



**STUDENT  
REGULATIONS  
FRAMEWORK  
2025-26**



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# 1. MODULES AND CREDIT

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

## 1.1 Modules

1. All taught programmes leading to named awards involve a set of modules which, in the context of the award, have a specific status. Each module is defined by way of a standardised module descriptor conforming to the module template set out in the Quality Assurance Framework.
2. University programmes consist primarily of credit rated modules. Each credit represents a notional ten hours of study. Modules may be completed within one term or semester, or span across two consecutive terms or semesters, but must normally be completed within an academic session.
3. **Compulsory** modules are those which must be taken for a student to be eligible for the named award for which they are registered. **Optional** modules are those modules from amongst which a student chooses, in order to accumulate the requisite number of credits to ensure eligibility for the award for which they are registered.
4. **Immersive** modules are normally delivered at the onset of a student's programme in order to integrate them successfully into university life and enhance retention.

## **1.2 Individual Programmes of Study**

1. A programme of study is the set of modules that comprises a student's individual academic experience leading to a particular named award within a specific award framework.
2. The programme specification details the modules available on any programme of study.
3. Each student must be normally registered for one programme of study (named award) only. However, they may apply to transfer from one programme to another subject to availability and their meeting the required criteria (see Section 2 of this [Framework](#)).

## **1.3 Departments and Programmes**

Modules are provided by Academic Departments, groups of staff with cognate academic interests, led by an Academic Director, but they may contribute to a number of different Programmes. A Programme comprises defined modules provided by one or more Academic Departments. Each Programme, or agreed group of Programmes, has a designated Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader with whom students may discuss any issues related to their Programme as a whole. Decisions about students' performance in a module, including confirmation of marks, are made at the Module Assessment Board owning the module (as indicated by the module code) regardless of the programmes it contributes to.

## **1.4 Stages and Levels**

1. Each stage of an undergraduate degree programme consists of 120 credits of modules taken at an appropriate level. Programmes of 240 credits therefore consist of two stages (Stages 1 & 2); and programmes of 360 credits, such as the BA/BSc Honours degrees (except for top-up degrees), consist of three

stages (Stages 1, 2 & 3). For most full-time students, there is a clear relation between years of study and stages and an even distribution of modules across the year of study. However, for part-time students, a stage may require two or more years of study of modules.

2. A level is an indicator of the relative demand, complexity and depth of learning associated with a module or with a stage of a programme (see the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, available at [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)). The University offers the following levels of taught study: Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 and Level 7. Levels 4 to 6 are associated with undergraduate provision, and Level 7 is associated with postgraduate provision. An Integrated Master's programme may include modules at both Level 6 and Level 7 in stage 3 of the programme.
3. At Level 4 (Stage 1), 120 credits of modules are taken by students. Level 4 modules receive a mark and credits, but only contribute to the final degree classification for Foundation Degrees. At Level 5 (Stage 2), students take 120 credits of modules. Level 5 modules receive a mark and credits and contribute to the final Foundation Degree or Honours Degree classification (except for top-up degrees). At Level 6 (Stage 3), 120 credits of modules are taken for Honours Degrees. For Integrated Master's programmes, Level 6 and Level 7 credits may be taken at Stage 3, as detailed in the Programme Specification.
4. Integrated Master's programmes consist of four stages (at Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7) with a total credit value of 480 credits and a minimum of 120 credits at Level 7 at Stage 4. Students must obtain 120 credits at Stage 3 at Level 6 or above before progressing to Level 7 (Stage 4).
5. Top-up (or direct entry) degrees consist of 120 credits at Level 6 (Stage 3) and are explicitly validated as such, with direct entry to Level 6 (Stage 3) in all instances.
6. Foundation Degree programmes consist of two stages (at Levels 4 and 5) each of 120 credits.

7. Certificate of Higher Education (CerHE) programmes consist of 120 credits at Level 4.
8. Specific programmes can also include modules delivered at Level 3 (Stage 0), but only where this is explicitly set out in the relevant Programme Specification. This will not affect the application of the standard regulations for undergraduate provision to these programmes in their entirety.
9. Unless the Programme Specification states otherwise, every postgraduate taught programme is divided into two stages. The taught stage comprises modules to the value of 120 credits at Level 7; the dissertation stage comprises a single dissertation rated at 60 Level 7 credits. The Master's award comprises 180 credits of modules at Level 7 and includes the dissertation.
10. The requirements for the attainment of awards, including exit awards, are set out in Section 8 of this [Framework](#).

## **1.5 Mode of Study – Full Time and Part-Time**

1. All full-time undergraduate students (on Honours and Foundation Degrees) must take a minimum of 120 credits in each year, usually comprised of six 20-credit modules (or the equivalent) in each year, normally three in each semester or two in each term. Students on accelerated degrees may take up to 200 credits per year across two stages. Exceptionally, where a Progression and Award Board has permitted a student to progress whilst 'trailing' a module, a student may take up to 80 credits in one semester or 60 credits in one term.
2. Part-time undergraduate students are subject to the same conditions of entry as full-time students, and the same awards are open to them except the BEd Honours and accelerated degrees. They will normally complete a programme of study leading to a degree with Honours in 5-6 years or a Foundation Degree in 3 to 4 years, but they could take longer provided they continue to engage with their studies – see Section 8 of this [Framework](#). Part-time

students may not take more than 80 credits per year or 40 credits per semester. Regulations governing progression and retrieval of initial failure apply equally to full-time and part-time students.

3. In cases where the University reviews and revalidates a programme, modifies the regulatory framework and/or changes the menu of modules available, part-time students who extend, or return to their studies following interruption, may be required to change their registration in line with the new arrangements.
4. Students may apply to transfer from one mode to another on completion of assessment at the end of any semester/term. The transfer form is available on Antler and MyMarjon. Students should be aware of the financial implications of a change in mode of attendance and should seek advice from their Personal Development Tutor and Student Wellbeing and Support prior to requesting a change.

## **1.6 Undergraduate Honours**

1. For Undergraduate Honours awards, details of the modules to be studied are contained within the relevant Programme Specification and the relevant page of the Virtual Learning Environment.
2. At Stage 1, students take 120 credits at Level 4, of which a minimum of 80 credits should be in the Single Honours programme. These modules normally include those compulsory modules which are prerequisites for the taking of the programme at Levels 5 and 6.
3. In order to take modules at Level 5, full-time students must normally have accumulated 120 credits by successfully completing six Level 4 modules, including those that are the prerequisites for Level 5 and Level 6 modules in the programme concerned. Students take a minimum of 80 credits in the Honours programme at level 5. In order to take modules at Level 6, full-time students (except for top-up degree students) must normally have accumulated 240 credits by successfully completing six Level 4 and six Level 5 modules,

including those that are the prerequisites for Level 6 modules in the programme concerned. Students take all of their 120 credits in the Single Honours programme at level 6. Detailed regulations for progression are to be found in Section 5 of this [Framework](#).

4. Only Level 5 and Level 6 modules are considered in the classification of non-top-up Honours awards. In the case of top-up Honours awards, only Level 6 modules are considered.
5. Dissertations can be 20 or 40 credits.
6. In exceptional circumstances and subject to the approval of the Academic Registrar and Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader concerned, an appropriate single 20 credit module may be taken as an independent study module (ISM) at either Level 5 or Level 6.

## **1.7 Joint Honours programmes**

1. The title of a Joint Honours award defines a coherent programme of study, with modules from two single subjects and an approximate balance between the two subjects.
2. Students registered on Joint Honours programmes shall attempt at least 160 credits in total in each of the two subjects. The dissertation or project may be in either or both subjects.
3. For a Joint Honours award, the first named title in the award will be determined by the dissertation or project. Where the dissertation or project is in both subjects, the title 'A and B' will be in alphabetical order.



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## 2. REGISTERING AND MAKING CHANGES

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, to all research degree students, and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 2.1 Registration

1. Every student - whether full-time or part-time, and whether following a programme for a University award or not - must complete the University's registration procedures. This also applies to students at the University's partner institutions. Students who do not register cannot attend teaching or access any other elements of their programme, such as placements, and their results will not be presented to the relevant Progression and Award Board.
2. Plymouth Marjon University will not admit an applicant to a programme of study if the application contains false or incomplete information. Moreover, the Academic Registrar may exclude from the University any student whose application was based upon, or included, false or incomplete information. In the case of returning students, this includes the failure of the student to inform the University of the outcome of any previous student misconduct proceedings.
3. The Academic Registrar will terminate a student's registration on a programme under the following circumstances:
  - if a Progression and Award Board has excluded the student from the programme (Section 3 of this [Framework](#))
  - if a Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader has reported that the student is no longer engaged with the programme (Section 11 of this [Framework](#))

- if the University Finance Department reports that the student has failed to discharge any liability to the University, e.g. tuition fees (Section 11 of this [Framework](#))
  - if the Chair of an Academic or Student Misconduct Panel notifies a penalty of expulsion from the University (Section 14 and Section 15 of this [Framework](#))
  - if a Fitness to Practice Panel requires the termination of a student's registration on a programme (Section 10 of this [Framework](#))
4. Students who wish to change their programme of study must seek the prior advice of the Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader concerned and the approval of Student Wellbeing and Support as required on the Transfer Request Form (available on Antler or MyMarjon).
5. Any changes since registration must be notified, without delay, by either:
- completion of the appropriate form (in the case of changes to programme of study, mode of attendance or registration status)
  - via Antler or MyMarjon (in case of changes to personal details such as address and telephone numbers)
  - in writing (in the case of a change of name). The University will require evidence of the legal change to any name (i.e. marriage certificate or Change of Name by Deed Poll).

In case of difficulty or where further advice is needed, queries should be addressed to the Registry and Programme Support Office ([RPSO@marjon.ac.uk](mailto:RPSO@marjon.ac.uk)). **The University can accept no responsibility for any consequences if a student fails to meet these requirements.**

6. Plymouth Marjon University deems any additional information it intends to deliver to a student to have been received by that student if:
- It is published on the University's website, Canvas or any VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) whose existence has been notified to students.
  - It is sent by electronic mail to the student's University e-mail account, provided that five working days (or fifteen working days during vacations) shall elapse before receipt can be presumed. The student is responsible for ensuring that any e-mails sent to their University e-mail address are redirected to any personal e-mail address, and guidance can be provided.
  - The Module Leader gives it to students in person at the first lecture or point of contact at the commencement of the delivery of the module (note that it is the responsibility of individual students who, for any reason, were not present when that information was provided, to take whatever steps are necessary to acquire the information).
  - It is delivered by hand to a student in person, or to the latest address notified to the University as their local or home address, and the person delivering it has certified a copy of the document to that effect: or
  - It is sent by first class mail, or Recorded or Special Delivery, to the latest address notified to the University as their local or home address provided that five working days (or fifteen working days during vacations) shall elapse before receipt can be presumed.

Students should also make appropriate arrangements to collect any mail that has been sent to them by Recorded or Special Delivery.

In addition, please note that the University's definition of 'working days' is in accordance with the standard Government definition. A working day, therefore, is any day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or bank holiday.

7. Students on professionally-accredited programmes and programmes that involve regulated activities with children/vulnerable adults requiring clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Services, either before commencing their programme of study or during their programme, must inform the Registry and Programme Support Office, in writing, of any criminal conviction, caution, warning or reprimand received after they start their programme. Failure to do so may result in misconduct proceedings and may result in the student being immediately withdrawn from that programme of study.

## **2.2 Module Registration**

Students must ensure that they have been correctly registered onto relevant modules. Incorrect registration can have serious repercussions for examinations and other assessment and students who do not follow the correct procedures may not be able to submit work for modules for which they have failed to register. The University makes module registration information available to students in a variety of ways through its Virtual Learning Environment. Students must check this information and report any errors to the Registry and Programme Support Office ([RPSO@marjon.ac.uk](mailto:RPSO@marjon.ac.uk)) immediately. Module Leaders must also check the accuracy of module lists regularly and report inaccuracies promptly to the Registry and Programme Support Office. All modules will operate in accordance with their definitive module descriptor. All module choices must be in line with the provisions set out in Section 1.5 of this [Framework](#) with regard to modes of study.

## **2.3 Teaching Timetable**

Timetable information and seminar group allocations are posted on the University's Virtual Learning Environment. For each module, the timetable for lectures and seminars are shown. Students who have any issues with their timetable must contact the Timetable Unit immediately.

## **2.4 Changing Seminar/Practical Group**

The published module lists indicate the seminar or practical group that has been allocated to the student where this applies. The timetable shows where and when these activities take place. Allocations are made to facilitate agreed programme combinations, to produce even distributions between groups, and to share out the less popular timetable slots. If a student wishes to request a change, this must be initially discussed with the Module Leader. If a change is made, the Module Leader must inform the relevant office(s) so that students can be contacted in an emergency.

## **2.5 Changing Programme Registration**

It may be possible to transfer from one programme to another within three weeks of the course start date or before the start of the next Semester, subject to the nature of the programme. Any student who wishes to explore this option should discuss the situation in the first instance with the new Programme Leader and Student Wellbeing and Support as promptly as possible. Approval of a transfer is subject to places being available, to the suitability of entry qualifications, and to programme-specific regulations. For example, programmes leading to professional accreditation may require students to undertake and pass all modules regardless of any other academic credit they may have gained. Students who have failed one or more modules may apply to transfer but failed modules must be redeemed through successful re-assessment. If the change of programme is allowed, the University will notify the appropriate funding authorities. Applications should be made via the Transfer Request Form available on Antler and MyMarjon.

## **2.6 Internal Programme Transfers - Level 4**

1. Students wishing to change their degree programme during the first year should seek advice from their Personal Development Tutor, the new Programme Leader and/or Student Wellbeing and Support in the first instance. Approval is subject to places being available and the regulations for the relevant award framework and programme e.g. requirements for Disclosure and Barring Service checks.
2. In the case of applications from students in their first year, received within fifteen working days of the course start date, it may be possible for a programme change to take immediate effect. In such cases, the student will be registered for the modules appropriate to their new programme(s) as listed in the initial module registrations. This timeframe can be adjusted in specific circumstances, subject to the affected students being informed in advance.
3. Students wishing to apply for internal transfer should do so at the earliest opportunity following discussion with the Programme Leader and Student Wellbeing and Support.
4. A student who wishes to transfer programme, after the time limits specified, can either complete the current stage of their programme, or interrupt their studies and transfer at the start of the following academic year. They should seek advice from Student Wellbeing and Support before deciding. Any transfer will be subject to the conditions listed in Section 2.5 of this Framework above.

## **2.7 Internal Programme Transfers - Levels 5 and 6**

1. Students wishing to join, or change, programmes at Levels 5 and 6 should seek advice from their Personal Development Tutor, their Programme Leader and/or Student Wellbeing and Support in the first instance. Approval is subject to places being available and the regulations for the award framework and programme e.g. requirements for Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Applications should be made on the Transfer Request Form available on Antler and MyMarjon.

2. The transfer will only be permitted if the student has successfully completed the relevant stage(s) of their current programme. This includes modules that are prerequisites for entry to the next level in the programme to be taken. A directly equivalent programme of work completed successfully, or recognised prior learning (RP(E)L), may be acceptable instead of the published prerequisites for a module or for entry to a programme at Levels 5 and 6. The transfer request will be forwarded to the relevant Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader, to confirm authorisation so that the student record can be updated. Student Wellbeing and Support will be notified to discuss any implications with the student.
3. Mid-year transfers (end of Semester A/Term 1/2) will only be considered on an individual basis and will require support from the Programme Leaders and Student Wellbeing and Support.

## **2.8 Module Choices**

1. The online Module Choice process is made available to all students on programmes with optional modules each year so that they can select their modules for the following academic year. Programme Leaders or Programme Area Leaders will outline choices available to their students, where applicable, providing programme information to students. Students complete the online choices process, and their choices are then confirmed by the relevant Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader. The Registry and Programme Support Office reserves the right to allocate module choices to any student who has not completed the process so that resource and timetable planning can proceed.
2. It may be possible to change these allocations before the start of the next academic year through the Module Choice portal, but only if there are sufficient places available and the timetable permits. The Registry and



Programme Support Office will query any choices that are incompatible with undergraduate regulations and permissible combinations.

3. In the majority of cases, students are able to study the modules they have selected. However, if a module is not viable due to low enrolment numbers it may be withdrawn. If so, the appropriate Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader will contact students affected, advise them of alternative replacement module(s) and advise the Registry and Programme Support Office accordingly.

## **2.9 Changing Modules**

1. Module changes, after the start of the academic year or the start date of the Semester when the module is taught, will need to be discussed with the Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader who will email the request to Registry with their authority for the change. Late module transfers will only be considered before any assessment submissions are required and cannot constitute grounds for an extenuating circumstance claim.
2. Students wishing to change modules within fifteen working days of the start of the academic year, or before the start of Semester B/C, should first discuss the matter with the relevant Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader. Approval is subject to places being available, continued adherence to programme regulations, and the timetable facilitating this. The University advises students not to change modules after the second week of the semester, trimester or term. This timeframe can be adjusted in specific circumstances, subject to the affected students being informed in advance.
3. Late changes will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, where the appropriate Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader is in agreement. Moreover, late entry to a module will not constitute extenuating circumstances in relation to assessments. A student starting a module late is required to undertake all the assessments for that module - no student may therefore join a module after the first assessment deadline has passed. A student will not be

permitted to select an alternative module which results in a timetable clash being created.

4. External or internal students applying to enter directly into Years 2 and 3 will be sent details of optional modules where appropriate for their course by the Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader in advance of their registration. The student must complete the Module Choice Form available from MyMarjon. The Registry and Programme Support Office will consult with the Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader for approval.

## **2.10 Study Abroad**

1. Students on full-time Honours degrees may undertake study abroad, for up to 60 credits of study, at approved institutions on approved module-equivalent programmes as part of their programme. This is available to them normally during their second year of study, when undertaking Level 5 modules, and usually (but not exclusively) during the second semester. These equivalent programmes must be passed, and failure will prevent progression to Level 6. Credits for the modules will be awarded but, as no grades are carried forward, this will not be included within a student's final degree classification.
2. Students who are interested in studying abroad, subject to available opportunities, should contact their Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader in the first instance. The relevant application form must be completed no later than March of the previous year for Semester A study, and no later than October of the relevant year for Semester B study. The relevant Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader must support the application, given the potential implications for any student.

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### **3. ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

#### **3.1 Introduction**

1. These regulations set out the assessment responsibilities within Plymouth Marjon University relating to taught programmes of study and should be read in conjunction with other information in this Framework. What follows applies to the formal processes of the Module Assessment Boards and Progression and Award Boards relating to all taught provision.
2. The University operates a two-tier arrangement of Module Assessment Boards (MABs) and Progression and Award Boards (PABs) for all taught programmes.
3. Module Assessment Boards determine the final mark for each student in every module within their purview and award credit for the module to every student who has demonstrated achievement of the learning outcomes of those modules.
4. Progression and Award Boards make decisions relating to the progression of students in programmes and the consequence of failure at any stage of a programme. They also make recommendations for the conferment and classification of awards to Senate.
5. Module Assessment Boards must use the University standard module marksheets for all University-approved modules. On completion, the marks must be made available to the Registry and Programme Support Office by the

date stated in the Assessments Calendar published on Antler and MyMarjon each year

6. The Academic Registrar is responsible for the oversight of all formal examinations and PABs, assisted by Registry Services staff.
7. The Deans of Faculty are responsible for the academic standards and the content of examination papers or coursework assignments.

### **3.2 Emergency Powers**

Exceptionally, circumstances beyond the control of the University might make it impossible to operate the processes of assessment in accordance with these regulations and procedures. In such circumstances, the Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of Senate, may vary these regulations and procedures or vary the constitution or quoracy requirements of any board, panel or committee. The Vice-Chancellor will make the variation(s) known to staff and students in writing. Before doing so, the Vice-Chancellor will notify the Chair of the Board of Governors in writing of the variation and the reasons for it. The Vice-Chancellor will also report the variation and the reasons for it to the next meeting of Senate. Specific powers relating to Module Assessment Boards and Progression and Award Boards are to be found in the relevant sections of these regulations. Guidance on using these powers may be obtained from the Academic Registrar.

### **3.3 Module Assessment Boards (MABs) – General Administration**

1. The Registry and Programme Support Office is responsible for scheduling all Module Assessment Boards and the associated arrangements. Deans of Faculty inform all internal examiners of the schedule that relates to them.

2. The Registry and Programme Support Office schedules and publishes the dates and times of the Progression and Award Boards.
3. Deans of Faculty, assisted by the appropriate administrators, are responsible for ensuring that accurate marks, and annotations, are presented to the relevant University Assessment Boards.
4. Deans of Faculty are responsible for liaising with External Examiners regarding inspection of coursework and practical examinations.
5. The Registry and Programme Support Office is responsible for the co-ordination of agreed marks from Module Assessment Boards and the presentation of these marks to the appropriate Progression and Award Board.

### **3.4 Module Assessment Boards (MABs) – Membership and Quoracy**

1. Membership of a Module Assessment Board is as follows:
  - The Chair, who will normally be an Associate Dean of Faculty or an appropriate nominee
  - The External Examiner(s) for the cognate groups of modules under consideration
  - Module Leaders of all modules to be considered by the Board.

In addition, the Academic Registrar has the right to attend or to send a nominee.

2. A Module Assessment Board will be quorate if the following members are in attendance:
  - The Chair or nominated deputy
  - The External Examiner(s) (however, the Board may proceed if the External Examiner is exceptionally unable to attend in accordance with the

procedure described in the Handbook for External Examiners and Moderators).

3. The Chair is appointed on the authority of Senate and is accountable to Senate for ensuring that the Module Assessment Board fulfils its responsibilities in accordance with these regulations and procedures.
4. In addition to the membership, a person shall be appointed to act as Secretary to the Board to provide to the Chair of the Board a draft record of its proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting. This will include a list of those present and the capacity in which they attended, all the decisions made and the reasons for them. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that minutes are circulated to members as soon as reasonably practicable after the meeting and that a copy is lodged with Registry 48 hours before any Progression and Award Board that will receive decisions of the Module Assessment Board.
5. No student may attend any part of a meeting of a Module Assessment Board, unless they are a member of staff or approved External Examiner who is coincidentally registered as a student on another programme of the University or elsewhere.
6. The role of the External Examiner, the associated rights and responsibilities and the procedure to be followed if the External Examiner is exceptionally unable to attend the meeting, are described in the Handbook for External Examiners and Moderators.
7. A Module Leader who is exceptionally unable to attend a meeting of a Module Assessment Board must provide written advice to the Board relating to the assessment of their module(s). If, exceptionally, they are unable to provide such advice, the Chair will investigate the assessment of the module and report to the Module Assessment Board on behalf of the Module Leader.
8. Module Assessment Boards should start promptly, and all members should have with them their own copies of relevant module descriptors, regulations etc.

9. In circumstances beyond the University's control where it is not possible to convene a normally constituted Module Assessment Board, the Vice-Chancellor, having received advice from the Academic Registrar, will determine the arrangements necessary to conduct the business of the meeting. In such circumstances, the decision and the reasons for it will be reported in full to the next meeting of Senate.

### **3.5 Module Assessment Boards (MABs) – Business**

1. The Module Assessment Board will receive:
  - the minutes of its previous substantive meeting and any intervening meetings
  - notification of any actions taken under delegated authority
  - the current approved module descriptor of each module
  - the examination papers, coursework and other assessments used
  - the name of any student alleged to have been guilty of academic misconduct in relation to any of the modules under consideration and details of any action taken in relation to it
  - the previous annual report and interim report of the External Examiner and the response to these reports
  - the record of the relevant RPL Board
  - in respect of each student:
    - if appropriate, a report on any placement or work-based learning undertaken including details of placement hours undertaken
    - if appropriate, a report on any practical activity undertaken
    - the overall mark for the module



- the mark for each assessment element (i.e. coursework, examination etc)
- the mark for each component
- a record against each assessment mark of any decision made by the Registry and Programme Support Office for Extenuating Circumstances
- a record against each mark showing if it is the result of the application of an assessment penalty and, if it is, the mark without penalty should also be available

2. The Module Assessment Board shall:

- agree the final version of the minutes of the previous meeting to be a true record of that meeting and note any matters arising from them.
- receive the summary statistics available for each module and identify any anomalies which may require attention by the Board, or action for the next academic session.
- scrutinise the marks or grades relating to each module and the analysis of the marks and identify and obtain an explanation for any anomaly, or other cause for concern, and take any action considered necessary, seeking advice from the External Examiner.
- having taken any such action, make decisions in relation to each student, as described below, taking into account any decisions of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.
- recommend the marks or grades for each candidate in each module, in accordance with those decisions.
- assign credit to individual students on the basis of the confirmed marks or grades.

- make recommendations for resit and/or deferral assessments for those students who have not been assigned credit.
- authorise the update of the Student Record System and the notification of recommended marks to students.
- receive an oral report from each External Examiner concerning the standards achieved by students and the quality of the provision.
- review the responses to the previous External Examiner's reports and consider the rationale for any recommendations that have not been acted upon.
- consider the adequacy of all assessments used in each module and make recommendations for future assessments.
- formally delegate its authority to Chair's Action to resolve any cases arising from resit or deferral, or where, subsequent to the meeting, students present reasons and circumstances, considered by the Chair to be both acceptable and supported by satisfactory evidence, which have led to a mark or grade being wrongly confirmed. In all such cases the Chair must document their decision, the reasons for it, and the extent of any consultation and report the decision without delay to the Registry and Programme Support Office for presentation at the Progression and Award Board and to the next meeting of the Module Assessment Board.

### **3.6 Module Assessment Boards (MABs) – Moderation of Marks**

1. Module Assessment Boards may moderate marks as a collective decision, on the recommendation of an External Examiner, and after reviewing the full range of information if, in the opinion of the Board, any of the following have occurred:
  - the pass threshold has been incorrectly applied.

- the marks do not fall within the expected mark distribution.
  - the Dean of Faculty confirms that an Academic Department or programme management issue, including any such issue that has been identified via the formal complaints process, has disadvantaged all students taking the module.
2. The Chair of the Module Assessment Board must ensure that any moderation, and the reason for it, is recorded in the minutes.

### **3.7 Module Assessment Boards (MABs) – Decisions**

1. The Module Assessment Board recommends grades awarded to individual students and module cohorts. It has the authority to review cohort results, but not individual student marks.
2. In the event of a rubric infringement such as attempting more examination questions than required, the Module Assessment Board will receive a mark that disregards the lower or lowest mark.
3. Where students are given target word counts or equivalents for an assessment, the instructions for the assessment should make clear before the student undertakes the assessment what the consequences of exceeding or failing to reach the word count are. These are likely to be determined by the practice in a particular discipline or programme. Those consequences should be applied in the marking process and associated comment should be made in the feedback to the student. The Module Assessment Board should receive details of adjustments of this kind which will be fully recorded in the Module Assessment Board minutes.
4. The module mark reported to students and to the Module Assessment Board and Progression and Award Board will be a rounded integer as follows:
  - a decimal of x.50 or greater shall round up to the next highest integer.
  - a decimal lower than x.50 shall round down to the next lowest integer.

5. In respect of each student on each module, the Module Assessment Board must make one of the following decisions, which it will pass to the Progression and Award Board.
- a) **Passed** - confirms that the credit has been assigned. A module is passed if a student has achieved the module outcomes, the evidence for this being achievement of the overall module pass mark (40% for undergraduate modules, 50% for postgraduate modules) regardless of the mark achieved in any element of assessment. Note however that certain programme regulations may require all elements of some or all modules to be passed for professional accreditation purposes. In such cases the MAB will annotate the mark “n” to show that the module is not yet passed for professional accreditation purposes.
  - b) **Failed** - confirms that the student has not achieved the module outcomes and that credit has not been assigned.
  - c) **No Decision** – confirms either that the student has not satisfactorily completed the assessment of the module for a good reason that would not be considered under the Extenuating Circumstances Procedures, or that the Module Assessment Board has been unable to confirm the mark and assign credit because of some procedural delay. In such cases, the Chair should ensure that the reasons for such missing marks are noted in full, so that they can be accurately forwarded to the Progression and Award Board for decision-making purposes.
  - d) **Decision Withheld** – confirms that the Module Assessment Board has made a decision but has withheld notification of it to the student and to the Progression and Award Board until the outcome of Academic Misconduct Procedures is known (in accordance with Section 14 of this [Framework](#)). In all such cases the marksheet will be appropriately annotated.

### **3.8 Module Assessment Boards (MABs) – Assessment Penalties**

1. Responsibility for the application of assessment penalties rests with the Module Assessment Board when it determines the final mark in the module.
2. All cases in which assessment penalties have been applied, or in which work has not been accepted for assessment, shall be reported to the Module Assessment Board and to the Progression and Award Board.
3. The Module Assessment Board will waive an assessment penalty if it receives an Extenuating Circumstances decision from the Registry and Programme Support Office that late submission of that work was due to valid Extenuating Circumstances.
4. The Module Assessment Board cannot waive penalties imposed in accordance with the University's Academic Integrity Procedure (Section 14 of this [Framework](#)) or impose any penalty for alleged academic misconduct. In the event of such an allegation coming to light at the meeting, or being unresolved by the time of the meeting, the Module Assessment Board will make its decisions in the normal way. However, the Progression and Award Board will withhold them from the student until the outcome is known, appropriately annotating the marksheet.

### **3.9 Module Assessment Boards (MABs) – Finalising and Signing the Marksheet**

1. When the Module Assessment Board has agreed the marks, with or without moderation, the Chair and the External Examiner sign the marksheet where paper copies are still provided, or together recommend the submission of marks into the student record. Where multiple marksheets require signature, a cover sheet may be signed instead to confirm this. The significance of this process, and the procedure to be followed if the External Examiner is unable

or unwilling to sign the marksheet, is described in the Handbook for External Examiners and Moderators.

2. After the External Examiner has completed this process, no marks may be changed, other than in exceptional circumstances and with the written agreement of the External Examiner. Marks recommended at the MAB may not be released to individual students until all assessment results are published by the Registry and Programme Support Office.
3. For Level 5 and 6 modules, any changes to the module mark sheets made at the Module Assessment Board must be recorded in the minutes.

### **3.10 Module Assessment Boards (MABs) – Convention for Reporting Resit Requirements to the PAB**

1. Module Assessment Boards are required to make recommendations to the Progression and Award Board concerning students with failed modules and/or modules in which the assessment is deferred.
2. Students must always pass every element of assessment that the Board has set for their retrieval of failure. Specifically, resit marks cannot be combined with existing marks from passed elements, nor with each other, so that the student accumulates a module pass mark.
3. Chairs of Module Assessment Boards must ensure that notations, as approved by the Academic Registrar, appear after each module score on the module mark sheet where resit assessment is to be recommended. See Section 6 of this [Framework](#) for further information about setting resit work. See Section 4 of this [Framework](#) relating to deferred assessment in cases of valid Extenuating Circumstances.

### 3.11 Student Review Process

1. The Teaching, Learning and Academic Quality Committee will assess the engagement and progress of its undergraduate students at appropriate points during the session, on behalf of Senate, with specific reference to:
  - Modules with a high number of fails.
  - Student profiles that demonstrate a downward or upward trend from previous marks.
  - Any queries related to registration or enrolment.
2. The Registry and Programme Support Office will then seek comments, on behalf of the Academic Registrar, from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost; Deans of Faculty; Programme Leaders and Programme Area Leaders; and Student Wellbeing and Support on any such matters before advising the appropriate Assessment Board. Decisions on the progression or continuing enrolment of any student or recommendations for the conferment of academic awards are the ultimate responsibility of the Progression and Award Boards (PABs).

### 3.12 Extenuating Circumstances

1. Action relating to extenuating circumstances must be taken strictly in accordance with the relevant Student Regulations, as set out in Section 4 of this [Framework](#). Extenuating circumstances are circumstances that lessen or mitigate the apparent seriousness of academic failure. Typically, they include illness, close family bereavement and severe emotional stress. They are temporary, abnormal and mostly unexpected circumstances that are beyond the student's control and that relate to a particular assessment or assessments. They are claimed by an individual student (or by Student Wellbeing and Support on behalf of the student) and are appropriately verified

through the Extenuating Circumstances process (see Section 4 of this [Framework](#)).

2. The Registry and Programme Support Office will decide the validity or otherwise of claims for extenuating circumstances. No other body and no individual member of staff is authorised to rule on the validity or otherwise of a claim for extenuating circumstances. A Module Assessment Board or Progression and Award Board can only take extenuating circumstances into account if they have been authorised by the Registry and Programme Support Office.
3. The Registry and Programme Support office will notify the Module Assessment Boards that Valid Extenuating Circumstances apply to named students in specific assessments in named modules.
4. Module Assessment Boards must, where Valid Extenuating Circumstances have prevented the student from submitting an assessment by the due date, waive the assessment penalty and ensure the assessment attracts the full mark it justifies on its merits alone.
5. In other cases of Valid Extenuating Circumstances, where no mark is recorded for an assessment, Module Assessment Boards may:
  - permit the assessment of the module in the form of the affected assessment(s) to be deferred until specified dates. **Deferred assessments will normally involve new assessment tasks (e.g. new essay title).**
  - exceptionally, if it is not possible to replicate the original assessment mode/s, permit the assessment of the module by means of different assessment mode/s, which must be defined and made known to the student, to be deferred until specified dates.
6. In relation to any assessment, an assessment penalty imposed following Academic Misconduct and Student Misconduct Procedures described in Section 14 and Section 15 of this [Framework](#) overrides any valid extenuating circumstances.



7. The Module Assessment Board will minute all decisions reached in respect of valid extenuating circumstances made known to it.
8. Chairs of Module Assessment Boards must ensure that "v" appears after each element of assessment on the module mark sheets where extenuating circumstances have been found valid whether or not the module has been passed. If the module pass mark has not been reached, the appropriate annotation will be applied.
9. Module Assessment Boards make recommendations to the Progression and Award Board concerning students with failed modules and/or modules in which the assessment is deferred. Chairs of those Boards must ensure that notations appear after each module score on the module mark sheet where resit/deferred assessment is recommended.

The notations will appear on lists made available to the Progression and Award Board. If the Module Assessment Board has waived a penalty for late submission of coursework, the "v" annotation remains, but no coursework/exam annotation is added.

### **3.13 Viva Voce Examinations**

1. The University does not permit the use of viva voce examinations to determine an individual student's marks or to make recommendations for awards, unless such an examination is specified in the module descriptor as a method of assessment for all students on that module.
2. In such cases, the Dean of Faculty will make all arrangements, with both the External Examiner(s) and the students for the viva voce examination.

### **3.14 Progression and Award Boards (PABs) - General**

1. The Progression and Award Board confirms all module overall grades, oversees the assessment of awards, decides on student progression and makes recommendations to Senate, or to another awarding body, on the award and category of award to be conferred upon individual students.
2. All named awards shall be assigned to the authority of a Progression and Award Board.
3. The Progression and Award Board shall convene meetings, to discharge the duties defined by these regulations. The Academic Registrar shall schedule its meetings.
4. The Progression and Award Board shall exercise its powers in accordance with the standard of the award, the identified aims and objectives of any particular programme and the individual candidate's overall performance.
5. Only a Progression and Award Board constituted in accordance with these Regulations shall be authorised to recommend conferment on a student of an academic award of the University, or of any awarding body with which the University has a collaborative agreement.
6. The University's academic awards are conferred by the Progression and Award Board by way of delegated authority from the University Senate. The Progression and Award Board will also make recommendations to other awarding bodies with which the University has a collaborative agreement on Senate's behalf.
7. The decisions of the Progression and Award Board with regard to academic awards shall be ratified by the Academic Registrar, in their ex-officio role as Secretary of Senate.

### **3.15 Progression and Award Boards (PABs) - Constitution, Terms of Reference and Membership**

1. The following have membership rights of Progression and Award Boards:

- Chair
- Progression and Award Board External Examiner(s) for awards under consideration
- Chairs or a nominee of the Module Assessment Boards relevant to the PAB
- Academic Registrar or nominated deputy

Additional staff may attend at the discretion of the Academic Registrar.

2. The Chair is appointed on the authority of Senate and is accountable to Senate for ensuring that the Progression and Award Board fulfils its responsibilities in accordance with these regulations. The Academic Registrar or nominee will advise and assist the Chair in this respect.

3. No student may be a member of a Progression and Award Board, unless they are a member of staff or approved External Examiner who is coincidentally registered as a student on another programme in the University or elsewhere.

4. The Progression and Award Board, when recommending the conferment of an academic award or considering the progression of students, shall be quorate with the following membership:

- Chair or nominated deputy
- Progression and Award Board External Examiner(s) for awards under consideration
- Chairs or a nominee of the Module Assessment Boards relevant to the PAB

- Academic Registrar or nominee.

If, exceptionally, a MAB Chair is unable to attend, the Board will be quorate provided that the Dean of Faculty has ensured that someone is present at the Board to represent students on all programmes in their Faculty.

5. The role of the Progression and Award Board External Examiner and the associated rights and responsibilities are described in the Handbook for External Examiners and Moderators. If, exceptionally, the Progression and Award Board External Examiner is unable to attend the meeting, and the University is unable to arrange for one of the External Examiners for modules contributing to one or more of the awards to attend, then the Progression and Award Board External Examiner will:

- as far as possible, make their views known to the Board before it meets.
- after the Board has met, write to the Chair of the Progression and Award Board stating the reason for absence, the extent of their involvement with the processes of assessment and signifying satisfaction with them. The letter shall not be considered to signify agreement with every decision of the Progression and Award Board.
- the minutes of the meeting will record the Chair's agreement that the meeting should go ahead.

6. In circumstances beyond the University's control where it is not possible to convene a normally constituted Progression and Award Board, the Vice-Chancellor, on advice from the Academic Registrar, will determine the arrangements necessary to conduct business of the meeting. In such circumstances, the decision and the reasons for it will be reported in full to the next meeting of Senate.

### **3.16 Progression and Award Boards (PABs) - Process and Powers**

1. The Progression and Award Board will receive:
  - the minutes of its previous meeting and any intervening sub-committee(s).
  - notification of any actions taken under the delegation of its authority at a previous meeting.
  - the relevant regulations, policies and procedures.
  - the recommended marks and assigned credit from the appropriate Module Assessment Board(s) for each student registered for awards for which it is responsible.
  - decisions made by Module Assessment Board(s) with regard to failure and deferral.
  - a record against each module of Extenuating Circumstances found Valid by The Registry and Programme Support Office with an indication of action that remains to be taken.
  - the name of any student alleged to have been guilty of academic misconduct in relation to a module and details of any action taken in relation to it.
  - the annual report(s) of the Progression and Award Board External Examiner(s).
  - the name of any student in breach of University regulations from whom an official transcript/certificate will be withheld.
2. The Progression and Award Board will:
  - before making decisions about any students, agree how it should exercise discretion with regard to extenuating circumstances and other factors affecting performance.

- agree the final version of the minutes of the previous meeting to be a true record of that meeting and note any matters arising from them.
- note any actions taken under authority delegated at its previous meetings.
- exercise its discretion to condone failure in accordance with the provisions of these regulations.
- in the event of Extenuating Circumstances having been found Valid that have not otherwise been completed, exercise discretion as appropriate in accordance with the provisions of those and other regulations.
- determine whether to permit a student to progress to the next stage of a programme.
- determine whether any student shall be excluded from their programme of study on academic grounds.
- determine whether to allow any student to make good an initial failure in one or more modules by resit assessment.
- determine whether to allow any student to make good an initial failure in one or more modules by repeat assessment of the module.
- subject to the constraints of these regulations, require a student to repeat the assessment of a module where the resit requirements have not been successfully completed.
- determine whether a candidate's registration should be extended beyond the application of these or other University regulations.
- recommend the conferment and, as appropriate, categorisation of an award, including, as appropriate, an Aegrotat award.
- determine whether or not to defer recommending progression or the conferment of an award until specified conditions, within a specified time scale, have been met.

- authorise the publication of its decisions and recommendations.
- consider the previous annual report/s of the Progression and Award Board External Examiner(s) and the response to it, including a rationale for any recommendations that have not been acted upon, and refer any matters of concern to Senate.
- fulfil, as appropriate, any specific and additional requirements of any external accrediting body for the award recognised by Senate.

### 3.17 Progression and Award Boards (PABs) - Decisions

1. At the conclusion of each meeting the Chair shall sign a list of the decisions of the Progression and Award Board. The Minutes Secretary will then release the decisions in accordance with the approved Assessments Calendar.
2. The list shall show the name and/or Student Record System Identification Number of each student and the decision of the Progression and Award Board. The decision shall be one of the following:
  - **Progress:** this confirms that the student may continue to the next stage of the programme and, if appropriate, has been permitted to carry forward a module or modules for which credit has not yet been assigned.
  - **Recommend the award of [name of specific award]:** this confirms that an academic award is to be made to the student following, as appropriate, completion of the programme of study, withdrawal or exclusion.
  - **Decision Deferred:** this confirms either that there is insufficient information on which to make a decision or that, due to Valid Extenuating Circumstances, the student has not yet been awarded sufficient credit to progress or secure an award. Such deferral may be in addition to a decision to allow resit assessment. The Progression and Award Board will not make the decision 'Decision Deferred' following a resit if the timing of any deferred resit would make normal progress impracticable (see Section

3.16.2 of this [Framework](#)). Instead it will allow the student to repeat the assessment of the outstanding modules and will determine whether or not the student may progress before completion of the repeat assessment (see also Section 5 of this [Framework](#)).

- **Resit:** this confirms that further marks are to be confirmed, and credit assigned, following an opportunity to make good an initial failure, before progression can be determined or an award can be recommended. This may be in addition to a decision of 'Decision Deferred'.
- **Retake Module(s):** this confirms that the student may not continue to the next stage of the programme or be recommended for an award until there has been a successful repeat assessment. Students must enrol to retake module(s) and register for those modules in accordance with University regulations. Unless the Progression and Award Board specifically states otherwise, the student must complete all the assessments required in the next delivery of the module and gain sufficient marks to pass the module. The mark for the repeated module is capped at the module pass mark. See also Section 6 of this [Framework](#).
- **Exclude:** this confirms that the student may not continue to study for the named award for which they are registered at the University as a full-time student. This decision does not prevent the student transferring their registration to another programme of study within the University, subject to the agreement of the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader (s) for that programme.
- **Decision Withheld:** this confirms that one of the above decisions has been determined but that it is not to be released yet by way of an official transcript/certificate. This is either because the student is in breach of the University's regulations in some respect or has not yet decided whether or not to accept the offer of an award prior to its recommendation. The Decision is released by subsequent Chair's Action.

3. The Academic Registrar shall ensure that, as soon as practicable after the Board, students have sufficient further details of the Board's decisions to



exercise their rights under these and any other regulations of the University. In particular, those further details must make clear any actions the student must complete in order to retrieve any failure.

4. At the end of the meeting, the Progression and Award Board External Examiner will approve the Board Papers. This endorsement signifies that the External Examiner upholds the effectiveness and adequacy of the assessment processes, with particular reference to the student profiles and issues of fairness. It does not necessarily indicate agreement with every individual mark or recommendation of the Board.

### **3.18 Progression and Award Boards (PABs) - Delegation**

1. The Progression and Award Board can delegate to a subsidiary body its authority in relation to the progression of, and recommendation of awards to, students following resit assessment. It must define the membership and quorum of such a subsidiary body and prescribe the reporting arrangements to the Board.
2. The Progression and Award Board can delegate to the Chair its authority in relation to the progression and recommendation of awards to students arising from deferred decisions and the release of withheld decisions. It shall require the Chair to document their decision, the reasons for it, and the extent of any consultation. The Chair shall report any such decision to the next meeting of the Board.
3. The Progression and Award Board can delegate to the Chair its authority in relation to the outcome of successful appeals (see Section 16 of this [Framework](#)). The Chair shall report any such decision to the next meeting of the Board.
4. The Progression and Award Board cannot delegate its authority in any other way.

### **3.19 Progression and Award Boards (PABs) - Minutes**

1. The Academic Registrar shall appoint a Minutes Secretary to draft the minutes of the meeting of the Board and of any sub-committee.
2. In the case of the exercise of the discretionary powers described below, the minutes must include all the information specified within that regulation. In the case of the exercise of any other discretionary powers under these regulations, the minutes shall record in full the reasons for any decision to exercise discretion or not to do so.
3. The Chair of the Progression and Award Board shall ensure that approved draft minutes of meetings are issued to members within a reasonable time. The Progression and Award Board will receive and consider the minutes of its previous meeting as described in Section 3.16 of this [Framework](#).

### **3.20 Authority to Depart Exceptionally from University Regulations**

1. Within the constraints of the programme objectives and good practice within the UK higher education sector, the Progression and Award Board may depart from any of these regulations, except this regulation, in exceptional circumstances if a strict application of the regulations would be unjust to a student or students. The Progression and Award Board will take advice from the Progression and Award Board External Examiner in relation to good practice in the sector.
2. In such a case the minutes must record all of the following information:
  - a reference to this regulation.
  - the name of the student(s).
  - the regulation from which the Progression and Award Board wishes to depart.

- the full circumstances in which the Progression and Award Board considered it necessary to exercise the discretionary power under this regulation.
- the reason the Progression and Award Board considered it necessary to exercise the discretionary power under this regulation - this should highlight the consequences of the exercise or non-exercise of such discretion for the student.
- the advice of the Progression and Award Board External Examiner in relation to good practice within the UK higher education sector.
- the reason such discretionary power should not be exercised in respect of other students.

The Chair of the Progression and Award Board should report in writing via its Minutes Secretary to both the Vice-Chancellor and Academic Registrar regarding the departure from the regulations, so that this can be reported to Senate.

### **3.21 Other Procedural Matters**

1. The Academic Registrar will retain electronic copies of mark sheets.
2. All members of a Progression and Award Board or Module Assessment Board must exercise the strictest confidentiality regarding its proceedings. Board decisions are the decisions of all its members jointly and severally, regardless of the members' views before those decisions were finalised.
3. The Academic Registrar is responsible for communicating the decisions of Assessment Boards and issuing statements relating to appeal procedures. Candidates whose results are not published by the deadline for procedural reasons will be notified separately at the same time. They will also retain award lists and details of Chair's actions taken after the PAB meeting.

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## 4. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 4.1 Introduction

1. Students must undertake a wide range of assessments in different formats. This requires them to balance their workload and use time management skills to ensure that assessments are submitted to stated deadlines. However, the University recognises that serious adverse factors beyond a student's control (extenuating circumstances) can prevent them from completing assessments. This procedure enables them to be taken into account when considering a student's assessment profile.

### 4.2 Definition

1. Extenuating circumstances are defined as circumstances which are outside the control of the student and negatively affect performance. Students and staff should follow these procedures where circumstances are:
  - **Severe:** the event or circumstance must have had a serious impact on assessment performance
  - **Unexpected:** the student must have had no prior knowledge that a particular event would occur

- **Unpreventable:** there must have been no reasonable steps that the student could have taken to prevent the event or circumstance from occurring
- **Relevant:** the event or circumstances must have occurred at the time of the assessment or during the period immediately leading up to the assessment date
- **Corroborated:** the claim must meet any requirements for independent documentary evidence outlined in the Extenuating Circumstances guidance

Students may experience immediate events that prevent them from attending, or submitting, an assessment, and/or preliminary events that impact on their ability to prepare for an assessment.

2. The aim of these procedures is to:

- ensure that students are appropriately supported when extenuating circumstances are brought to the attention of the University in a timely manner
- ensure that all students are treated fairly and equitably in the light of extenuating circumstances
- outline the responsibilities of students in informing the University of circumstances which are affecting their performance
- protect the academic integrity of programmes for all students
- make clear the types of serious adverse factors that the University will consider as extenuating circumstances

3. Students can download the Extenuating Circumstances Claim Form and find related guidance in the [Registry Documents](#) section on MyMarjon. All forms should be submitted to the Extenuating Circumstances team by the

published deadlines and should be accompanied by documentary evidence where required. Decisions are emailed to students within 48 hours where possible, however in busier periods this may extend to within one week.

### **4.3 Examples of Extenuating Circumstances**

1. The University considers the following to be examples of extenuating circumstances, but this list is not exhaustive, and other circumstances are considered appropriate so long as circumstances meet the definition above:
  - The death or serious illness of a close family member, friend, or partner
  - Serious short-term illness or injury that is impacting a student's ability to study
  - Worsening of an ongoing illness or disability - including mental health conditions
  - Significant personal or family crisis directly affecting the student
  - Witnessing, or involvement in, a traumatic incident
  - Statutory parental leave
  - Court attendance, jury service, other public/civic duty or obligation
  - Competing in sport or participation in other activity at national or international level.
2. These procedures are intended to apply to individuals. They do not apply when a failure in programme management arrangements has disrupted the learning and assessment of a group or groups of students. In such cases, the Dean of Faculty and the programme team should provide appropriate remedies, taking advice from the Academic Registrar. If those remedies are unsatisfactory, students may use the complaints procedure at Section 17 of this [Framework](#).

## **4.4 Extenuating Circumstances Not Considered To Be Valid**

1. Extenuating circumstances cover critical incidences and do not encompass normal life challenges. The following circumstances are not considered extenuating by the University, although the University has services in place which can support and advise students who are dealing with some of the difficulties indicated below:
  - A medical condition, medical circumstances or disability for which no supporting evidence has been presented
  - Any circumstances for which appropriate adjustments have already been made by the University and where there is no evidence of a worsening of the condition which requires further consideration
  - Assessment-related stress which is not diagnosed as an illness or discussed with Student Wellbeing and Support
  - An illness occurring after an examination/in-class test or the deadline for submission of coursework
  - A minor illness such as a cough or cold
  - Pregnancy, except for morning sickness or a period of three weeks immediately preceding the due date, and except for complications relating to the pregnancy which medical evidence can substantiate
  - Poor working practice such as:
    - the student's failure to back up electronic documents regularly and securely
    - not acquainting themselves with the times, dates and places where assessments were to be submitted or examinations to be sat



- erroneous e-submission, including e-submission to an incorrect module code
- poor time management during peaks in assessment work demands
- Problems with network facilities, personal computers or printers, unless a student is unable to access campus. Faults associated with the VLE, Turnitin or University-maintained network facilities preventing online assessment submission will be managed in line with University policy
- Where students are studying on a full-time basis, issues relating to paid employment except in cases of work placements which contribute to the programme of study
- House moves, renovations or other routine, rather than emergency, accommodation difficulties
- Holidays, including attendance at marriages, festivals and like events
- Financial difficulties
- Additional learning needs
- Complaints against individual members of staff, or complaints about the delivery of the module/programme, which are managed through the University's Complaints Procedure (see Section 17 of this [Framework](#)).

## **4.5 Extenuating Circumstances and Valid Evidence**

1. The following general principles apply to the extenuating circumstances procedure:
  - Extenuating circumstances cannot be valid for more than twenty working days

- Students whose circumstances exceed twenty working days must discuss the matter with Student Wellbeing and Support so that they can be supported or to discuss a possible interruption of studies
- Evidence must include specific dates for the period of the claim and should correspond with the dates recorded on the claim form
- Extenuating Circumstances will not apply during the resit period
- Retrospective Extenuating Circumstances will be limited to exceptional circumstances only
- Self-certification will not apply to exams
- Extended Extenuating Circumstances will not apply to the resit period
- Deferred assessment into the next academic year due to the approval of an Extenuating Circumstance will be limited to one module per year.

2. There are five categories of Extenuating Circumstances:

- **Self-Certification**

- For circumstances of no more than five working days which include the submission date
- This can be used once per Term/Semester and requires no evidence
- This gives an extension to the original deadline of five working days for all coursework submitted electronically in line with University requirements
- Presentations can be re-scheduled within the five working days at the module leader's discretion

**or**

- Will be deferred to the next resit session.
- Self certification does not apply to exams.
- **Standard ECs of six working days or more**
  - Can be claimed for University-defined acceptable circumstances of no more than 20 working days, excluding weekends and Bank Holidays
  - Appropriate evidence must be provided with the claim (see Extenuating Circumstances Guidance)
- **Student Support Short-Term**
  - where DIAS submits a claim for Extenuating Circumstances on the student's behalf, when the student is known to them and has had an exacerbation of a recorded existing condition
  - No evidence is required.
  - Can be used in the resit period in exceptional circumstances.
- **Student Wellbeing and Support Extended Term**
  - Where Student Wellbeing and Support can submit an Extended claim for a student with known, long-term, circumstances that are having a significant impact on the student's ability to study
  - Can be claimed for up to one academic year
  - Evidence is discussed or provided to Student Wellbeing and Support
  - Will be approved as the default status for all assessments during the stated period so that multiple Extenuating Circumstance claims do not have to be submitted throughout the year
  - Students can submit assessments where they are able, which will supersede the Extenuating Circumstance status.

- Will not apply to the resit period.

- **Academic Module Assessment ECs**

- To be claimed by the module leader on behalf of the module cohort where there are circumstances impacting the delivery of an academic course or placement
- Can be all or one or more element of the assessment

3. A working day is defined as a day on which the University (or Partner Institution) is open, so includes student vacation periods but excludes weekends, Bank Holidays and other times that the University or Partner Institution is closed, such as the period between Christmas and New Year.

For all valid EC claims, apart from Self-certification, this gives the option of submitting within five working days of the original deadline or at the next resit session. All work to be submitted electronically in line with University requirements.

4. To be fair and transparent, applications for extenuating circumstances must be evidence-based and judged within clearly defined guidelines. This also helps students who are not fit to undertake an assessment to understand the nature of the evidence required. The supporting evidence required is stated in the Extenuating Circumstances Guidance. Students should ask Student Wellbeing and Support and/or the Extenuating Circumstances team for advice on how to apply and their chances of success.
5. Supporting evidence must refer directly to how the extenuating circumstances have impacted upon the student's ability to complete or sit assessments on their scheduled due date.
6. Corroborating evidence must:

- be written by appropriately qualified professionals who are independent to the student. Evidence from family and/or friends will not normally be accepted.
- be on headed paper and signed and dated by the author. Evidence presented by email is acceptable if the email has been sent by the author from the official domain name of the author's organisation.
- confirm specifically that the circumstances were witnessed on the relevant date as opposed to being reported retrospectively.
- All evidence should be in English. Where, for example, a student is taken ill in their home country and corroborating evidence is provided in the language of that country, then it should be accompanied by a translation, certified officially as being accurate as advised by the Extenuating Circumstances team.

## **4.6 Serious and Confidential Extenuating Circumstances**

1. The University recognises that there are circumstances which may be traumatic or extremely personal to a student. In these cases, the student may seek the advice of Student Wellbeing and Support who will decide whether or not the circumstances are both serious and confidential.
2. If satisfied that the circumstance is valid, the member of staff will refer the case to the Registry and Programme Support Office for direct approval without the need for evidence or explanation to be supplied to the Extenuating Circumstances team.
3. Exceptionally, for example due to the incapacity of the student, written statements on a student's behalf may be considered at the discretion of the Academic Registrar. The student will need to consent to this, unless the circumstances themselves have made it impossible for the student to give

consent, and the submission must make it clear how that consent has been given.

4. A request must be made in writing, detailing:
  - the intervention involved
  - the reasons for its consideration
  - the module assessment affected and submission dates
5. The student will receive a notification that the Extenuating Circumstances have been approved.

#### **4.7 Timing of an Extenuating Circumstances Submission**

1. Extenuating circumstances claims must normally be made by the end of the semester or term to which they relate. Submissions that relate to years already completed will not be considered.
2. Deadlines for the submission of completed forms and evidence are published annually via the Assessments Calendar. However, students should submit claims as early as possible and by no later than the published deadline, particularly with regard to major assessment tasks such as dissertations, so that a decision can be made promptly.

#### **4.8 Misrepresentation and Falsehood**

1. By submitting a claim, students certify that the information they have provided is true and complete, and that misrepresentation or falsehood related to extenuating circumstances may lead to the application of the Student Misconduct Procedures. The Extenuating Circumstances procedure is intended to be supportive, and claims will be treated in good faith by

University staff. Students are encouraged to seek advice from Student Wellbeing and Support or the Extenuating Circumstances team if they have any queries about a claim.

## **4.9 Data Protection Act 2018**

1. By submitting an extenuating circumstances form, students agree to the University holding this personal data in accordance with its Records Retention Policy and its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018, which aligns with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

## **4.10 Support for Students**

1. Plymouth Marjon University places great emphasis on supporting its students. The University recognises that students who have recourse to these procedures may require additional support. Students are therefore encouraged to seek advice from Student Wellbeing and Support which includes professional counsellors; from their Personal Development Tutor; or from the Student Union.
2. During their studies students may also experience personal issues that hamper their ability to learn, or undertake assessments, but do not meet the criteria for extenuating circumstances. In all such cases students should contact those identified above.

## **4.11 Procedures at Partner Organisations**

1. All arrangements on collaborative programmes relating to extenuating circumstances are expected to align with those of the University.

2. All decisions relating to Extenuating Circumstances will be conveyed to the University's Extenuating Circumstances team to be recorded on the students' records.

## **4.12 The 'Fit to Sit' Principle**

1. The University operates a 'fit to sit' approach to extenuating circumstances. This acknowledges that only the individual student concerned, with advice from others where appropriate, can know if an event has impacted upon their ability to undertake an assessment. A student confirms that they are 'fit to sit' by submitting an assessment or sitting an examination and a subsequent claim will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, where a student is shown to have been unable to reasonably make the required judgement.
2. It follows that students should only try to meet learning outcomes when they are fully fit to do so. The Extenuating Circumstances team will not judge the impact of particular circumstances on any individual but will either accept that the evidence presented by the student meets the criteria or that it does not. If it does not, the claim will be rejected.
3. The Extenuating Circumstances decisions are used to inform the Module Assessment Board that deals with the relevant module. Where there are valid extenuating circumstances, Module Assessment Boards must waive the assessment penalty for late submission, provided the work was submitted within ten working days of the due date of submission, and ensure the assessment attracts the full mark it merits. Students may not submit an additional Extenuating Circumstances claim within this period to extend the time further, but this deadline may be varied exceptionally by the Academic Registrar.
4. Where a student cannot submit the assessment within five working days but has valid Extenuating Circumstances, so that no attained mark is recorded for an assessment, Module Assessment Boards will record an interim mark



and annotation. If no work is submitted within the five working days for a Self-Certification EC claim, a Fail with no submission will be recorded against the assessment.

5. The Progression and Award Board:

- will permit the assessment of the module in the form of the affected assessment(s) to be deferred until specified dates, usually the next available assessment period for that module. Deferred assessments will normally involve new assessment tasks (e.g. new essay title).
- may exceptionally, if the same type of assessment mode(s) cannot be used again, permit a different assessment mode(s), which must be defined and made known to the student, to be deferred until specified dates. Some assessments (for example, some professional placements) must be repeated exactly and may not, therefore, be available in defined resit/deferral periods. Students will be informed about such assessments in the programme handbook.

#### **4.13 Extenuating Circumstances Appeal Process**

1. A student who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the Extenuating Circumstances application process or decision should contact the University's Extenuating Circumstances team (or, for Partner institutions, their Extenuating Circumstances team) in the first instance, as an informal resolution of their appeal may be possible. If the student is dissatisfied with the informal response, then they may write formally to the Registry and Programme Support Office, within twenty working days of receipt of the notification of the informal response. Complaints against individual members of staff are managed by the People Team; complaints about the delivery of the module/programme are managed through the University's Complaints Procedure (see Section 17 of this [Framework](#)).

2. The letter or e-mail should be entitled 'Extenuating Circumstances Appeal' and should clearly state the reasons for the student's dissatisfaction, including any information that they feel has not been considered. The appeal should include new information about the Extenuating Circumstances claim that was not available at the time of the decision.
3. If the formal response does not resolve the complaint, the student may appeal against the decision in writing to the Academic Registrar.
4. The Academic Registrar and a member of Senate will convene as an Adjudication Panel to investigate the appeal. The Panel's decisions will be determined by the nature of the circumstances, the documentary evidence provided and the alignment with the requirements of Section 4.5 of this Framework. Where the Adjudication Panel deems an appeal to be without adequate substantiating evidence, they may decide to reject it without further discussion.
5. The Panel meets as soon as is practicable to consider additional evidence and agree the outcome of a claim.
6. The appellant will be advised of the Panel's decision in writing within ten working days. If it decides that an Extenuating Circumstances claim is not valid, the reasons for this will be stated. The decision will be copied to the Academic Standards Officer, so that a Completion of Procedures letter can be issued to the appellant on request.
7. The Panel's decisions inform the Module Assessment Boards and Progression and Award Boards. Academic appeals can only be made on the grounds set out in the academic appeals process described in Section 16 of this [Framework](#).

#### **4.14 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education**

1. If an appellant remains dissatisfied after the appropriate internal processes have been exhausted, they can ask the University to issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review their appeal.
2. The University must issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the OIA to review an appeal. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued to an appellant on request. If a Completion of Procedures letter is issued before the adjudication stage has been conducted, the letter will make it clear that the student has not completed the University's internal processes.
3. All requests for review must be made to the OIA within twelve months of the date of issue of a Completion of Procedures letter. For full details please contact <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.

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## 5. PROGRESSION

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's degree apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 5.1 Points of Progression

1. Programmes of study leading to named awards may be divided into stages (see Section 1.4 of this [Framework](#)) separated by points of progression.
2. Unless specifically stated otherwise in the approved Programme Specification, points of progression will occur on the first day of the next semester or term to start after the meeting of the Progression and Award Board following the completion of study at a particular stage.
3. Where a placement, or other student experience, occurs across two stages of a programme, and its successful completion is a condition of the conferment of the award, the Progression and Award Board will determine where the point of progression lies. The Progression and Award Board may also determine the point of progression differently according to a student's circumstances. If it does so, the minutes shall record in each case the Board's reasons for so determining the point of progression.

### 5.2 Progression of Individual Students

1. Responsibility for all decisions relating to progression rests with the Progression and Award Board.
2. The Progression and Award Board will consider each student's overall performance at the first meeting following the student's completion of the study of each stage. If a student has obtained the credit required to complete

that stage, including credit in all compulsory modules, the Board will permit him or her to progress to the next stage. This can be following condonement, resit, and/or repeat assessment.

3. On the authority of the Chair of the Progression and Award Board, a student may commence the study of a module or modules at the next stage before the Progression and Award Board has met to consider the results of the assessment of modules at the preceding stage. This will include the results of any referral or repeat assessment. However, a Module Assessment Board may not assign credit for a module or modules at any stage until the Progression and Award Board has confirmed that the student has been permitted to progress to that stage.
4. The Progression and Award Board, before or after any resit, may permit a student to progress to the next stage of a programme, where applicable to that programme. They can do so trailing failure in the assessment of one 20 credit module or two 10 credit modules, as long as they have attempted the assessment of the module, and a mark is recorded either before or after any resit. This failure must be retrieved in accordance with the provisions for repeating modules in Section 6 of this [Framework](#) and this provision is not applicable to students on accelerated degrees. Students must have also obtained an average module mark of 50% across the previous stage. Exceptionally, students may be permitted to trail failure in the assessment of a 40-credit dissertation or honours level project, at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board, as an alternative to retaking the stage in its entirety.
5. Students can only trail failure in the assessment of modules at the previous level/stage, thus preventing the trailing of Level 4 (Stage 1) modules into Level 6 (Stage 3) or the trailing of Level 5 (Stage 2) modules into Level 7 (Stage 4) of an Integrated Master's programme.
6. As an alternative, not an addition, to the standard provision, a student registered on a professionally accredited degree programme may progress to the academic work of the next year of the programme if they have failed or

been deferred in a placement module. However, they will then need to pass that module at the time set aside for placement learning in the next session. Arrangements may then be made for the next level placement to be postponed to the following year. If a student fails to complete a deferred or resit placement satisfactorily, they will be required either to interrupt their programme until they are able to satisfy the outstanding requirements or transfer onto an alternative programme of study.

6. Progression with trailing failure requires the Progression and Award Board to specify the modules to be taken to make good the failure and the time by which the assessment must be completed. Successful retrieval of this failure becomes part of the progression or award requirement of the next stage of the programme of study.
7. A student may be allowed to progress without sufficient credit, if an assessment has been deferred, and gain the necessary credit through assessment in modules where credit has not yet been assigned. The Progression and Award Board will decide the maximum shortfall of credit but, if the workload is manageable, a student will normally be allowed to progress.
8. If a student undertakes assessments and/or is awarded credit for prior learning such that the minimum required for progression is exceeded, the Progression and Award Board will, firstly, take account of the student's performance in all compulsory modules and then the student's best performance in optional modules up to the total required.
9. Specific requirements might apply to professionally accredited programmes, such as healthcare provision, which prevent the trailing of any module, and these will be made known to students where applicable.

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## 6. RETRIEVAL OF FAILURE

NB - for details of fees relating to each of these retrieval processes, please refer to the University website.

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 6.1 Retrieval of Failure - Undergraduate Condonement

1. At each stage of assessment, Progression and Award Boards for undergraduate programmes will award credit for failed modules up to a maximum of 20 credits if **all** of the following conditions are met:
  - the module is not listed in the Programme Specification as a module that cannot be condoned (but see Section 6.1.7 of this Framework below)
  - the full range of marks is available to the Board (which specifically means that condonement cannot be granted if the student has no mark or a partial mark for a particular module(s) perhaps because of extenuating circumstances)
  - the average mark per credit for that stage (including the failing mark) is 40% or more
  - the module has not been the subject of a confirmed instance of academic misconduct
  - the student has attempted the assessment(s) of the module and has achieved a mark of between 30% and 39% (or 40% and 49% for an Integrated Masters Programme where Level 7 modules are studied, in addition to Level 6, at stage 3).

The actual marks achieved for a condoned module will be recorded for classification purposes so that the student bears the consequences of their achievement in the module.

2. If more than 20 credits fall in the condonable range, the Progression and Award Board will not condone any of the modules.
3. The principle of condonement applies to marks attained in resits, retakes and deferred assessments, provided the conditions in Section 6.1.1 of this Framework for the relevant stage are met.
4. Condonement applied at one stage does not preclude condonement being applied in any or all subsequent stages.
5. Any transcript will show the actual mark achieved and will indicate that the credits have been gained by condonement.
6. If the module will not count towards the classification of a final award, the Progression and Award Board may condone the module without offering a resit opportunity.
7. All modules are condonable, unless there are specific requirements relating to external accreditation.

## **6.2 Retrieval of Failure – Postgraduate Condonement**

1. The Progression and Award Board for a taught postgraduate programme will condone marks for a module in the 40% - 49% range for the purposes of awarding credit, in accordance with 6.2.2 below.
2. Condonement decisions can only be made, once a student has been given the opportunity to resit for a 50% mark in the first instance, on the basis of a credit-weighted mean mark of at least 50% obtained across the requisite number of credits for the qualification being considered for award.

3. Modules for which condonement will not be allowed must be listed in the programme specification and made known to students at the start of each programme.
4. The credit-weighted mean mark calculated for classification purposes must use marks in their original form.
5. The limits of condonement are as follows:
  - For the award of a Master's degree, 30 credits
  - For the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, 30 credits
  - For the award of a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), 30 credits
  - For the award of a Postgraduate Certificate, 15 credits.
6. Condonement will not be permitted where the module has been the subject of a confirmed instance of academic misconduct.

### **6.3 Retrieval of Failure – Resit and Deferral**

1. The University defines a resit as a second attempt, following initial failure, at the assessment of a module, for a maximum module mark of the module pass mark (normally 40% for undergraduate modules and 50% for postgraduate modules), without the requirement to repeat any attendance. A resit will cover only the failed assessment, rather than requiring reassessment of the entire module.
2. The University defines a deferral as an attempt at the assessment of a module, following failure which is the subject of a valid claim of extenuating circumstances, for an uncapped mark, without the requirement to repeat any attendance. In accredited programmes requiring students to pass all assessment components, if not all elements were attempted, the resit mark for

the module will remain uncapped provided that all other assessment components in the first attempt were successfully passed.

3. The Progression and Award Board will determine the period during which resit and deferral assessments must be attempted.
4. When the period determined by the Progression and Award Board has expired, the right to retrieve failure by resit or deferral assessment also expires, unless the Progression and Award Board determines that, because of valid extenuating circumstances, the period should be extended.
5. Immediately following the publication of results determined by Progression and Award Boards, the Academic Registrar will ensure that candidates who have failed to satisfy the requirements for progression or an award are informed through a secure webpage.
6. Deans of Faculty will ensure that resit assessment tasks and deferral requirements are published on the University's Virtual Learning Environment at the start of the academic year for all modules.
7. Resit and deferral assessments must assess the learning outcomes of the module in a similar manner and mode to the original assessment. Resit and deferred assessments will normally involve new assessment tasks (e.g. new essay title) rather than revisions of previously submitted work. However, in the case of an honours project or a reflective piece of assessment, students may be allowed to revise and resubmit their original work.
8. Resit and deferral assessments should ensure that principles of academic integrity are upheld.
9. In setting resit and deferral assessments, Module Assessment Boards should take into account that, **on resit or deferral, students must pass every element of assessment the Board has set for their retrieval of failure.** Specifically, resit marks cannot be combined with existing marks from passed elements, nor with each other, so that a module pass mark results.

10. Module Leaders must nominate an alternative contact, to be communicated to resit or deferral candidates, if they are to be absent from the University at any point during the first two weeks after results are published.
11. Deans of Faculty must ensure that resit and deferral coursework is marked promptly after the date set for receipt.
12. The deadline stated is final, and resit coursework cannot be submitted late for a capped pass mark as it is already capped at the module pass mark. Resit coursework submitted after the deadline, therefore, will be treated as a non-submission in accordance with Section 12.4 of this [Framework](#).
13. Resit and deferral assessments are conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 3 of this [Framework](#). However, the marks for resit assessment are not combined with any other marks. In order to pass the module by resit or deferral, a student must pass all the elements of assessment required by the Module Assessment Board to make good the failure.
14. Deans of Faculty shall ensure that signed and completed mark sheets are uploaded into the system by the agreed deadline.
15. Resit and deferral examinations and the submission date for resit and deferral coursework for undergraduate programmes are set out in the University's Assessments Calendar; absence on holiday or work is not a valid extenuating circumstance in the case of non-submission. Failure to complete successfully each year's modules may prevent or delay progression to the next year of the programme of study or result in a student failing to gain an Honours degree.
16. Students are allowed a maximum of three attempts for any assessment regardless of their programme of study, subject to normal resit and deferral regulations, unless they are restarting the entire stage (see 6.4.1, 6.5.3 and 6.6.2). These attempts include a first attempt, a resit attempt and, exceptionally, a third attempt if the assessment is deferred or a module retaken.

17. Resit opportunities for Postgraduate students will take place following the Semester C Assessment Boards as set out in the University's Assessment Calendar for Postgraduate Students.

## **6.4 Retrieval of Failure - Retake**

1. The University defines a retake as a further attempt, following an initial or, exceptionally, a second failure, for a maximum mark of the module pass mark, at the assessment of a module. All assessments for the module must be retaken. The Progression and Award Board will determine whether the retake should be with or without attendance. Students who have failed more than 50% of the credits required for successful completion of a stage will also be considered by a Progression and Award Board for a restart of any stage of an undergraduate programme.
2. The Module Assessment Board and Progression and Award Board will deal with the outcome of retake assessments at the meeting scheduled to consider the next delivery of the module. A student who fails a module having retaken the stage can retrieve their failure by resit subject to the normal conditions but will not normally be allowed to retake a module or restart the stage again. However, a student may apply to start a different programme and may apply for specific credits already achieved to be taken into consideration towards the new programme of study.
3. Unless the Progression and Award Board specifically states otherwise, the student must complete all the assessments required in the next delivery of the module and gain sufficient marks to pass the module. The actual marks attained by the student in each element of assessment contribute in the normal way to the overall module mark which is capped at the module pass mark. The overall module mark will not be capped where a student is retaking modules as a first attempt.
4. The Progression and Award Board will only permit a student to retake a module that the Dean of Faculty has declared will run in the next session.

Otherwise, the Progression and Award Board will require the student to take another specified module in order to make up the credit shortfall. This will be with attendance. Nevertheless, the module mark will be capped at the pass mark and the number of overall attempts will continue to build up unless the module or modules are being taken as a first attempt.

5. Students must undertake sufficient learning activities to demonstrate the outcomes of the module as it is delivered in the next session. This remains the case if a student is allowed to progress trailing failure with attendance and timetable constraints prevent them from attending the retake module. If two or more examinations are held at the same time, the student should attend one examination and claim extenuating circumstances for the other.
6. Otherwise, students enrolled upon retake modules with attendance have the same rights to tuition and support as any other student enrolled upon the module but will be liable for a pro-rata fee of the full-time tuition fee for the retake module.

## **6.5 Retrieval of Failure - Failure on Undergraduate Programmes**

1. In the case of modules failed for the first time where condonement does not apply or has already been applied to another module, the Progression and Award Board will allow resit assessment in up to 50% of the credits required for successful completion of the stage. The nature of the resit assessment will be determined by the Module Assessment Board and shown upon the marksheet.
2. Some programme regulations require students to pass all or particular elements of assessment within modules in order to accumulate credit towards that particular programme. If that is the case, the Progression and Award Board may allow students to attempt resit or deferral assessments in more than 50% of the credits required for successful completion of the stage, if they have achieved the overall module pass mark for those modules. In such cases the Progression and Award Board will determine the maximum number of

assessments that may be attempted and record that decision in the minutes of its meetings.

3. The Progression and Award Board can exclude a student who fails more than 50% of the credits at a specific level of a programme. If so, it may or may not permit them to apply to restart the entire year subject to the University's regulations and the agreement of the Programme Leader. Students restarting the year must pay the full tuition fee, attend all lectures and seminars and take all of the assessments again as if for the first time - no marks can be carried over.
4. In the case of modules failed after a resit or deferral opportunity, the Progression and Award Board may allow the student to progress in accordance with Section 5.2.4 of this [Framework](#) (trailing fail). To be eligible for a resit opportunity, students **must** meet the progression regulation in Section 5.2.4. This allows students to carry forward (trail) a failed assessment in either one 20-credit module or two 10-credit modules, provided they have attempted the assessment and a mark is recorded, either prior to or following any resit. Students must have also obtained an average module mark of 50% across the previous stage.

## **6.6 Retrieval of Failure - Failure on Taught Postgraduate Programmes**

1. In the case of modules failed for the first time where condonement does not apply or has already been applied to another module, the Progression and Award Board will allow resit assessment in up to 50% of the credits required for successful completion of the stage. The nature of the resit assessment will be as determined by the Module Assessment Board and shown upon the marksheet. Condonement cannot be applied if more than one module has been failed at a specific stage.
2. If a student fails modules following a resit opportunity, the Progression and Award Board may or may not permit them to apply to restart the entire year



subject to the University's regulations and the agreement of the Programme Leader. Students restarting the year must pay the full tuition fee, attend all lectures and seminars and take all of the assessments again as if for the first time - no marks can be carried over. If the Progression and Award Board does not permit them to apply to restart the entire year, it will recommend the award of a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma as determined by the credits that the student has accumulated on the programme.

3. To be eligible for a resit opportunity, students **must** meet the progression regulation in Section 5.2.4. This allows students to carry forward (trail) a failed assessment in either one 20-credit module or two 10-credit modules, provided they have attempted the assessment and a mark is recorded, either prior to or following any resit. Students must have also obtained an average module mark of 50% across the previous stage.

## 6.7 Acceptance of Awards

If a student accepts an award which is conferred by a decision of the relevant Progression and Award Board, by choosing not to exercise their right of appeal, all further resit or retake opportunities available to the student lapse with immediate effect.

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## 7. AWARD CLASSIFICATION

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 7.1 General Regulations

1. Module Assessment Boards will determine module marks and report them to Progression and Award Boards as described in Section 3 of this [Framework](#).
2. Unless stated otherwise in the approved programme specification, the Progression and Award Board will recommend classifications of its degrees and other academic awards in accordance with these regulations.
3. Where there is insufficient evidence to determine the class of an award, but the Progression and Award Board is nevertheless satisfied that the student would have qualified for the award for which they were a candidate, had it not been for illness or other sound reason, an *unclassified Aegrotat award* may be recommended.

### 7.2 Honours Degree Classification

1. All module marks at Levels 5 and 6 for non-top-up degrees will be presented to the Progression and Award Board as a whole number with any decimal below x.50 being rounded down and any decimal of x.50 or above being rounded up. For top-up degrees, all module marks at Level 6 will be presented in the same way.

2. If, exceptionally, a student has acquired more than the credits required at each of these levels, the Progression and Award Board will first take account of the marks in all compulsory modules for the award and title for which the student is registered, then the student's best performance in optional modules associated with that award and title, up to the total credit requirement. The Board will disregard all other marks.
3. The Progression and Award Board will recommend the classification calculated from all credits obtained at the applicable levels in accordance with the following classifications:

70+ First Class

60-69 Upper Second Class

50-59 Lower Second Class

40-49 Third Class

The overall weighted average will be presented at the Progression and Award Board as a whole number with any decimal below 0.5 being rounded down and any decimal of 0.5 or above being rounded up. The classification will then be determined by the following formula:

- The best marks achieved in 80 credits pursued at Level 6 will be given a weighting of 3 (i.e. they will count three times).
- The marks achieved in the remaining credits pursued at Level 6 and the best marks achieved in 40 credits pursued at Level 5 will be given a weighting of 2 (i.e. they will count twice).
- The marks achieved in the remaining credits pursued at Level 5 will be given a weighting of 1 (i.e. they will count once).

In exceptional circumstances, where a programme includes more than 120 credits pursued at Level 6, a proportional calculation will be applied.

4. If a student is admitted to Level 6 (whether to a top-up degree or, with credit, to a non-top-up degree), the classification will be determined by the following formula with regard to credits pursued at Level 6 only:
- The best marks achieved in 40 credits pursued at Level 6 will be given a weighting of 3 (i.e. they will count three times).
  - The marks achieved in the next best 40 credits pursued at Level 6 will be given a weighting of 2 (i.e. they will count twice).
  - The marks achieved in the remaining credits will be given a weighting of 1 (i.e. they will count once).

In exceptional circumstances, where a programme includes more than 120 credits pursued at Level 6, a proportional calculation will be applied.

5. If a student was admitted with credit other than as described in Sections 7.2.4 above, mean values will be calculated on the remaining credits *pro rata* and the Progression and Award Board will recommend the highest classification available, following as closely as possible the formula described in Section 7.2.3 above.
6. Modules that are not assigned a numeric mark, e.g. pass/fail modules, or are rated at Levels other than 5 or 6, do not count towards degree classification. Mean values will be calculated on the remaining credits *pro rata* and the Progression and Award Board will recommend a classification, following as closely as possible the formulae described in Section 7.2.3 above.
7. Where the overall weighted average falls within 1% of a higher classification, the higher classification will be applied.

## 7.3 Foundation Degree Classification

1. The credit-weighted mean of all module marks at Level 5, and the three best module marks at Level 4, will be presented to the Progression and Award Board as a whole number with any decimal below x.50 being rounded down and any decimal of x.50 or above being rounded up.
2. If exceptionally a student has acquired more than the credits required at Level 5, the Progression and Award Board will first take account of the marks in all compulsory modules for the award and title for which the student is registered, then the student's best performance in optional modules associated with that award and title, up to the total credit requirement. The Board will disregard all other marks.
3. The Progression and Award Board will recommend the classification calculated from the equally weighted mean of all Level 5 credits, and the three best module marks at Level 4, as follows:  
  
70+ Foundation Degree with Distinction  
  
60-69 Foundation Degree with Merit
5. Modules that are not assigned a numeric mark, e.g. pass/fail modules, do not count towards degree classification. Mean values will be calculated on the remaining credits *pro rata* and the Progression and Award Board will recommend a classification, following as closely as possible the formulae described in Section 7.4.4 above.
6. Where the overall weighted average falls within 1% of a higher classification, the higher classification will be applied.

## 7.4 Master's Degree Classification

1. The credit-weighted mean of all module marks will be presented to the Progression and Award Board as a whole number with any decimal below x.50 being rounded down and any decimal of x.50 or above being rounded up.
2. If, exceptionally, a student has acquired more than the credits required for the award, the Progression and Award Board will first take account of the marks in all compulsory modules for the award and title for which the student is registered, then the student's best performance in optional modules associated with that award and title, up to the total credit requirement. The Board will disregard all other marks.
3. The Progression and Award Board will condone modules in accordance with Section 6 of this [Framework](#), up to the maximum of value stated therein.
4. The Progression and Award Board will recommend the classification calculated from the equally weighted mean of all credits as follows:

70+ Master's Degree with Distinction

60-69 Master's Degree with Merit

50-59 Master's Degree Pass

5. If a student was admitted with credit, mean values will be calculated on the remaining credits *pro rata* and the Progression and Award Board will recommend the highest classification available, following the formula described in Section 7.4.4 above.
6. Modules that are not assigned a numeric mark, e.g. pass/fail modules, or are rated at levels other than Level 7, do not count towards degree classification. Mean values will be calculated on the remaining credits *pro rata* and the Progression and Award Board will recommend a classification, following as closely as possible the formula described in Section 7.4.4 above.

7. Where the overall weighted average falls within 1% of a higher classification, the higher classification will be applied.

## **7.5 Integrated Master's Degree Classification**

1. The classification system applicable to Integrated Master's Degree awards will be determined by the student's point of exit. If a student exits with a Level 6 award (i.e. a Bachelor's Degree or Bachelor's Degree with Honours), then the undergraduate algorithm will apply as set out in Section 7.2 of this Framework. If, however, a student exits with a Level 7 award (i.e. an Integrated Master's Degree) then the following algorithm will normally apply:
  - The best marks achieved in 100 credits pursued at Level 7 will be given a weighting of 1 (i.e. they will count once).
  - The best marks achieved in 100 credits pursued at Level 6 or above (not counting credit from the above) will also be given a weighting of 1 (i.e. they will also count once).
  - The best marks achieved in 40 credits pursued at Level 5 or above (not counting credit from the above) will also be given a weighting of 1 (i.e. they will also count once).
2. If a student first registered before 1st September 2019 and has not interrupted their studies, the Progression and Award Board may also consider the regulations in force on the date of the student's first registration and recommend the higher of the two possible classifications. Specifically, the alternative classification will be determined by the credit-weighted mean of all module marks at Level 7 only. A student who interrupts their studies will be subject to the classification regulations in force at the time of the resumption of studies.



## 7.6 Apprenticeship Award Classification

1. The University validates two levels of apprenticeship programmes: Higher apprenticeships (Level 5), and Degree apprenticeships (Level 6 and above). Apprenticeships must include an academic programme leading to a University award at Levels 5 to 7.
2. Apprenticeship courses finish with an End Point Assessment (EPA), the format of which will depend on the apprenticeship standard and will be outlined in the EPA plan on the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) website and the Programme Specification document. The EPA will confirm the apprentice is occupationally competent in their role before they receive their apprenticeship certificate, and will determine whether the overall apprenticeship standard has been met.
3. For integrated apprenticeship courses, where the University is responsible for the teaching of the award and the EPA module is included within the structure of the course (for example a 20-credit final year module), the Progression and Award Board (PAB) will confirm all modules and completion of the EPA (and notify this to the Education and Skills Funding Agency). Where the EPA module is ungraded, as specified in the EPA plan, this will be excluded from the calculation of the degree award classification.
4. For integrated apprenticeship courses, the PAB may exceptionally require an additional external examiner who meets the criteria set out in the EPA Assessment Plan for the course being examined. The PAB and End Point Assessment Panel will make a decision on the award of the degree and its classification and also secondly whether the learner has passed or failed the EPA. The two separate decisions will be based on differing criteria.
5. For non-integrated apprenticeship courses, the employer will select an approved end point assessment organisation to conduct the EPA. The apprentice cannot be awarded until there has been confirmation that they have passed their End point Assessment.

6. For some regulated professions, the apprenticeship standard follows a fully integrated EPA. Students will be informed by their Academic Department if this is the case. The EPA is not included within the structure of the course. The learner can only progress to the PAB once the Gateway requirements, in line with the apprenticeship standard, have been met. The PAB will then confirm the credit, EPA and make a recommendation for the conferment of the award.

## **7.7 Classification of Other Awards of the University**

1. The Progression and Award Board will classify other academic awards of the University, including Certificates of Higher Education, defined in the Regulations for Academic Awards as follows.
2. The credit-weighted mean of all module marks will be presented to the Progression and Award Board as a whole number with any decimal below x.50 being rounded down and any decimal of x.50 or above being rounded up.
3. If, exceptionally, a student has acquired more than the credits required for the award, the Progression and Award Board will first take account of the marks in all compulsory modules for the award and title for which the student is registered, then the student's best performance in optional modules associated with that award and title, up to the total credit requirement. The Board will disregard all other marks.
4. The Progression and Award Board will recommend the classification calculated from the equally weighted mean of all credits as follows:

70+ with Distinction

60-69 with Merit

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## 8. REGULATIONS FOR ACADEMIC AWARDS

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are also classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 8.1 Authority to Confer Awards

1. Senate is responsible for conferment of academic awards on behalf of Plymouth Marjon University. Except for honorary degrees, an academic award is conferred only when Senate has confirmed the recommendation of the appropriate Progression and Award Board for the granting of that award. This is achieved when the Academic Registrar, who is Secretary to Senate, signs the Progression and Award Board's recommendation for the award.
2. In the event that clarification of these Regulations is required to secure the conferment of an award within a specified time, the Vice-Chancellor, who is Chair of Senate, may interpret the Regulations on its behalf. Any such interpretation shall be reported to the next meeting of Senate.
3. The University will maintain a permanent record of all the academic awards it confers.
4. These regulations apply to all academic awards of the University wherever or however the teaching, learning and assessment takes place.
5. Credit is not in itself an academic award of the University and is not the subject of these regulations. Section 3 of this [Framework](#) includes the authority for the assignment of credit by Module Assessment Boards.

6. These regulations align with the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies, February 2024, and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Advice on Academic Credit Arrangements, May 2021.
7. Throughout these regulations, reference to a post holder shall include the post holder in person or any other person which the University authorises to act in that capacity.

## **8.2 Named Awards**

Each student of the University works towards a named award, normally of the University but which may be registered for an award of another awarding body. The award is bound by the University's regulations and the relevant Programme Specification.

## **8.3 List of Awards**

### **Level 4 awards**

1. The University may confer the following Level 4 awards:
  - University Certificate
  - Certificate in Professional Studies
  - Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE)
2. The award of Certificate in Professional Studies is linked only to programmes of study in the context of specific professional experience and designed to establish or build upon professional qualifications or registration.

### **Level 5 Awards**

3. The University may confer the following Level 5 awards:
  - University Diploma
  - Diploma in Professional Studies
  - Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)
  - Foundation Degree
4. The award of Diploma in Professional Studies is linked only to programmes of study in the context of specific professional experience and designed to establish or build upon professional qualifications or registration.
5. The Foundation Degree may be awarded as:
  - Foundation Degree Arts (FdA)
  - Foundation Degree Science (FdSc)
6. The award of Foundation Degree Science (FdSc) is linked only to programmes in which studies are substantially based on science or mathematics and their applications.

### **Level 6 Awards**

7. The University may confer the following Level 6 awards:
  - Bachelor's Degree
  - Bachelor's Degree with Honours
  - Graduate Certificate
  - Graduate Diploma
  - Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
  - Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (International)

8. The Bachelor's Degree and the Bachelor's Degree with Honours may be awarded as:
- Bachelor of Arts (BA)
  - Bachelor of Education (BEd)
  - Bachelor of Education (International) (BEd International)
  - Bachelor of Science (BSc)
9. The award of Bachelor of Science (BSc) is linked only to programmes in which studies are substantially based on science or mathematics and their applications.
10. The award of Bachelor of Education (BEd) is linked only to programmes of initial teacher training including a substantial element of teaching practice. Moreover, it is awarded only to students who have satisfied the Government's current requirements for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). This requirement must be recorded in the Programme Specification.
11. The award of Bachelor of Education (International) (BEd International) is linked only to programmes of initial teacher training including a substantial element of teaching practice and where the award is taught wholly or in part overseas. This award does not carry UK Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and does not entitle the holder to teach in maintained schools or non-maintained special schools in the UK.
12. The award of Professional Graduate Certificate in Education is linked only to programmes of initial teacher training including a substantial element of teaching practice. The award of Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (International) is linked only to programmes of initial teacher training including a substantial element of teaching practice and where the award is taught wholly or in part overseas. This award does not carry UK Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and does not entitle the holder to teach in maintained schools or non-maintained special schools in the UK.

## **Level 7 Awards**

13. The University may confer the following level 7 awards:
  - Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
  - Postgraduate Certificate in Education (International) (PGCE International)
  - Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)
  - Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)
  - Master's Degree
  - Master's Degree (Integrated)
14. The award of Postgraduate Certificate in Education is linked only to programmes of initial teacher training including a substantial element of teaching practice. The award of Postgraduate Certificate in Education (International) (PGCE International) is linked only to programmes of initial teacher training including a substantial element of teaching practice and where the award is taught wholly or in part overseas. This award does not carry UK Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and does not entitle the holder to teach in maintained schools or non-maintained special schools in the UK.
15. The Master's Degree (inclusive of Integrated) may be awarded as:
  - Master of Arts (MA)
  - Master of Education (MEd)
  - Master of Science (MSc)
  - Master of Business Administration (MBA)
  - Master of Osteopathy (MOst)
  - Master of Physiotherapy (MPhysio)
  - Master of Psychotherapy and Counselling (MPsy)



- Master of Public Administration (MPA)
  - Master of Public Health (MPH)
  - Master of Research (MRes)
16. The award of Master of Education (MEd) is linked only to programmes of continuing educational professional development.
  17. The award of Master of Science (MSc) is linked only to programmes in which studies are substantially based on science or mathematics and their applications.
  18. The award of Master of Business Administration (MBA) shall be used for programmes that focus on the general principles and functions of management and the development of management skills. Students entering MBA programmes must have appropriate experience of managerial practice and should normally have at least two years of appropriate postgraduate work experience on admission.
  19. The title Master of Public Administration (MPA) shall be used for programmes that focus on the general principles and functions of management and/or policy and administration in the public sector. Students entering MPA programmes must have appropriate experience of managerial practice and/or policy in the public sector and should normally have at least two years of appropriate postgraduate work experience on admission.
  20. The title Master of Public Health (MPH) shall be used for programmes which take an interdisciplinary approach to areas related to public health. Students will be taught how to monitor, diagnose, and regulate the health concerns of communities through public policies.
  21. The Master of Research (MRes) is a taught postgraduate degree. The award of MRes shall be used to provide a structured research training programme which can act as a foundation for doctoral study or for a research career outside academia.

22. The award of MOfst (Integrated Master's Degree) is a 4-year full time or 6-year part time pre-registration undergraduate and postgraduate degree, which is designed to develop a critical evaluation of the theory and practice of osteopathy. Recognised Qualification (RQ) status will be sought from the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC).
23. The award of MPhysio (Master of Physiotherapy) is linked only to programmes which prepare students to meet the standards of proficiency for physiotherapists set by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

### **Honorary Awards**

24. The University may confer any of its degree awards as an honorary degree. In addition, the following degrees may be conferred *honoris causa* in accordance with University Guidelines for the Award of Honorary Degrees:
  - Master of Letters (MLitt)
  - Master of Music (MMus)

## **8.4 Standards of Awards**

1. The University defines the standards of its awards in terms of the amount and the level of study undertaken, which builds upon the knowledge and skills expected of each student on commencement of their programme.
2. Except for the conferment of honorary awards, on completion of their studies, students are required to demonstrate outcomes in line with the qualification descriptors and the amount and level of study indicated in the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies, February 2024, and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Advice on Academic Credit Arrangements, May 2021.

3. The University's Senate ensures that programmes of study are designed so that students can demonstrate outcomes at the level appropriate for the awards to which they lead.

## **8.5 Entrance Requirements for Academic Awards**

1. The General Entrance Requirement for a taught programme of study in the University is that an applicant has provided evidence of knowledge and skills to support the academic judgement that the applicant will succeed in their studies. The evidence required is likely to include the qualifications described herein or their equivalent.
2. The Programme Specification relating to a programme of study leading to an award of the University must state any additional entrance requirements for a specific programme.
3. Entry tariffs for each programme will be published on the University website.
4. The University will publish guidance for staff, students and applicants in its Admissions Policy and Procedures.

## **8.6 Admission with Credit and Transfer between Programmes**

1. In accordance with the University's Admissions Policy and Procedures, evidence of prior certificated learning and/or prior experiential learning appropriate to the named award will allow a student to apply for admission to a programme of study with specific credit. The decision to allow admission with credit will exempt the student from specified whole modules, the outcomes of which the student has already demonstrated. Students admitted by direct entry to any stage of a programme other than the beginning of its first stage are regarded as being admitted with credit, as endorsed by the University's Admissions team. Prior certificated learning can only be counted once. Once used for admission to an award of the University or of an alternative provider

the same credit cannot be used for an additional award. Double counting of credit is not permissible.

2. The University will make an academic judgement as to whether the learning is appropriate to the named award and which particular modules may be exempted. In doing so, the University will be bound by the General Entrance Requirement described in Section 8.5.1 of this Framework, by the limits imposed in this regulation and by the aims and outcomes of the programme as they are defined in the Programme Specification. The Admissions team will state any exempted modules in the formal offer letter to the applicant and inform the Registry and Programme Support Office so the Student Record can be maintained. Documents and evidence relating to admission with credit will be retained in the student's file throughout their registration.
3. The total of specific certificated credit allowed to exempt the student from specified whole modules (as per Section 8.6.1 of this Framework) may not exceed the following limits:

#### **Level 4**

- University Certificate and Certificate of Professional Studies – zero.
- Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE) – 60 credits.

#### **Level 5**

- University Diploma and Diploma of Professional Studies – zero.
- Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) – 120 credits of which not more than 60 are at level 5.
- Graduate Certificate – zero.
- Graduate Diploma – 60 credits.
- Foundation Degree – 180 credits of which not more than 60 are at level 5.

## Level 6

- Bachelor's Degree – 240 credits of which none may be higher than Level 5.
- Bachelor's Degree with Honours – 240 credits, of which no more than 60 may be at Level 6. Exceptionally, candidates with a certificated level 6 professional qualification may be admitted with a maximum of 300 credits, of which no more than 60 are at level 6.
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) – zero.

NB - in the case of top-up degrees, a similar requirement exists but this does not constitute 'advanced entry' *per se*. This is because Levels 4 and 5 are not offered on these specific programmes.

## Level 7

- Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) – 30 credits.
- Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) – zero.
- Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) – 60 credits.
- Master's Degree – 90 credits.

4. Notwithstanding the overall limits on RPL within this Framework, not more than 50% of the total credit requirement for an academic award of the University will be awarded on the basis of prior experiential learning alone. Where a proposal is made to increase this amount for all entrants to a programme, agreement from the University's Senate will be required. This must be sought at the point of programme approval and will not be applied retrospectively. This exemption will not be granted to individual applicants seeking entry to a programme. This maximum limit of 50% does not apply to applicants to pre-registration nursing programmes (including nursing apprenticeships) who are currently a NMC registered nurse without restrictions on their practice.

5. The approved Programme Specification for a named award may, exceptionally, specify higher or lower limits for admission with credit, for example at the request of an accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB), or may include in its Specific Entrance Requirements particular qualifications for which admission with credit will be permitted.
6. Applications for the transfer of credit between University programmes will be considered on the basis of the equivalence of the curriculum studied. The general principles in Section 8.6.2 of this Framework will apply, but subject to the student achieving the aims and outcomes of the programme, there will be no limit on the number or level of credits that may be transferred. The Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader will communicate their request with Registry who can authorise the update to the Student Record. Documents and evidence relating to the transfer of credit will be retained electronically by Registry throughout the student's registration.
7. Transfers of credit will normally be possible only at the defined stages of a programme or at a point when modules start or end.
8. The University will publish guidance for staff, students and applicants in its Admissions Policy and Procedures.

## **8.7 Credit Requirements for Academic Awards**

1. This regulation defines the minimum credit requirements for the recommendation of an award of the University to a student admitted in accordance with Section 8.5 of this Framework. However, the accumulation of credit at appropriate levels is a necessary but insufficient requirement for the conferment of University awards.
2. The Programme Specification will state the modules that must or may be studied. It will also state any additional outcomes that are not assessed for the award of credit, but which a student must demonstrate before they can be considered for progression to the next stage and/or the award.

3. The Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Advice on Academic Credit Arrangements, May 2021 describes the use of credit in UK higher education institutions and the definitions in these regulations have been set in line with that Framework.
4. The minimum credit requirements for awards of the University are as follows:

#### **Level 4 Awards**

- University Certificate – 60 credits at Level 4 or higher.
- Certificate of Professional Studies – 60 credits at Level 4 or higher.
- Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) – 120 credits at Level 4 or higher.

#### **Level 5 Awards**

- University Diploma – 60 credits at Level 5 or higher.
- Diploma of Professional Studies – 60 credits at Level 5 or higher.
- Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) – 240 credits at Levels 4 and 5 or higher, of which not more than 120 are at Level 4.
- Foundation Degree – 240 credits at Levels 4 and 5 or higher, of which not more than 120 are at Level 4.

#### **Level 6 Awards**

- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) – 60 credits at Level 6 or higher.
- Graduate Certificate – 60 credits at Level 6 or higher.
- Graduate Diploma, Bachelor's Degree with Honours (top-up) – 120 credits at Level 6 or higher.

- Bachelor's Degree – 300 credits at Levels 4 and 5 and 6 or higher, of which not more than 120 are at Level 4 and at least 60 are at Level 6 or higher.
- Bachelor's Degree with Honours – 360 credits at Levels 4 and 5 and 6 or higher, of which not more than 120 are at Level 4 and at least 120 are at Level 6 or higher.

### **Level 7 Awards**

- Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) – 60 credits at Level 7.
- Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) – 60 credits at Level 7.
- Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) – 120 credits at Level 7.
- Master's Degree (Integrated) – 480 credits at Levels 4 or 5 or 6 or 7, including 120 credits at Level 7.
- Master's Degree – 180 credits at Level 7.

## **8.8 Maximum Period of Registration**

1. The default maximum period for registration for programmes of more than one year's duration is three years longer than the planned duration of the programme of study. However, for programmes of one year's duration, the maximum registration is three years for full-time students and five years for part-time students. Absolute maximum registration periods are as follows:-
  - Foundation Degree – 8 years
  - Bachelor's Degree (including with Honours) – 10 years
  - Master's Degree – 5 years
  - Master's Degree (Integrated) – 11 years



2. A student's registration for an award of the University will cease if two academic years elapse without the award of credit towards that award and the Progression and Award Board will recommend any interim award for which the student may be qualified. For this purpose, an academic year will include any resit period and may be extended to allow for differences in the timing of Module Assessment Boards and Progression and Award Boards between years. Subject to Section 1 of this [Framework](#), such a student may apply for admission with credit to that programme or another programme of the University.
3. A student who voluntarily exits the programme with an Ordinary Degree, without attempting the Honours project, may normally be permitted to return and complete the Honours project within a five-year period. This is subject to the approval of the Programme/Programme Area Leader and the Academic Registrar. However, this provision does not apply to students who exit with an Ordinary Degree due to non-completion resulting from failed modules. Any Honours 'top-up' must be completed within the standard maximum period of registration, as outlined above.

## 8.9 Classification of Awards

1. The University will confer the Bachelor's Degree with Honours with one of the following classifications of honours:
  - First Class
  - Upper Second Class
  - Lower Second Class
  - Third Class
2. The University may confer all other Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees, except those conferred in **Honoris Causa** or **Aegrotat**, with the addition of one of the following classifications where applicable:

- with Merit
  - with Distinction
3. The Progression and Award Board will use the method of classifying awards described in Section 7 of this [Framework](#) at the time it meets.

## **8.10 Conferment and Certification of Awards**

1. A recommendation for conferment of an award of the University shall be confirmed when all the following conditions have been satisfied.
- The student was a registered student on a programme of the University at the time of their assessment for an award.
  - The student has discharged all academic debt to the University (i.e. tuition fees).
  - Registry and Programme Support Office has confirmed that the student completed the programme leading to the award recommended.
  - The award has been recommended by the appropriate Progression and Award Board.
  - The recommendation for the award has been approved by the Chair of the Progression and Award Board confirming that all assessments have been carried out in accordance with the requirements of Senate.
2. The University will issue a certificate for each award it confers, on which will be recorded:
- the name of the University
  - the name of the student as it appears on the list of recommendations submitted by the Progression and Award Board
  - the award and any classification

- the title of the programme as approved by Senate
  - where appropriate, an endorsement that the programme was studied in association with an approved partner institution
  - any other approved endorsement
  - the date of the Progression and Award Board's recommendation for the award
  - the signatures of the Chair and Secretary of Senate.
3. The University will issue to each student on completion of their studies a European Diploma Supplement which may include additional information.

## **8.11 Titles of Named Awards**

The title will reflect accurately the field of study and should not mislead students or potential employers. An award may be untitled if the award itself sufficiently describes the content of the programme.

## **8.12 General Regulations relating to Awards of the University**

### **Interim Awards**

1. When a student withdraws from their programme of study, or a Progression and Award Board excludes them on academic grounds or determines that their maximum period of registration has expired, it will recommend the conferment of any interim award for which the student is qualified.
2. If the student subsequently uses that interim award within two years to gain admission with credit to the same programme or another programme leading to an equivalent award, then they must surrender that interim award.

3. The Postgraduate Certificate in Education is not an interim award and is not to be surrendered if it is used to gain admission with credit to a taught postgraduate programme of study.
4. A Foundation Degree is not an interim award and is not to be surrendered if it is used to gain admission with credit to an Honours Degree programme.

### **Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards**

5. Where there is insufficient evidence to determine the class of an award, but the Progression and Award Board is nevertheless satisfied that the student would have qualified for the award for which they were a candidate, had it not been for illness or other good cause, an unclassified Aegrotat award may be recommended.
6. Senate will not confer the Aegrotat award until the student, or a person authorised to act on behalf of the student, has signified acceptance of the Aegrotat award, or the maximum period of registration as defined in these regulations has elapsed.
7. An award may be conferred posthumously to a student who was a registered student at the time of death and satisfied the remaining general conditions for the conferment of the award as far as was practicable. If there is insufficient evidence to classify the award, the PAB will recommend an Aegrotat award be conferred posthumously.

### **Deprivation and withholding of award**

8. In exceptional circumstances, on the recommendation of the relevant Progression and Award Board or a Student Misconduct Panel, Senate may deprive any person of any award conferred by the University. Such a recommendation may be made, for example, if the person was found to have been admitted to the University or recommended for the award on the basis of material misrepresentation or non-disclosure of facts, or following academic misconduct. In the case of an honorary graduate whose conduct in public life

might harm the reputation of the University, the Vice-Chancellor may present a case to Senate for the annulment of the award.

9. The University will not permit a student who has undischarged liabilities to the University to attend any graduation ceremony. In addition, certification will be withheld if there are unpaid tuition fees.

### **Academic Dress**

10. Graduands who attend a University graduation ceremony for the formal presentation of their academic award must wear Academic Dress, as defined by the University.

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## 9. SUPPORT TO CONTINUE IN STUDY PROCEDURE

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, to all research degree students and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 9.1 Introduction

1. This procedure will be used where the University is concerned about a student's mental or emotional well-being, health or behaviour, to the extent that this might have an adverse effect on the student, other students or staff. It will only be used when the University is unsure that a student is 'capable of living independently (with adequate support) whilst also being able to continue in study and not have such a negative impact on others in the study environment as to significantly impair the learning experience of others'.
2. Staff may raise a specific welfare concern, via the appropriate form, with the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group. The Student Welfare Concern process is primarily one of support, to reduce risk and prevent the deterioration of health, wellbeing and behaviour, including 'radicalisation' (i.e., being drawn into terrorism or extremist behaviour). Staff should consult the University's Mental and Emotional Well-being Guidelines for more detailed advice on what signs to look for and what to do if a student is exhibiting concerning or disturbing behaviour.
3. Staff who are concerned about a student's health, wellbeing or behaviour should use this procedure. If there is a concern of this nature, it is appropriate to explore the student's health, wellbeing issues or pattern of behaviour as promptly as possible and agree supportive action.

4. A student 'giving cause for concern' is likely to be one who is behaving **out of character**. The University embraces and accepts difference, and its students and staff will exhibit a diverse range of backgrounds, abilities and disabilities. A student might behave in ways that a casual observer may consider unusual, but which is characteristic for that student. Therefore, signs to look for and which might give rise to the need to invoke the Support to Continue in Study procedures include, but are not limited to:
- A number of third-party reports about a student. These may be an indication that there is a need to address:
    - under-performance in academic work; frequent lateness/absence from lectures; missing deadlines; poor concentration or a lack of engagement to respond in a timely manner to reasonable requests made by the University; lack of self-care; self-harm; suicidal thoughts; substance misuse;
    - unusually loud or aggressive behaviour or withdrawn or unusually quiet behaviour;
    - concern about how a student's behaviour is affecting their own and/or others' wellbeing in accommodation on campus or in private rental.
    - concern about how well a student may manage their learning experience on off-site activities (e.g. residential trips) within a module or programme, or year abroad study. Students may have been receiving support, but staff may be concerned as to how well a student may cope in an unusual environment even when support issues have been addressed.
5. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will keep relevant departments of the University fully informed of the outcome of any formal assessment of Support to Continue to Study, whilst respecting confidentiality, data protection and professional guidelines.
6. This procedure has two stages based on the perceived level of risk to the health and safety, welfare or ability of the student to continue in study or the risk to others posed by their health, wellbeing or behaviour. The procedure can be activated at either stage.



7. If staff are unsure about implementing this procedure, they should seek advice and discuss their concerns, anonymously and in general terms, with a member of the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group directly or via the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee). The Group meets on a regular basis to discuss student issues and concerns that have arisen within, or as referrals to, Student Wellbeing and Support.
8. If a student on a professional programme is giving cause for concern, particularly with regard to placements, the Fitness to Practise procedures might also need to be invoked. The Support to Continue in Study procedures will apply to all aspects of study that do not involve placement opportunities or similar contacts with external agencies. If a student is subsequently suspended from their programme of study, this will also include any placements and the Fitness to Practise procedures will be suspended accordingly.

## **9.2 Stage One Procedure**

1. If concerns arise about a student's health, wellbeing or behaviour, a member of staff with primary responsibility for their academic progress and/or wellbeing, such as a Personal Development Tutor, should, in the first instance, approach them in a sympathetic and understanding way. Other staff should report their concerns to the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group via [SWS@marjon.ac.uk](mailto:SWS@marjon.ac.uk) in order to make the approach. This might also result in a referral to an external organisation (e.g. Channel, The Zone), with the student's consent.
2. The concerns should be explained to the student as clearly as possible and reported to the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group, normally with the student's knowledge, using the Student Welfare Concern Form. The student concern will be brought to the next meeting of the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group or, if appropriate, a special meeting will be convened.

3. The Group will consider the referral and nature of the concerns before deciding whether:
  - no further action should be taken; or
  - a member of the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group should be appointed to liaise with the student and all staff concerned (by way of an informal meeting and/or other appropriate mechanisms) to offer and co-ordinate support and referrals, as appropriate: or
  - a case conference should be convened, on the grounds that there is evidence of a safeguarding concern, persistent anti-social behaviour, withdrawal or extreme physical change / uncharacteristic episodes that have not been or are unlikely to be resolved without such a meeting.
4. If a case conference is convened, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will write to the student, setting out the arrangements, and all relevant parties including the Academic Standards Officer should be sent a copy of the letter.
5. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will chair the meeting. A nominee of the appropriate Dean of Faculty (such as the Academic Director, Programme Leader, or Programme Area Leader) will also attend, along with a Student Life Officer and/or the Resident Life Tutor in cases where the student is a campus resident or where the behaviour occurred in a University residence.
6. The student may choose to be accompanied by a friend, who should normally be a student of the University or a representative of the Student Union. Students with a disability also have the right to be accompanied by a support worker (e.g. sign language interpreter or mental health worker) as appropriate to their needs.

7. The meeting will invite the student to respond to the concerns. A clear, written statement from the member of staff calling the meeting should be sent to the student and staff attending at least 48 hours before the meeting. The meeting will focus on how the concerns can be addressed, along with the potential consequences of (a) not keeping to the agreed actions and/or (b) continuing to give cause for concern.
8. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will write to the student after the meeting, setting out the arrangements made, and all relevant parties - including the Academic Standards Officer and, in the case of a safeguarding incident, Registry - will be sent a copy of the letter. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) is also responsible for keeping the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group informed.
9. The student's case will continue to be monitored until all those involved agree that there is no continuing cause for concern. At this point, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will write to the student to confirm that, unless there are any further concerns, the procedures have come to an end. All relevant parties - including the Academic Standards Officer and, in the case of a safeguarding incident, Registry - should be sent a copy of the letter.

### **9.3 Stage Two Procedure**

1. Stage Two will be initiated if there is ongoing concern or evidence of 'disturbing' behaviour that might be a serious safeguarding concern to themselves or others, a risk to their health, wellbeing or safety, or the good order or reputation of the University, and if it is not possible to resolve these concerns at Stage One.

2. In such instances, a member of the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group will immediately convene a meeting of the Group, which will discuss and agree the next step. The Group will also appoint a member to liaise with all concerned and make recommendations to the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) as appropriate.
3. A formal meeting (the arrangements for which will be as for the Stage One Case Conference) will be called by the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) to discuss the most appropriate course of action. The student will have the right either to represent themselves at the first part of this meeting, accompanied if desired, or to submit a written representation to the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee). If the student fails to respond or attend, the case conference and formal adjudication may go ahead in their absence.
4. The formal meeting, chaired by the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee), will include representatives from the student's academic programme, the Marjon Student Union and the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group. Their contribution, however, will be subject to Data Protection legislation and/or professional codes of confidentiality.
5. The student may choose to be accompanied by a friend, who should normally be a student of the University or a representative of the Student Union. Students with a disability also have the right to be accompanied by a support worker (e.g. sign language interpreter or mental health worker) as appropriate to their needs. The friend is permitted to attend to provide advice and quiet support to the student, and can be heard only with the agreement of both the student and the Chair. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will write to the student, setting out the arrangements, and all relevant parties including the Academic Standards Officer will be sent a copy of the letter.

6. In the event of extreme unacceptable behaviour or serious risk to the student and/or other members of the University, a student may be denied access to the University, both physically and virtually, with immediate effect at the point of referral. The Vice-Chancellor or (in the Vice-Chancellor's absence) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost will confirm this, on the recommendation of the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee), either before or after the case conference takes place. Any denial of access under this provision will normally be reviewed at intervals of no more than one month and the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group will continue to provide support, co-ordinated by the appointed member, to the student during this period.
7. In exceptional cases those involved in the case conference may conclude, on the basis of the available evidence, that extreme unacceptable behaviour or serious risk to the student and/or other members of the University, is likely to continue throughout the two-year period stipulated, in Section 8 of this [Framework](#) (the Regulations for Academic Awards), as the maximum period during which a student can remain registered without gaining credit. As this will automatically result in a student's registration coming to an end, they may recommend to the Vice-Chancellor or (in the Vice-Chancellor's absence) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, via the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee), that they should be excluded permanently with immediate effect. The Academic Registrar must be notified immediately of any such recommendation, copied to the Academic Standards Officer, and, in the event of a safeguarding incident, Registry.
8. The student's case will continue to be monitored until:
  - it is agreed by all those involved that there is no continuing cause for concern
  - the student withdraws, or
  - the student's registration ceases, under Section 8 of this [Framework](#) (the University's Regulations for Academic Awards), on the basis that credit has not been obtained for a period of at least two years.

At this point, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will write to the student to confirm that the procedures have come to an end, subject to their reactivation if this becomes appropriate. All relevant parties, including the Academic Standards Officer and, in the event of a safeguarding incident, Registry should be sent a copy of the letter.

## **9.4 Return to Study**

1. Where the outcome of either of the above Stages is interruption, the student's appointed member of the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group will continue to monitor the student's progress towards return and liaise with all parties as necessary. The student will be required to provide sufficient evidence, from an appropriate professional who has been working with the student, to enable the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group to recommend to the Academic Registrar (copied to the Academic Standards Officer) that the student is ready to return to study after interruption. In addition, the student may be required to agree a study support plan and/or obtain formal medical clearance, for example by way of an Occupational Health assessment. This is intended to respond to any ongoing support needs the student has as well as providing terms for the student's return. Should the student not adhere to the terms, or concerns re-emerge or escalate, proceedings can be re-instigated.
2. The appointed member of staff will be responsible for continued monitoring and co-ordinating support until the student no longer gives any cause for concern.
3. If, on the other hand, the Student Wellbeing and Support Welfare Concern Group cannot recommend that the student is ready to return to study, it will recommend a further period of interruption or withdrawal to the Academic Registrar (copied to the Academic Standards Officer), stating the reasons for their decision. The Vice-Chancellor or (in the Vice-Chancellor's absence) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost will confirm this, on the recommendation of the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee).

4. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will advise all relevant parties - including the Academic Registrar (copied to the Academic Standards Officer) and, in the event of a safeguarding incident, Registry - with regard to return to study after interruption and any related issues.

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## 10. FITNESS TO PRACTISE PROCEDURE

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, to all research degree students, and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 10.1 Introduction

1. Plymouth Marjon University offers a number of professionally accredited programmes (as indicated in the relevant programme specifications). These programmes are practice-centred and are directed towards the achievement of professional competence. In such programmes, academic success alone may not meet all of the professional requirements, for example, these might include ethical, moral or behavioural matters and, in some situations, the impact of certain physical and mental health conditions.
2. Upon graduation, students must be able to contribute effectively to their chosen profession and operate as competent professionals. This fitness to practise procedure aims to ensure that students are fit to practise whilst also helping to ensure user, client or pupil safety and public trust in the relevant profession.
3. Professionally accredited programmes must also comply with the regulations and codes of professional conduct of their relevant controlling bodies, including the Department for Education's *Teachers' Standards* and those set by organisations known in the UK as Health and Social Care Regulators. The application of the procedures will be informed by any relevant regulator-specific guidance.

4. In addition, students may undertake placement or work-based learning activities on any programme offered by the University, irrespective of its professional accreditation status. Whilst these programmes are not practice-centred or directed towards the achievement of professional competence *per se*, the University expects all students who are working in a professional setting to conduct themselves in an appropriately professional manner at all times. These procedures may be applicable to all students in respect of any module in which placement or work-based learning activities occur. However, their principal application is to professionally accredited programmes.
5. These procedures are separate from the Student Misconduct Procedures (see Section 15 of this [Framework](#)) and will only be invoked in cases where a student's behaviour is giving cause for concern with regard to their fitness to practise. In addition, they will not apply when a decision to remove a student from a professionally accredited programme has been made by an Assessment Board. This is because such a decision can then be challenged via the Academic Appeals procedure, which would be expected to take into account the same evidence base that would have been considered under these procedures. It may be appropriate, therefore, to defer any related Assessment Board decision until these procedures are complete.
6. If a student on a professionally accredited programme is giving cause for concern, the Support to Continue in Study procedures might also need to be invoked. In such cases, the Support to Continue in Study procedures will apply to all aspects of study that do not involve placement opportunities or similar contacts with external agencies. However, if the application of Support to Continue in Study procedures result in the suspension of a student from their programme of study, this will apply to a student's entire programme of study including any placements. In such cases, the suspension of the student will lead to the automatic suspension of any Fitness to Practise procedures that are ongoing.

7. Where students are already in the workplace and attending a programme directly relating to their professional practise, either with or without the support of their employer, the University may contact employers where it has identified serious concerns about potential fitness to practise. This applies, in particular, with regard to the safety of users, clients or pupils, other members of the employer/placement provider and the student.
8. The University accepts that different standards of behaviour will normally be required of students at different stages of a programme. It recognises professional training as a place where exploration takes place and accepts that mistakes can, in fact, be made and addressed. However, it is also constantly vigilant in ensuring that all students on professionally accredited programmes are fit to practise in the relevant professional area. This involves dealing promptly and appropriately with all cases in which fitness to practise is in doubt.
9. These procedures are conducted on the basis of 'the balance of probabilities' - rather than the criteria of 'beyond reasonable doubt' which applies in criminal cases - as they are civil, rather than criminal, procedures.
10. Where a student submits a complaint during fitness to practise proceedings, it may be appropriate to pause the fitness to practise process while the complaint is being investigated. This will depend on the nature of the fitness to practise concerns and the nature of the complaint, and how they relate to one another.
11. Students involved in the fitness to practise procedure are encouraged to make use of support through the University's Student Wellbeing and Support team, the Marjon Student Union, or other sources as appropriate. If students have any queries regarding the procedure or outcomes, they should contact the Academic Standards Officer.
12. The University can make reasonable adjustments to the procedure on a case-by-case basis to take account of the individual needs of students with disabilities. Students are encouraged to discuss their requirements with the Disability Team (Student Wellbeing and Support).

In addition, the University can consider making reasonable adjustments for any student, where appropriate, to reflect their individual circumstances. Students are encouraged to raise any such needs at any stage during the fitness to practise process, so that the University can consider and implement appropriate adjustments.

## **10.2 Acceptance on Programmes**

1. Before commencing a professionally accredited programme, each student must undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. If a student would not fulfil the requirements of the relevant profession in this respect s/he would not be admitted to study for that profession or to practise it. The purpose of this DBS screening is to protect the safety of children and/or vulnerable adults in the student's care. This need to protect also applies to students throughout their programme and to professionals in practise. It is the responsibility of the student, alongside the University, to ensure that the DBS has been completed prior to commencing the programme of study. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the University of any criminal conviction, caution, warning or reprimand received after they start their programme in accordance with Section 2 of this [Framework](#).
2. In addition, trainee teachers must have the health and physical capacity to teach, as set out in the Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations (2003). The University will ensure that only those with the capacity to teach remain on the programme, using the guidance set out in Section 10.4 of this Framework. Additional checks, as currently required by the Department for Education, may also be applied as appropriate.
3. In addition, the University will ensure that all students admitted onto its health programmes are of good character and good health to ensure they can practise safely and effectively. As such, additional checks may be applied and declarations sought, as required by the relevant Health and Social Care Regulators.

## 10.3 Practice Placements

Practice in the care of users, clients or pupils is an essential part of professionally accredited programmes. Students must be supervised by a named individual who holds effective and appropriate registration or other professional and academic qualifications as well as appropriate experience.

## 10.4 Professional Unsuitability

1. Sometimes, it becomes apparent that a student may not be suitable for the profession for which they are studying. The student, their tutors or a placement provider may be the first to notice this. Any student who has doubts about their suitability for the profession for which they are studying should discuss the situation informally with a tutor as soon as possible. Where a member of staff or placement provider feels that a student may be unsuitable, the matter should be reported to the relevant member of University staff responsible for supporting students during the placement period. They should then discuss matters informally with the student. In some cases, the issues of concern may be resolved by appropriate support and guidance. If the unsuitability is expected to be temporary, an interruption of study may be appropriate. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if there is a risk to user, client or pupil care, the formal procedure will need to be invoked.
2. Professional unsuitability can take various forms. The following are typical examples, although this is not an exhaustive list:
  - Ongoing lack of motivation or interest and/or non-participation in learning activities (e.g. direct care; engagement in small group/problem-based learning; portfolio development; practise placements; presentations; timetabled academic sessions; academic or pastoral tutorials; clinical skills sessions).
  - Ongoing unwillingness or inability to accept guidance about involvement in the programme/professional practise.

- Ongoing inability to make/evidence professional judgements over and above personal value considerations as appropriate.
- Inconsistent, unreliable and/or inappropriate behaviour in the clinical, teaching, coaching and/or learning context, including inappropriate appearance/failure to follow applicable dress codes, poor timekeeping/attendance and inappropriate/excessive use of personal digital devices such as mobile phones.
- Emotional and/or inter-personal problems that adversely affect the clinical, teaching, coaching and/or learning context.
- Behaviour that adversely affects the operation of the clinical, teaching, coaching and/or learning context, including a failure to maintain appropriate boundaries with users, clients or pupils and/or patient confidentiality.
- Negligent misuse of social media in a placement or work-based learning context (please see the University's [Social Media Policy](#) for further guidance).
- Physical and/or mental health conditions, where the relevant adjustments and appropriate support would not prevent the student or others being at risk and/or where there has been a failure to seek help or engage with appropriate services.
- Competence issues: these would normally relate to whether the student was able to practise competently and safely by the progression point in each year of the programme. However, they could also stem from a holistic assessment of the student's capability, at the end of the programme, after relevant adjustments and appropriate support had been offered / provided.
- An inability, in a healthcare context, to recognise the duty of candour that applies to users or clients when something has gone wrong with their treatment or care, or which has the potential to cause harm or distress.

- Health and safety breaches resulting from negligence, rather than malicious intent, on the part of the student.
- A failure to self-reflect, indicating a lack of insight on the student's part.
- Poor communication and/or language skills which affect the student's ability to practise.

## 10.5 Interim Measures

1. If there is evidence of a risk to user, client or pupil care at any point in these Procedures, the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader should notify the Dean of Faculty. The Dean of Faculty may then authorise the immediate removal of a student from a current or prospective placement until this risk is no longer perceived to apply. Any such decision should be notified to the Registry and Programme Support Office, via the Academic Registrar, in writing.
2. Under the terms of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and where the student may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or put a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm, there is a legal requirement to refer the student to the DBS. This action will be taken by the Registry Manager (Applications, International & Compliance) (or nominee) under the authority of the Academic Registrar.
3. There could be times when it is considered that a referral should be made in the interests of safeguarding children or vulnerable adults even if the student has not been removed from regulated activity. This could include acting on advice of the police or a safeguarding professional, or in situations where there is insufficient evidence to dismiss or remove a person from working with vulnerable groups.
4. The DBS is required by law to consider any and all information sent to it from any source. This includes information sent where the legal referral conditions are not met. The DBS will use legal powers and barring processes to

determine whether the person should be barred from working in regulated activity with children and / or vulnerable adults.

5. In addition, some programmes (such as Initial Teacher Training) will have support mechanisms that are activated prior to these procedures. These are as outlined in the relevant Programme Handbooks and/or the relevant programme pages within the University's Virtual Learning Environment.

## **10.6 Acceptable Behaviour**

The University recognises that involvement in the fitness to practise procedure can be a stressful experience for students. However, it also has a duty to ensure the safety and well-being of its staff and, for example, will not accept communication that is abusive; offensive or defamatory; aggressive; threatening; coercive or intimidating and/or unreasonably persistent or demanding. Such behaviour, therefore, might constitute an instance of student misconduct (see Section 15 of this [Framework](#)).

## **10.7 Stage One Procedure – Programme Level**

1. If professional unsuitability is alleged, the placement supervisor/mentor, personal tutor, Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader or other appropriate member of academic staff will discuss the issue with the student and advise them in writing of any concerns that they have about their conduct, with the prior agreement of the Dean of Faculty. This would include any remaining concerns that have not been resolved informally. They will also supply the student with any relevant documents/reports that support these allegations and direct them to appropriate sources of independent support (such as the Student Union and Student Wellbeing and Support).
2. The Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader will convene and chair a meeting involving the student, their Personal Development Tutor and other appropriate members of academic staff. Where appropriate, the placement



supervisor/mentor and a member of the institutional staff designated to support students during the placement period will also attend. At the meeting, the concerns and the student's progress will be discussed with a view to agreeing an action plan. The Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader will communicate the outcome of the meeting, and of any subsequent meeting held to review progress and/or to provide additional support, by letter to the student. This letter, which should normally be sent within five working days of the meeting and should be copied to the supervisor/mentor, Personal Development Tutor, Dean of Faculty, the Academic Registrar, Registry and Programme Support Office, the Academic Standards Officer and/or other appropriate members of academic staff.

3. The student's case will continue to be monitored, normally by the originator of the Stage One procedures, until all those involved agree that there is no continuing cause for concern. At this point, the Dean of Faculty (or Associate Dean) will write to the student to confirm that the procedures have come to an end, subject to their reactivation if this becomes appropriate. All parties who were sent a copy of the letter referred to in the previous paragraph should also be sent a copy of the letter. If, on the other hand, the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader cannot recommend that the student is ready to return to professional practice, they may recommend a further period of removal from professional practice to the Dean of Faculty, stating the reasons for their decision.

## **10.8 Stage Two Procedure - Investigation**

1. If the matter is not resolved by this course of action - or if the matter is so serious that an immediate investigation is required - the Dean of Faculty (or Associate Dean), on the advice of colleagues as appropriate, will initiate an investigation, to be held as soon as reasonably possible. The investigator will be a member of academic staff from the same Academic Department, normally on another professionally accredited programme, who has had no involvement with the student. The Dean of Faculty (or Associate Dean) will

inform the student that Stage Two has been initiated and invite them to an interview which will proceed in the presence of the investigator and at least one other member of the Academic Department.

2. The investigator will collate and present the evidence that will determine whether or not a student's fitness to practise is impaired. The investigator will take into account any relevant accrediting body criteria as notified to them by the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader.
3. Following the investigatory interview with the student (at which the allegations and any evidence which supports them will be made clear to the student), the investigator may meet with others, e.g. institutional placement staff, placement supervisor/mentor, witnesses to events and relevant professional practitioners. The investigator shall examine the circumstances of the alleged unsuitability from all perspectives, including that of the student, and maintain records of the investigation including records of complaints, notes of meetings held, interviews and statements.
4. When the investigation is complete, subject to any deferral that might be required to obtain a medical report, the investigator will submit a report to the Dean of Faculty (or Associate Dean). If the Dean of Faculty (or Associate Dean) considers, in the light of the investigator's report, that the student's behaviour is insufficiently serious or persistent to call their fitness to practise into question at the present time, they may determine the following courses of action:
  - No further action.
  - To allow continued practise for a specified period, following which a further assessment will be made.
  - A formal warning to be placed on the student's record.
5. The resultant decision letter, which should normally be sent within five working days of the conclusion of the investigations, should be copied to the supervisor/mentor, Personal Development Tutor, Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader and/or other appropriate members of academic staff as well as the Academic Registrar, Registry (in the case of a

safeguarding incident) and the Academic Standards Officer. Any documents that have been explicitly taken into account in reaching a decision, where these have not been supplied by the student, should be supplied to the student at this point.

## **10.9 Stage Three Procedure – Fitness to Practise Panel**

1. If the Dean of Faculty (or Associate Dean) considers, in the light of the investigator's report, that the student's behaviour is serious or persistent enough to call their fitness to practise in question, the case will be referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel. The investigator, however, will not serve on the Panel. The Fitness to Practise Panel will consider evidence presented by the investigator and the student, with a view to deciding whether the student's fitness to practise is impaired. Its decision will be taken with reference to the balance between user, client or pupil and public safety, the interests of the student and the need to maintain trust in the profession.
2. The Dean of Faculty (or Associate Dean) will refer the matter accordingly to the Academic Standards Officer by way of a report consisting of the investigator's report, the associated evidence and authorisation to proceed. On receiving such a report, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will convene a Fitness to Practise Panel which shall comprise:
  - An appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the student and who teaches or has taught on a professionally accredited programme.
  - A second appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the student.
  - A member of the Executive Committee of the Student Union, normally the President or Deputy President, who also has no involvement with the student.

In addition, where practicable and at the request of the Chair, the Panel may include up to two external advisors with professional expertise of the relevant discipline. They may be academic colleagues at other institutions where the discipline is taught, professional colleagues with appropriate knowledge and experience, and/or service users in the case of health-related provision. The advisors may attend the Panel hearing in person or provide written commentary on the basis of the available evidence.

The Academic Standards Officer or nominee will act as Secretary to the Panel and proceedings may also be recorded, either electronically or by a minute taker, by mutual agreement. The Panel will not meet unless all members and the Secretary are present. The Academic Standards Officer or nominee will endeavour to ensure that the Panel includes at least one male and one female member.

3. The student shall be informed of the date of the meeting of the Panel not less than ten working days in advance. This deadline can only be reduced with the student's written consent. They will be invited to appear in person but, in exceptional circumstances, the Panel may also hear a case, at the discretion of the Chair advised by the Academic Standards Officer or nominee, in their absence. A Panel can be scheduled at any time in the calendar year; however, reasonable steps will be taken to schedule this at a point in the year when the student would normally be present in the University.
4. The student may be accompanied by a 'friend', who is permitted to attend to provide advice and support to the student and can be heard only with the agreement of both the student and the Chair. The name and status of any such 'friend' must normally be notified to the Academic Standards Officer or nominee no less than five working days in advance of the hearing. The University must grant its consent beforehand for the 'friend' to attend the meeting, but requests by students to attend a hearing in the company of an independent, knowledgeable and objective supporter from the relevant profession will normally be accepted. The student may also choose to call witnesses in their defence, including employees of the University where appropriate.

5. The Academic Standards Officer or nominee shall normally circulate the list of witnesses to be called, and all relevant documentation, to all parties not less than five working days before the meeting. Where this is not possible, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will advise the student, who will have the right to request a postponement. Additional papers supplied by or on behalf of the student will be circulated thereafter with the proviso that, in exceptional circumstances, the Panel may decide to adjourn a hearing in order to secure a written response. The documentation will include any relevant accrediting body criteria and/or institutional guidance, as notified to the investigator by the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader.
6. The refusal or failure of a student to attend will not invalidate the Panel's proceedings, provided that they have been given sufficient notice as set out above.
7. At the outset of the hearing, the Chair of the Panel shall identify the issues to be determined, the persons entitled to attend the hearing, and the documents supplied to the Panel. They will also ask the student to confirm that they have understood the procedures and have no concerns with regard to procedure.
8. The Dean of Faculty, or a nominee, will then outline the case against the student, before the Chair invites witnesses to give evidence. Members of the Panel may question witnesses directly and the student, or their 'friend', may question the Dean of Faculty, or nominee, and the witnesses through the Chair.
9. The Chair shall then invite the student, or their 'friend', to respond. The Chair and other members of the Panel may question the student on the statement and/or the documentary evidence. Witnesses may question the student through the Chair.
10. At the conclusion, the Chair shall offer the student the opportunity to make a closing statement (which should not introduce new evidence), once the witnesses have left, before the Panel considers its decision in private. In all cases, the student shall have the right to make a final statement to the Panel before it considers its decision.

11. The possible outcomes of a fitness to practise hearing include the following:
  - Fitness to practise is not impaired and the student has no case to answer.
  - Whilst there is evidence of inappropriate conduct, fitness to practise is not currently impaired.
  - The student's fitness to practise is impaired and a sanction is appropriate.
12. The purpose of imposing a sanction is to protect users, clients or pupils and the public, to maintain trust in the profession and to ensure that students whose fitness to practise is impaired are dealt with effectively. Accordingly, if a sanction is imposed, an appropriate rationale should be provided in the decision letter.
13. In order of severity, the sanctions available to the Panel include the following:
  - A formal warning to be placed on the student's record.
  - An undertaking on the part of the student, to be reviewed after an appropriate period of time.
  - Conditions on the student's continued participation in the programme.
  - Suspension from the programme.
  - Removal from the programme, with the opportunity of transfer to an appropriate stage of an alternative programme (if available) at an appropriate time.
14. The resultant decision letter will be drafted by the Academic Standards Officer or nominee for the approval of the Chair. It shall also constitute the official record of the hearing including, where this is applicable, the reasons for imposing a specific penalty or penalties and an explanation as to why a lesser penalty was unsuitable.
15. The letter will normally be sent to the student within ten working days of the hearing and within thirty-five working days of the commencement of the Fitness to Practise Procedure at Stage One. If this is not possible, exceptionally, the student will be kept informed.

16. Where a decision has been taken to suspend or remove a student from a programme, it will take immediate effect. A decision to remove a student from a programme will be referred to the Academic Registrar for implementation.
17. If the University has a duty to inform the Independent Safeguarding Agency, the Department for Education, a designated Health and Social Care Regulator or any other Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body of the outcome of any Fitness to Practise proceedings, the decision letter will set out the notification arrangements. These will vary according to the context - for example, there may be an external requirement for educational institutions to report fitness to practise cases as part of their annual reports, along with details of individual students who have been subject to fitness to practise procedures.
18. Where a student is not removed from a programme, their case will continue to be monitored, normally by the originator of the Stage One procedures, for the remainder of the academic year or until all those involved agree that there is no continuing cause for concern. At this point, the Dean of Faculty (or Associate Dean) will write to the student to confirm that the procedures have come to an end, subject to their reactivation if this becomes appropriate. All relevant parties should be sent a copy of the relevant communication.

## **10.10 Right of appeal**

1. At all stages of the process, a student has the right of appeal against the decision and/or the penalty imposed on any or all of the following grounds:
  - that the procedures were not followed properly.
  - that the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision.
  - that the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
  - that there was bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure.

- that the action the provider has decided to take is disproportionate or not permitted under the procedures.

Any such appeal must be submitted in writing to the Academic Standards Officer or nominee within ten working days of the date of the letter communicating the decision.

2. The Academic Standards Officer or nominee will refer the appeal to an appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the student. The appeal stage will normally be concluded within fifteen working days of the receipt of the appeal. If a delay is envisaged, the appellant will be notified in writing before the end of the fifteen working day period. If valid grounds to proceed with the appeal are not found, the University's Fitness to Practise Procedure will have been exhausted, and the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will advise the student accordingly.
3. If, however, it is found that there may be additional evidence that could not reasonably have been provided to the original hearing, or procedural irregularities, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will reconvene the original decision-making body with new membership of a similar status. This will always lead to an additional interview or hearing, under the procedures appropriate to the relevant Stage, which will not involve the participation of anyone involved in the original decision. This re-hearing will be final and there will be no further right of appeal thereafter. In all such cases, the appeal process may lead to the confirmation, reduction or quashing of any sanction originally imposed, but not to an increased sanction.
4. The student will be notified in writing of the decision, normally within five working days of the hearing, in accordance with the procedures appropriate at the relevant stage. The decision letter will confirm that the University's Fitness to Practise Procedure has been exhausted.



## **10.11 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education**

1. If an appellant remains dissatisfied after the appropriate internal processes have been exhausted, they can ask the University to issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review their appeal.
2. The University must issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the OIA to review an appeal. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued automatically where valid grounds for re-hearing the appeal are not found at the review stage.
3. All requests for review must be made to the OIA within twelve months of the date of issue of a Completion of Procedures letter. For full details please contact <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.

## **10.12 Annual Report**

Each year, the Academic Standards Officer submits a report on student casework to Senate, detailing (anonymously) general matters or issues arising from recent Fitness to Practise cases. Additional reports are also submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee of the Board of Governors on a regular basis. Senate will forward recommendations to other relevant University committees so that broad concerns can be shared, and appropriate action taken.

## **10.13 Procedures at Partner Organisations**

1. In accordance with the Good Practice Framework issued on behalf of the HE sector by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and Plymouth Marjon University's Collaborative Provision Regulations and Procedures, all students registered for the University's awards have the ultimate right to complain to the

University, irrespective of where they are studying. This right of complaint, however, is not absolute and is subject to the precise wording of the partnership agreement.

2. The partner organisation, accordingly, should ensure that clear information and guidance with regard to fitness to practise is made available to all students registered for the University's awards. This should include clear information about the sequence of processes involved and make clear the channels through which dissatisfied students can contact the University directly.
3. Once the internal procedures of the partner organisation have been fully exhausted, students who wish to take their case to the University for review should ask the Academic Standards Officer in writing if they are eligible to do so. Students may request a review of the decision on the following grounds only:
  - A review of the procedures followed at the formal stage.
  - A consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances.
  - New material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
4. If a case is eligible for review, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will refer the challenge to an appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has no involvement with the partnership. If the challenge is upheld, the case will be referred back to the partner organisation to be reheard under its own procedures. Otherwise, the University will not refer the case back to the partner organisation to be reheard and the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will advise the student accordingly. This will include advice with regard to a student's further right of appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

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## 11. ATTENDANCE, INTERRUPTION, WITHDRAWAL AND FEES

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 11.1 Attendance

1. Students registered on programmes of study are required:
  - to be in attendance throughout the academic session, subject to the specific requirements of their programme of study including scheduled breaks
  - to participate fully in their studies
  - to be present at lectures, seminars, tutorials and other assigned academic activities, including assessments
  - to submit work when required
  - to fulfil all other academic requirements of their programme.

Significant absences not only affect the performance of a student but also reduce the benefits of participation for others. The University may withdraw students from their programme if their participation has been unsatisfactory. If funding is terminated due to non-attendance, students may not receive support for future funding.

2. An Academic Director, on the advice of the relevant Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader and other relevant institutional staff, may refuse a student access to placement, work experience or a practical activity if poor attendance at preparatory sessions meant that the student would be ill-prepared for the activity, or would be a Health and Safety risk to themselves or others. The relevant Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader will

communicate further information on the requirements for both attendance and practical activity to students.

3. Satisfactory attendance is a basic condition of accepting public finance for higher education. The Student Loans Company and other relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies require the University to inform them within ten working days if a student fails to start a programme or ceases to attend.
4. The University is also required to notify UK Visas and Immigration if any student who has been issued with a Certificate of Acceptance to Study (CAS) fails to start a programme, ceases to attend, is absent due to illness for an extended period of time, or has a consistently poor record of attendance (for example, frequent unexplained absences) and is withdrawn from the programme.
5. If an attendance, engagement or progression issue has been identified by a Module Leader, they will contact the Programme Leader, Personal Development Tutor and Student Wellbeing and Support without delay to ascertain the reasons for the student's absence. Where there is no known reason, the Personal Development Tutor will contact the student informally by telephone and/or email, providing advice with regard to the possible consequences of non-attendance. If there is still no response after ten working days' non-attendance, the Personal Development Tutor will ask the Registry and Programme Support Office to contact the student in writing. If the student does not respond within a further five working days, the Personal Development Tutor will advise the Registry and Programme Support Office to withdraw the student. The Registry and Programme Support Office will then update the student's record and inform them of this action and their fee liability for the period.
6. Students who require a leave of absence due to legitimate medium to long term commitments (including maternity or paternity) should contact Student Wellbeing and Support as soon as is practicable, to enable the relevant support to be put in place.

7. Students who are not enrolled on distance learning programmes are expected to reside either on the University campus, or within a practicable daily commuting distance of it. The University reserves the right to terminate a student's registration, in exceptional circumstances, if their location makes it impossible for them to travel to the campus and back in a single day.

## **11.2 Absence through Illness**

Students prevented by illness from taking part in their programme for more than seven successive days should ensure that a certificate signed by a medical practitioner is submitted to the Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader, or to a representative of Student Wellbeing and Support who will forward the form to the Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader on the student's behalf. Please note that medical conditions that develop during a programme may be subject to occupational health investigation to comply with professional body requirements.

## **11.3 Interruption of Studies**

1. Circumstances sometimes arise which make it very difficult for students to continue with their studies. It may be possible to arrange an interruption of studies subject to the maximum period of registration permitted for the programme of study. Representatives of Student Wellbeing and Support will advise on academic implications and financial consequences. Deadlines for requesting an interruption of studies are normally set around 4 weeks before the student's final assessment board each year.
2. The digital Interruption form is available on Antler and MyMarjon. Students must inform the Registry and Programme Support Office of any changes to their registration via the appropriate form, and a failure to do so may make a student liable for repayment of loans.

3. The assessment results of students who interrupt or withdraw during the academic year will be handled as described in Section 11.6 of this Framework below. This will enable return at an agreed point in the subsequent academic year.
4. If a student has interrupted their studies for more than two years, the Progression and Award Board will normally exclude them from their programme in accordance with the University's Regulations for Academic Awards (see Section 8.8 of this [Framework](#)).
5. The unavailability of modules and/or the constraints imposed by the University timetable may affect the resumption of studies. A condition of students being permitted to interrupt their studies is that they must accept any such consequences. Poor academic progress is not an acceptable reason for interruption of studies and a student must not gain an assessment advantage through interruption of studies. Therefore, all assessment marks (including any zeros) for the period up to and including the date of interruption must stand. Students are subject to the regulations in force at the time of return, inclusive of any increase in tuition fee.
6. Students who interrupt on health grounds are required to provide evidence, from an independent professional, indicating that they are fit to resume prior to re-registration with the University. The names of students interrupting on health grounds will be forwarded to Student Wellbeing and Support so that the appropriate support can be put in place.

## **11.4 Withdrawing from the University**

1. Students who are considering withdrawing from the University should contact Student Wellbeing and Support for advice in the first instance. If they decide to withdraw, they must complete the digital Withdrawal Form available on Antler and MyMarjon and ensure that books borrowed from the Library have been returned, accounts due have been settled and accommodation agreements

properly terminated. The University will make every effort to recover debts, and this may involve outside agencies.

2. If a student intends to transfer to another institution this should be indicated on the Withdrawal Form and relevant details provided. Failure to do this, under government guidelines, could jeopardise future funding as students may be deemed to have withdrawn from all study and funding may be terminated.
3. The Withdrawal form will ask the student for their date of last attendance in order to minimise liability for fees and other expenses due to the University and/or funding organisations such as the Student Loans Company. This date will be verified with the Programme Leader. They must also ensure that the University is aware of any changes to their registration. Failure to inform the Registry and Programme Support Office in writing via the appropriate form will mean that the student may be liable for repayment of loans.
4. The University asks students, by way of the Withdrawal form, for their reasons for withdrawing. This is to ensure that it is providing the appropriate services and support. If a student responds, then the data will be anonymised and used only for this purpose.
5. If a student is withdrawn following a decision by the Progression and Award Board, the date of the Board meeting will be recorded as the student's last date of attendance.

## 11.5 Tuition Fees

1. Unless other funding arrangements are in place, students are required to pay tuition fees for their programme of study, as set out in the appropriate [fee schedule](#). Students must pay tuition fees as part of the registration process and/or provide proof of a tuition fee loan in the form of the authorising letter from the funding partnership.
2. Students cannot complete registration until payment arrangements have been made with the Finance Office. Moreover, **please note that any student who**



**fails to pay tuition fees may be withdrawn from the course until all debt for the year is paid in full.**

3. Part-time and modular fees are pro-rata to the full-time fees according to the credit value of the modules.
4. The University will make every effort to recover outstanding tuition fees, and this may involve outside agencies.

## **11.6 Recording of Module Results for Students who Withdraw or Interrupt**

1. A student who withdraws from or interrupts their programme of study before the first assessment submission date will be given the module free of consequence – i.e. the module(s) will not form part of their profile for that year, and, if they return, the module(s) will be taken as an uncapped first attempt.
2. A student who withdraws or interrupts after the final assessment deadline for that module has passed will be deemed to have completed that module and the marks for any assessment due will be taken to the next set of Boards. The student will be deemed as having had an attempt at the module(s); subsequent attempts at the module(s) or their direct replacements will then be capped at the module pass mark.

## **11.7 Fees Policy for Students who Withdraw or Interrupt**

1. Students who withdraw prior to the end of their programme will be liable to a pro-rata fee payment for the time spent on their programme of study on the following basis. Dates based on the standard term dates are given below for indicative purposes only and are not exhaustive: in the case of non-standard entry, students who withdraw will be charged in accordance with the terms of the specific provision.

- Students withdrawing or interrupting for any reason between the start date of course plus 27 calendar days inclusive will be exempted from fees. This equates to a period of 28 calendar days.
  - Students withdrawing or interrupting for any reason, between day 29 of the programme and the end of 16 weeks from the programme start date, will be charged 25% of the tuition fee as set out in the fee schedule.
  - Students who withdraw or interrupt after 16 weeks but before the end of 32 weeks from the programme start date will be charged 50% of the tuition fee as set out in the fee schedule.
  - Students who withdraw or interrupt after the end of 32 weeks from the programme start date will be charged 100% of the tuition fees as set out in the fee schedule.
  - In all of the above, any part of a week shall be charged as a full week calculated up to and including the following Friday.
2. Students returning to study after interruptions from the previous academic year(s) will be treated as continuing students for fee purposes, and will be liable for the balance of the tuition fee as published in the fee schedule for the current year.

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## 12. ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 12.1 Introduction

1. Plymouth Marjon University has defined a range of assessment regulations and procedures that underpin the maintenance of standards within the University. These are detailed in Section 3 of this [Framework](#). All its assessment and classification conventions are in the public domain, including the procedures of Module Assessment Boards (MABs), the procedures of Progression and Award Boards (PABs), the work of External Examiners and procedures relating to the disclosure of marks to students.

#### **Assessment design, approval and review**

2. Identifying appropriate assessment opportunities and criteria is important when designing a programme. The University has adopted programme design criteria which are informed by the expectations and practices set out in the [UK Quality Code For Higher Education](#) and [OfS B conditions](#). The University's approach to assessment is also aligned to the QAA advice and guidance relating to assessment.
3. Responsibility for the quality and standards of assessment lies with the designated members of academic staff. The University's [Strategies and Policies](#) provide the supportive framework.

4. Validation and review of programmes involves scrutiny of assessment processes. The Periodic Review and Validation Panels follow the guidelines on assessment published by the University. As good practice, during the review, the amount and type of assessment should be addressed.
5. The collection of feedback from students, through a number of routes, is an integral part of programme review. Informal feedback can occur through the Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader, through module tutors, and/or through Personal Development Tutors. Formal feedback is via mid-module review and semester/term evaluations, which specifically ask for feedback on assessment methods and loads. In addition, Programme Voice Panels provide further opportunities for assessment issues to be addressed and to consider External Examiner reports. Student feedback is systematically referred into the University's quality mechanisms at the appropriate level.

### **Programme assessment procedures**

6. University-wide procedures for the smooth running of programme assessments are adopted in order to ensure that there is internal consistency and external confidence in the University's standards. These are made explicit to staff and students in the relevant University documentation.

### **Responsibilities for supervising assessment and related procedures**

7. At the programme level, the day-to-day responsibility for assessment lies with module teams. Individual tutors are responsible for setting, marking, making arrangements for second marking / moderating work, recording provisional marks, and returning the work to students on time.
8. At the University level overall responsibility for assessment and related procedures lies with Senate. The Academic Registrar is responsible for oversight, with appropriate devolved management, of the administration of examination processes, assessment boards and recognition of prior learning. The Academic Standards Officer manages appeals and complaints procedures within the Quality and Academic Standards Unit.

9. The Registry and Programme Support Office will make arrangements for examinations and for timetabled in-class tests that directly contribute to final module marks, as defined by the University's Assessments Calendar. Module Leaders are also responsible for ensuring that any additional arrangements for students are adhered to for practical examinations and presentations.
10. Deans of Faculty, Academic Directors, Programme Leaders, Programme Area Leaders and External Examiners have significant responsibilities for maintaining standards on particular programmes. These are defined in the University's **Annual Monitoring Procedures** and in Section 3 of this [Framework](#).

## 12.2 Module assessment

All taught modules have a set content and form of assessment (including the weighting of elements of assessment). Students are provided with information relating to assessment, at the beginning of their module, by their programme teams through the programme/module information available on the University's Virtual Learning Environment. The content of this information conforms to the approved Programme Specification and Module Descriptors. Students must attempt all components and elements of a modules assessment in order to pass the module - this includes all elements of a portfolio where this is an assessment mode of the module.

## 12.3 Programme Assessment

1. Submission dates for all programme assignments are provided by programme teams at the start of each module, and are published in the programme/module information available on the University's Virtual Learning Environment. Changes to the published submission date may only be changed if:
  - there is good reason for doing so

- that doing so will not impact adversely on students' assessment schedules
  - all registered students have been informed in writing in advance
2. Students will be given target word counts or equivalents for programme assessments. The instructions for the assessment should make the consequences of exceeding or failing to reach the word count clear before the student undertakes the assessment and this should be further noted in the Programme Specification.
  3. Word counts include footnotes, quotes and reference citations within the text of the work. The following elements are normally excluded from the word count, unless otherwise specified in the assessment brief: titles; abstracts; acknowledgements; table of contents; list of abbreviations; reference list; bibliography; appendices; captions for images, figures and tables.
  4. Programme assessments must be submitted via the appropriate means in a format agreed by the Module Leader, normally via Turnitin. Submissions made in the absence of Turnitin must have the University's signed programme assessment report form or agreed equivalent attached. A receipt recording the student number and the exact time of submission will be issued or recorded via the electronic audit trail inherent to a Turnitin submission. Where required the receipt should be retained by the student as proof of submission until after publication of the results relating to that module.
  5. The University may make and authorise third parties to make copies of any work submitted for assessment but only for the following purposes:
    - assessment of work
    - comparison with databases of earlier answers or works or other previously available works to confirm that a student's work is original
    - addition to databases of works used to ensure that future works submitted at this institution and others do not contain content from a student's work

- To align to the OfS requirement to retain appropriate records of assessed student work, including for students who are no longer registered on a course, for a period of five years after the end date of a course.

The University will not make any more copies than are necessary for these purposes, will only use copies made for these purposes and will only retain such copies as remain necessary for those purposes.

6. The Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader will provide students with further details concerning the arrangements for the submission of programme assessments, including resit work, at the beginning of the academic session. The feedback is returned to students, either on the programme assessment report form or other agreed format. A copy of the feedback is also made available to the appropriate office.
7. The University requires marked work to be returned to students with feedback within twenty working days of the submission deadline. If there are reasons beyond the marker's control why this will not be possible, the Module Leader must inform all students of the reason for the delay, and state the date by which students can expect to receive their returned programme assessments.
8. **N.B. - all marks remain provisional until recommended by the relevant Module Assessment Board.**
9. Non-submission of programme assessments will be awarded a mark of zero (in accordance with the University generic grade descriptors, as set out in Section 12.6 of this [Framework](#)).

## 12.4 Penalties for Late Submission

1. Extensions to submission dates for programme assessments for individual students are not permitted. A student who is unable to meet a submission date for a programme assessment (and this includes an approved flexible submission date), must consult the Extenuating Circumstances procedures described in Section 4 of this [Framework](#).



2. Programme assessments submitted after the published submission time and date, but within seven calendar days of that date, will be marked. The mark awarded will be subject to a reduction of ten marks per day (or part of a day, and by this anything received after the deadline will be considered to be a day late and so on), for a maximum of seven calendar days or until the module pass mark has been reached. In each case, the mark the work merits will also be shown on the programme assessment. This does not apply to resit work, which is already capped at the module pass mark. Resit work submitted after the deadline will receive a mark of zero.
3. Work submitted manually more than seven calendar days after the published submission date will be marked for formative purposes only, but a mark of zero will be awarded and recorded.
4. The assessment penalties described above may only be waived if the student has successfully applied for Extenuating Circumstances. Therefore, the marks, as described above, remain until the Module Assessment Board meets and responds to the Registry and Programme Support Office's recommendations.
5. If Extenuating Circumstances have been deemed valid, the Module Assessment Board will take the appropriate course of action. All actions will be recorded in the MAB minutes.
6. All work will receive written feedback, irrespective of whether or not the work can achieve its actual grade.
7. These late submission penalties apply only to standard numerically marked assessment. For all non-standard assessment, students should refer to the relevant Module Descriptor.

## **12.5 Marking Procedures**

1. The University's approach to marking is shaped by the expectations, practices and guidance set out in the UK Quality Code For Higher Education, OfS B

conditions and by practice across the sector as communicated by its External Examiners.

### **Anonymous marking**

2. The general marking practice for modules delivered at Level 5 or above is that for summative assessment, where possible, the identity of the student should be unknown to the marker(s).
3. Every examination script for modules delivered at Level 5 or above should be marked anonymously wherever possible. Any exemption to this requirement at programme level should be recorded on the programme specification.
4. Where possible, programme assessments for modules delivered at Level 5 or above will be marked anonymously. At the beginning of a module, students will be notified via programme and module information of those assessed activities for which their anonymity will be preserved and those for which it will not.

### **Double marking**

5. Double marking is where two markers assess the work. The purpose of double marking is to ensure the accuracy and consistency of marking, and thus to verify the marks. A sample reflecting the range of marks and classifications should enable the two markers to ensure that they are marking consistently and accurately against assessment criteria and grade descriptors.
6. Student work for assessment is sample double marked internally and made available to external examiners. The minimum sample is either the square root of  $n$  (where  $n$  is the number of students on the module), rounded up to the nearest whole number, or a sample of 5 assignments where this is greater. In addition, if there is more than one first marker, at least two assignments should be reviewed per marker. Marks are usually only recorded on the work once the double marking process is complete. It is the expectation that all Level 6 and 7 dissertations and honours projects are double marked.

7. Blind double marking is where the student work is independently assessed by two markers, neither of which is aware of any comments made or mark awarded by the other. Any assessment may be double blind marked on a discretionary basis, although this is more likely to apply to individual pieces of work constituting at least 75% of the assessment of modules which are greater than 20 credits and where the credits contribute to the final award.
8. Once double marking (including blind double marking) has taken place, first and second markers agree marks for each assessment. Ordinarily, if the marks are within a 5% tolerance band, the first marker's grade should be maintained. Where the double marking process reveals that markers are more than 5% apart, they will need to agree the grade for the individual piece of work. Should the double marking process result in marks falling outside the 5% tolerance band for two or more assessments within the sample, then the entire corpus of grades should be reconsidered, and moderated as necessary, to ensure that a consistent approach is maintained across all assessments on a module.
9. Exceptionally, where no agreement can be reached between first and second markers, a third party, who must have appropriate subject expertise and standing and be a member of the relevant Academic Department, should mark the work and adjudicate. The decisions of the third marker, which should be clearly recorded, are final. External Examiners must not be used to resolve marking disagreements.
10. Once double marking has taken place, the full set of marks for the assessment can be confirmed. Marks can then be entered on the programme assessment report form and the work returned to the students. Similarly, marks for examinations can be recorded on the module marksheet. No assessments, or marks, should be returned to students unless the set of marks, as a whole, has been agreed.
11. Markers should maintain clear records which should be available to other markers and External Examiners, as necessary. However, whilst markers' records identify a mark and provide a justification for this judgement, the

programme assessment report form should only present the final, agreed mark, and feedback which warrants the grade, so as to provide students with clear and helpful information.

### **Moderation**

12. Module teams should review the patterns of the full range of marks for elements of assessments within a module. The review may consider the pattern of marks in relation to
  - Other assignments
  - Previous history of the module
  - Other modules on this and other programmes
  - External norms
13. Action resulting from moderation could involve the rescaling of the entire assignment, if the pattern of marks is considered to be anomalous or, if it displays no pattern at all, remarking of an entire assessment may be necessary. Moderation should be used in annual monitoring of modules and could be taken as evidence for the need for a modification to the learning, teaching and assessment of the module. Evidence of moderation should be kept and shared with the External Examiner.

### **External examiners**

14. In addition to internal double marking and moderation as described above, all student work for assessment is subject to sampling by the External Examiner appointed with responsibility for the relevant cognate group of modules. The size and nature of the sample and the rights and responsibilities of the External Examiner are described in the University's Handbook for External Examiners and Moderators, but the External Examiner has the right of access to all assessed work at all FHEQ Levels.

## 12.6 Marking and Grading

1. The following scheme is used in all summative assessment for Honours degrees.

### **CLASS AND NUMERICAL EQUIVALENT**

First class	70-100
Upper second	60-69
Lower second	50-59
Third	40-49
Fail	1-39
No work submitted	0

2. The following scheme is used in all summative assessment for undergraduate programmes other than Honours Degrees (or the related exit awards).

### **GRADE AND NUMERICAL EQUIVALENT**

Distinction	70-100
Merit	60-69
Pass	40-59
Fail	1-39
No work submitted	0

3. The following scheme is used in all summative assessment in Master's level programmes.

## GRADE AND NUMERICAL EQUIVALENT

Distinction 70-100

Merit 60-69

Pass 50-59

Fail 1-49

No work submitted 0

4. Unless an assignment has 'absolute' answers then the following grade points will apply within each classification band:

- High – threshold plus 8% (58%, 68% etc.)
- Medium – threshold plus 5% (55%, 65% etc.)
- Low – threshold plus 3% (53%, 63% etc.)
- Pass – threshold plus 0% (50%, 60% etc.)

The purpose of this is to enhance clarity and consistency across the marking process.

5. The University has developed Generic Grade Descriptors, which inform assessment across its programmes in a non-prescriptive manner. The Descriptors focus on the development of knowledge and understanding and intellectual skills. Each grade presented assumes that the lower level criteria have been achieved. Staff are encouraged to mark across the full range of grades.

## LEVELS 4, 5 and 6

### **1st (90–100%). Outstanding work which:**

- demonstrates analytical and critical acumen

- demonstrates the ability to develop and sustain a personal judgement which is well grounded in leading current research
- demonstrates the ability to present a clear, structured, articulate and persuasive argument

**1st (80–90%). Exceptional work which:**

- demonstrates thorough, critical understanding of current knowledge
- demonstrates a critical awareness of the principles and practices of the discipline

**1st (70–79%). Excellent work which:**

- demonstrates a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the discipline
- shows evidence of extensive, relevant reading which includes up-to-date research
- reveals originality and insight
- demonstrates ability to critically evaluate complex ideas

**2.1 (60–69%). Very good work which:**

- demonstrates a sound understanding of the discipline
- shows effective and competent use of literature
- demonstrates a clear understanding of complex ideas

- demonstrates the ability to analyse, interpret and organise information effectively
- demonstrates a wide reading base
- is a clear, concise and well-structured presentation

**2.2 (50–59%). Good work which:**

- demonstrates a generally sound understanding of the discipline
- makes good use of relevant literature
- demonstrates ability to synthesise information into a clear, well-structured account / argument

**3rd (40–49%). Fair work which:**

- demonstrates an understanding of the discipline
- shows evidence of relevant reading
- demonstrates ability to work towards tasks set, but more descriptive than analytical
- demonstrates the ability to organise work appropriately

**Borderline fail (35-39%). Weak work which:**

- demonstrates a basic understanding of the discipline
- demonstrates some evidence of reading
- demonstrates evidence of broadly working towards the task(s) set



Weaknesses may be identified in one or more of the following:

fragmentary coverage; errors and omissions; organisation and presentation; misconceptions; inclusion of irrelevant information; misinterpretation of instructions.

**Fail (30-34%). Inadequate work which:**

- demonstrates a basic and partial understanding of the discipline
- some evidence of reading
- limited focus on task(s) set

Inadequacies may be identified in one or more of the following:

assessment guidelines not followed; little engagement with the discipline; errors / omissions; poorly presented work.

**Fail (20-29%). Poor work which:**

- demonstrates little understanding of the discipline

Poor work may be evidenced by one or more of the following:

basic misunderstanding or misinterpretations; inability to meet the requirements of the assessment; poor organisation and presentation; inclusion of inappropriate material.

**Fail (10-19%). Incompetent work which:**

- demonstrates very limited evidence of understanding of the discipline
- follows few or none of the tasks set

Incompetent work may be evidenced by one or more of the following:

inclusion of irrelevant information; little evidence of engagement with the task;  
little evidence of engagement with the discipline.

**Fail (1-9%). Unacceptable work which:-**

- demonstrates minimal or no understanding of the discipline

Unacceptable work may be evidenced by one or more of the following:

work which is not presented in an acceptable manner; work which is not written in an appropriate manner; work which does not evidence appropriate reading; no evidence of engagement with the discipline.

**Fail (0%). Non-submission.**

## **LEVEL 7 PROGRAMMES**

**Pass with Distinction (90-100%). Work which:**

- is thought-provoking, presenting challenging evidence-based insights and proposals
- work which is of publishable quality

**Pass with Distinction (80-89%). Work which:**

- contributes to the knowledge base of the discipline
- effectively challenges theoretical frameworks
- displays methodological rigour

- demonstrates qualities consistent with publishable material

**Pass with Distinction (70-79%). Work which:**

- demonstrates confident, detailed and informed knowledge of the discipline
- demonstrates qualities of self-critical, independent learning
- displays a confident / competent grasp of complex issues
- displays evidence of originality and innovation

**Pass with Merit (60-69%). Work which:**

- demonstrates a secure and relevant knowledge base
- is analytical in style and critical in interpretation
- demonstrates a fluent style and uses an appropriate language

**Pass (50-59%). Work which:**

- demonstrates a competent understanding of the discipline
- reveals knowledge and understanding of key issues
- addresses issues within a structured framework
- demonstrates analytical and critical acumen
- is well organised and presented

**Condonable Fail (40-49%). Work which:**

- displays relevant knowledge of the discipline
- reveals some evidence of a systematic, coherent and analytical engagement with the discipline
- is generally competent but may be conceptually weak
- contains irrelevant materials

**Fail (30-39%). Work which:**

- demonstrates limited understanding of the discipline
- reveals weaknesses / flaws in argument
- uses an insufficient range of sources
- has a poor style / structure
- is partially incomplete

**Fail (20-29%). Work which:**

- displays insufficient engagement with or lack of understanding of the discipline
- shows limitations in the ability to formulate / sustain a clear argument
- does not meet the expectations of the task set

**Fail (10-19%). Work which:**

- has serious errors and / or major omissions

- is poorly communicated / presented
- is incomplete / does not focus on the task set

**Fail (1-9%). Work which:**

- unacceptable work which lacks evidence of understanding the discipline
- includes inappropriate / irrelevant information
- lacks any evidence of an appropriate reading base
- has marginal or no engagement with the task

**Fail (0%). Non-submission.**

6. Transcripts record the numerical marks obtained for modules (which are presented as whole numbers with any decimal below x.50 being rounded down and any decimal of x.50 or above being rounded up).

## **12.7 Criteria Used in Assessment**

The assessment criteria of particular assignments are based on the University's generic level and grade descriptors, UK qualification and classification descriptors and the QAA Outcome classification descriptors for FHEQ Level 6. Students should be made aware of these criteria, and of any additional criteria upon which their work is being judged.

## **12.8 Examination Timetables**

1. The Registry and Programme Support Office supports examinations organised by the module leaders, including the equivalent within a digital context. Exams

will be timetabled by the module leader to take place during the University's Assessment weeks. Exams scheduled outside of the designated Assessment Weeks will not be centrally administered and must instead be organised and managed by the individual programme teams. **Please note that the arrangements set out below may need to be varied in a digital context, and that appropriate advice will be issued if this is the case.**

2. Module Leaders are responsible for providing assessment details, including those for in-class tests, to the Programmes Office by the start of September each academic year. Students may have examinations on consecutive days and up to two examinations on one day. Students should make sure that they are punctual for University examinations in accordance with given instructions. Examination information is posted on the University's Virtual Learning Environment.
3. Academic Departments are responsible for issuing examination papers, where applicable, in advance for seen examinations. Papers will be available from the Programmes and Partnerships Office fifteen working days before the date of the examination.

## **12.9 Additional Examination Arrangement Requests**

1. Additional examination arrangements are normally requested by the University's Disability and Inclusion Advice Service (DIAS) team.
2. If requests have not been made in sufficient time for the additional arrangement to be made, normally at least ten working days before the date of the examination, the student should not attempt the examination without the additional arrangements but make use of the Extenuating Circumstances procedure to seek a deferral. Additional Arrangements are put into place by the Programmes Office which notifies students of the details of their examination.

## **12.10 General information on examinations**

1. Candidates will be identified on examination scripts or answer book covers by student numbers only. They should bring their library card or other photographic identification to all their examinations where physical attendance is required.
2. No unauthorised materials or equipment should be taken into Examinations Halls/Rooms.
3. Students should refer to the published Examination process and code of conduct on MyMarjon for detailed information about examinations.
4. Candidates will have access to equipment facilities appropriate to the examination type and their own additional arrangements.
5. Students would not normally have an entitlement to have access to their examination scripts. Access to examination scripts, if requested by a student, is at the discretion of individual programme teams. Should access to a script be granted, this should be limited and supervised, and under no circumstances should a student be permitted to remove the script from the Academic Department.

## **12.11 Absence from an Examination**

1. If a student is prevented by serious circumstances from attending any examination or part of any examination they must follow the extenuating circumstances procedure in Section 4 of this [Framework](#).
2. In the absence of valid extenuating circumstances, a student who misses an assessment will be deemed to have failed it and a mark of zero will be awarded.

## 12.12 Notification of results

1. Registry will notify students of their confirmed marks, the decisions of Progression and Award Boards and the consequences of those decisions by way of a password protected page that may be accessed directly at [Login \(marjon.ac.uk\)](https://marjon.ac.uk) .
2. Provisional marks may also be issued in certain circumstances for **general guidance only**, but students are advised that significant changes may occur when the marks are finalised. These include the possibility of a provisional mark of 40% or more for undergraduate programmes — or 50% or more for postgraduate programmes — changing to a failing mark.
3. Registry will make a transcript of module marks available to students who have successfully completed their programme. Continuing students should discuss their marks with their Personal Development Tutors at the beginning of the next academic year.
4. The arrangements for publishing results in partner institutions will be as notified to students by the Programme Leader or Programme Area Leader or Personal Development Tutor in consultation with the Academic Registrar, but will follow this procedure as closely as possible.
5. Students should access their results immediately. Students have a right of appeal against decisions taken by the Progression and Award Body that affect their academic progress; the permitted grounds of appeal are set out in Section 16 of this [Framework](#) (Academic Appeal Procedure).
6. Students should also ensure that they are able to complete any resit work that has been set during the resit period.

## 12.13 External Examiners

1. In common with all Higher Education institutions in the UK, the University appoints External Examiners.



2. Each External Examiner considers student performance in a designated cluster of modules associated with one or more programmes. External Examiners help the University to ensure that justice is done to students, past present and future, that the standard of academic awards is maintained and that assessments are conducted in accordance with the approved regulations.
3. External Examiners submit written annual and interim reports to the University. A Progression and Award Board (PAB) External Examiner is responsible for maintaining consistency of standards across programmes and award frameworks at the same level.
4. Details of the External Examiner arrangements applicable to a specific programme can be obtained by contacting the Academic Standards Officer in writing, although please also note that the University seeks to safeguard the impartiality of the External Examiner process at all times. For this reason, it regards any unauthorised attempt by a student to contact an External Examiner as gross misconduct, the possible penalties for which include expulsion.
5. Detailed information about the role of External Examiners is contained in the Handbook for External Examiners and Moderators.

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## 13. SUBSTANTIAL ASSESSMENT TASKS

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 13.1 Introduction

Substantial assessment tasks include Dissertations, Honours Projects, Independent Study Modules and other modules of more than 30 credits, and typically have a single assessment point. Detailed information on substantial assessment tasks will be found in Programme and Module information provided by the programme team.

### 13.2 Ethical Clearance

Students should seek ethical clearance for all assessment tasks which involve research, or where specifically required, following the procedures used by researchers at the University as laid down in the University's Research Ethics Policy and Code of Conduct. Programme teams will make students aware of this, and support students through the process of seeking ethical clearance in accordance with the Policy.

### 13.3 Dissertations and Honours Projects

1. Dissertations and honours projects involve students working independently but with supervision provided by an appropriate tutor, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Detailed guidance on what is required will be provided in the Programme and / or Module information.

2. Dissertations and honours projects are taken in the final stage of study (Level 6 for undergraduate dissertations; Level 7 for postgraduate dissertations). They are typically worth 40 credits or more and therefore cannot be considered for condonement (see Section 6 of this Framework).
3. Dissertations and honours projects must be an original piece of work and should not exceed the word limit as published in the information provided by the programme team or the equivalent student effort (where graphical, video, audio or other non-written material is involved).
4. The nature and timing of the undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations and honours projects will be subject to approval at programme and/or Academic Department level and will follow the University's published Assessments Calendar.

### **13.4 Dissertations and Honours Project Requirements**

Students must follow the requirements specified by their programme team, including the nature and format required for the work. All sources consulted must be fully acknowledged throughout in accordance with the University's requirements. Further guidance can be found on [MyMarjon](#).

### **13.5 Submission of Dissertations and Honours Projects**

1. Students must follow the format for submission as detailed by their programme team and set out in the module information. The University normally retains a copy.
2. Please also refer to Section 4 of this Framework with regard to Extenuating Circumstances.

## **13.6 Feedback on Dissertations and Honours Projects**

Feedback on the dissertation/honours project will be provided to the student in the normal timeframes (please also refer to Section 12.3 of this Framework), and should be available no later than the day the final results are posted.

## **13.7 Library Dissertation and Honours Project Holdings**

1. Selected dissertations/honours projects will be made available electronically via the Library, typically for a period of five years. This will not affect ownership or copyright of any original material contained within the dissertation/honours project.
2. Students who do not wish their dissertation/honours project to be made available, if selected, can opt out. They can do so either by completing the relevant section on the dissertation/honours project report form or by advising the Library Team in writing at any time thereafter.

## **13.8 Undergraduate Independent Study Modules (ISMs)**

1. Undergraduate programmes may also have validated Independent Study Modules (ISMs). An ISM is a single module (20 credits) at Level 5 or 6 that enables students to negotiate a topic for independent study under the supervision of a tutor. An ISM is distinct from, and cannot form part of, the dissertation/honours project.
2. Details of what the module involves can be found in the relevant Programme and/or Module information. The content of ISMs must be drawn from the areas of study within, or related to, the student's programme of study.
3. The Programme Leader, in liaison with the Academic Registrar, must approve registration for an ISM and the topic. Submission dates for ISMs, will be agreed with the student.

4. An Independent Study Module (ISM) should not exceed 5,000 words or the equivalent student effort (where graphical, video, audio or other non-written material is involved).
5. In order to ensure that students are equipped to meet the demands of independent study, they will not be permitted to undertake an ISM before the second semester at Diploma Level (Level 5). Students can only take one ISM across their entire programme of study.
6. Please also refer to Section 4 of this Framework with regard to Extenuating Circumstances.

### **13.9 Right to Copy**

The University retains the right to copy any work submitted for assessment, be it in print or electronic format, in order to carry out its processes of assessment and for administrative purposes. Students cannot opt out of this arrangement.

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## 14. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROCEDURE

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, to all research degree students and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 14.1 Academic Integrity

1. Academic Integrity relates to ethical practice in all areas of academic activity and professional conduct. Academic Integrity is guided by adherence to agreed principles that ensure fairness and create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. It assumes a level of honesty and rigour that enables academic activities - such as teaching, learning, assessment and publication - to function for the benefit of all members of the University and the external community.
2. Plymouth Marjon University seeks to foster an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Students who embrace academic integrity understand that there are conventions of academic practice which both display and ensure academic integrity and that they must:
  - properly acknowledge and cite all use of the words, results or ideas of others.
  - properly acknowledge all those who have contributed to a piece of work.
  - ensure that all work submitted as their own as part of an assessment or other academic activity is produced without the aid of impermissible materials or impermissible collaboration.



- ensure that data and results are obtained by ethical means and reported accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with their interpretation or conclusions.
- treat all other students in an ethical manner by neither facilitating academic dishonesty by others nor obstructing their academic progress.

It is necessary to follow these principles in order to ensure that:

- everyone is given credit for their ideas, words, results, and other academic activity.
  - all student work is fairly evaluated and no student has an inappropriate advantage over others.
  - each student's intellectual and professional development is ensured.
  - each student is supported towards a successful transition to graduate employment and future careers, as employers will expect graduates to have acquired the attitudes and behaviours that academic integrity demands.
  - the reputation of the University for integrity in its teaching and research is maintained and enhanced.
3. The acquisition of relevant study skills such as effective note-taking, ability to critically evaluate other writers' theories and concepts and presentation skills will help students to understand these conventions.
  4. Failure to adhere to these principles leads to poor academic practice. It can also lead to an offence of academic misconduct and, in serious cases, can threaten the reputation of the University. Every member of the University community therefore has a responsibility to ensure that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. The sanctions that will be applied where academic misconduct has been established, which can ultimately involve the cancellation of credit and/or expulsion, are set out below.

## 14.2 Academic Misconduct – general principles

1. The University recognises three particular areas of misconduct, as follows:

- Personal misconduct
- Professional misconduct
- Academic misconduct

Academic Misconduct is defined in greater detail below. Personal and Professional Misconduct are the subject of separate procedures (see Section 15 of this [Framework](#)). A particular case of alleged misconduct might span more than one of these areas.

2. The University is committed to safeguarding the standard and integrity of its awards by the prevention and/or detection and punishment of academic misconduct in assessed work. Accordingly, students are expected to display academic integrity by not acting in any way which is likely to gain unfair academic advantage in an assessment. Where a student acts in this way, an offence of academic misconduct has been committed. **Regardless of their intentions, any student who breaches these regulations will be considered to have committed academic misconduct.** Academic misconduct can be investigated at any time, and where it is proven after an award is made the University reserves the right to withdraw that award.
3. Cases of alleged academic misconduct are dealt with by way of a three-stage process. At each stage, additional and more severe penalties become available. The cancellation of credit becomes available at the third and final stage. In the case of repeated misconduct, the University reserves the right to escalate a case of misconduct to a subsequent stage.
4. Every student is assigned to an Academic Department and is accountable to the Academic Director of that Department. This will be the Academic Department in which the majority of a student's programme of study is based.

5. All students will be invited to attend the interviews associated with these procedures. Where attendance is not possible, then correspondence may be used in place of the interview and the procedures may be modified to reflect this, subject to the agreement of the Academic Standards Officer or nominee.
6. The University determines allegations of academic misconduct on the basis of the balance of probabilities, supported by reliable evidence, rather than the criteria of beyond reasonable doubt which applies in criminal cases.

### 14.3 Definitions of Academic Misconduct

Examples of behaviour that could be construed as academic misconduct **(please note that these are not exhaustive)** include:

- Plagiarism – when a student takes and uses as their own, the thoughts, writing, visual material or inventions of others without proper attribution (in contravention of the [guidance on referencing](#)).
- Self-plagiarism - this involves the submission of material already prepared for one assessment task for another such task. A piece of work may only be submitted for assessment once. Submitting the same piece of work twice (or a significant part of it), will be regarded as an offence of 'self-plagiarism'. A student who intends to quote an excerpt from material that has already been submitted for another assessment task should seek the advice of the Module Leader before doing so. Any such excerpt must be appropriately referenced (see [guidance on referencing](#)).
- Unauthorised collusion – when students join together to pass off as the work of one (or a specified number of people) the work of more than one (or a specified number of people). Where students are required to work in groups as part of an assessment, module tutors are expected to make it absolutely explicit in their instructions whether the students should produce common or individual work and the extent of permissible collaboration. Taking a copy of another student's work without their permission also

amounts to unauthorised collusion, although sanctions will only apply in such cases to the student who copied the work.

- Cheating – when a student brings books, notes or other material or equipment of value in answering examination questions, or any means of accessing information of value, into an examination which has not been explicitly authorised: fails to comply with the instructions given concerning conduct in examinations: or obtains an examination paper in advance of its authorised release. Similarly, any student who is authorised to leave an examination temporarily is not permitted to consult any source regarding the content of their examination whilst absent.
- Unauthorised Content Generation (UCG) – when a student submits work that has been produced in whole or part by another person and/or organisation on their behalf, including any such work that has been produced with the inappropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI). This may include the purchase of an assessment from an organisation or an individual or an unpaid contribution from a partner, friend or family member, as well as the use of software, services and assistance in assessments which have been specifically prohibited in the assessment specifications. A student who makes available work to another student (of the University or elsewhere) also commits this offence, whether in exchange for financial gain or otherwise.
- Fabrication – when a student makes up data or other such content, manipulates content and/or tampers with documentation to gain an unfair academic advantage. Fabrication also occurs when a student falsely claims to have conducted experiments, observations, interviews or any form of research which they have not carried out.
- Impersonation – when a student enters into an arrangement with another person who fraudulently represents them at an examination or test. Please note that where an offence of impersonation takes place, both the impersonator (if a student of the University) and the student impersonated will be the subject of misconduct procedures.

- Unethical conduct – when a student fails to gain ethical approval where appropriate, coerces or bribes project participants and/or breaches confidentiality with regard to information on individuals gathered during data collection, or otherwise breaches ethical codes of practice that are applicable to the student's programme of study.

## **14.4 Allegations of Academic Misconduct**

1. Alleged academic misconduct should always be investigated within the Academic Department in which the majority of a student's programme of study resides. Where it involves a module located outside that Academic Department, appropriate subject-specialist advice should be sought where necessary although, normally, the decision as to whether or not an offence of academic misconduct has been committed can be taken independently of subject knowledge.
2. Staff should refer all cases of alleged misconduct for investigation to the appropriate responsible officer, which will be the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader. Where a student's programme of study crosses two Academic Departments, this will be the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader in which the majority of a student's programme of study resides.

## **14.5 Academic Misconduct – Stage One Procedures**

### **Academic Misconduct not relating to the inappropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI)**

1. Where assessment is undertaken at Level 5 or above, i.e. at a higher level than Year One of an honours degree, a foundation degree, or a Certificate of Higher Education (see Section 1.4 of this Framework), the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader must always refer a case of academic misconduct to Stage Two (see Section 14.6 of this Framework).

2. Where assessment is undertaken at Level 4, i.e. in Year One of an honours degree, a foundation degree, or a Certificate of Higher Education (see Section 1.4 of this Framework), and poor scholarship is identified as the most likely cause of academic misconduct, the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader will permit the assignment to be resubmitted for an *uncapped* mark. This will follow an advisory meeting between the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader and the student.

The above will not apply to the resit period. If academic misconduct is proven **during the resit period**, the assessment will be marked as failed. No further resit opportunity will be granted in line with Section 6 of this Framework.

3. The Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader will communicate their decision to the student in writing, and the reason(s) for it, normally within five working days of the advisory meeting, copying to the Academic Standards Officer. As an assignment can be resubmitted for an uncapped mark at Stage One, there is no right of appeal at this stage.

### **Academic Misconduct relating to the inappropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI)**

4. For first-time instances of inappropriate use of AI, Stage One procedures will normally apply. The default sanction in such cases — regardless of level of study — is resubmission of the assignment free of academic misconduct, for an *uncapped* mark, following an advisory meeting with the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader. Any subsequent instances of AI-related academic misconduct must be referred to Stage Two.

However, where the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader determines that a case involves substantial misuse of AI — constituting significant academic misconduct — they may, by exception, refer the matter directly to Stage Two, even if it is a first offence. This is particularly appropriate where the standard Stage One sanction (resubmission for an *uncapped* mark) is deemed insufficient.

5. If the student has failed the assessment, the failure would automatically rule out the appropriateness of the Stage One sanction (i.e. resubmission for an *uncapped* mark); therefore, in this instance, the case should be considered under Stage Two of these procedures.
6. If a student is found to have used AI inappropriately **during the resit period**, the assessment will be marked as failed, regardless of whether it is a first offence. No further resit opportunity will be granted in line with Section 6 of this Framework.
7. The Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader will communicate their decision to the student in writing, and the reason(s) for it, normally within five working days of the advisory meeting, copying to the Academic Standards Officer. Where a student has been permitted to resubmit an assignment for an *uncapped* mark at Stage One, there is no right of appeal.

## 14.6 Academic Misconduct – Stage Two Procedures

1. In all cases where academic misconduct is suspected on assessment undertaken at Level 5 or above, and in cases where academic misconduct is suspected on assessment undertaken at Level 4 and the procedures set out in Section 14.5 of this Framework are considered insufficient (i.e. a further instance of inappropriate use of artificial intelligence, or substantial academic misconduct), the Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader will forward the relevant Turnitin Similarity Report to the Dean of Faculty or Associate Dean where appropriate. Where it is suspected in an examination, the principal invigilator will prepare the report in association with at least one other invigilator or member of staff. The Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader should then endorse the report and pass it to the Dean of Faculty or Associate Dean where appropriate.
2. In cases where, in the opinion of the Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty, the potential severity of an offence of academic misconduct identified at Stage Two would justify suspension from the University, the cancellation of credit

(covering one or more modules affected by the academic misconduct) or expulsion, they shall refer the matter direct to Stage Three without interview (on the prior advice of the Academic Standards Officer if appropriate), providing a written rationale in the context of their incident report. Otherwise, they shall call the student to a Stage Two interview, which will allow the student an opportunity to provide additional information.

3. If the standard of assessed work is completely out of line with that of previous work and/or written in a style that raises credibility issues, thus raising the possibility that contract cheating or 'ghosting' has occurred, the evidence presented to the Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty should consist of copies of other work submitted during the academic year in conjunction with the suspect piece/s of work.
4. The Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty will normally undertake the Stage Two procedures, but may also nominate the Dean or Associate Dean of another Faculty or Academic Director to undertake this task. The student should be informed of the date, time and place of the interview in writing at least five working days before the hearing and be provided with the evidence at that point along with a copy of these Procedures. Where this deadline is not met, the hearing will only proceed, at the stated date and time, with the student's consent. Should the student not respond to the request for an interview or fail to attend the interview without good reason, the Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty should proceed in their absence. Such an interview can be scheduled at any time in the calendar year, but reasonable steps will be taken to schedule it at a point in the year when the student would normally be present in the University.
5. The interview will proceed in the presence of at least one other member of the Faculty, normally the member of the Academic Department who identified the suspected academic misconduct, as well as any other witnesses as appropriate. A member of the Registry and Programme Support Office will normally be in attendance. The student may be accompanied by a 'friend', who is permitted to attend to provide advice and support to the student, and can be heard only with the agreement of both the student and the Chair. The



name and status of any such 'friend' must normally be notified to the University no less than five working days in advance of the hearing. The University must grant its consent beforehand for the 'friend' to attend the meeting.

6. Following interview, and if upholding the allegation/s, the Dean or Associate Dean may impose one of the following penalties:
  - re-submission of work free of academic misconduct to be assessed for a *capped* mark of 40% (or 50% for postgraduate work) for the assessment.
  - re-submission of work, free of academic misconduct, to be assessed for a *capped* mark of 0% in the relevant assessment element or, in more serious cases, for the module as a whole; credits will be awarded if a passing standard of 40% (or 50% for postgraduate work) has been reached in the module overall.

The above penalties **will not apply to the resit period**. If academic misconduct is proven during the resit period, the assessment will be marked as failed. No further resit opportunity will be granted in line with Section 6 of this Framework.

7. The Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty may also refer the matter to Stage Three if, on the basis of the information gained at interview, they now consider that the potential severity of an offence of academic misconduct identified at Stage Two would justify suspension from the University, the cancellation of credit (covering one or more modules affected by gross academic misconduct) or expulsion.
8. The resultant decision letter, which should normally be sent within five working days of the interview, should clarify the decision and the reason(s) for it. The letter should be copied to appropriate members of staff, including the Academic Standards Officer so that a central record can be maintained.
9. All proven cases of academic misconduct at Stage Two shall be considered as failure of the module, normally requiring resubmission of the work to be undertaken at the normal time for resit work.

## **14.7 Academic Misconduct – Stage Three procedures**

1. In cases where the severity of an offence of academic misconduct identified at Stage Two is potentially such as to justify suspension from the University, the cancellation of credit (covering one or more modules affected by gross academic misconduct) or expulsion, the Dean of Faculty or nominee will provide a written rationale for recommending a formal hearing at Stage Three of the Procedures to the Academic Registrar.
2. In all cases the rationale must state the name(s) of the student(s) against whom the allegation/s is/are made and the nature of the alleged academic misconduct, with a brief description of it and all available evidence. It should also include the names of any witnesses who can support the allegation/s and the name and role of the person signing the report.
3. The Academic Registrar will instruct the Academic Standards Officer or nominee to convene an Academic Misconduct Panel. This Panel shall comprise:
  - An appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of academic staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has no involvement with the student (Chair)
  - An appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of academic staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the student
  - A member of the Executive Committee of the Student Union, normally the President or Deputy President, who also has no involvement with the student

The Academic Standards Officer or nominee will act as Secretary to the Panel and proceedings may also be recorded, either electronically or by a minute taker, by mutual agreement. The Panel will not meet unless all members and the Secretary are present. The Academic Standards Officer or nominee will

endeavour to ensure that the Panel includes at least one male and one female member.

4. Before a Panel meeting is convened, the Chair will review the available evidence and request any additional evidence that they consider to be appropriate via the Academic Standards Officer or nominee. This will also be circulated to all parties involved within the applicable timeframes.
5. The student shall be informed of the date of the meeting of the Panel not less than ten working days in advance. This deadline can only be reduced with the student's written consent. They will be invited to appear in person but, in exceptional circumstances, the Panel may also hear a case, at the discretion of the Chair advised by the Academic Standards Officer, in their absence. A Panel can be scheduled at any time in the calendar year; however, reasonable steps will be taken to schedule this at a point in the year when the student would normally be present in the University.
6. The student may be accompanied by a 'friend', who is permitted to attend to provide advice and support to the student and can be heard only with the agreement of both the student and the Chair. The name and status of any such 'friend' must normally be notified to the Academic Standards Officer or nominee no less than five working days in advance of the hearing. The University must grant its consent beforehand for the 'friend' to attend the meeting. The student may also choose to call witnesses in his or her defence, including employees of the University where appropriate.
7. The Academic Standards Officer or nominee shall normally circulate the list of witnesses to be called, and all relevant documentation, to all parties not less than five working days before the meeting. Where this is not possible, the Academic Standards Office or nominee will advise the student who will have the right to request a postponement. Additional papers supplied by or on behalf of the student will be circulated thereafter with the proviso that, in exceptional circumstances, the Panel may decide to adjourn a hearing in order to secure a written response.

8. The refusal or failure of a student to attend will not invalidate the Panel's proceedings, provided that they have been given sufficient notice as set out above.
9. At the outset of the hearing the Chair of the Panel shall identify the issues to be determined, the persons entitled to attend the hearing, and the documents supplied to the Panel. They will also ask the student to confirm that they have understood the procedures and have no concerns with regard to procedure.
10. The author of the incident report, or a nominee, will then outline the case against the student, before the Chair invites witnesses to give evidence. Members of the Panel may question witnesses directly and the student, or their 'friend' at the student's request, may question the author of the incident report (or nominee) and the witnesses through the Chair.
11. The Chair shall then invite the student to respond. The Chair and other members of the Panel may question the student on the statement and/or the documentary evidence. Witnesses may question the student through the Chair.
12. At the conclusion, the Chair shall offer the student the opportunity of making a closing statement (which should not introduce new evidence), once the witnesses have left, before the Panel considers its decision in private. In all cases, the student shall have a right to make a final statement to the Panel before it considers its decision. This can be made by the student's 'friend' at the student's request.
13. In addition to the penalties available at Stages One and Two, the Panel may impose any or all of the following penalties:
  - suspension from the University, for a maximum period of one academic session
  - the cancellation of credit (covering one or more modules) with or without the possibility to retake the modules for a capped or uncapped module mark as determined by the Panel

- expulsion from the University (actual or suspended)
14. The resultant Stage Three decision letter will be drafted by the Academic Standards Officer or nominee for the approval of the Chair. It shall also constitute the official record of the hearing including, where this is applicable, the reasons for imposing a specific penalty or penalties and an explanation as to why a lesser penalty was unsuitable.
  15. The letter will normally be sent to the student within ten working days of the hearing and within forty working days of the commencement of the Academic Integrity Procedure. If this is not possible, exceptionally, the student will be kept informed. Where a decision has been taken to suspend or expel a student, it will take immediate effect.
  16. The University may inform the Independent Safeguarding Agency or any other Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body of the outcome of any Stage 3 misconduct proceedings, where applicable. If it intends to do so, it will include notification of that decision within the decision letter.

## **14.8 Right of Appeal**

1. At Stages Two and Three of the process, a student has the right of appeal against the decision and/or the penalty imposed on any or all of the following grounds:
  - That the procedures were not followed properly
  - That the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision
  - That the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process
  - That there is bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure
  - That the penalty imposed was disproportionate, or not permitted under the procedures

Any such appeal must be submitted in writing to the Academic Standards Officer or nominee, within ten working days of the date of the letter communicating the decision.

2. The Academic Standards Officer or nominee will refer the appeal to an appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of academic staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the student for consideration. The appeal stage will normally be concluded within fifteen working days of the receipt of the appeal. If a delay is envisaged, the appellant will be notified in writing before the end of the fifteen working day period.
3. If valid grounds to proceed with the appeal are not found, the University's Academic Integrity Procedure will have been exhausted, and the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will advise the student accordingly.
4. If, however, it is found that there may be additional evidence that could not reasonably have been provided to the original hearing, or procedural irregularities, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will reconvene the original decision-making body with new membership of a similar status. This will always lead to an additional interview or hearing, under the procedures appropriate to the relevant Stage, which will not involve the participation of anyone involved in the original decision. In all such cases, the appeal process may lead to the confirmation, reduction or quashing of the penalty originally imposed, but not to an increased penalty. This re-hearing will be final and there will be no further right of appeal thereafter.
5. The student will be notified in writing of the decision, normally within five working days of the hearing, in accordance with the procedures appropriate at the relevant stage. The decision letter will confirm that the University's Academic Integrity Procedure has been exhausted.

## **14.9 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education**

1. If a student remains dissatisfied after the appropriate internal processes have been exhausted, they can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review their case. For full details please contact <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.
2. The University must issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the OIA to review a case of academic misconduct. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued automatically where valid grounds for re-hearing the case are not found at the review stage and otherwise on request. However, where a Completion of Procedures letter is issued before the review stage has been conducted, the letter will make it clear that the student has not completed the University's internal processes. All requests for review must be made to the OIA within twelve months of the date of issue of a Completion of Procedures letter.

## **14.10 Annual Report**

Each year, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee submits a report on student casework to Senate, detailing (anonymously) general matters or issues arising from recent academic misconduct cases. Additional reports are also submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee of the Board of Governors on a regular basis. Senate will forward recommendations to other relevant University committees so that broad concerns can be shared, and appropriate action taken.

## **14.11 Procedures at Partner Organisations**

1. In accordance with the expectations set out in the UK Quality Code For Higher Education and the University's Collaborative Provision Regulations and Procedures, all students registered for the University's awards have the

ultimate right to complain to the University, irrespective of where they are studying. This right of complaint, however, is not absolute and is subject to the precise wording of the partnership agreement.

2. The partner organisation, accordingly, should ensure that clear information and guidance with regard to academic misconduct is made available to all students registered for the University's awards. This should include clear information about the sequence of processes involved and make clear the channels through which dissatisfied students can contact the University directly.
3. Once the internal procedures of the partner organisation have been fully exhausted, students who wish to take their case to the University for review should ask the Academic Standards Officer in writing if they are eligible to do so. Students may request a review of the decision on the following grounds only:
  - That the procedures were not followed properly
  - That the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision
  - That the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process
  - That there is bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure
  - That the penalty imposed was disproportionate, or not permitted under the procedures
4. If a case is eligible for review, the Academic Standards Officer will refer the challenge to an appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of academic staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has no involvement with the partnership. If the challenge is upheld, the case will be referred back to the partner organisation to be reheard under its own procedures. Otherwise, the University will not refer the case back to the partner organisation to be reheard and the Academic Standards Officer will advise the student accordingly. This will include advice



with regard to a student's further right of appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

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## 15. STUDENT MISCONDUCT PROCEDURE

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, to all research degree students and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's degree apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 15.1 Introduction and Scope

1. Plymouth Marjon University is committed to upholding the highest standards of behaviour in an atmosphere conducive to learning, and in accordance with its Values. Students are expected to conduct themselves in ways which ensure that this is the case. These procedures provide a mechanism for dealing with conduct which falls short of what is acceptable (hereafter referred to as 'misconduct') and harms the good order and discipline of the University in so doing. They operate in the context of the University's general and specific rules, regulations, policies and strategies.
2. Please note that the University's interest in misconduct is not limited to the time spent on its premises and that, therefore, students are deemed to be members of the University at all times and in all media, including social media.
3. The University recognises three particular areas of misconduct, as follows:
  - General misconduct
  - Programme-specific misconduct
  - Academic misconduct

The Student Misconduct Procedure covers general and programme-specific misconduct. Academic misconduct is covered in the University's Academic Integrity Procedure, which constitutes Section 14 of this [Framework](#). A particular case of alleged misconduct might span more than one of these areas.

4. Where there is an allegation of misconduct, the University will firstly check whether another process or procedure should be initiated alongside or instead of the Student Misconduct Procedure, such as the Support to Continue to Study Procedure (Section 9 of this [Framework](#)) or the Fitness to Practise Procedure (Section 10 of this [Framework](#)).
5. Cases of alleged general and programme-specific misconduct are dealt with by way of a three-stage process. The first stage focusses on supporting students to address their behaviour, although it also includes a range of penalties. The second stage introduces additional penalties. The most serious penalties of suspension and expulsion become available at the third and final stage, and expulsion is the default penalty at that stage. In the case of repeated misconduct, the University reserves the right to escalate a case of misconduct to a subsequent stage. Cases of misconduct may not always proceed through all three stages - in serious cases the University reserves the right to begin misconduct proceedings at the second or third stage. The decision regarding the stage at which the misconduct proceedings will begin resides with the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support.
6. Allegations of misconduct are determined by the University on the basis of 'the balance of probabilities', rather than the criteria of 'beyond reasonable doubt' which applies in criminal cases. 'The balance of probabilities' asks if it is more likely than not that the misconduct occurred.
7. These Procedures only apply to students, and separate Procedures apply to members of staff. Any student seeking to make an allegation of inappropriate conduct against an employee of the University should pursue the allegation initially with the Executive Director of People and Culture (see Section 17.2.5 of this [Framework](#)).
8. The University recognises that involvement in misconduct proceedings, either as a reporting/reported student or as a witness, can be stressful and potentially traumatic. Every effort has been made to reduce the level of stress associated with these procedures. Students (reporting/reported/witnesses) are encouraged to make use of support throughout their involvement with these

procedures and should feel able to raise queries at any point, whether that is through the University's Student Wellbeing and Support team, the Student Union, or other sources. Procedural queries can be directed to the Academic Standards Officer.

9. The University will aim to ensure that penalties are applied consistently, for example by holding an anonymised summary log of Stage 2 and 3 proceedings to act as a source of future reference for panel members.
10. The University can make reasonable adjustments to the procedures on a case-by-case basis, as appropriate, to take account of the individual needs of students. Reasonable adjustments shall be made to the procedures to ensure fairness for students with a disability. Reporting students, reported students and witnesses should make any reasonable adjustments known to the University so that these can be implemented. A record will be kept of any adjustments made.
11. This procedure can be read in conjunction with the Summary of Misconduct Proceedings flowchart which can be provided on request.
12. This procedure is applicable to all students throughout their period of enrolment with the University, whatever their registration status, and includes students whose enrolment is interrupted or suspended.
13. In cases which might lead to a more serious sanction being imposed, if a student withdraws from or leaves the University part way through misconduct proceedings, or where an allegation of misconduct is made after a student has left, the University reserves the right to continue proceedings, to hear the process in full and reach a conclusion. If the former student is found to have had a case to answer (i.e. it was determined that misconduct occurred on 'balance of probabilities'), this will be noted on their student record and the outcome would be taken into account if the individual wished to gain re-entry to the University in future, considering the possible risk to the good order and discipline of the University. This caveat will not apply to allegations of student misconduct that can be dealt with at Stage One under Section 15.7 of this [Framework](#).

## **Confidentiality and Disclosure**

14. Information about students who are subject to misconduct proceedings will be kept confidential as far as possible. The information will only be disclosed to those involved in investigating or deciding the matter, and those involved in actioning any of the outcomes, where applicable. The University handles reference requests from employers based on their professional standards. If a reference request comes from a health or education provider, recent or ongoing disciplinary actions, or referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), may be disclosed to the employer if requested. Disciplinary action does not refer to an allegation being made against a student, or to misconduct proceedings being opened (as this is not disciplinary action), but to the student being found to have had a case to answer under this procedure, i.e. it was determined that the misconduct occurred on the 'balance of probabilities'. Information provided should be relevant, limited, factual, and justifiable in all cases.
15. It will not normally be appropriate to keep the identity of witnesses secret during misconduct proceedings, as doing so might undermine the reported student's ability to defend themselves. If a witness does not agree to the reported student knowing their identity, then the University might deem it inappropriate to rely on their evidence.

## **Cases involving more than one student**

16. Where more than one student is involved in a case of suspected misconduct, the University will determine, based on the particular circumstances, and at the discretion of the Academic Registrar, whether the cases should be investigated and/or heard separately or as a group.
17. Where cases are investigated and/or heard as a group, a decision will be made for each student individually, taking their particular circumstances into account. However, there should be broad consistency in any sanction/s given to all students who commit the same offence with similar circumstances.

18. Where cases are investigated and/or heard as a group, decision-makers can cross-reference evidence or statements from or against one reported student facing the allegations with those from or against the other reported student/s.

## 15.2 Examples of Misconduct

1. Examples of unacceptable behaviour which involve a potential offence of general misconduct include:
- Physical aggression (whether or not this results in physical injury).
  - Verbal aggression (to include all forms of communication including face-to-face and telephone conversations, letters, e-mails, social media and all other forms of electronic media). Please see the University's [Social Media Policy](#) for further guidance.
  - Threatening behaviour.
  - Harassment (conduct towards others which is perceived as a negative act and which is unwanted, offensive, worrying, stressful or intimidating to the recipient. See Section 15.5 of this [Framework](#) for a fuller definition).
  - Anti-social, disruptive and/or offensive behaviour (including drunken behaviour and/or excessive noise), even where there is no evidence of any deliberate intention to cause harassment or inconvenience.
  - Theft or deception, including the use of forged, falsified or fraudulent documentation to gain an advantage.
  - Involvement with illegal drugs, including new psychoactive substances or so-called 'legal highs', either as a consumer and/or supplier.
  - Bringing the University or its staff or students into disrepute with partner organisations and/or the wider community or via social media. Please see the University's [Social Media Policy](#) for further guidance.

- Harming or attempting to harm the good order and discipline of the University, including the deliberate obstruction of and/or non-cooperation with University procedures.
- Compromising the safety of and/or wellbeing of staff, other students, or visitors.
- Failure to maintain effective relationships and to deal efficiently and politely with peers, University staff, University support services, and/or external stakeholders.
- Damage to University property or the property of others.
- Misuse of computing or University network facilities.
- Misuse of the University's fire-fighting or other safety equipment.
- Unauthorised recording of any University-related activity, event or meeting.
- A persistent refusal to pay a fine.
- Infringements of a Tenancy Agreement to reside on the campus not covered by the above.

2. Examples of behaviour that could be construed as programme-specific misconduct, in addition to the examples given above, are as follows:

- Behaviour that would bring the programme or associated profession (if applicable) into disrepute.
- Inappropriate behaviour towards staff and/or students in a programme-specific context (including, but not confined to, the examples set out in Section 15.2.2 of this [Framework](#)).
- Inappropriate behaviour on placement or in work-based learning activities including:
  - abuse (physical, sexual or emotional)



- any action or omission on placement that may place a client's / pupil's safety at risk
- aggressive or threatening behaviour
- alcohol or drug abuse
- breach of confidentiality (except under the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998)
- behaviour that indicates a lack of honesty and trustworthiness, e.g. misrepresentation of qualifications at the time of admission, forging of documents or signatures
- acceptance of gifts, hospitality and other considerations, apart from small tokens of appreciation, or allowing any gift to influence the quality of care provided to the donor or to others
- malicious or wilful damage to practice placement premises
- unjustified refusal to carry out a reasonable and lawful instruction
- failure to respect clients as individuals and/or failure to protect the interests and dignity of clients irrespective of gender, age, race, ability, sexuality, economic status, lifestyle, culture, religion or of any other irrelevant distinction
- forming an inappropriate relationship with a client or acting in an inappropriate way with or towards a client
- failure to disclose at the earliest opportunity that a member of staff responsible for their supervision, teaching, training or assessment has a likely conflict of interest on account of their relationship with them (e.g. being family members, family friends, romantic or sexual partners), if not previously disclosed by a member of University or placement staff.
- Malicious or wilful misuse of social media in a programme-specific context (please see the University's [Social Media Policy](#) for further guidance).

- Unauthorised contact with an External Examiner or external professionals involved with a student's programme of study.
  - Disruption of an examination or other formal assessment.
  - Unauthorised recording of any programme-specific activity, event or meeting.
3. Please note that these are not exhaustive. Moreover, specific instances of misconduct might combine two or more of these examples.
  4. Issues of professional unsuitability, where these do not involve allegations of misconduct, are dealt with by way of separate Fitness to Practice procedures (see Section 10 of this [Framework](#)).

### **15.3 Reporting Misconduct**

1. Reports of alleged student misconduct can be made to Student Wellbeing and Support (SWS) by email or in person at the SWS office. Reports should be directed to the Head of Wellbeing and Support (or nominee). Where a potential offence of misconduct is reported by a visitor to the University, a member of staff or a student will need to instigate the procedures on their behalf.
2. Students and staff will be supported to discuss their concerns and given appropriate advice and guidance about their options, which might include making a formal report under the misconduct procedures, reporting the matter to the police where they are reporting behaviour that may amount to a criminal offence, or taking no further action. The University recognises that reporting misconduct can be challenging, and a student may have significant concerns about making an allegation, whether informally or formally, particularly if it concerns those with whom they have a personal relationship. Discussions will be confidential, there is no obligation for a student or member of staff to make a formal report under misconduct procedures, and reporting parties will be offered support whatever action they choose to take.

3. Normally, where the recipient of the alleged misconduct indicates that they do not wish to report a matter to the police, the University will follow that decision. However, the University reserves the right to report an incident(s) to the police where it deems that the safety of students or staff may be at risk. The University will consider any potential harm that unauthorised disclosure to the police may have on the individual, and any such decision should be explained to the recipient of the alleged misconduct.

## **15.4 Interim Measures**

1. In exceptional circumstances, such as where a student is the subject of an allegation of serious misconduct, or has been charged with or accused of a criminal offence, a student may be denied access to the University, both physically and virtually, with immediate effect at the point of referral. This will take account of students' rights under the legislation protecting tenants and licensees and suitable alternative accommodation will be provided if the denial of access is likely to lead to hardship. This will be an interim arrangement, pending the outcome of the student misconduct procedure and any subsequent penalties which are imposed.
2. This power will only be exercised, however if the Vice-Chancellor (or, in the Vice-Chancellor's absence, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost) decides, on the joint recommendation of the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) and Academic Registrar, that the student's access to the University would jeopardise the physical and/or mental well-being of any members of staff or of the student body, or otherwise harm the good order and discipline of the University.
3. Denial of access will be subject to regular review (normally at monthly intervals) and a student can challenge the denial of access by sending a written submission to the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee). The challenge will be referred for review to a member of the Executive Leadership Team who has had no involvement with the student or the case. The decision of this senior colleague will be final and there will be no further right of appeal.

4. If a risk to client / pupil care is perceived at any point in these Procedures the Dean of Faculty, on the joint recommendation of the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) and Academic Registrar, may authorise the removal of a student from a current or prospective placement or work-based learning activity until this risk is no longer perceived to apply. Any such decision should be notified to Registry Services in writing, via the Academic Registrar. Due attention should also be paid to University Safeguarding Policies in cases where risk to client/pupil care is perceived.
5. Under the terms of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and where the student may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or put a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm, there is a legal requirement to refer the student to the DBS. This action will be taken by Registry Services on behalf of the Academic Registrar.
6. Students charged with a criminal offence may also be subject to the Student Misconduct Procedure with regard to the same offence. Proceedings will be opened but suspended until such time as the criminal case has been resolved. The University should keep in touch with the student involved and the police during this process. This does not affect the capacity of the University to deny access to a student, or remove them from placement, as above. Any such decision should be notified to Registry Services in writing.
7. The University reserves the right to invoke these Procedures, irrespective of any related criminal case. This is because it determines allegations of misconduct on the basis of 'the balance of probabilities', supported by reliable evidence, rather than the criteria of 'beyond reasonable doubt' which applies in criminal cases.
8. Interim Measures may also be put in place informally at the discretion of the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee). This may be for the purpose of supporting the wellbeing of students involved in Misconduct Proceedings, ensuring confidentiality while proceedings are ongoing, or preventing emotionally charged situations from escalating further. Measures may include:

- Moving a student into Emergency Accommodation.
- Requesting that students are not required to work directly with each other where permissible.
- Temporarily moving a student to another teaching group where permissible.
- Temporarily prohibiting named students from contacting each other, either directly, indirectly, via social media or through a third party.
- Making arrangements for students to access University facilities at different times.

## 15.5 Harassment and Discrimination

1. The University defines harassment and discrimination, in the context of these procedures, as conduct or behaviour which is unwanted by the recipient and is offensive, intimidating or hostile; which interferes with the recipient's study performance; and/or induces stress, anxiety, fear or sickness in the recipient. What is perceived as harassment by one person may not seem so to another. However, if conduct is perceived as a negative act and is unwanted, offensive, worrying, stressful, and/or intimidating to the recipient then these procedures may be invoked.
2. **The University will not tolerate harassment under any circumstances or however motivated.** All members of the University community have a responsibility, therefore, to ensure that they do not perpetrate, incite, encourage or condone any form of harassment within the University.
3. Individuals may fear victimisation if they complain of harassment. It should be remembered that victimisation of the complainant is itself unlawful even if it is subsequently found that no harassment occurred.
4. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits three types of harassment that the University uses to guide its understanding. These are:

- Harassment related to a 'relevant protected characteristic' (including sex or gender reassignment)
- Sexual harassment
- Less favourable treatment of a student because they submit to or reject sexual harassment.

The following is broadly taken from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on the meaning and understanding of harassment derived from the Equality Act 2010 Guidance.

### **Harassment related to a 'relevant protected characteristic'**

5. Following advice in the Equality Act 2010, the University includes the following as 'relevant protected characteristics':-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Pregnancy and maternity are not protected directly under the harassment provisions. However, harassment related to pregnancy and maternity would amount to harassment related to sex.

6. Harassment, which is related to a protected characteristic will be, for this procedure, as stated in section 15.5.1.
7. Unwanted conduct covers a very wide range of behaviour, including spoken or written words or abuse, imagery, graffiti, physical gestures, facial expressions, mimicry, jokes, pranks, acts affecting a student's surroundings or other physical behaviour.

8. The word unwanted means essentially the same as 'unwelcome' or 'uninvited'. 'Unwanted' does not mean that express objection must be made to the conduct before it is deemed to be 'unwanted'. A serious one-off incident can amount to harassment.
9. Unwanted conduct 'related' to a protected characteristic has a broad meaning and includes the following situations:
  - where the student has a protected characteristic
  - where there is any connection with a protected characteristic (whether or not the student has that protected characteristic themselves) or it is assumed there is a connection with a protected characteristic.

## **Sexual Harassment**

10. Sexual harassment occurs when a person engages in unwanted conduct (as defined in 15.5.8 above) which is of a sexual nature.
11. Conduct 'of a sexual nature' can cover verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct including unwelcome sexual advances, touching, forms of sexual assault, sexual jokes, displaying pornographic photographs or drawings, or sending emails or sharing social media posts with material of a sexual nature.

## **Less favourable treatment for rejecting or submitting to unwanted conduct**

12. The third type of harassment occurs when a student is treated less favourably by an education provider because the student has submitted to, or rejected, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. This applies when the unwanted conduct creates for them any of the circumstances defined in paragraph 15.5.1 above. Under this type of harassment, the initial unwanted conduct may be committed by the education provider who treats the student less favourably, or by another person.

## Reporting Harassment and Discrimination

13. There are several options for reporting harassment and discrimination. Students can contact Student Wellbeing and Support directly by email. Students can also use the [Report Harassment and Bullying Form](#) which can be submitted anonymously, and also provides links to support and advice. If students wish the University to follow up any such report, they should set out as specifically as possible the nature of the harassment/discrimination, the identity of the reported student(s), dates of occurrence etc. The report will be dealt with thereafter in accordance with these Procedures, inclusive of any right of appeal.
14. A student who considers that they have been harassed, receives a complaint of alleged harassment, or witnesses harassment, may wish to seek advice, support and/or counselling before deciding how to proceed. In such circumstances, students should contact Student Wellbeing and Support or the Student Union. Support from the University is not contingent upon a student choosing to pursue a complaint through misconduct proceedings.
15. In dealing with allegations of harassment, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will ensure that reporting students are kept informed of the progress of a case, including its outcome. However, this does not extend to the right to receive copies of correspondence between the University and the reported student(s). If a reporting student has any concerns about how the matter was handled, or the outcome, they will be directed to the Student Complaints Procedure (see Section 17 of this [Framework](#)). If the reported student's behaviour is found to have had an adverse impact on the reporting student, then a discretionary remedy might be offered by the University.
16. The reporting student will not be exposed unwillingly to any face-to-face meeting with the reported student(s). If a hearing is convened, and the reporting student is willing to attend, they will have the same right to be accompanied by a 'friend', where applicable, as the reported student(s). The reporting student is not required to attend, and the case can proceed in their absence.



17. There will be no time bar, exclusion or redemption allowed for acts of past harassment.

## **15.6 Acceptable Behaviour**

The University recognises that involvement in the Student Misconduct Procedure can be a stressful experience for students. However, it also has a duty to ensure the safety and well-being of its staff and will, for example, not accept communication that is abusive, offensive, defamatory, aggressive, threatening, coercive, intimidating, unreasonably persistent or demanding. Whatever the outcome of any investigations, the University will not tolerate any form of intimidation, victimisation or discrimination against any student(s) or members of the University community involved in these investigations. This applies both to students and their supporters. Where such behaviour is displayed, therefore, by a student it might constitute an instance of student misconduct in its own right. Where such behaviour is displayed by the supporter of a student, the University reserves the right to limit or terminate its correspondence with that individual.

## **15.7 Student Misconduct – Stage One procedures**

1. The Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (or nominee) will meet with the reporting student(s) to discuss the allegation. The reporting student will be given an opportunity to provide supporting statements or evidence (either their own, or from witnesses). Ideally this will be submitted in advance of the in-person interview held with the reported student, so they can be considered within the discussion.
2. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will notify the reported student that an allegation has been made against them, to include notification in writing. The letter will state the allegations and give details of a date and time for an interview to discuss the allegations. The interview will

take place no later than ten working days after the letter being sent. The reported student may provide a statement in advance of the interview if they wish. The reported student will also be offered the opportunity to respond to any new or amended allegations should these arise during the course of proceedings. The staff member carrying out the initial investigation should not have been involved in making the allegation/s against the student.

3. Prior to the interview, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will collect any relevant additional information. This may involve collecting witness statements from students, reports from staff, CCTV footage, or other forms of information as suggested by the reporting and reported students or other relevant parties.
4. During the in-person interview, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will discuss the allegations and collected evidence with the reported student and advise them with regard to their future conduct. The purpose of this interview is to determine if the misconduct occurred on 'balance of probabilities', to offer the reported student an opportunity to provide context, and to ensure all relevant information has been gathered in order to come to a fair and balanced outcome.
5. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will write to the reported student within five working days after interview to confirm the outcome and any recommendations with regard to future conduct. This will include information about the student's Right to Appeal. The letter will be copied to the Academic Standards Officer, so that a central record can be kept, and a record will be kept on the Student Wellbeing and Support database.
6. Should the reported student admit to a minor offence, their admission shall be taken into account when considering which sanction/s to apply. Reported students will be made aware of the consequences of agreeing to a sanction(s) at this stage; for example, whether this will be taken into account in any future proceedings.

7. Where appropriate, the following limited sanctions can be applied at Stage One:

- a fine, not exceeding £100, in addition to any appropriate restitution for damage or loss (to be reported in writing, using the designated form, to Finance)
- the prohibition of entry to specified areas of campus, including social areas, and/or University social functions for the time specified by the responsible officer
- a recommendation to the Marjon Sports Federation (MSF) that a ban is enforced on representing the University in any sporting event or activity for the time specified by the responsible officer
- a requirement to carry out community service for the time specified by the responsible officer, up to a maximum period of one working day (defined as seven hours)
- a requirement to undertake appropriate remedial action to address the student's behaviour, such as an anger management programme or diversity training (amongst other possible examples)

The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) may also issue an informal warning to a student, accompanied by conditions, with regard to their social media and/or other online activities.

8. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) may also decide to escalate the case to Stage Two proceedings, based on the investigation and interview, if it is felt that the sanctions available at Stage One are not appropriate.

9. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will normally meet with the reporting student to inform them of the outcome subject to the University's data sharing and risk assessment process.

10. Students are expected to co-operate with the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee). Should the reported student not respond to the request for an interview or fail to attend the interview without good reason, this might be sufficient grounds in itself for escalation to Stage Two. If grounds for escalation to Stage Two are not met, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will decide an outcome based on the available evidence.
11. If the reported student does not engage with the outcomes, and does not provide good reason for this, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will decide if this is grounds in itself for escalation to Stage Two.
12. All students involved in proceedings will be encouraged to engage in support from the Student Union and/or Student Wellbeing and Support throughout this process. Student Wellbeing and Support will ensure that a neutral member of staff will be available to offer support, and that reported and reporting students are treated fairly and offered support from separate members of staff.

## **15.8 Student Misconduct – Stage Two procedures**

1. In cases where an allegation of student misconduct has been identified which might lead to a more serious sanction being imposed, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will refer the matter to the Academic Registrar, via the Academic Standards Officer, by way of a written incident report. The preparation of the report should take any sensitive personal issues and/or potential clashes of interest into account. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will provide the reporting student an opportunity to contribute to this report in the form of a statement.
2. The report will state the name of the student against whom the allegation is made, the date, time and place of the alleged misconduct if known and applicable and the nature of the alleged misconduct with a brief description of it. It should also include the names of any witnesses who can support the allegation and notes of any interviews and discussions undertaken.

3. In cases where, in the opinion of the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) and colleagues as appropriate, the potential severity of an offence might justify expulsion, they will also provide a written rationale for recommending a formal hearing at Stage Three of the Procedures in the context of their incident report.
4. Before referring the report to the Academic Standards Officer, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will notify the reported student that an allegation of misconduct has been made against them, which will be reviewed under Stage Two of the Misconduct Proceedings. The procedure will be explained to the reported student in full, and they will have an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. The reported student will also be provided the opportunity to respond to the allegations in writing, should they wish to do so, within a maximum period of ten working days.
5. On receipt of the incident report and any supporting evidence, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will write to the reported student, advising them that a Panel will be convened. The incident report and any supporting evidence will be sent to the student at this point and the student will be provided with a further opportunity to respond to the allegations in writing, within a maximum period of five working days. Once the Panel has been convened, the Academic Standards Officer will notify the reported student of the date that the Panel will take place, and its members.
6. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will convene a Student Misconduct Panel on behalf of the Academic Registrar. This shall comprise:
  - Chair: An appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the reported student (or, where applicable, the reporting student)
  - An appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the student (or, where applicable, the reporting student)

- A member of the Executive Committee of the Student Union, normally the President or Deputy President, who also has no involvement with the student (or, where applicable, the reporting student)

With regard to allegations of programme-specific misconduct, the Panel may also include up to two additional external advisors with professional expertise of the relevant discipline where practicable and at the request of the Chair.

They may either be academic colleagues at other institutions where the discipline is taught or professional colleagues with appropriate knowledge and experience. The advisors may attend the Panel hearing in person or provide written commentary on the basis of the available evidence.

The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will endeavour to ensure that the Panel includes at least one male and one female member.

7. The incident report, any supporting evidence and any response from the reported student will be circulated to the Panel and an initial meeting will be arranged. This meeting will be attended by the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) who will offer procedural advice, where required, and record the decision taken.
8. The Panel may either issue a decision immediately or defer its decision, pending any further information that it requires. This may involve meetings in person with the reported/reporting student and/or other interested parties, which can be conducted either by individual Panel members or the complete Panel. These will not be formal hearings, but a notetaker may be present. If any further information is required, or such a meeting is to be arranged, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will contact the relevant party or parties to make the necessary arrangements. The reported student will be notified in the case of a decision being deferred, with an expected timeframe for a decision included in this notification.
9. Where a sanction is agreed at Stage Two, any or all of the following penalties can be imposed in addition to those available at Stage One:

- a fine, not exceeding £250, in addition to any appropriate restitution for damage or loss (to be reported in writing, using the designated form, to Finance)
  - the removal of a student either from a specific Hall of Residence or from campus accommodation in its entirety, subject to their legal rights as tenants
  - a formal warning as to a student's future conduct, accompanied by such reasonable conditions as may be deemed appropriate
  - a formal warning, accompanied by conditions, with regard to a student's social media and/or other online activities
  - conditions concerning the student's future conduct or access to facilities
  - the suspension of access to specific Academic Department-based facilities for a fixed period of time
  - suspension or removal from a programme that is professionally accredited, with the option to transfer to a non-accredited programme at a similar level (if available) with immediate effect
10. The Panel may also refer the matter to Stage Three if, on the basis of the finalised evidence base, it now considers that the potential severity of an offence could justify expulsion.
11. The resultant decision letter, which will be drafted by the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) for the approval of the Chair, should normally be sent within thirty working days of the commencement of the Student Misconduct Procedure. This will also provide information about the next steps in the process (including the student's right of appeal) and details of who the student can contact with any queries or for advice and support. If the Panel has agreed to refer the matter to Stage Three, clarification of the relationship between Stages Two and Three will be provided to the student in writing along with the Panel's reasons for escalation.

12. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will normally meet with the reporting student to inform them of the outcome subject to the University's data sharing and risk assessment process.
13. If the reported student does not engage with the outcomes, and does not provide good reason for this, the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support or (or nominee), in consultation with a member of the Executive Leadership Team, normally the Academic Registrar, will decide if this is grounds in itself for escalation to Stage Three.
14. Students (both reporting and reported) will be encouraged to engage in support from the Student Union and/or Student Wellbeing and Support throughout this process. Student Wellbeing and Support will ensure that a neutral member of staff will be available to offer support, and that reported and reporting students are offered support from separate members of staff.

## **15.9 Student Misconduct – Stage Three procedures**

1. In cases where the severity of an offence is potentially such as to justify expulsion, the decision will also be subject to a formal hearing of the Student Misconduct Panel.
2. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will act as Secretary to the Panel. If proceedings are recorded electronically by mutual agreement, recordings will be made available to all participants on request. The hearing will not take place unless all members and the Secretary are present.
3. The reported student shall be informed of the date of the hearing by the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) not less than ten working days in advance. This deadline can only be reduced with the student's written consent. They will be invited to appear in person but, in exceptional circumstances, the hearing may take place at the discretion of the Chair, advised by the Academic Registrar, in their absence or may be conducted virtually in whole or in part. A hearing can be scheduled at any time in the



calendar year, however reasonable steps will be taken to schedule this at a point in the year when the student would normally be present in the University. The University will only consider rearranging the date of the hearing if the reported student or other witness is unable to attend for good reason. Where a witness is unable to attend in person, they may be able to attend virtually in order to avoid a delay in proceedings - this will be at the discretion of the Chair, advised by the Academic Registrar,

4. The reported student may be accompanied by a 'friend', who is permitted to attend to provide advice and support to the student and can be heard only with the agreement of both the student and the Chair. The name and status of any such 'friend', who is expected to be a member of the University, must normally be notified to the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) at least five working days in advance of the hearing. The University must grant its consent beforehand for the 'friend' to attend the hearing. The student may also choose to call witnesses in their defence.
5. These Procedures are internal to the University and therefore legal representation will not normally be permitted, although a reasoned request can be made by the reporting student and will be considered. The University reserves the right to refuse the request if the circumstances are not deemed 'exceptional'.
6. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) shall normally circulate the list of witnesses to be called, and all relevant documentation, to all parties not less than five working days before the hearing. Where this is not possible, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will advise the reported student who will have the right to request a postponement. Additional papers supplied by or on behalf of the student will be circulated thereafter with the proviso that, in exceptional circumstances, the Panel may decide to adjourn a hearing in order to secure a written response.
7. The refusal or failure of a reported student to attend will not invalidate the hearing's proceedings, provided that they have been given sufficient notice as set out above. Where a student has been denied access to the University

under the provisions set out in Section 15.4.1 of this [Framework](#), this will be waived to enable the student to attend the interview. In such circumstances, the student shall only attend the interview and not visit or stay in other areas of campus.

8. If a reporting student is unwilling to attend a face-to-face meeting with the reported student, the Panel Chair will interview them prior to the hearing either physically or virtually. A recording of the interview will be played back at the hearing, so that the student facing the allegations can respond directly to the points that have been made. The applicable timeframes can be adjusted to accommodate this additional meeting, ensuring that both reporting and reported students are made aware of these adjustments.
9. At the outset of the hearing, the Chair of the Panel shall identify the issues to be determined, the persons entitled to attend the hearing, and the documents supplied to the Panel. They will also ask the reported student to confirm that they have understood the procedures and have no concerns with regard to procedure. In addition, they will advise the student that all those involved in the hearing are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and that they are empowered to suspend the hearing in exceptional circumstances.
10. The Chair will then outline the case against the reported student, before inviting witnesses to give evidence. Members of the Panel may question witnesses directly and the reported student may question the witnesses through the Chair. Recorded evidence secured from a reporting student, in a case of alleged harassment, will also be played back at this point.
11. The Chair shall then invite the reported student to respond. The Chair and other members of the Panel may question the student on the statement and/or the documentary evidence. Witnesses may question the student through the Chair.
12. At the conclusion, the Chair shall invite the reported student to make a closing statement (which should not introduce new evidence), once the witnesses have left, before the Panel considers its decision in private. This can include

any mitigating circumstances or factors that they believe should be taken into account.

13. In addition to the complete range of penalties available at Stage Two, the Panel may impose any or all of the following penalties:

- suspension from the University, for a period of time to be determined by the Panel.
- expulsion from the University (actual or suspended).

The default penalty at Stage Three will be expulsion, with scope for reduction to suspended expulsion or suspension if there are mitigating circumstances. A student's previous disciplinary record may be taken into account when determining the penalty, but the Chair and the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will withhold it from the Panel until a decision has been taken as to whether not an offence has been committed.

14. The resultant Stage Three decision letter will be drafted by the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) for the approval of the Chair. It shall also constitute the official record of the hearing including, where applicable, the reasons for imposing a specific penalty or penalties and an explanation as to why a lesser penalty was unsuitable. The letter will also provide information about the next steps in the process (including the student's right of appeal) and details of who the student can contact with any queries or for advice and support.
15. The letter will normally be sent to the student within ten working days of the hearing and within forty working days of the commencement of the Student Misconduct Procedures. If this is not possible, exceptionally, the reported student will be kept informed. Where a decision has been taken to suspend or expel a student, it will take immediate effect.
16. The University may inform the DBS or any other Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body of the outcome of the misconduct proceedings, where applicable. If it intends to do so, it will include notification of that decision within the decision letter.

17. The Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) will normally meet with the reporting student to inform them of the outcome subject to the University's data sharing and risk assessment process.
18. Students (both reporting and reported) will be encouraged to engage in support from staff in Student Wellbeing and Support throughout this process. Student Wellbeing and Support will ensure that a neutral member of staff will be available to offer support, and that reported and reporting students are treated fairly and offered support from separate members of staff.
19. Whilst it is unlikely to be necessary, as part of proceedings, the Panel reserves the right to seek legal advice and/or the advice of other external agencies as appropriate.

## **15.10 Right of Appeal**

1. A reported student has the right of appeal against the decision and/or the penalty imposed on the following grounds:
  - That the procedures were not followed properly.
  - That the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision.
  - That the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
  - That there is bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure.
  - That the penalty imposed was disproportionate or not permitted under the procedures.

Any such appeal must be submitted in writing to the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) within ten working days of the date of the letter communicating the decision, normally by way of a single submission including any relevant attachments. If the student does not appeal within this timeframe, then the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will close the case. If the

reported student wishes to appeal, they can make use of support from Student Wellbeing and Support to do so.

2. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will refer the appeal to a member of the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar who has had no involvement with the student for consideration. The appeal stage will normally be concluded within twenty working days of the receipt of the appeal; if a delay is envisaged, the student will be notified in writing before the end of the twenty working day period.
3. If valid grounds to proceed with the appeal are not found, the University's Student Misconduct Procedures will have been exhausted, and the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will advise the student accordingly.
4. If, however, it is found that there may be additional evidence that could not reasonably have been provided to the original hearing, or procedural irregularities, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will reconvene the original decision-making body with new membership of a similar status. In all such cases, the appeal process may lead to the confirmation, reduction or quashing of the penalty originally imposed, but not to an increased penalty. This re-hearing will be final and there will be no further right of appeal thereafter.
5. The student will be notified in writing of the decision, in accordance with the procedures appropriate at the relevant stage. The decision letter will confirm that the University's Student Misconduct Procedures have been exhausted. If the University's handling of the procedure is found to have had an adverse impact on the student, then a discretionary remedy might be offered by the University.

### **15.11 Rights of Affected Students**

Students who are the recipients of the alleged misconduct, whether or not they have reported it in person, may be informed of the outcome of any subsequent

case at the discretion of the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support and subject to the University's data sharing and risk assessment process. However, they will not be copied into any correspondence between the University and the student/s concerned, in accordance with relevant data protection legislation, and they will have no right of appeal against the outcome (including any sanction that has been applied). This also applies to any third parties acting on their behalf. Should a student who is the recipient of the alleged misconduct have any concerns about how the matter was handled, or the outcome, they will be directed to the Complaints Procedure (see Section 17 of this [Framework](#)).

## **15.12 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education**

1. If a student remains dissatisfied after the appropriate internal processes have been exhausted, they can ask the University to issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review their appeal.
2. The University must issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the OIA to review an appeal. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued automatically where valid grounds for re-hearing the appeal are not found at the review stage.
3. All requests for review must be made to the OIA within twelve months of the date of issue of a Completion of Procedures letter. For full details please contact <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>. The University will draw the student's attention to any exceptional factors that mean that it is particularly important for the student to bring the matter to the OIA's attention promptly.

## **15.13 Reconsideration of the Same Offence**

Normally, the University will not reconsider an offence once these procedures have been invoked. However, if new evidence emerges which, for a good

reason beyond its control, was unavailable to the University at the time of the original investigation, the University reserves the right to reconsider an allegation and, in exceptional circumstances, re-open proceedings. If this applies, then a new Student Misconduct Panel will be recruited, and this will not include any previous members.

## **15.14 Annual Report**

Each year, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) submits a report on student casework to Senate, detailing (anonymously) general matters or issues arising from recent student misconduct cases. Additional reports are also submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee of the Board of Governors on a regular basis. Senate will forward recommendations to other relevant University committees so that broad concerns can be shared, and appropriate action taken.

## **15.15 Procedures at Partner Organisations**

1. In accordance with the Good Practice Framework issued on behalf of the HE sector by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and Plymouth Marjon University's Collaborative Provision Regulations and Procedures, all students registered for the University's awards have the ultimate right to complain to the University, irrespective of where they are studying. This right of complaint, however, is not absolute and is subject to the precise wording of the partnership agreement.
2. The partner organisation, accordingly, should ensure that clear information and guidance with regard to student misconduct is made available to all students registered for the University's awards. This should include clear information about the sequence of processes involved and make clear the channels through which dissatisfied students can contact the University directly.

3. Once the internal procedures of the partner organisation have been fully exhausted, students who wish to take their case to the University for review should ask the Academic Standards Officer in writing if they are eligible to do so. Students may request a review of the decision on the following grounds only:
  - That the procedures were not followed properly.
  - That the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision.
  - That the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
  - That there is bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure.
  - That the penalty imposed was disproportionate or not permitted under the procedures.
4. If a case is eligible for review, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will refer the challenge to a member of the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar who has no involvement with the partnership. If the challenge is upheld, the case will be referred back to the partner organisation to be reheard under its own procedures. Otherwise, the University will not refer the case back to the partner organisation to be reheard and the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will advise the student accordingly. This will include advice with regard to a student's further right of appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).



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## 16. ACADEMIC APPEAL PROCEDURE

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are also classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 16.1 Introduction

1. The University, in accordance with the Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals and the expectations set out in the UK Quality Code For Higher Education, defines an academic appeal as a 'request for a review of a decision of an academic body around a mark, outcome or decision'.
2. These procedures describe how students may submit an academic appeal and the grounds on which they may do so. Students should read these procedures carefully before deciding whether or not to formally appeal, and should also note that parallel procedures are in place for complaints (see Section 17 of this [Framework](#)). If a student is in doubt over any matter relating to an intended appeal, advice may be sought from the Academic Standards Officer.
3. Appeals will be treated with due diligence and confidentiality. However, those considering an appeal will normally require access to all the supporting documentation in order to come to an informed decision.
4. Appeals will not always produce the outcome preferred by a student. However, whatever the decision, the student will be informed of the result of an appeal and the reasons for it.
5. If an academic appeal is of a particularly sensitive nature, and a student would like to make some early enquiries on a confidential basis, s/he should contact

the President or Deputy President of the Student Union or Student Wellbeing and Support for advice.

6. The University can make reasonable adjustments to the procedures on a case-by-case basis to take account of the individual needs of students with disabilities. Students are encouraged to discuss their requirements with the Disability Team (Student Wellbeing and Support).

In addition, the University can consider making reasonable adjustments for any student, where appropriate, to reflect their individual circumstances. Students are encouraged to raise any such needs either when requesting or submitting an appeal form, or at any stage during the appeal process, so that the University can consider and implement appropriate adjustments.

## **16.2 Right of Appeal**

1. Students have a right of appeal against decisions taken, by the designated Assessment Board on behalf of the University, that affect their academic progress. These procedures set out the grounds of appeal permitted.
2. Students should note that the University's complaints procedure (see Section 17 of this [Framework](#)) should be invoked in other areas of potential dispute. There may be appeals against academic decisions which refer to matters or allegations that are, or that become, the subject of a formal complaint. In such circumstances the Complaints Panel will determine the outcome of the appeal.
3. Students will not be disadvantaged in any respect by submitting an academic appeal.

## **16.3 Grounds of Appeal**

1. Appeals must be lodged on either or both of the following grounds:

- (a) **Material circumstances:** factors affecting a student's performance in an assessment(s), which the Board of Examiners had been unaware of when making its decision. These circumstances may **only** be considered if the student can demonstrate that, for a sound and acceptable reason, they had been unable to make them known at an earlier time through the Extenuating Circumstances procedures

and/or

- (b) **Procedural irregularities** (i.e. alleged irregularities in the formal conduct of an assessment or in reaching another academic decision, including alleged prejudice or bias on the part of one or more examiners and/or markers).

Evidence for each ground of appeal invoked must be provided. In exceptional circumstances, where this might advantage the student or where a student has not cited a specific ground for appeal, an appeal may also be considered on permitted grounds which have not been cited.

2. Appeals can only be lodged against specific module marks. It is not, therefore, possible to lodge an appeal against an overall result including a degree classification.
3. A successful appeal cannot result in the raising of a mark that has already been confirmed by an Assessment Board. Instead, it will normally result in the granting of an additional assessment opportunity (e.g. new essay title), rather than the re-assessment of previously submitted work, so that no student is disadvantaged by the outcome of a successful appeal. The higher of the two module marks will then be recorded.

## 16.4 Exclusions from Appeal

1. The following grounds cannot be considered as the basis for an appeal:

- Dissatisfaction with the academic judgement of the internal and external examiners and/or markers including the Board of Examiners.
  - Matters of dispute that are within the remit of the student complaints procedure (see Section 17 of this [Framework](#)).
2. As required by the University's Marking Procedures set out in Section 12.5 of this [Framework](#), a sample of work from each assignment is double-marked to ensure the accuracy and consistency of marking. This would normally rule out a successful appeal on the ground of procedural irregularities, involving alleged prejudice or bias.
  3. Academic appeals submitted outside of the timeframe set out in Section 16.8 of this Framework will only be considered if the student can show reasonable grounds for not submitting the appeal within the deadline.
  4. Issues relating to the quality of teaching or supervision, or other circumstances that relate to the delivery of a programme of study before the point of assessment (including the submission of a thesis or dissertation), cannot be pursued by way of these procedures. They should instead be raised under the University's student complaints procedure within the stated timeframe (see Section 17 of this [Framework](#)).

## **16.5 Acceptable Behaviour**

1. The University recognises that lodging an academic appeal can be a stressful experience and that the overwhelming majority of students do so in an appropriately constructive way. However, it also has a duty to ensure the safety and well-being of its staff.
2. Students (and, where appropriate, their representatives) are expected to use the established procedures and channels of communication to bring and resolve academic appeals. Under those circumstances, they can expect University staff involved in their appeal to be impartial, fair and, above all, helpful. However, the University will take action to protect its staff from

unacceptable behaviour and will, for example, not accept communication that is abusive, offensive, defamatory, aggressive, threatening, coercive, intimidating and/or unreasonably persistent or demanding.

3. If a student's behaviour is deemed to be unacceptable, the University will explain the reason(s) for this and will ask the student to modify their behaviour. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, action will be taken to restrict the student's communication with the University on the authorisation of the Academic Registrar. Under such circumstances, the student will be provided in writing with the reason(s) why his/her behaviour has been deemed unacceptable and the action/s that will be taken in response.
4. Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate and may include the following (please note that these are not exhaustive):
  - Requiring contact in a particular form (e.g. in writing only)
  - Requiring that contact takes place with a single, named individual
  - Restricting telephone calls to specified days and times
  - Asking the student to appoint a representative to correspond with the University
  - Asking the student to enter into an agreement about their conduct
5. Where a student behaves unacceptably during a telephone conversation or a face-to-face meeting the University may, as a last resort, terminate the call or the meeting.
6. Where unacceptable behaviour on the part of a student continues, despite the student's communication with the University having been restricted, the University may terminate consideration of the appeal. Under these exceptional circumstances, a Completion of Procedures Letter (as per Section 16.10 of this Framework) will be issued.
7. The University may also refuse to process an academic appeal if it considers it to be frivolous or vexatious, issuing a Completion of Procedures Letter accordingly. Examples of frivolous or vexatious appeals include, but are not necessarily restricted to, the following:

- Academic appeals which are obsessive, harassing or repetitive
  - Academic appeals which seek unrealistic and unreasonable outcomes
  - Academic appeals which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
  - Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value
8. Anyone making malicious allegations concerning the reputation or conduct of members of staff in the context of an appeal may be subject to Student Misconduct proceedings, on the grounds that they have harmed or attempted to harm the good order and discipline of the University, and/or brought the University or its staff or students into disrepute.

## **16.6 Responsibilities of Students**

1. The responsibility for compiling documentation in support of an appeal, including any supporting evidence, rests with the student in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 16.8 of this Framework.
2. Students should note the time constraints outlined in these procedures and respond to any communications relating to their appeal in a timely manner.
3. Students should ensure that they are fully aware of the timing and the conditions of any assessments, including the deadlines that apply to them. Where this responsibility has not been exercised, the University reserves the right to decide that a valid case for appeal has not been made.
4. A student who submits an appeal must continue to undertake all resit opportunities, as its success cannot be guaranteed.

## **16.7 Informal Resolution**

Academic appeals can only be made formally, following the publication of results. However, students who may have grounds for appeal, or who seek clarification of an Assessment Board's decision, are invited to discuss their

concerns with the appropriate Dean of Faculty, Academic Director, or Programme Leader/Programme Area Leader immediately following the publication of results. In certain circumstances, where appropriate and proportionate, students may be provided with a written outcome which will be taken into account in the event of a subsequent appeal.

## 16.8 Submission of Appeal

1. Students can appeal only **after** the relevant Board has met and the official communication notifying results has been sent. Students who are aware that they might wish to lodge an appeal at this point are advised to retain any relevant correspondence and associated paperwork.
2. Should a student intend to appeal, they should request an appeal submission form from the Academic Standards Officer by emailing the Quality and Academic Standards Unit, as notified in the official results communication.
3. A completed appeal submission form should be returned to the Academic Standards Officer or nominee (preferably by way of e-mail with scanned attachments in .pdf format), with all relevant supporting evidence, **within twenty working days from the date of the communication notifying results**. A student should send copies of any evidence supplied in support of their appeal, to avoid any risk that the originals will be lost. Students will also be invited to complete an anonymous questionnaire for equality monitoring purposes.
4. On receipt of the completed appeal form, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee shall acknowledge the appeal and carry out an initial assessment. This may result in:
  - The appeal being rejected, for example because it is late, the outcome the student is hoping for cannot be achieved under the Academic Appeal Procedure, or it falls outside of the permitted grounds for an appeal (see Section 16.3 and 16.4). Where applicable, the student will be directed to a



different procedure. The reason/s for the rejection will be explained to the student, who will be able to request a review of the decision at this point (See Section 16.9 - Review Stage).

- The appeal being redirected to the Complaints Procedure if it includes grounds for a complaint (in accordance with Section 17 of this [Framework](#)).
- The appeal being accepted for formal consideration.

The student will normally be informed of the process to be followed in relation to their appeal submission within five working days of its receipt.

## **Formal Stage**

5. If accepted for formal consideration, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will forward the appeal to an appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of academic staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has no involvement with the student.
6. When investigating the appeal, the senior member of academic staff may decide to seek additional information, either from relevant University colleagues and/or the student. Where supplied by University colleagues, this information will be made available to the student on request. In exceptional cases, the senior member of academic staff may decide to meet with colleagues and/or the student to obtain additional information, making a brief note of the meeting which will be made available on the same terms.
7. Once the senior member of academic staff has reached a decision, they will communicate their decision to the Academic Standards Officer or nominee who will advise the student in writing. The University aims to communicate its decision as quickly as possible and within twenty working days of receipt of the full appeal submission from the student. If a delay is envisaged, i.e. in excess of five working days, the student will be notified in writing before the end of the twenty working day period.

8. If the appeal is upheld, the case will be referred back to the Chair of the Module Assessment Board (MAB) or Progression and Award Board (PAB) so that they can take Chair's Action to change the Board's initial recommendations. In this case, the University will follow its normal procedures, including involvement of External Examiners where appropriate. Care will be taken to ensure student confidentiality and equity in the treatment of marks.
9. If the relevant Board changes its original recommendation, the change of recommendation will be confirmed to the student in writing and reported to its next meeting.
10. If the appeal is not upheld, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee shall set out the student's right to challenge the decision in the decision letter. This will explain the grounds under which a student may request a review of the decision, and make it clear that - if the student does not take the academic appeal to the review stage within the time limit for doing so - the appeal will be closed automatically.

## **16.9 Review Stage**

1. The student may request a review of the decision on the following grounds only:
  - That the procedures were not followed properly.
  - That the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision.
  - That the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
  - That there is bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure.

Any such request must be submitted in writing to the Academic Standards Officer or nominee, within ten working days of the date of the letter communicating the decision.

2. The Academic Standards Officer or nominee will refer the challenge to a second appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the student or the appeal. If no valid grounds for re-hearing the appeal are found, the University's Academic Appeal procedure will have been exhausted, and the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will advise the student accordingly. This will constitute a Completion of Procedures Letter (see Section 16.10 of this Framework).
3. If, however, it is found that there are valid grounds for re-hearing the appeal, the decision will be overturned, and the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will re-convene the formal stage of the appeals procedure. The appeal will be re-heard, accordingly, by a third appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the student or the appeal, under the procedures set out in Section 16.8 of this Framework. This re-hearing will be final and there will be no further right of appeal thereafter.
4. The review stage will normally be concluded within ten working days of the receipt of the student's request. Where it is agreed that the formal stage should be re-convened, the timescales set out in Section 16.8 of this Framework will apply and the processing time recorded for the appeal will be reset accordingly.

## **16.10 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education**

1. If a student remains dissatisfied after the appropriate internal processes have been exhausted, they can ask the University to issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review their appeal.

2. The University must issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the OIA to review an appeal. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued automatically where valid grounds for re-hearing the appeal are not found at the review stage and otherwise on request. If a Completion of Procedures letter is issued before the review stage has been conducted, the letter will make it clear that the student has not completed the University's internal procedures.
3. All requests for review must be made to the OIA within twelve months of the date of issue of a Completion of Procedures letter. For full details please contact <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.

## **16.11 Annual Report**

The Academic Standards Officer submits an annual report on student casework to Senate, detailing (anonymously) general matters or issues arising from recent academic appeals. Additional reports are also submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee of the Board of Governors on a regular basis. Senate will forward recommendations to other relevant University committees so that broad concerns can be shared and appropriate action taken. In addition, the Academic Standards Officer will collate and present anonymised monitoring information with regard to academic appeals to Senate at appropriate intervals.

## **16.12 Procedures at Partner Organisations**

1. Students registered for the University's awards, irrespective of where they are studying, must normally appeal to the University direct. Details of how they can do so will be included in the official communication notifying results, and the procedure, thereafter, will be identical to that which applies to students on the University's home campus.

2. Where this is not the case, in accordance with the expectations set out in the UK Quality Code For Higher Education and the University's Collaborative Provision Regulations and Procedures, all students registered for the University's awards have the ultimate right to appeal to the University, irrespective of where they are studying.
3. The partner organisation, accordingly, should ensure that clear information and guidance with regard to academic appeals is made available to all students registered for the University's awards. This should explain whether students should appeal to the University directly, or whether appeals should be made to the partner organisation in the first instance.
4. Once the internal procedures of the partner organisation have been fully exhausted, where this is applicable, students who wish to take their case to the University for review should ask the Academic Standards Officer in writing if they are eligible to do so. The student may request a review of the decision on the following grounds only:
  - That the procedures were not followed properly.
  - That the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision.
  - That the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
  - That there is bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure.
5. If a case is eligible for review, the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will refer the challenge to an appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of academic staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has no involvement with the partnership. If the challenge is upheld, the case will be referred back to the partner organisation to be reheard under its own procedures. Otherwise, the University will not refer the case back to the partner organisation to be reheard and the Academic Standards Officer or nominee will advise the student accordingly. This will include advice with regard to a student's further right of appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

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## 17. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This section of the Student Regulations Framework applies to all taught programmes of Plymouth Marjon University, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, to all research degree students and to all apprentices enrolled on the University's apprenticeship programmes, who are classified as 'students' and referred to accordingly throughout this Procedure.

### 17.1 The University's Commitment on Complaints

1. Plymouth Marjon University is committed to delivering a high-quality service and encourages its students to tell it where there is cause for concern and a case for improvement. Whilst this is normally achieved through student feedback mechanisms at module and programme level, there are exceptional occasions where a complaint needs to be taken further.
2. The University reviews its complaints procedure annually with a strong emphasis being placed upon protecting the consumer rights of its students. It aims to be as clear and concise as possible, reflecting the University's commitment to plain English in public communication. Further details of the University's compliance with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) can be found [here](#).
3. Students who are considering making a complaint, or who need help or further information, are advised to discuss the matter first with the Student Union and/or Student Wellbeing and Support.
4. The University, in accordance with the [Good Practice Framework for Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals](#) and the expectations set out in the [UK Quality Code For Higher Education](#), defines a complaint as 'a specific query about an aspect of experience of the provider'. It aims to handle all such complaints in a way that:
  - Encourages informal conciliation

- Is fair and efficient
  - Treats complaints with appropriate seriousness, sympathy and confidentiality
  - Facilitates early resolution
  - Allows the University as a whole or a particular part of the University to learn from the experience
  - Aligns with the University's commitment to equality and diversity
  - Has due regard to any applicable law
5. The University can make reasonable adjustments to the procedures on a case-by-case basis to take account of the individual needs of students with disabilities. Students are encouraged to discuss their requirements with the Disability Team (Student Wellbeing and Support).

In addition, the University can consider making reasonable adjustments for any student, where appropriate, to reflect their individual circumstances. Students are encouraged to raise any such needs either when submitting a complaint or at any stage during the complaint process, so that the University can consider and implement appropriate adjustments.

6. Students making a complaint will be described in this section of the Framework as 'complainants'.
7. Complaints from applicants concerning admissions decisions will be considered under this procedure. However, once all relevant internal processes have been completed, applicants who remain dissatisfied will not be eligible for an external review of their case by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), unless they are former students seeking re-admission and their complaint relates directly to their previous period of study at the University, in accordance with the OIA's rules ([www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)).



## 17.2 How to Complain

1. The University's complaints procedures are set out below. Students who complain may wish to inform relevant members of staff that they are doing so under the procedures.
2. The University's complaints procedures focus on matters that affect the quality of a student's learning opportunities. However, students should also note that for the following matters of potential dispute, separate procedures apply:
  - Unacceptable conduct on the part of a student (see below)
  - Unacceptable conduct on the part of a member of staff (see below)
  - Academic appeals (see Section 16 of this [Framework](#))
  - Complaints against the Student Union (procedures available from the Student Union)
3. If a complaint refers to matters or allegations that are, or that become, the subject of an appeal against an academic decision, the Complaints Panel will determine the outcome of the appeal.
4. Where unacceptable conduct on the part of a student is alleged, the allegation should be pursued initially with the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) so that the appropriate procedures, as set out in Section 15 of this [Framework](#), can be instigated. This is because students are not employed by the University and, therefore, are not part of the service that it provides.
5. Where unacceptable conduct on the part of a member of staff is alleged, the allegation should be pursued initially with the Executive Director of People & Culture (via Student Wellbeing and Support at the discretion of the student). This is because separate procedures exist with regard to staff disciplinary issues.
6. A student who is dissatisfied with the way in which their allegation of unacceptable conduct, on the part of a student or a member of staff, has been dealt with can invoke the formal stage of the complaints procedure. Whilst a

Complaints Panel cannot consider or authorise disciplinary action against a student or a member of staff, it may review the conduct of the Student Misconduct or staff disciplinary procedures and recommend their re-opening where appropriate.

7. Complaints can only be made by students or former students at the University. Former students can submit a complaint provided that they do so within three months after their programme of study has formally ceased or (if eligible to graduate) the date of graduation. As explained in Section 17.9 of this Framework, non-members of the University may attend Complaints Panel hearings to provide advice and support to the complainant and they can also be heard with the agreement of both the complainant and the Chair. However, if a complainant is unable to attend a Complaints Panel hearing, then they will not be permitted to send a non-member of the University as a representative on their behalf.

### **17.3 Acceptable Behaviour**

1. The University recognises that bringing a complaint can be a stressful experience, but that the overwhelming majority of complainants do so in an appropriately constructive way. However, it also has a duty to ensure the safety and well-being of its staff.
2. Complainants (and, where appropriate, their representatives) are expected to use the established procedures and channels of communication to bring and resolve formal complaints and, under those circumstances, they can expect University staff involved in their complaint to be impartial, fair and above all helpful. However, the University will take action to protect its staff from unacceptable behaviour and will, for example, not accept communication that is abusive, offensive, defamatory, aggressive, threatening, coercive, intimidating, unreasonably persistent or demanding.
3. If a complainant's behaviour is deemed to be unacceptable, the University will explain the reason(s) for this and will ask the complainant to modify their

behaviour. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, action will be taken to restrict the complainant's communication with the University on the authorisation of the Academic Registrar. Under such circumstances, the complainant will be issued with a letter that sets out the reason(s) why their behaviour has been deemed unacceptable and the action/s that will be taken in response.

4. Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate and may include the following (please note that these are not exhaustive):
  - Requiring contact in a particular form (e.g. by letter only)
  - Requiring that contact takes place with a single, named individual
  - Restricting telephone calls to specified days and times
  - Asking the complainant to appoint a representative to correspond with the University
  - Asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about their conduct
5. Where a complainant behaves unacceptably during a telephone conversation or an in-person or virtual meeting, the University may, as a last resort, terminate the call or the meeting.
6. Where unacceptable behaviour on the part of a complainant continues, despite the complainant's communication with the University having been restricted, the University may terminate consideration of the complaint. Under these exceptional circumstances, a Completion of Procedures Letter (as per Section 17.11 of this Framework) will be issued.
7. The University may also refuse to process a formal complaint if it considers it to be frivolous or vexatious, issuing a Completion of Procedures Letter accordingly. Examples of frivolous or vexatious complaints include, but are not necessarily restricted to, the following:
  - Complaints which are obsessive, harassing or repetitive

- Complaints which seek unrealistic and unreasonable outcomes
  - Complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
  - Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value
8. Anyone making malicious allegations concerning the reputation or conduct of students or members of staff in the context of a complaint may be subject to misconduct proceedings, on the grounds that they have harmed or attempted to harm the good order and discipline of the University, and/or brought the University or its staff or students into disrepute.

## **17.4 Results of Complaints**

Complaints will not always produce the outcome preferred by a complainant. For instance, policy decisions or resourcing beyond the University's control may affect the level of service provided. In addition, a successful complaint might not benefit a complainant directly if it results, for example, in service improvements applicable to students in the future.

## **17.5 Anonymity with Regard to Complaints**

1. In general, those about whom complaints are made, under these specific procedures, will be informed about the source and content of a complaint. If this is likely to deter a student from making a complaint, they are invited to contact the Academic Standards Officer to discuss. An anonymous complaint will only be investigated in exceptional circumstances, where there is a compelling case (supported by appropriate evidence) to justify its investigation.
2. A copy of the complaint will normally be supplied to all affected parties.
3. A complainant will not suffer recrimination as a result of making a complaint unless it contains malicious unfounded allegations.

## **17.6 Confidentiality of Complaints**

The University expects the confidentiality of the documentation generated by a complaint to be respected by all parties. Information received during investigations will remain confidential to those involved in the process and those who may need to be consulted in order to reach an outcome. Where disclosure to a third party is necessary to progress a complaint, the affected party will be notified in advance of the disclosure. No third party should be told any more than is reasonably necessary to obtain the required information from them.

## **17.7 Group Complaints**

1. On occasions, a group of students might wish to raise a complaint. Under these circumstances, the best way to do so is by way of an identified spokesperson. Each member of the group must agree in writing to the spokesperson, and they will also be invited to submit separate copies of the equal opportunities monitoring form. Where separate complaints are submitted, the University reserves the right to process them together subject to any data protection issues that might apply.
2. The decision letter will be sent to the spokesperson (where applicable) at the early resolution and formal stages. However, as each member of the group would have the ultimate right to ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review their complaint if it remains unresolved after the final stage of the process (as per Section 17.11 of this Framework), separate Completion of Procedures Letters will be issued at that point.

## **17.8 Early Resolution Stage (Stage One)**

1. The Early Resolution Stage (Stage One) is designed to address straightforward concerns quickly at a local level, and the University expects

that the majority of issues can be resolved at this stage without the need to instigate the formal procedures. Complainants are invited to raise any issues with the appropriate member/s of staff, either in writing or verbally, and should indicate the outcome being sought. The appropriate member/s of staff include, but are not necessarily restricted to, the following:

- Academic: Programme/Programme Area Leader and/or Personal Development Tutor
- Accommodation: Campus Services Manager
- Admissions: Admissions Manager
- Equality and Diversity: Inclusion Co-ordinator
- Estates (apart from accommodation): Head of Estates and Campus Development
- Finance: Finance Director
- IT: Head of Digital and IT Services
- Library: Library Team Leader (or nominee)
- Registry Services: Academic Registrar
- Sports Centre: Sports Centre Operations Manager
- Welfare: Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee)

Any issues that do not fall into these categories should be communicated to the Head of Student Wellbeing and Support (or nominee) in the first instance.

2. The appropriate member of staff will advise the Academic Standards Officer, via the Quality and Academic Standards Unit, that a concern has been raised. The appropriate member of staff will investigate and try to resolve the concern in consultation with the complainant. The appropriate member of staff will liaise with relevant colleagues, if applicable, and alert the Executive Leadership Team member/Dean of Faculty who is responsible for their area, if

deemed appropriate. The appropriate member of staff, as part of their investigation, should take the following points into account:

- What specifically is the concern about?
- What outcome is the student hoping for and can it be achieved?
- Is the concern straightforward and likely to be resolved with little or no investigation?
- Can it be resolved on the spot by providing, where appropriate, an explanation, an alternative solution or an apology?
- Can someone else help to resolve the issue, for example where an informal administrative resolution is required?
- Would it be helpful to use confidential mediation or conciliation, and are the student and the provider willing to do so?
- What assistance or support can be provided to the student in taking this forward, including whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to help the complainant to engage with the process?

The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) can also advise with regard to the handling of an informal complaint, particularly with regard to precedent.

Where it is clear that early resolution is not appropriate or possible, and that the complainant's concern needs to move to the formal process, the appropriate member of staff should promptly direct the student to the Formal Stage (Stage Two) of this procedure (Section 17.9).

3. Concerns should be raised within twenty working days of the relevant incident or incidents in the case of current students, otherwise, they will normally be rejected on the grounds that a sound investigation can no longer be conducted. Concerns from former students must be raised within three months after their programme of study has formally ceased or (if eligible to graduate) the date of graduation.

4. The appropriate member of staff will advise the Academic Standards Officer, via the Quality and Academic Standards Unit, of their response. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will respond to the complainant in writing, sharing their response with appropriate members of staff, and will maintain a central record of all such concerns.
5. A response should normally be sent within fifteen working days of receipt of the complaint. If a delay is envisaged, the complainant should be notified in writing before the end of the fifteen working day period. Where a complainant requests additional information, every effort should be made to provide this within ten working days of the receipt of the request.

## **17.9 Formal Stage (Stage Two)**

1. The Formal Stage (Stage Two) can be activated if any of the following apply:
  - a complainant remains dissatisfied with the response received at the Early Resolution Stage (Stage One) and wishes to escalate their complaint.
  - the complaint is regarding the way in which The People Team have investigated an earlier complaint of alleged unacceptable conduct, on the part of a member of staff.
  - the matter cannot be resolved without gathering extensive evidence.
  - the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) allows the complainant to initiate the formal process immediately, by exception, at the complainant's request; for example, when the complainant can provide good reason for not wanting to engage with the Early Resolution Stage.
  - the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) in liaison with the Academic Registrar, determines, by exception, that the complaint should be escalated immediately to the formal process, for example because early resolution



would be inappropriate due to the nature, complexity, or seriousness of the complaint, and/or the outcome being sought.

- the complaint is brought by a former student and there is no ongoing relationship with the University.
2. The complainant should contact the Academic Standards Officer, via the Quality and Academic Standards Unit, to request a Complaints Submission Form, if not already provided. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will supply the Complaints Submission Form, which will include an anonymous questionnaire for equality monitoring purposes, and indicate any possible sources of advice and support as appropriate. The complainant should contact the Academic Standards Officer if they feel they need to submit their complaint in an alternative format.
  3. Completed Complaints Submission Forms from current students must be received within twenty working days of the relevant incident or, where applicable, within twenty working days of the conclusion of Stage One. Completed Submission Forms from former students must be received within three months after their programme of study has formally ceased or (if eligible to graduate) the date of graduation.
  4. The complainant should send copies of any evidence supplied in support of their complaint, to avoid any risk that the originals will be lost. Moreover, complainants should respond to any communications relating to their complaint in a timely manner. The University reserves the right to take steps to verify the evidence and, if it is found not to be genuine, it may consider the matter under Section 15 (Student Misconduct Procedure). Recordings made in support of a complaint will be accepted, as long as they are made available to the University not less than five days in advance of a hearing (as per Section 17.9.13 of this Framework) and were made with the knowledge and consent of the relevant colleagues. In addition, the University reserves the right to check recordings with a sound engineer and to reschedule a hearing for this purpose in exceptional circumstances.

5. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will normally acknowledge all complaints within five working days of receipt, and issue a decision within thirty working days of receipt of the full complaint submission, if possible. If a delay is envisaged, the complainant will be notified in writing before the end of the thirty working day period. Where exceptional factors affect the timing of these procedures, reasonable attempts will be made to avoid undue delay in the processing of complaints. Where a complainant requests additional information, every effort will be made to provide this within ten working days of the receipt of the request.
6. Whilst every attempt will be made to expedite complaints that may require particularly swift action, due process will always be carried out and arrangements for Complaints Panel hearings will not be compromised.
7. On receipt of the completed submission form and associated evidence, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will nominate an appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has no involvement with the complainant or the complaint, to chair the Complaints Panel. The Chair will determine the witnesses to be called to the Panel and the documentation to be circulated to all parties in advance of the meeting, advised by the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) as appropriate. This will include a formal response from the relevant academic or service area of the University, to be circulated to the complainant not less than five working days in advance of the meeting, where such a response has not already been provided.
8. The Panel Chair, advised by the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee), may suspend consideration where relevant supporting evidence has not been supplied, if a practicable remedy has not been proposed by the complainant or in other exceptional circumstances. Where additional information is requested from a complainant, this should normally be received within twenty working days of the request. In such cases, where any discrepancies have not been addressed within this period the University reserves the right, exceptionally, to

reject a complaint without recourse to a Complaints Panel and issue a Completion of Procedures Letter accordingly.

9. Subject to any suspension of consideration as above, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will convene a Complaints Panel. This shall comprise:

- An appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar (Chair).
- A second appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar.
- A member of the Executive Committee of the Student Union, normally the President or Deputy President, who also has no involvement with the student or the complaint.

The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will act as Secretary to the Panel and proceedings may also be recorded, either electronically or by a minute taker, by mutual agreement. The Panel will not meet unless all members and the Secretary are present. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will endeavour to ensure that the Panel includes at least one male and one female member.

10. The complainant shall be informed of the date of the meeting of the Panel and the venue, which will normally be a formal meeting room on the University campus, not less than ten working days in advance. This deadline can only be reduced with the complainant's written consent. Advice will also be provided to the complainant with regard to the timeframe for the meeting and the opportunities available for them to present their case.
11. The complainant will be invited to appear in person but, in exceptional circumstances, the Panel may also hear a case, at the discretion of the Chair advised by the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee), in their absence. A

Panel can be scheduled at any time in the calendar year; however reasonable steps will be taken to schedule it at a point in the year when the student would normally be present in the University.

12. The complainant may be accompanied by a 'friend', who is permitted to attend to provide advice and support to the complainant and can be heard only with the agreement of both the complainant and the Chair. The name and status of any such 'friend' must normally be notified to the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) no less than five working days in advance of the hearing. The University must grant its consent beforehand for the 'friend' to attend the meeting.
13. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) shall normally circulate the list of witnesses to be called, and all relevant documentation, to all parties not less than five working days before the meeting. Where this is not possible, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will advise the complainant who will have the right to request a postponement. Complainants may submit additional information in support of their complaint, although if this is circulated less than five working days before the meeting its inclusion will be at the discretion of the Panel Chair.
14. Complainants have the right to call witnesses on the same basis as the University. Any such witnesses should also be notified to the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) not less than five working days before the meeting.
15. The meeting will commence with private discussions within the Panel to clarify matters of process. The complainant will then be called to appear, along with any 'friend' that they have nominated, followed by the members of University staff involved in the complaint. The complainant and the members of University staff will then be invited to make a statement to the Panel, after which the Panel will interview all parties in order to obtain the information it requires to reach an informed decision. This may involve discussion between the complainant and the members of University staff, which must be conducted through the Chair of the Panel. The complainant will then be invited

to make a final statement to the Panel, in the absence of the members of University staff, after which the Panel shall consider its decision in private. In exceptional circumstances, the Panel might reserve its decision, pending the outcome of additional investigations and appropriate correspondence.

Meetings can be adjourned and reconvened in exceptional circumstances.

16. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) shall notify the complainant in writing of the Panel's decision, and the reasoning behind that decision, normally within ten working days of the meeting. This letter, which will also constitute the official record of the meeting, will explain the grounds under which a complainant may request a review of the decision, and make it clear that if the complainant does not take the formal complaint to the review stage within the time limit for doing so the complaint will be closed automatically.
17. The University may award compensation to a complainant when a complaint is upheld either in whole or in part. A proposed compensatory payment is agreed, in the first instance, by a Complaints Panel. Compensatory payments can only be agreed by a Complaints Panel and cannot, therefore, be made at the early resolution stage (Stage One).
18. The University's Refund and Compensation Policy will determine the level of the payment and will be supplied to complainants for information on request. Payments that exceed a predetermined amount will be subject to the ratification of the University's Executive Leadership Team. Contestation of the payment offer can only be considered at the review stage (Stage Three) on the grounds that the outcome was unreasonable.

### **17.10 Review Stage (Stage Three)**

1. The complainant may request a review of the decision on the following grounds only:
  - That the procedures were not followed properly.
  - That the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision.

- That the complainant has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
- That there is bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure.

Any such request must be submitted in writing to the Academic Standards Officer, within ten working days of the date of the letter communicating the decision.

2. The Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will refer the challenge to an appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has had no involvement with the student or the complaint. The challenge will be copied to University staff for information only, and no response from them will be sought or anticipated at this stage.
3. If valid grounds for doing so are identified, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will convene another Complaints Panel under the formal stage of these procedures. This will be convened with a different membership to ensure objectivity. This rehearing of the complaint will be final and there will be no further opportunity to request a review. Considering this, the University will ensure that the outcome of the rehearing is no less favourable to the complainant than that of the original hearing. The decision letter issued to the complainant following the rehearing will also serve as a Completion of Procedures Letter.
4. If valid grounds are not identified, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will advise the complainant that the University's internal complaints procedures have been exhausted and issue a Completion of Procedures Letter accordingly (as per Section 17.11 of this Framework).
5. The review stage will normally be concluded within fifteen working days of the receipt of the challenge. If a delay is envisaged, the complainant will be notified in writing before the end of the fifteen working day period. Where it is agreed that another Complaints Panel should be convened under the formal stage of these procedures, the timescales set out in Section 17.9 of this

Framework will apply and the processing time recorded for the complaint will be reset accordingly.

### **17.11 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education**

1. If a complainant remains dissatisfied after the appropriate internal processes have been exhausted, they can ask the University to issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review their complaint.
2. The University must issue a Completion of Procedures letter in order for the OIA to review a complaint. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued automatically where valid grounds for re-hearing the complaint are not found at the review stage, following a rehearing of the complaint, and otherwise on request. If a Completion of Procedures letter is issued before the review stage has been conducted, the letter will make it clear that the student has not completed the University's internal processes.
3. All requests for review must be made to the OIA within twelve months of the date of issue of a Completion of Procedures letter. For full details please contact <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.
4. This provision does not apply to applicants (i.e. non-registered students), as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is unable to review such cases — unless the applicant is a former student seeking re-admission and the complaint relates directly to their previous period of study at the University.

### **17.12 Annual Report**

The Academic Standards Officer submits an annual report on student casework to Senate, detailing (anonymously) general matters or issues arising from recent complaints. Additional reports are also submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee of the Board of Governors on a regular basis.

Senate will forward recommendations to other relevant University committees so that broad concerns can be shared, and appropriate action taken. In addition, the Academic Standards Officer will collate and present anonymised monitoring information regarding complaints to Senate at appropriate intervals.

### **17.13 Procedures at Partner Organisations**

1. In accordance with the expectations set out in the UK Quality Code For Higher Education and the University's Collaborative Provision Regulations and Procedures, all students registered for the University's awards have the ultimate right to complain to the University, irrespective of where they are studying. This right of complaint, however, is not absolute and is subject to the precise wording of the partnership agreement.
2. The partner organisation, accordingly, should ensure that clear information and guidance regarding formal complaints is made available to all students registered for the University's awards. This should include clear information about the sequence of processes involved and make clear the channels through which dissatisfied students can contact the University directly.
3. Trainees who are undertaking placements at partner organisations and who wish to complain should contact their Personal Development Tutor and/or Programme (Area) Leader in the first instance, so that they can be directed as appropriate. A complaint direct to the University rather than to the placement provider will normally be appropriate.
4. Once the internal procedures of the partner organisation have been fully exhausted, if invoked, students who wish to take their case to the University for review should ask the Academic Standards Officer in writing if they are eligible to do so. The complainant may request a review of the decision on the following grounds only:
  - That the procedures were not followed properly.
  - That the decision maker(s) reached an unreasonable decision.



- That the student has new material evidence that they were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
  - That there is bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure.
5. If a case is eligible for review, the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will refer the challenge to an appropriately qualified and experienced senior member of academic staff, from the roster of Student Casework practitioners approved by the Academic Registrar, who has no involvement with the partnership. If the challenge is upheld, the case will be referred to the partner organisation to be reheard under its own procedures. Otherwise, the University will not refer the case back to the partner organisation to be reheard and the Academic Standards Officer (or nominee) will advise the student accordingly. This will include advice regarding a student's further right of complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (as per Section 17.11 of this Framework). The review stage will normally be concluded within fifteen working days of the receipt of the request. If a delay is envisaged, the complainant will be notified in writing before the end of the fifteen working day period.

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