

TO: Chairs of BoS, Chairs of GSB, Chairs of BoE (PGT programmes)

CC: Departmental Administrators, Trevor Sheldon, Registry Services, Academic Support Office, Chair of SCA

13 July 2011

An amendment and some clarifications to the Taught Postgraduate Modular Scheme Assessment Rules for 2011/12

Following some queries regarding the assessment rules for PGT programmes that will come into operation from October, we wanted to clarify a few points. The first point has resulted in a change to the Rules of Assessment document (link below). If you have already used the text in your handbooks for next year, please accept our apologies for this late change.

<http://www.york.ac.uk/media/staffhome/learningandteaching/documents/programmedevelopment/assessment%20rules%20-%20PGT%20-%20FINAL.pdf> (also see point 7 below)

1. Change to Rules of Assessment E8, regarding reassessment of marginal fails (40-49)

Old wording: Reassessment in modules for which compensatable marks have already been achieved is simply an opportunity (not a requirement) for students whilst the programme is running.

This wording should have been removed from the rules when details within the compensation criteria were changed several years ago, following consultation with departments. The advice and guidance that we have given to departments in the formal CDT feedback and informally is, however, correct and so this should require no change in procedure.

To clarify the situation with regard to the timing of reassessments, compensation can only be applied at the end of the taught element of a Masters programme. At this point it will be possible to make decisions about the reassessments students must undertake and any choices they may have (see (3) below). Boards of Studies/Graduate School Boards can choose to offer an earlier reassessment point as soon as possible after failure of the first assessment for students who have achieved an outright fail (below 40) (because you know they will have to be reassessed whatever their other marks). However, where this is available it will be necessary to have an additional reassessment point at the end of the taught modules for students who achieved potentially compensatable fail marks (40-49) as it would not be clear whether they would need to be reassessed until all the marks are collated and the compensation criteria are applied. Fail marks of 40-49 cannot be reassessed prior to the application of the compensation criteria.

Departments offering earlier reassessment opportunities for students with outright fails also need to consider whether these students might be disadvantaged if they are preparing/undertaking a reassessment whilst other modules are in progress. The number of reassessments being undertaken by individuals would also need to be closely monitored, and recorded, to ensure the results were entered correctly in SITS and that students are aware of the opportunities still available to them and do not undertake more than the permitted reassessment opportunities .

See the Framework for Programme Design D.6-D.9 and Appendix II for more information.

<http://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/programme-development/programmes/programme-design/>

2. Reassessment opportunities

To clarify with regard to reassessment opportunities for non-ISM modules in a Masters degree programme, students are entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 40 credits-worth of failed modules *provided that they have failed no more than 40 credits (i.e. have no more than 40 credits with marks below 50)*.

See E.2 in the Rules of Assessment, and similarly E.4 and E.5 in relation to Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates.

3. Choosing to be reassessed in 40-49 marks (if a student cannot progress by compensation)

The PGT rules do not currently make clear that if a student *cannot progress following the application of the compensation rules* then they may choose to be reassessed in modules for which they have 40-49 marks.

For example,

Module 1	20 credits	30 (F)
Module 2	20 credits	41 (F)
Module 3	20 credits	50 (P)
Module 4	20 credits	50 (P)
Module 5	20 credits	50 (P)
Module 6	20 credits	50 (P)

Mean = 45

When the compensation rules are applied (at the end of the taught modules) this student cannot progress as they have an outright fail (Module 1) and their mean is below 50. They must be reassessed in Module 1. They may also choose to be reassessed in Module 2. For example, if they were concerned that they would not get their Module 1 mark high enough to raise the mean over 50.

We have therefore replaced the out of date E8 with the following:

New wording for E8: If, following the application of the compensation rules, a student has not met the overall progression or award requirements then they may be reassessed in modules for which potentially compensatable* marks have already been achieved. This will simply be an opportunity (not a requirement).

*By potentially compensatable marks we mean marks between 40-49, which could be compensated if, following reassessment, a student's profile of marks means the compensation criteria could be applied.

This same rule is in the undergraduate assessment rules. The decision about whether to be reassessed in these modules is the student's. However, supervisors should offer advice on the possible scenarios and implications.

4. 'Staged' programmes

Where a staged approach is taken to a programme (i.e., students register for a Certificate before progressing to a Diploma etc), the assessment rules are cumulative. So, for example, if a student undertakes 20 credits of reassessment during the 60 credits the Certificate stage, they will only have 20 credits of reassessment available to them during the 60 credits of the Diploma stage. This is to ensure that all students who are awarded a Diploma have been subject to the same rules.

5. No capping rule

A reminder that under the new rules taught modules will *not* be capped after reassessment. Capping is used in the undergraduate programme to prevent leapfrogging at degree classification. As there is no degree classification (or equivalent) in Masters programmes this is not an issue. Distinctions and Merits can only be achieved using marks from a student's first attempt.

The postgraduate academic transcript will make it clear where a mark has been achieved at reassessment.

6. Early adopters of the rules

If your department has already moved to the new modular scheme assessment rules (fully or partially), please double-check that the rules for 2011/12 are fully in line with the Rules of Assessment document (link above). In particular, the award of Merits will be new for all from 2011/12. We are also aware that a number of early adopters did not introduce the rule that there is no capping of reassessed marks (taught modules).

7. Guide to Assessment

The rules of assessment document will be incorporated into the Guide to Assessment Standards Marking and Feedback from 2011/12, which is in the process of being updated and will be available at

<http://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/guide/>

You may find it helpful to link to the Guide in your handbooks and other documentation, and also to add a note that if there is any conflict between the rules as set out in the handbook and those in the Guide, then the Guide will prevail.

8. Training on the use of SITS for the assessment rules

In November, the Student Systems Development Team will be running some courses on using SITS to process marks under the new rules. The courses can be booked at the link below. Early booking is advised to get your preferred date.

http://www.york.ac.uk/univ/mis/cfm/crsbkg/crsbkg_list.cfm

Queries: If you have any queries about the above or the rules generally, please contact your QA Team contact in the Academic Support Office, in the first instance.