) to the Mitigating Circumstances and Interruption of Studies Panel Terms with the support of the Curriculum Manager. The process is defined in the Institute's Code of Practice Interruption of Studies (Higher Education).

- c) Interruptions of study will normally be granted on the following grounds:
- i **Medical reasons** where there are strong medical reasons for a period of interruption of study. In such cases the student is required to submit appropriate medical evidence;
 - ii **Personal reasons** where there are strong personal reasons for a period of interruption of study. In such cases the student should briefly outline the circumstances pertaining to the request for interruption of study supported by third party evidence;
 - iii **Academic reasons** where there are good academic reasons for a period of interruption of study beneficial to the student's programme e.g. study, a year in industry or work experience abroad.
- d) The maximum period of interruption of study permitted for a two year full time or three year part time Foundation Degree must not exceed one academic year.
- e) Students are responsible for complying with the requirements for interruption of study in force and published at the time of change.
- f) A student who interrupts their study may have to accept that in doing so he or she will return to a programme which has been modified from the one on which he or she was originally enrolled. This may require acceptance of an ad hoc variation of programme in order to achieve completion.
- g) If an interruption of study is approved the student must be informed in writing and the Institute must inform the Funding Body, the Student Loans Company and any other relevant body.

5.8 Retrospective Interruption of Studies

- a) Interruption of study is expected to be applied for in advance, or at the start of any problems affecting studies.
- b) However, if the interruption of study is for reasons of illness or personal problems, it may be the case that students do not immediately take the decision to interrupt their study, and do not inform their department for the reason for their absence.
- c) Retrospective interruption of study must therefore be seen as exceptional, and when applied for, must come with the full support of the academic department, and with clear evidence of the rationale behind the request. All requests for retrospective interruption of study must be approved by Progression, Quality and Standards Committee (PQSC).
- d) There must also be a clear rationale shown as to why the request is for a retrospective interruption of study (confirming that the student was effectively not in attendance) and not a request for a repeat period (where the student was in attendance but had their ability to study affected by their circumstances).

5.9 Interruption of Study on the grounds of risk

- a) If a student on a Foundation Degree approved by the Institute, where-so-ever located, is judged, on substantial evidence, to be unfit to study by reason of posing a risk to him/herself or others, he/she may be required to suspend those studies. The process is defined in the Institute's Code of Practice Fitness to Study (Higher Education).

5.10 Academic Issues Relating to Interruption of Study

- a) Students who are interrupting their studies are defined as taking a break from studies. As such, they are not registered students and are not entitled to receive any tuition or supervision

- b) If the student has outstanding assessments or examinations, they may request to take those assessments whilst interrupting their studies. No students should be compelled to undertake assessments whilst interrupting their studies and this issue must be discussed at the time of the interruption of study request. The final decision as to whether the student is permitted to take outstanding assessments rests with the Curriculum Manager (or nominee). Programme Leaders must be particularly aware of students interrupting their studies due to health problems, and take into account that such students may not be fit to take assessments whilst interrupting their studies

- c) Students who normally have alternative arrangements for their assessments may have those arrangements affected by interrupting their studies, particularly if those arrangements rely on the availability of DSA funding. Students in this position must discuss this with Disability Services and their academic department before interrupting their studies

5.11 Access to Services

- a) Access to Institute services may be affected by interruption of studies. Once the student's status has been amended on the Management Information Systems, this information will be shared with other areas e.g. Library access. The main effects will be:
 - Accommodation
 - Library
 - IT Services
 - Disability Services

6. Assessment, Reassessment and Awarding Credits

- a) The results of assessments and examinations must be approved by the Institute's Module Board of Examiners.
- b) Any progression and/or awards decisions (including the award of credit) must be determined by the Programme Board of Examiners.
- c) Progression and Awards must be ratified by the Progression, Quality and Standards Committee.

6.1 Summative Assessments Methods

- a) Methods of summative assessment for all modules must be in accordance with the Institute's Code of Practice for Assessment of Students.
- b) A mixture of modes of assessment, which is evidence-based and commensurate with the allocated learning hours, and which may include, for example:
 - A formal 2-hour written examination
 - A 2,000-3,000 word written assignment
 - Presentations
 - Laboratory work
 - Experiments
 - Performances
 - In-class tests
 - Oral examinations
 - Projects
 - Portfolios
 - Computer-based tests
 - E-assessment
 - Exhibition of art works
 - Live performance or outcomes evidenced through digital media

Programmes **must**, if using a mixture of assessment modes within a single module, ensure that the overall assessment load for each student is not excessive, bearing in mind the requirements above.

- c) Generic Key Skill Outcomes: Teams should plan assessments so that the following key skill outcomes are met during the programme. On completion of a Foundation Degree programme, students must be able to:
 - i. communicate with others in a clear and articulate manner, both verbally and in writing
 - ii. use information and communication technology to store, retrieve and produce material, which may include the use of word-processing, databases, spreadsheets and other applications as appropriate to the programme
 - iii. exercise personal responsibility for own decision making, learning, development and time management
 - iv. work with others with confidence, initiative and take responsibility for an agreed area of shared activity
 - v. show flexible, methodical, informed and creative approaches in identifying and proposing solutions
 - vi. act in a professional and ethical manner, demonstrating the ability to learn from and reflect on experiences

- d) The word count and assessment number and type per 20 credit module is set at validation. The academic team should plan word count based on pedagogical principles. As an indication the equivalent word count for a 20 credit module may be assessed by a maximum of 3,000-5,000 words dependant on level of study. Normally this would be a maximum of 2 assessments per 20 credit module.
- e) Each programme must have modules or parts of modules delivered through online/blended learning. This should equate to at least 56 hours of guided learning hours split between the Certificate and Intermediate stages of the award.

6.2 Attempts at assessment

- a) A student must be deemed to have made a first attempt at each component or sub-component of assessment at the due date, whether or not the attempt has been made, unless:
 - i a standard extension of five working days deadline is authorised by the Programme Leader: or
 - ii a non-standard extension of time is agreed by the Mitigating Circumstances committee: or
 - iii a deferral is agreed by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners. Where a deferral is granted, the student will be expected to attempt the assessment at the next available opportunity; this will usually be in August/September: or
 - iv a student has been assessed by a Disability and Dyslexia Support Coordinator as requiring alternative assessment arrangements and permission authorised to cite his/her disability in a claim for an extended deadline. In such a case an appropriate period of extension should be recommended by the Disability Officer and agreed with the Programme Leader.
- b) In each instance work submitted by the extended deadline will be marked in the normal way with no capping of marks.
- c) If the period of extension or deferral has expired, the student must be deemed to have made a first attempt at each component or sub-component of assessment, unless the relevant Programme Board of Examiners grants a further deferral on grounds of mitigating circumstances as approved by the Mitigating Circumstances committee.

6.3 Reassessment

- a) Reassessment is an automatic right for student(s) who have failed at first attempt. The second attempt for assessments should normally be in August/September.
- b) The method of re-assessment must be the same as the method of first assessment unless either the alternative method was published prior to the commencement of the module, or the written consent of the student(s) is obtained. Where alternative methods have been agreed, the same method must be adopted for all students to be reassessed in the current session.
- c) A student who repeats an assessment for a module, or element, will only be eligible for the minimum pass mark, on the elements requiring reassessment, as designated in the Institute's marking scale.

6.4 Student Responsibilities for Assessment and Reassessment

- a) Dates of examinations and for the submission of assessments/ reassessments must be published by the relevant School. It is the responsibility of student to:

- i make themselves aware of these dates, and
- ii attend examinations and submit work for assessment/ reassessment on the dates required.

6.5 Module marks

- a) The performance of a student in meeting the assessment requirements of a module is determined by the Module Board of Examiners, and is indicated by a numerical mark recorded on the following scale:

Fail	0% to 39%
Pass	40% to 100%

- b) For modules passed **after** reassessment, a mark of 40% must be applied to the element(s) which were failed at first attempt.
- c) A student who fails to submit a component or sub-component of assessment as required will be awarded a mark of 0% NS for that component or sub-component of assessment. An attempt is defined as an exam attendance card being completed or a front cover submitted.
- d) Students may not be permitted to present themselves for assessments if they have not participated in the activities specified for a module.
- e) **Pass/ Fail Modules:** some modules may be designated within a 'Professional' category. This category is not in itself a 'level', but may include work at various levels. The category designates situations in which the Institute's approval procedures are unable directly to control the learning environment. These include such activities as school experience, work placements, certain approved work undertaken abroad, and professional requirements in fulfilment of an academic programme. In such cases a Foundation Degree may include pass/fail module(s):
- i where a vocational or professional element exists which includes competency based assessments specified by a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body
 - ii Professional Pass/Fail modules will be disregarded in calculating any weighted average required under these regulations.

6.6 Mitigation

- a) Mitigation is a process designed to assist students who have encountered unforeseen circumstances which have prevented them from submitting an item of assessed work for the published deadline; or from attending an examination; or from performing to their usual standard; and to bring these unforeseen circumstances to the Institute's attention. The process is designed to maintain student engagement in assessment.
- b) Mitigation is not the correct process to follow if a student has a chronic long term disability or long term medical condition (unless it has suddenly deteriorated). In such instances assessment adjustments and support should be discussed with Learner Services Department who will refer the student to the Disabilities and Dyslexia Service through which adjustments may be put in place throughout the year.
- c) Mitigation is categorised into 3 criteria; namely: absence with good cause; non-standard extension; and impaired performance.

6.7 Absence with Good Cause and Non Standard Extension

- a) A student who is unable to attend a scheduled written examination/ assessment, or submit a piece of assessed work by the published summative date, may apply, for 'Absence with Good Cause' or a 'Non Standard Extension', provided that the application is formally made no later than **7 working days** after the date of the examination; or **7 working days** after the date on which submission of the assessment material was due.
- b) Where an application is made within the permitted timescale, the Mitigating Circumstances Committee must determine whether the application constitutes 'good cause' and report accordingly to the relevant Module Board of Examiners.
- c) It is not possible to give definitive examples of what a Mitigating Circumstances Committee will consider reasonable cases of 'Good Cause' which relate to unforeseen or exceptional circumstances affecting a student's ability to study. Examples may include serious illness; incapacity (which must only be considered in extreme cases such as emotional stress resulting from bereavement, being a victim of crime). Difficulties in travel do not constitute good cause unless exceptional circumstances exist, such as adverse weather conditions affecting travel. Students are expected in all circumstances to attempt alternative forms of transport.
- d) All applications must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence. The Mitigating Circumstances Committee must have regard to the extent to which the evidence submitted confirms the student's claim against the circumstances. Other than in exceptional circumstances no claim based upon medical circumstances must be accepted in the absence of evidence from a medical practitioner. Such evidence should be rejected where it is not evident that the medical practitioner witnessed first-hand the medical circumstances claimed.
- e) Where the Mitigating Circumstances Committee determines that good cause has been established, the Committee will recommend to the Module Board of Examiners that:
 - i in the case of a written examination, the student must be awarded a 'Fresh Attempt' at the examination. A 'Fresh attempt' means the student is offered a new first attempt, and in the case of a re-assessment, that the student is offered a new re-assessment;
 - or*
 - ii in the case of a piece of assessed work, the student will be awarded an extension, subject to a new deadline being set by the Mitigating Circumstances Committee .
- f) Where a student is offered a fresh attempt s/he must be informed in writing of the offer and the mark achieved in the module, notwithstanding the mitigating circumstances, and must be permitted to decline the offer, in writing, within five working days of notification.
- g) Where the student declines the offer the mark for the original attempt must stand and no further action must be taken.
- h) Where the student does not decline the offer within the time limit the mark for the original attempt must become void irrespective of any mark subsequently achieved by the student.

6.8 Impaired Performance

- a) A student who has attempted their examination, or submitted their assessment to the published deadline but who believes that their performance has been significantly impaired by mitigating circumstances, may apply for 'impaired performance with good cause'.

- b) A student application for impaired performance must be made no later than 7 working days after the date of the examination; or 7 working days after the date on which submission of the assessment material was submitted.
- c) Where an application is made within the permitted timescale, the Mitigating Circumstances Committee must determine whether the application constitutes 'good cause' and report accordingly to the relevant Module Board of Examiners.
- d) Where the Mitigating Circumstances Committee determines that good cause has been established, the Committee will recommend to the Module Board of Examiners that:
 - i in the case of any assessment, the student must be awarded a 'Fresh Attempt' at the examination. A 'Fresh attempt' means the student is offered a new first attempt, and in the case of a reassessment, that the student is offered a new reassessment;
 - or*
 - ii the matter is referred in exceptional mitigating circumstances to the relevant Programme Board of Examiners with the recommendation that the circumstances be taken into account by that Board when determining the final award of the student's Foundation Degree.
- e) Where a student is offered a fresh attempt s/he shall be informed in writing of the offer and the mark achieved in the module, notwithstanding the mitigating circumstances, and should be permitted to decline the offer, in writing, within five working days of notification. Where the student declines the offer the mark for the original attempt shall stand and no further action shall be taken. Where the student does not decline the offer within the time limit the mark for the original attempt shall become void irrespective of any mark subsequently achieved by the student.

6.9 Late Applications

- a) Where a student makes an application after the deadline, the Mitigating Circumstances committee must decide whether the application will be considered by having regard to:
 - i the reasons given by the student for the lateness of the application and the evidence to support this;
 - ii the risk of the student gaining, or being perceived to be gaining, an advantage through the late application.
- b) Where the Mitigating Circumstances Committee determines that an application shall be considered and is satisfied, by reference to the published criteria of good cause, that it should be approved.

7. Academic and professional behaviour

7.1 Exclusion from assessment and termination of programme

- a) A student who has not satisfied the attendance requirements which are part of an approved programme or module specification, or the deadlines for submission of assessed work as published by the Institute, may be:
- i excluded from the assessments for the module, or
 - ii have his/her Foundation Degree terminated.
- b) Exclusion and termination shall both be noted at the Programme Board of Examiners.

7.2 Professional Misconduct

- a) Professional misconduct means any behaviour that falls below the standards of behaviour that are expected of students whilst enrolled on a particular Foundation Degree and which normally relate to preparation for professional registration and demonstration of professional suitability (with a professional, regulatory or statutory body).
- b) Professional misconduct includes any actions taken by the student during the course of their study on any of the Institute's Group; or on any placement/ work based activity linked to the Foundation Degree; or any conduct outside of the Institute's campuses including the student's social life, that may call into question the student's professional suitability or/and as such would bring the reputation of the Institute and/or Foundation Degree into disrepute.
- c) The procedure for dealing with allegations of professional misconduct relating to unfair means will be managed through the Institute's Code of Practice Plagiarism, Cheating and Unfair Means. All other allegations of professional misconduct will be managed via the Student Disciplinary Policy. In both instances the Institute is empowered to terminate a student's Foundation Degree.

8 Boards of Examiners

- a) The Institute requires two levels of boards of examiners, both of which have separate and distinct responsibilities:
- Module boards verify module marks awarded to candidates for summative assessment tasks
 - Programme boards verify progression between programme stages, to awards, and where applicable the classification of awards
- b) Under no circumstances may module and programme boards alter any decision made by the other. Neither may impose a penalty for plagiarism or other unfair means. A programme board, acting on information not available to module boards, may invite the chair of a module board to consider whether the marks verified for a specified module(s) were appropriate.

8.1 Chairs of Boards of Examiners

- a) The Academic Registrar will appoint chairs of module and programme boards. A list of chairs **should** be sent to the Secretary of the Progression, Quality and Standards Committee before the assessment period begins.

- b) Chairs **should** be appointed for a period of three years, a period which may be renewed. Each chair must attend the Institute briefing session provided by HE Quality Department before their first board, and should receive annual updates provided by the Institute unless otherwise directed by Progression, Quality and Standards Committee.

8.2 Module Boards

- a) A module board **must** comprise:
- The chair appointed in accordance with para.9.1
 - The relevant external examiner(s)
 - The relevant internal examiners
 - A secretary who must not be the same person as the chair
- b) A module board will be deemed quorate only where the chair and at least 50% of the internal examiners are present. Any decisions made by an inquorate board remain provisional until confirmed by a board which is quorate. Where the external examiner is unable to attend the board may proceed but the Academic Registrar (or nominated person) **must** be informed.
- c) Where an external examiner is unable to attend s/he must be provided with the opportunity to provide relevant comments by another means (e.g. e-mail, telephone, video conferencing).

8.3 Unfair Means

- a) The module board **must** be informed of all relevant unfair means cases, including those resolved and the penalty imposed, whether via a Plagiarism Caution or by an Adjudication Panel in accordance with the Regulations on the Use of Unfair Means, and cases ongoing. Where the board is informed of a penalty imposed in accordance with the Regulations the board **must** apply that penalty to the module in question and confirm the mark. Under no circumstances is a module board permitted to change the decision specified in the Caution or specified by the Adjudication Panel. Where a case is ongoing the module board **must** defer decision for the candidate(s) in question

8.4 Confirmation of marks

- a) Agreement of the marks awarded, and therefore resolution of any disagreement between examiners, **should** be achieved before the module board sits. The board **should** therefore be able to focus on confirming the marks awarded taking into account and confirming any recommendations of the Mitigating Circumstance Committee and any penalties for unfair means. In the event that a disagreement has not been resolved, the chair is the final arbiter of the mark to be awarded following consultation with members of the board, including the external examiner(s).
- b) In confirming the marks awarded the board's decision must be informed by the relevant module results data, which includes comparing the current range of marks with those in previous years and on other modules at the same level. Boards **must** consider any anomalies which become apparent and take steps to address any unfairness, including re-scaling marks where appropriate.
- c) The board **must** ensure that for all candidates, members are clear whether it is a first attempt or reassessment which is being considered, and therefore ensure that for modules passed by reassessment, that the component mark is capped at the pass mark.

8.5 Programme Boards

- a) A programme board **must** comprise:
 - The chair
 - The relevant external examiner(s)
 - The relevant programme leader
 - At least 50% of the internal examiners responsible for modules from the programme
 - A secretary who **must** not be the same person as the chair
- b) Where the external examiner is unable to attend the board may proceed but the Academic Registrar must be informed.

8.6 Role of the programme board

- a) Programme boards are responsible for determining the progression of candidates between the stages of a programme and to an award including, where applicable, determining the classification of the award. Under no circumstances is a programme board permitted to change the marks of a module. A programme board, acting on information not available to module boards, may invite the chair of a module board to consider whether the marks verified for a specified module(s) were appropriate.

8.7 Unfair Means

- a) The programme board must be informed of all cases where a penalty has been imposed by an Unfair Means Adjudication Panel.

8.8 Progression

- a) A student automatically progresses to the next stage of their programme if they satisfy the requirements of the current stage in full. Students may not study modules from a higher stage until progression has been awarded at an assessment board.
- b) Part time students are able to study modules from subsequent stages if at least 60 credits from current stage have been considered by a module board.
- c) Progression boards make a formal progression decision for all students. This includes the provision to:
 - i Confirm compensation in up to 20 credits at each stage of the programme. In such cases, credits will be awarded to the compensated module.
 - ii Permit a student to trail a failed module to the next stage
 - iii Defer the decision to a later board
 - iv Confer target awards or contained awards.
 - v Withdraw a student from their programme of study, if they have exhausted all opportunities to retrieve failure
- d) Compensation is automatic and awarded at the earliest opportunity up to a maximum of 20 credits in any stage of a programme subject to the following conditions:
 - i Compensation can only be applied when a progression board is considering all the modules in a stage
 - ii Compensation can only be awarded if the overall stage average is 40% or above
 - iii Compensation must not be awarded if there has been no attempt at any assessment attached to the module at either first or second attempt
 - iv Modules deemed as non-compensatable at approval are ineligible for compensation

v Modules failed due to academic misconduct are not compensatable

e) Progression and Award Boards have no discretion outside of the regulations. Permission for discretion outside of the regulations can only be given by PQSC. The following is a list of permitted decisions:

Decision	Description
Proceed	A student has been awarded 120 credits at the current stage of study and may proceed to the next stage.
Proceed with Compensation	A student is able to proceed to the next stage. Student must have achieved 100 credits and a stage average of 40% or above.
Reassess	A student has not satisfied the progression criteria at the first point of consideration but is offered the opportunity to do so through reassessment.
Defer	A student has not satisfied the progression criteria due to mitigating circumstances. Consideration of the student is formally deferred to the next meeting of the Assessment Board.
Proceed Trailing	A student has passed a minimum of 100 credits at the current stage and has been offered the chance to proceed to the next stage trailing up to 20 credits to be attempted in full during the next stage.
Progress Under Provision	At the second point of consideration, a student who has not satisfied the progression criteria, due to approved mitigation, or has been awarded reassessment by the Assessment Board, may progress to the next stage of the programme. This could potentially be all 120 credits, individual circumstances need to be considered. The student progression to the next stage of the programme is subject to the provision that the criteria for the current stage is complete within 8 weeks of the next academic year. If this is not complete then progression is rolled back and suspended.
Confer Intended Award	A student has satisfied all requirements of the intended award as detailed in the Programme Specification and the intended award is made.
Confer Contained Award	Following all opportunities for reassessment, if the student has not met the requirements for the intended award, but has met the requirements for a contained award the contained award will be conferred.
Cannot Proceed (Restudy)	<p>A student who has not satisfied the progression criteria for the current stage of the programme at the second point of consideration may remain on the programme to retrieve failure through restudy in a subsequent academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the student has passed 60-90 credits they are offered restudy of the failed credits automatically; • If the student has passed less than 60 credits the progression board may offer restudy of the failed modules. The following criteria should be considered at the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The profile of marks and any evidence of improvement; ii. The academic standing of the student with regards to submission; iii. The candidates potential to succeed; iv. Any mitigating circumstances. <p>Restudy can only be offered once in the lifetime of the programme.</p>
Withdrawal from	A student has failed to meet the requirements to continue on their

Study	programme of study, and is formally withdrawn by the Progression Board.
Decision Deferred	A progression decision cannot be made. This may be because outcomes of other processes are pending. It may also be because there are errors in, or absence of, information.
Delegate Decision to Chairs Action	A progression decision cannot be made. Subject to approval by External Examiner, the Progression Award Board agrees to delegate its responsibility in the relevant matter to the Chair

8.9 Award

- a) Stage average marks are rounded to the nearest integer. For example: .5 is rounded up; .4 is rounded down. Awards for Foundation Degrees are based on stage average for the final stage of the award. It is the responsibility of the award board to offer the highest classification from the list below.
 - i If the final stage average is equal or more than 40% then a Foundation Degree Pass is awarded;
 - ii If the final stage average is equal to 60% or more the award will be a Foundation Degree with Merit;
 - iii If the final stage average is equal to 70% or more the award will be a Foundation Degree with Distinction.

- b) For the awards of Merit and Distinction a borderline rule applies. If the overall average mark is within 2% or less of the boundary for the award, the Board of Examiners will award the higher award if more than 50% of the credits at level 5 are in the higher classification.

9 External Examiners

- a) The Institute must appoint one or more external examiner(s) to carry out the role(s) and responsibilities defined for all provision that leads to a Foundation Degree or contained award
- b) The Institute must ensure it maintains accurate, complete and up to date information about External Examiners including their name, position, institution and period of tenure
- c) The Institute must make External Examiners annual reports available in full to students, with the sole exception of any confidential report made directly, and separately, to the Principal and/or Chief Executive of the Institute. The External Examiners name, designation and institution must also be published in relevant student handbooks
- d) The Institute must provide a considered and timely response to any confidential report received, outlining any actions it will be taking as a result

9.1 Responsibilities

- a) The general responsibilities of an External Examiner are to:
 - i Provide the Institute with impartial and independent advice, as well as informative comments on the standards of the Institute's Foundation Degrees and on student achievement in relation to those standards

- ii Ensure equity and fairness in the decisions reached in respect of each student being assessed and that the standards of the Institute's Foundation Degrees are maintained
 - iii Report to the Institute on aspects of the quality of the assessment process, the standards set, and the threshold and typical standards of achievement and to advise the Module Board of Examiners on the marks to be awarded
 - iv Provide informative comments and recommendations on observed evidence of good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment observed by the external examiner
 - v Meet with students and contribute to opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to them
 - vi At the Programme Board of Examiners ensure that academic regulations are fairly and consistently implemented
 - vii Conform to the requirements and criteria specified in these regulations and the Institute's Code of Practice External Examining.
- b) The specific responsibilities of an Institute appointed External Examiner are to provide informative comments and recommendations upon whether or not:
- i The Institute is designing and setting its assessments for modules (examination papers and coursework briefs) in terms of standards and relevance to intended learning outcomes
 - ii Samples of marked work (or other evidence as appropriate, such as artefacts, design shows and presentations) meet the programme and module requirements, in addition to threshold and typical standards of achievement
 - iii The Institute is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its Foundation Degrees in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements
 - iv The Institute is measuring student achievement within the assessment process rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducting assessment in line with its policies and regulations
 - v Academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which the external examiner has experience
- c) Within the Module Board of Examiners and prior to the confirmation of mark lists, pass lists or similar documents, the External Examiner must formally endorse the outcomes of the assessment processes they have been appointed to scrutinise. This must be clearly recorded within the minutes of the Module Board of Examiners

9.2 Appointment

- a) All external examiner appointments shall be approved by the PQSC
- b) The Academic Registrar (or nominated person) must maintain a central register of appointments and periods of tenure to avoid inadvertent conflicts of interest and ensure the proper rotation of external examiners
- c) The terms of appointment require External Examiners to provide evidence of the following:
 - i knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
 - ii competence and experience in the fields covered by the Foundation Degree, or parts thereof

- iii relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined
- iv competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures
- v sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the subject to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers
- vi familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed
- vii fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that external examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements)
- viii at the time of appointment demonstrate permission to work within the UK
- ix meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
- x awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
- xi competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience

9.3 Conflicts of Interest

- a) The Institute must not appoint an External Examiner who is deemed to have a conflict of interest such as anyone in the following categories or circumstances:
 - i a member of a governing body or committee or current employee of the Institute or partner Institution
 - ii anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the Foundation Degree
 - iii anyone required to assess or moderate work of colleagues who are recruited as students to the Foundation Degree
 - iv anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the Foundation Degree or in employment
 - v be directly involved in the placement of students in the External Examiner's organisation, or in contact with placement students following the programme to which he or she is appointed
 - vi anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research or scholarship activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question
 - vii former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the External Examiner have completed their programme(s)
 - viii a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution
 - ix the succession of an External Examiner by a colleague from the Examiner's home department and institution
 - x the appointment of more than one External Examiner from the same department of the same institution

9.4 Period of Tenure

- a) The duration of an External Examiner's appointment will be for four years (covering three annual cycles of assessment) normally from September in the first year of the appointment until December following the final academic year of the appointment (e.g. September 2012 - December 2016) with an opportunity for an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity
- b) All External Examiner appointments will be reviewed annually in line with clause 10.1

- c) An External Examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment by the Institute
- d) External Examiners should normally hold no more than two External Examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time

9.5 Approval

- a) All External Examining appointments must be approved by the PQSC
- b) The Academic Registrar (or nominated person) must on approval by the PQSC and via the Institute's Human Resources Department, ensure that all External Examiners are informed about organisational procedures, practices, and academic regulations, and the crucial value of External Examiners' feedback to the Institute as part of the broader system of quality assurance and enhancement
- c) The Academic Registrar (or nominated person) must ensure that all newly appointed External Examiners receive a copy of the latest External Examiner report(s)
- d) As a minimum, the Institute must provide External Examiners with written information about, and access to:
 - i modules, programmes and/or award(s) to which each External Examiner is appointed
 - ii relevant Institute and programme regulations for its Foundation Degrees
 - iii the various responsibilities and powers assigned to their External Examiner role including the extent of their authority in a Board of Examiners
 - iv examining and assessment regulations and the Code of Practice for External Examiners and Code of Practice Assessment of Students
 - v information such as programme and module handbooks, and marking and classification criteria
 - vi learning, teaching and assessment strategies
 - vii information about relevant professional issues, such as fitness to practise, and any features that relate to the specific discipline
 - viii the processes through which their work contributes to the Institute's quality assurance processes
- e) The Institute must inform External Examiners, in writing at the beginning of their term of office, that they have a right to raise any matter of serious concern with the Principal and/or Chief Executive, if necessary by means of a separate confidential written report

9.6 External Examiner Induction

- a) All newly appointed External Examiners must receive a letter inviting them to attend the Institute's External Examiner Induction, for a generic induction to the role of External Examiner at the Institute

9.7 Submitting Reports

- a) External Examiners must submit an annual report, to the Academic Registrar within **20 working days** of the Programme Board being held
- b) External Examiners' annual reports must provide clear and informative feedback on those areas defined as part of the External Examiners responsibilities

In addition, External Examiners' reports must:

- i confirm that sufficient evidence was received to enable the role to be fulfilled (where evidence was insufficient, they give details)
- ii state whether issues raised in the previous report(s) have been, or are being, addressed to their satisfaction
- iii address any issues as specifically required by any relevant professional or regulatory body
- iv give an overview of their term of office (when concluded)

9.8 Responses to External Examiners

- a) The Institute must provide each External Examiner with a considered and timely response within **30 working days** to their comments and recommendations, outlining any actions they will be taking as a result or the reasons for not taking action

9.9 Termination of Appointment

- a) The appointment of an External Examiner may be terminated by the PQSC if the Committee judges that the responsibilities of the appointment have not been or cannot be fulfilled in the manner or to the standard which the Institute requires
- b) Reasons for termination may include:
 - i failure to provide reports (or complete reports) on the assessment process required by the Institute
 - ii inability to attend two successive boards
 - iii persistent refusal to work within the Institute's academic regulations
 - iv conduct which in the case of an employee of the Institute would be the subject of disciplinary action
 - v relocation of the External Examiner from the UK
- c) The Institute recognises that a change in the External Examiner's circumstances which brings about potential conflicts of interest might jeopardise objectivity. Where this cannot be resolved, normal practice would be for the External Examiner to resign. Only, as a last resort the Institute will terminate the appointment to protect the independence of its External Examining arrangements
- d) The power to terminate the appointment is not restricted to a particular time period, such as the end of the academic year, but the Institute must ensure that decisions are made on sound evidence of non-fulfilment and make such decisions in accordance with procedures set out in these regulations and relevant policies and Codes of Practice
- e) When circumstances arise which are considered as possible grounds for termination of an External Examiner's contract, the HE Academic Registrar (or nominated person) and HR Manager must be notified as soon as practicable
- f) The Academic Registrar (or nominated person) will write formally to the Examiner to inform him/her that the termination is being considered and to offer the opportunity for the Examiner to explain the circumstances and request that the termination is not effected
- g) The Chair of the PQSC will take the final decision regarding the termination; the External Examiner will be notified in writing of this decision within 5 working days of the Committee being held

9.10 Resignation of External Examiners

- a) Where an External Examiner wishes to resign before the end of their term, this should be done in writing to the Academic Registrar (or nominated person), HE Quality Department who will send a letter confirming termination of employment

10 Results and transcripts

10.1 Notifications of Results and Transcripts

- a) It is the responsibility of students to find out their results, however the Student Handbook must explain to students how and where the results of their assessments will be published and how to object to the publication of their results
- b) Provisional marks for first semester assessments should be published at the start of the second semester (normally February), as required by the assessment calendar
- c) It must be made clear to students that the marks are provisional and are subject to ratification by the Board of Examiners at the end of semester two (normally June)
- d) Where students (such as those studying part time) are eligible for progression between levels at a mid-year point (such as between semester one and two) a Programme Board of Examiners must be held and the progression ratified by the board before a student is permitted to proceed onto modules at the next level
- e) No final marks or the decisions relating to a student's award and progression that are held on the Institute's Board of Examiner records may be released or published until approved by the Regulations, Performance and Progression Committee
- f) No results must be disclosed before the formal date of publication
- g) Unless a student wishes otherwise, results should be published on relevant notice boards and/or published electronically on a protected site
- h) Results must not be released to students by telephone
- i) Results published must identify students by their student number and not by name
- j) On completion of a stage and academic year, the student must be issued with a letter of results which must record all modules taken (including withdrawals), all marks and credits awarded (including fails) and marks obtained
- k) On completion of the Foundation Degree and/or period of enrolment, the student must be issued with a transcript of results which must record all modules taken (including withdrawals), all marks and credits awarded (including fails), marks obtained and any credit obtained or contained award
- l) No student is entitled to any assessment results, results letter, transcript, certificate and award unless all fees for tuition, library loans, accommodation and any other sums of money have been paid and/or any rightful property of the Institute has been returned in its original condition (at the point it was taken or loaned)

- m) Unfair means penalties must not be included on a result letter and/or transcript

10.2 Posthumous Awards

- a) The Board of Examiners, with the recommendation of the Associate Principal and support of the External Examiner, may recommend to the Progression, Quality and Standards Committee the award of a Posthumous Foundation Degree to a deceased student, for conferral at a graduation ceremony
- b) In the interests of courtesy and sensitivity a Posthumous Award must only be made with the knowledge and consent of the next of kin and/or immediate family members
- c) For the award of a Posthumous Foundation Degree the student must have:
- i Good academic standing
 - ii Assessment results (whilst studying at the Institute) where it is reasonable to conclude that the student would have successfully completed the programme and qualified for the award in question
 - iii Completed 200 credits of the requirements for the Foundation Degree
- d) There should be no known evidence to suggest that the conferral of an award will cause offence or undue stress to the relatives of the deceased, or others within the Institute or community
- e) In cases where it is determined the student did not meet the above requirements for a Foundation Degree, a Posthumous Certificate may be awarded, if appropriate. A Posthumous Certificate may be awarded if the student has made significant progress toward the attainment of a Foundation Degree
- f) A Posthumous Foundation Degree or certificate must be unclassified and, in all other respects, ungraded
- g) A Posthumous Award must be awarded in the name of the deceased student and may be announced at the next relevant graduation ceremony, if the next of kin so desires. The award certificate may be presented to the student's next of kin as part of a private meeting by the Associate Principal or alternative, or sent by post as soon as possible, if this is the wish of the next of kin
- h) The student's certificate will be printed with the words "Awarded Posthumously". On the transcript, it will be noted that the award is "Posthumous"
- i) In the event that it is not permitted by a professional body to award a Posthumous Foundation Degree or contained award for which the student was enrolled, the Board of Examiners may consider an alternative award

10.3 Aegrotat Award

- a) Should a student be prevented by illness or other event from attempting/completing a Foundation Degree, the Board of Examiners, with the recommendation of the Associate Principal and support of the External Examiner, may recommend to the Progression, Quality and Standards Committee an Aegrotat Foundation Degree

- b) There must be little doubt that the student will be unable, due to illness or other event, to return to complete his/her studies at a later date
- c) For the award of a Aegrotat Foundation Degree the student must have:
 - i Good academic standing
 - ii Assessment results (whilst studying at the Institute) where it is reasonable to conclude that the student would have successfully completed the programme and qualified for the award in question
 - iii Completed 200 credits of the requirements for the Foundation Degree
- d) In cases where it is determined the student did not meet the above requirements for a Foundation Degree, an Aegrotat Certificate may be awarded, if appropriate. An Aegrotat Certificate may be awarded if the student has made significant progress toward the attainment of a Foundation Degree
- e) An Aegrotat Foundation Degree or certificate must be unclassified and, in all other respects, ungraded
- f) The student's certificate will be printed with the words "An Aegrotat Award". On the transcript, it will be noted that the award is "Aegrotat"
- g) In the event that it is not permitted by a professional body to award a Aegrotat Foundation Degree or contained award for which the student was enrolled, the Board of Examiners may consider an alternative award
- h) The student must indicate that he/she is willing to accept an Aegrotat award. Where a student is unwilling to accept an Aegrotat award, he/she shall be permitted to complete the examinations or assessments in question by an approved subsequent date

10.4 Conferral at a Graduation Ceremony

- a) In those cases where a relative has agreed to accept the award on behalf of a deceased graduand, the relative receiving the award on their behalf should be encouraged to sit with other graduands participating in the ceremony, but given the option of sitting with relatives and friends if they would prefer
- b) If the relative receiving the award elects to sit with the graduands, they should also be given the option of wearing a black academic gown (but not a hood and trencher/ mortarboard or other applicable head wear)
- c) When the Posthumous Award is presented to the graduation ceremony, the presenting officer will wait for the previous graduand to leave the platform and will then read: "[Graduands full name] who has completed all aspects of a Foundation Degree [name of the degree] but has sadly passed away before this conferral ceremony. To receive this award today, I present [name of family member and their relationship to the deceased]"

(Note: the wording of this part may be amended subject to the award, and if after consultation with the family of the graduand, it is felt that more appropriate wording in relation to the graduand should be included)

- d) As a memorial gift the Institute will present, to the relatives of the deceased graduand a framed certificate of the award made

10.5 Certification Wording

- a) The Institute's Foundation Degrees will be conferred in a named subject
- b) A Certificate of Higher Education will not be conferred in a named subject
- c) A Posthumous Award must comply with clause 10.2c
- d) An Aegrotat Award must comply with clause 10.3c

11 Academic Appeals and Complaints

- a) An academic appeal is defined as a request for the review of a decision of an academic body charged with decisions on student progression, assessment and awards, such as a Board of Examiners
- b) In the event of a set of circumstances legitimately giving rise to grounds for both appeal and complaint the Chair of Progression, Quality and Standards Committee should determine in consultation with the appellant/complainant the manner in which the two matters shall be resolved, and the appropriate timescale. All parties shall ensure that the requirements of the respective regulations are fully adhered to
- c) As a result of making an appeal in good faith, a student has the right to appeal against a decision of the Module or Programme Board of Examiners without fear of disadvantage or recrimination
- d) The regulations can (save in exceptional circumstances) only be applied by the student (appellant) themselves and not by someone acting on their behalf
- e) At all the stages of the appeals process, the appellant has a right to be accompanied to any meeting called by the Institute as part of the appeals process by a friend, who may not (save in exceptional circumstances) be a lawyer acting in a professional capacity. The friend may not speak on behalf of or otherwise represent the interests of the individual concerned unless invited to do so by the Institute
- f) Where any of the Institute's Foundation Degrees or contained awards are conferred at a graduation ceremony, either in person or in absentia, the student shall be deemed to have accepted that qualification and all marks and classifications which constitute it. No appeal shall thereafter be considered

11.1 Grounds for an Academic Appeal

- a) The Institute permits 3 grounds for academic appeals:
 - i) that, at the time of the assessment, there existed circumstances which adversely affected the appellant's performance which, for the most exceptional reasons, the appellant was unable to communicate to the Board of Examiners before it reached its decision. In making such a case, the appellant must provide valid documentary evidence where appropriate. Other than in exceptional cases, retrospective medical certification will not be accepted as valid

- ii that there has been an administrative error or procedural irregularity during the conduct of the relevant assessment of such a significant nature as to have materially affected the approved grade or mark awarded
 - iii that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the recommendation or decision was influenced by prejudice or bias on the part of one or more of the examiners
- b) Posting of a results letter or transcript to an appellant's address that is listed as current but the appellant claims is a previous address, does not constitute grounds for any claim within the appeals process. It is the responsibility of the student (appellant) to ensure that his/her current addresses are up to date via the student records department
 - c) If an enrolled student wishes to raise an appeal, the Institute's Code of Practice for Academic Appeals (Higher Education, Foundation Degrees) must be followed.

11.2 Complaints

- a) If an enrolled student wishes to raise a concern or make complaint, the Institute's regulations for Concerns and Complaints must be followed.
- b) If an applicant (an individual who is not enrolled with the Institute) wishes to make an appeal against an academic decision and unsuccessful outcome of an application (for admission to a Foundation Degree), or to make a complaint regarding the way their application (for admission) was processed, the Institute Code of Practice Admissions Appeals and Complaints (Higher Education) must be followed.

11.3 Legitimate Incidental Expenses

- a) In the event of an appeal being upheld, the appellant may be entitled to the payment of legitimate and reasonable incidental expenses necessarily incurred in relation to the appeal, which may include the cost of travel to the appeal hearing and overnight accommodation, but must not include the cost of producing or copying evidence relevant to the appeal, or the obtaining of any advice or instruction relating to the appeal

The Chair of the Appeals Committee should determine which expenses shall be paid following a successful appeal, subject to any further guidance or instruction which may be issued by the Human Resources Department