

Guidance for Examiners 2021/22

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Conventions for Classifications of Awards - Guidance for Examiners 2021/22

General Information 2021/22

The information in these guidance notes is taken from the [Credit Framework for Taught Courses: Information for Students, Teachers and Examiners](#) and the [Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance of Taught Courses](#).

Relevant academic regulations may be found on the [Quality Assurance and Compliance Office \('QACO'\) website](#).

It should be noted that the joint degree courses delivered respectively by the Medway School of Pharmacy and the Kent and Medway Medical School are governed by distinct sets of conjoint academic regulations, and the procedures and conventions for classification for those courses differ in several areas from the terms of this guidance document. Other collaborative courses leading to joint or dual awards may also be subject to alternative sets of bespoke [academic regulations](#).

Points of Significant Note for 2021/22

(a) Dispensations from Senate to Mitigate the Impact of industrial Action

In line with the licence afforded by the waiving of University Ordinances 26 and 27, Senate approved the implementation of a number of special conventions intended to mitigate the impact of the industrial action on student performance (as set out in Senate Paper: S2021-31 / 09/03/22). At the time of writing (6 April 2022), these conventions are in the main limited to some specific interventions that allow for adjustments to be made to mitigate the non-delivery of module materials/content and/or the non-staging or marking of assessments or the non-recording of marks due to the strike action.

These special conventions constitute contingency arrangements, the implementation of which will be dependent on the impact of the industrial action on the delivery of teaching, the staging of planned assessments and the return of marks for modules. Where based on an assessment of the potential impact of action taken to date it seems that a corrective measure might be required, the procedure for the possible implementation of the relevant special conventions has been laid out at the appropriate point in this document.

A framework for the implementation of the special conventions, as necessary, is set out as Annex B.

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(b) Relaxation of Public Health Restrictions

Given the relaxation of public health restrictions prior to the commencement of the academic year the University, while reverting to a more pre-pandemic 'business as usual' approach to managing the student learning experience, has nonetheless looked to retain those innovations in online delivery and assessment that have proven beneficial pedagogically during the previous two years. The recording of lectures for replay by students at a time of their convenience has become the norm and formal examinations (with one PSRB-driven subject area exception) will once again be staged online.

(c) Examinations

In committing to the delivery of online examinations the University has utilised the two formats, as relevant to the subject area and the format of assessment question used, as below:

1. **OPEN BOOK** examinations to be completed and submitted within 24 hours of release (this is the DEFAULT exam type).
2. **TIME-LIMITED** examinations to be completed within a restricted time window in accordance with professional and regulatory bodies or specific pedagogic requirements (these are restricted in use and subject to Divisional and University approval).

Each of the above exam formats are designed to accommodate both students located on a University campus and those studying remotely at a distance from the University. However, time-limited examinations impose tighter submission requirements and thereby require careful consideration of accessibility and inclusivity issues prior to finalising their design.

(d) Academic Integrity

While this year's examinations could not be conducted under invigilated conditions, it has been possible to adapt the format of the examination papers to be less susceptible to risk from behaviours intended to circumvent the presentation of work based on other than the students' own efforts, such as collusion or plagiarism.

In addition, students were reminded of the responsibilities and requirements for them to act with academic integrity, that is, to take responsibility for their own work and to acknowledge the work of others wherever it contributes to their own. Examinations answer books were submitted via Turnitin and in accordance with University regulations. Potential breaches of academic integrity would be considered under the University's principles and procedures set out in [Annex 10](#) of the [Credit Framework](#) for managing such cases.

Divisions are asked to bear in mind the University's timetable for publishing results when managing investigations into any potential cases.

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(e) Self-Certification and Extensions for Late-Submitted Work

As we returned to the pre-pandemic 'business as usual' ('BAU') approach to managing the student learning experience, it was our expectation at the outset of the academic year that the measures put in place to mitigate the impact of the pandemic during the past two academic years, such as increased flexibility on assessment submission deadlines and the evidence base for these, automatic non-penalised resubmission attempts for failed assessment and modules, and the use of a 'safety-net' alternative stage mark, would not be applied in the academic year 2021/22.

This has largely proven the case. The one exception, however, has been the reversion to the allowance of increased flexibility with regard to the evidence base required for requests for extensions to assessment submission deadlines, which was made in response to the sudden and severe worsening of the pandemic in December 2021 and the government's subsequent extension of the period of self-certification for periods of illness to twenty-eight days. This development required a reconsideration of the return to BAU and necessitated the adoption once again of a more flexible approach with regard to the submission of medical evidence generally in support of applications for extension and other forms of mitigation.

As a result of these changing circumstances, Divisions were, therefore, advised to allow any application submitted for the mitigation of extenuating circumstances on medical grounds to be treated as follows:

- (i) Where the application is made as a result of illness from Covid-19, the University's COVID Tracker should be used as the source of evidence in support of these applications.
- (ii) Where the application is made as a result of illness other than from Covid-19 that resulted in a period of absence that commenced before 10 December 2021, the University's rules on self-certification and the submission of supporting medical evidence will apply.
- (iii) Where the application is made as a result of illness other than from Covid-19 that resulted in a period of absence that commenced on or after 10 December 2021, the length of time for which self-certification can be used as evidence in support of the application is extended to twenty-eight days.
- (iv) Where the application for mitigation takes the form of a request for an extension to a coursework submission deadline, self-certification on medical grounds will be permissible even where the student has remained in attendance.

Given the foregoing, the position with regard to evidencing student absence due to illness from Covid-19 became straightforward. Divisions were encouraged, however, to consider applications for mitigation made on these grounds sympathetically. That a student had returned to their studies after illness from Covid should not imply that they had fully recovered. Extension requests or indications of impaired performance

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in assessments submitted on grounds of post-viral fatigue or similar malaise were to be considered sympathetically and without any requirement for the submission of further supporting evidence by the student.

(f) Carry Forward of 19/20 and 20/21 Safety-Net Calculations for Current Finalists

Although the intended reversion to the application of standard conventions to work assessed in 2021/22 as part of the return to 'business as usual' has largely been undertaken (except as noted above regarding the expanded time period allowed for self-certification), it is important to remember that the safety-net calculation undertaken in 2019/20 for current finalists must be carried forward and taken into account by Boards of Examiners at classification in 2021/22.

These include:

1. Inclusion of any better average for a stage relevant to classification arrived at under the 'Safety-Net Calculation' undertaken in 2019/20 with regard to Stage 2 of a four year UG degree course; and
2. Inclusion of any better average for a stage relevant to classification arrived at under the 'Safety-Net Calculation' undertaken in 2019/20 with regard to Stage 2 of a three year UG degree course where a student intermitted for the year in 2020/21.

Changes to the Conventions for 2021/22

A small number of relevant changes to the University's Code of Practice and Credit Framework have been introduced for the academic year 2021/22.

(a) Assessment Review Boards

Some intended changes to the arrangements for meetings of Boards of Examiners, most notably the implementation of a new split format of meetings into separate Assessment Review Boards and Progression and Award Boards has again been deferred, with issues regarding the schedule of meetings and the provision of relevant data contributing to this decision. It is likely the University must revisit the matter of the format of meetings of Boards of Examiners and determine an arrangement more practicably aligned to the tight schedule that we now face for processing results.

(b) Four Changes to the Conventions are Noted in the Document:

1. **At 23: Categorical Marking:** In response to feedback from the Divisions and several external examiners the additional marking point of '82' has been added to the topmost level of the categorical marking scale. Divisions were require to devise relevant distinctive grade criteria relevant to the level of achievement denoted by this level of achievement.

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2. **At 12.3.1:** the conventions now allow at the discretion of examiners for **up to 50% of the credit for the stage to be trailed by PGT students** where such trailing will take place through reassessment/re-sit at the next available opportunity and not via repeat in attendance. This additional allowance has been incorporated into the conventions to offset potential issues with delayed progression to the dissertation stage reported by some PGT Boards with regard to their Master's degree courses.
3. **At 14.3.5.1:** the term '**Delayed Assessment**' is now used instead of the former term 'Deferral in Advance'. This is because use of the term 'deferral' in this context was confusing as it incorrectly implied the specialist meaning that the term carries in credit conventions of constituting a unpenalised reassessment attempt following the failure of a module. Where on grounds of extenuation a student elects in advance to delay the taking or submission of a significant piece of assessment this is not to be regarded as constituting the failure of the relevant module and the delayed attempt is therefore not to be treated as a reassessment but as the completion of the original assessment diet at the first attempt. The term 'Delayed Assessment' is, therefore, now to be used to make this distinction clear.
4. At the request of Kent Union, in the interest of clarity the standard Credit Framework terms of '**referral**' and '**deferral**' have been supplemented throughout the document with the additional labels of 'penalised attempt' and 'unpenalised attempt', in order that their meaning is made plain to all potential readers.

(c) Rounding of Marks

In 2020/21 the University deployed a SITS-based students record system - KentVision - which applied an amended algorithm for the rounding of marks as part of the classification process. The amended rounding algorithm as applied in KentVision removed an existing stage for the rounding of marks at the coursework level and replaced it with a new rounding stage when calculating the overall mark for the module.

In response, the University has reverse engineered the KentVision methodology for calculating module marks, Stage 3 averages and final degree averages, and calculated the Credit Framework methodology alongside it in order to identify where differences might be seen in the final degree averages.

The headline outcome is that 1,037 of the 1,993 (52.03%) students experience no difference in final degree average between the two methodologies: 955 (47.92%) had a difference but not one that affected the classification of the degree and 1 (0.05% of the sample) saw a difference in final degree classification.

Within the subset of the sample that saw a difference in their final degree average, the average differences are very small and are expressed to two

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decimal places of a percentage, so a 0.01% difference might be expressed in terms such as 56.78% vs 56.79%. Overall, the take-away message is that the difference is negligible.

In a related issue, some examiners queried if there might be a 'double boost' effect evident at the classification stage, for example, with a final overall average mark being rounded twice, resulting in a candidate's profile of marks earning a higher classification than might have been awarded in previous years. In the interests of clarity it should be noted that the overall final mark calculated for the purpose of award classification under the University's conventions will be the raw mark as expressed to two decimal places in all cases.

The University's algorithm for the rounding of marks is set out in section 24 of this document.

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1. Duties of Boards of Examiners

Each Division will have one or more Board or Boards of Examiners, which will undertake the following tasks for the courses and modules for which it holds responsibility:

- review the marking of and confirm the marks to be awarded for all modules;
- make recommendations for the award of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees to students who have successfully completed courses of study;
- make recommendations with regard to progression, deferrals, referrals and termination of registration of students taking courses of study;
- agree the award of prizes to outstanding students, as relevant.

All discussion at meetings of Boards of Examiners shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed to students except where such disclosure is authorised by the Head of Quality Assurance and Compliance.

Meetings of Boards of Examiners may be conducted remotely by virtual means.

2. Membership

2.1 Standard Membership of Boards of Examiners

2.1.1 Boards of Examiners should include the following members:

- Chair (normally the Chief Examiner for the courses concerned);
- External Examiners for the courses concerned;
- Directors of Studies;
- Module convenors for the courses concerned, however, their attendance is not compulsory.

2.1.2 Chair of Board of Examiners – the Chair of the Board of Examiners will normally be a member of the subject area, and will be appointed by the Director of Division. The duties of Chairs of Boards of Examiners are detailed in section 2.11 below. The Chair will also act as the Chair of the Assessment Review Board, where such a Board is staged.

2.1.3 External Examiners – all External Examiners for the courses under consideration should be in attendance at meetings of the Board at which decisions may be taken about awards to students. External Examiner appointments are approved by the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) acting on behalf of Senate and Council in line with the requirements of [Annex K of the Code of Practice for Taught Courses](#). The full duties of External Examiners are detailed in Annex K.

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- 2.1.4** A minimum of three members of the Board are normally required for the Boards of Examiners to be considered quorate, including the Chair and at least one External Examiner.
- 2.1.5** Where a Board of Examiners has been arranged, but an External Examiner then advises that they are no longer able to attend on that date, that absence may only be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience.
- 2.1.6** Director of Operations for the Division (or nominee) will be responsible for appointing a Secretary to support the Board of Examiners. Secretary responsibilities are outlined below. Where applicable it may be appropriate for a Secretary and a note-taker to be appointed to carry out the requirements of the Secretary's role. The Secretary will not be expected to provide guidance to the Board on the conventions or other QA-related matters. Such guidance may be provided by another member of the Division and/or, where a representative is in attendance, a member of the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office (see 1.7 below).
- 2.1.7** Where it is considered appropriate to do so members of the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office will attend Boards of Examiners to provide advice and guidance in the application of regulations and conventions and their interpretation.

2.2 Role of Secretary to the Board of Examiners

- 2.1.8** All members of the Board of Examiners should, either in advance or at the meeting, receive from the Secretary to the Board:
- an agenda for the meeting;
 - conventions for the awards under consideration;
 - appropriate student achievement data.
- 2.1.9** The Secretary to the Board is responsible for:
- keeping a record of the decisions made by the Board and for ensuring that these decisions are acted upon;
 - where the Board makes a decision other than that indicated by the conventions, recording the reasons for so doing on the official record of results;
 - keeping a record of the consideration given to mitigation cases;
 - confirming with the Chair the accuracy of the official record of the decisions of the Board;
 - asking the External Examiner to sign the official record to endorse the decisions made by the Board.

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2.3 Role of Chair of Boards of Examiners

The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for the following:

- 1 Ensuring that the Board is arranged in good time for a date that allows the attendance of the External Examiner(s).
- 2 Ensuring that proofs of examination question papers are checked for level, spread, accuracy, clarity and appropriateness, that where questions are divided into parts the marks allocated to each part are shown on the paper, and that all draft examination papers are sent to the appropriate External Examiner for comment and approval. The Chair shall also ensure that the External Examiner receives the relevant module syllabus.
- 3 Ensuring liaison with the External Examiners about all the arrangements relating to the examination and for coordinating arrangements for the examination with all other staff concerned.
- 4 Ensuring that all marking of examination scripts by internal examiners is satisfactorily carried out.
- 5 Ensuring that where the Board of Examiners considers the work of students who have not, at that point, completed their course, such examination scripts, extended essays and dissertations are deposited with the appropriate Divisional Office and for confirming the number of scripts, extended essays and dissertations so deposited for each module.
- 6 Such examination scripts, extended essays and dissertations will be available if required for re-reading by examiners in light of the final year performance of candidates.
- 7 The Chair of the Board of Examiners may nominate another member of the Division, for example an Examinations Officer or equivalent, to undertake some of the above responsibilities on their behalf. Those responsibilities should be related to the examination process and not to academic matters.
- 8 Scripts, extended essays and dissertations should be stored in line with the University's [Documentation Retention and Archiving Policy](#).

3. Award of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees

A student may only be recommended for the award by the University of a Certificate, Diploma or Degree in a specified subject if:

- they meet the minimum requirements in terms of the number and levels of credits for the award in question as set out in Annex 4 of the Credit Framework, except where the student has been granted limited exemption from these requirements through credit transfer, accreditation of prior learning or accreditation of prior experiential learning;

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and

- they meet the requirements of the course of study which has been approved as leading to the award in question, except where the student has been granted limited exemption from these requirements through credit transfer or the accreditation of prior learning.

4. Successful Completion of Module

- 4.1** A student who successfully demonstrates via assessment that they have achieved the specified learning outcomes for a module will be awarded the number and level of credits prescribed for the module. Assessment methods vary between modules and assessment is designed so that achievement of the pass mark or above will demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. Normally individual assessments hold the same pass mark as the pass mark of the module. Module specifications will state if the pass mark has to be achieved overall and/or in prescribed elements of assessment.
- 4.2** Where a module learning outcome is tested only in one component of assessment, the assessment in question will become pass-compulsory for the module. Where a student has an overall mark for a module which is above the pass mark but has failed a pass-compulsory component of the assessment, the overall mark for the module will be recorded as one mark below the pass mark e.g. if the pass mark is 40, an overall mark of 39 will be recorded. In certain modules, assessment may be on a Pass/Fail or a Fail/Pass/Merit/Distinction basis and numerical marks will not be awarded. For all modules at levels 3 to 6 the pass mark will be 40%. For all level 7 modules the pass mark will be 50%.
- 4.3** A component of assessment that is marked on a pass/fail basis should only be treated as pass-compulsory where the assessment in question tests a unique module learning outcome for that module.
- 4.4** Except where denoted as non-compensatable or non-condonable in the relevant course specification, modules for which a pass-compulsory component of assessment has not been demonstrated may be compensated or condoned only where the module learning outcome in question has been demonstrated by the student in the same or an earlier stage of the course.

5. Condonement

Where a student fails a module or modules, but claims that this was due to illness or other mitigating circumstances, the Board of Examiners may condone such failure and award credits for the module(s), up to a limit of 25% of each stage of a course of study, provided that there is evidence to show that the

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student has achieved the **course** learning outcomes. The marks achieved for such modules will not be adjusted to take account of the mitigating circumstances but transcripts issued to the student will indicate modules for which credits have been awarded via condonement. In order to ensure that the application of condonement does not disadvantage a student when an award is classified, where credit for a module is awarded by condonement, the mark awarded for that module should be excluded from the calculation of the classification of the award. Course specifications specify modules in which failure cannot be condoned.

6. Compensation

Where a student fails a module or modules, but has marks for such modules which are within 10 percentage points of the pass mark (see note 1), the Board of Examiners may nevertheless award the student the credits for the module(s), up to a limit of 25% of each stage of a course of study, provided that there is evidence to show that **course** learning outcomes have been achieved. The marks achieved for such modules will not be adjusted, but transcripts issued to the student will indicate modules for which credits have been awarded via compensation. In order to ensure that the application of compensation does not disadvantage a student, where credit for a module is awarded by compensation the mark used for determining progression and classification should be the pass mark for the module. The mark on the transcript will not be adjusted. Course specifications specify modules in which failure cannot be compensated.

Note 1: i.e. the achievement of a mark in the range 30%-39% for modules taken at levels 3 – 6; or the achievement of a mark in the range 40%-49% for modules taken at level 7.

2021/22 Commentary: Impact of Industrial Action

Convention 6: Compensation: Extension of Maximum Credit Volume to 50%

With regard to **compensatable modules** taken at any stage, other than the final stage, that contributes to the classification of an academic award, in the situation where, **as a result of any marking and assessment boycott or other form of industrial action**, the profile of marks for a compensatable module is deficient from that normally required, the Board of Examiners may elect to award credit for any compensatable module where the final mark falls in the compensatable range, for up to a **maximum of 50% of the credit** required for the stage, provided that there is evidence to show that **course** learning outcomes have been achieved.

This additional licence to compensate modules granted by this clause should not be used where to do so would compromise academic standards or contravene any requirement set by an accrediting PSRB.

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The Chair of the Board of Examiners should seek the permission of the DVC: Education and Student Experience before implementing this special measure.

7. Concurrent Application of the Condonement, Compensation and Trailing Provisions

The application of condonement, compensation or trailing provisions is limited to a maximum cumulative total of 25% of the credit available for any stage.

2021/22 Commentary: PGT Trailing Exemption 2021/22

Note the extension of the limit of credit that might be **trailed** this year at the discretion of examiners by **PGT students only** from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of a Master's degree from 25% to up to 50% of the credit available for the stage (see 12.3.1). **In such cases the discretion to permit additional trailing above the 25% standard maximum may be used in combination with the standard provisions for compensation or condonement, for a maximum cumulative total of 50% of the credit available for any stage.**

Note potential exemptions to the standard application of Convention 7 set out in Conventions 6 and 8 in response to any relevant deficits in recorded marks due to the industrial action.

8. Application of the Condonement, Compensation and Trailing Provisions

- 8.1** The provision allowed for the condonement or compensation of failure or for the trailing and retrieving of credit should only be applied with respect to students who fail modules amounting to 25% or less of the credit available for the stage.

2021/22 Commentary: PGT Trailing Exemption 2021/22

Note the extension of the limit of credit that might be **trailed** this year at the discretion of examiners by **PGT students only** from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of a Master's degree from 25% to up to 50% of the credit available for the stage (see 12.3.1). **In such cases the discretion to permit additional trailing above the 25% standard maximum may therefore be applied where the student has failed more than the standard 25% of the credit available for any stage.**

This means that where a student is failing credit at May/June, Divisions can determine the conditions by which they continue: e.g.

1) Continue to August resits alongside dissertation with September submission;
OR

2) Continue to August resits with three month delay to commencement and subsequent submission of dissertation.

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Note potential exemptions to the standard application of Convention 8 set out in Conventions 6 and 7 in response to any relevant deficits in recorded marks due to the industrial action.

- 8.2 Detailed guidance on the application of other mitigation measures available to Boards is provided in section 14 of this document.
- 8.3 For the purpose of ensuring institutional level overview, Boards are required to keep a summary record of the decisions made to award credit via compensation, condonement and other mitigation measures and return this to the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office by the end of the Autumn Term 2022/23. A template for recording this data will be provided to Divisions.

9. Progression

- 9.1 When a student has completed a stage of a course of study other than the final stage, the appropriate Board of Examiners will decide whether the student may progress to the next stage of the course of study, or to another course of study.
- 9.2 The normal requirement for progression from one stage of a course of study to the next is that the student should have obtained at least 75% of the credits for the stage and should have obtained credits for those modules which the course specification indicates must be obtained before progression is permitted.
- 9.3 Boards of Examiners may apply additional requirements for progression (i.e. additional to the achievement of the credit required to proceed to the next stage) provided that:
- this involves progression into a stage composed predominantly of modules of a higher level;
 - the additional requirements are outlined in an approved course specification for the cohort under consideration; and
 - any students who do not meet the additional progression criteria either have (i) an alternative progression route onto another course of study; or (ii) receive an appropriate exit award (as outlined in the approved course specification for the cohort under consideration)."
- 9.4 Where a Board of Examiners is satisfied that a student has attained the minimum learning outcomes for Stage 1 of an undergraduate degree course, it shall have discretion to award the necessary credits for progression notwithstanding the marks obtained on particular modules. See Note 3 and Note 4.

Note 3: *This discretion will be used normally in exceptional circumstances where a student has failed to obtain marks necessary to proceed on modules whose learning content is not central to the learning outcomes of the course,*

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where the marks on the failed modules are inconsistent with the overall performance of the student and where they have been able to demonstrate achievement of the minimum course learning outcomes in other modules. The object of this discretion is to encourage interdisciplinary and experimental study and the take-up of modules outside a student's core course, such as languages or elective modules, and so as not unreasonably to penalise students who have elected to take such modules but through experience have found them particularly difficult and burdensome.

Note 4: 2021/22 Commentary: Impact of Industrial Action

For courses where Stage 1 is non-contributory to the classification of an award, the discretion to award the full volume of credit for the stage and allow progression may be applied by examiners where, as a result of any marking and assessment boycott or other form of industrial action, the profile of marks recorded for any Stage 1 student is insufficient from that normally required to allow progression.

The Chair of the Board of Examiners should seek the permission of the DVC: Education and Student Experience before implementing this special measure.

- 9.5** When a student has completed a year of study but has not completed a stage of a course of study, the Board of Examiners will recommend whether the student may continue with their studies.

10. Referral (i.e. Penalised Reassessment)

- 10.1** Where a student is not permitted to progress to the next stage of a course, or at the end of a year of study other than the end of a stage of a course has failed a module or modules, the Board of Examiners may permit the student to undertake further assessment in failed modules. The method of reassessment for any module may take one of two forms:

- (a) 'Like-for-Like' reassessment: in this method the referred student must undertake a form of reassessment that allows for a mark to be recorded against each element of assessment that has been failed. This may take the form of individual reassessments (literally like-for-like), or it may be a composite form of reassessment that allows for the mark achieved to be entered against each of the failed elements; marks already obtained for elements of assessment which the student is not required to undertake again will be carried forward; or
- (b) Single Instrument of Reassessment: where this method is used, the reassessment takes the form of a single piece of work, the mark for which

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will replace the marks for all elements of assessment obtained at a previous attempt and will stand as the mark achieved for the module as a whole.

Under referral, the maximum mark that can be awarded for the module will be the pass mark for the module. The method of reassessment will be specified in advance and set out in the module specification. This specified method will normally be taken by all students referred on the module concerned. The Board of Examiners may permit exemptions from the requirement to undertake the reassessment in the format specified on grounds in order to meet the conditions of an Inclusive Learning Plan. Except in cases where students have been informed in advance that alternative assessment will not be permitted, elements of assessment that are unrepeatable, e.g. seminar contributions, should be substituted by other assignments testing the same learning outcomes. In cases where alternative assessment is not permitted, students failing unrepeatable elements may only retrieve credit by retaking the entire module in attendance. Where a module cannot be reassessed or repeated, the Board of Examiners may permit the student to take another module for a capped mark in its place, or to transfer into a cognate course of study.

- 10.2** Two referral opportunities per module will be automatically permitted¹, the first of which is normally available during the long vacation following the initial failure. Where a Board of Examiners permits a referred student to take a substitute module on the grounds that the original module cannot be reassessed or repeated, this will count as a referral opportunity and not as a first attempt.
- 10.2.1** Where there is clear evidence of non-engagement with their studies by a student, such as *extensive failure* to attend timetabled teaching sessions (on campus or online), no attempt to submit assessed work for any module and a failure to engage with interventions made by the University to correct this situation, the Board of Examiners may recommend that the student be withdrawn from the University. The student will be notified of this recommendation in writing with a deadline set of 28 calendar days for an appropriate response. Where no such response is received in this time period, the recommendation for withdrawal will be confirmed.
- 10.2.2** Where the Board of Examiners makes the recommendation set out in the clause above it should be satisfied that the due process for a student in attendance with *very low* engagement with their studies has been followed, as set out in the [Academic Diligence procedures](#).

¹ Except for the dissertation element of taught postgraduate courses of study. See 10.5

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- 10.2.3** The threshold for establishing extensive failure to attend and very low engagement with their studies by any student studying in attendance will be those set out in the University's Attend and Engage policy.
- 10.2.4** Similarly, where following a failed attempt a student has not taken up the offer of a resit opportunity and has not contacted the School prior to the meeting of the Board to explain their non-engagement, the Board of Examiners may recommend that the student be withdrawn from the University.
- 10.3** It should be noted that Boards retain the option to compensate failure in a module under the conditions and limits set out at 6 above. Compensation and referral constitute different options available to examiners when considering failure on modules. A student who is compensated (i.e. awarded credit for a close fail) is not referred (i.e. required to repeat elements of assessment for a penalised mark).
- 10.4** A student who is so referred in a module may be required to, or may elect to, **repeat** the module, before progressing to the next stage of the course, provided that it is being taught in the year in question, or may choose to take a different module provided that the requirements of the course of study are still met, but must do so before progressing to the next stage of the course.
- 10.5 Referral - Taught Postgraduate Dissertation (i.e. Penalised Reassessment)**
- A student who is referred in the dissertation element of a taught postgraduate course may resubmit the dissertation **on one occasion only** in a revised form not later (except in cases of illness or other good cause) than twelve months after the decision to allow resubmission has been made by the Board of Examiners. Such resubmissions will be capped at the pass mark. Where the Board of Examiners require only minor corrections to the dissertation, it will not be regarded as a referral and the original mark allocated will stand.

Note: 2021/22 Commentary: Impact of Industrial Action

Where, **due to industrial action**, the quality of supervision of dissertations or special projects has suffered in terms of diminished contact time or guidance from supervisors, the markers of such work should be permitted to compensate for the deficit appropriately (e.g. by adjusting the grade criteria). The allowance for adjusting grade criteria should not give a licence for examiners to award extra marks. Rather it suggests that markers have adapted the grade criteria for these assessments in a reasonable way to reflect revised expectations of achievement as a result of the disrupted student learning experience. Any revised grade criteria should remain appropriate to the level of achievement required for the marks awarded. The Chair of the Board of Examiners should seek the permission of the DVC: Education and Student Experience before implementing this special measure.

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10.6 Further Guidance on Referral (i.e. Penalised Reassessment)

In cases where a student has failed to obtain half or more of the credit required to progress to the next stage of study, it is advisable for the Board of Examiners to recommend that the student be required to repeat these modules in attendance during the following academic year rather than undertake further assessment during the long vacation. In these cases the student's first opportunity to undertake further assessment would take place in May/June the following year with their final referral opportunity being offered to them in August of that year. In cases where students have been recommended to repeat the modules by the Board of Examiners, but are unable to do so, they may be permitted by the Boards of Examiners to re-sit examinations only in May/June of the following year. This recommendation would be based on academic judgement and there is, therefore, no grounds for appealing against the recommendation.

11. Deferral (i.e. Unpenalised Reassessment)

11.1 Where a student has failed due to extenuating circumstances, the Board of Examiners may permit the student to undertake further assessment for some or all of the failed modules comprising the stage at a later date either (i) **as if for the first time**, i.e. without incurring the penalty of a capped mark or a reduction in the number of permitted attempts; **or** (ii) **as if for the second time**, i.e. with a capped mark but without incurring a further reduction in the number of permitted attempts.

11.2 Where the student has met requirements for progression to the next stage of the course, they may be permitted to 'trail' the deferred assessment, i.e. to proceed to the next stage and simultaneously undertake the deferred assessment as for the first time or, where appropriate, the second time (see 11.3).

Where a student is offered a deferred reassessment opportunity for a module, the method of reassessment will take one of two forms:

- (a) 'Like-for-Like' reassessment: in this method the referred student must undertake a form of reassessment that allows for a mark to be recorded against each element of assessment that has been failed. This may take the form of individual reassessments (literally like-for-like), or it may be a composite form of reassessment that allows for the mark achieved to be entered against each of the failed elements; marks already obtained for elements of assessment which the student is not required to undertake again will be carried forward; or
- (b) Single Instrument of Reassessment: where this method is used, the reassessment takes the form of a single piece of work, the mark for which

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will replace the marks for all elements of assessment obtained at a previous attempt and will stand as the mark achieved for the module as a whole.

Under deferral, the final mark that can be awarded for the module will not be the pass mark for the module but the actual mark achieved under the method of reassessment selected by the School².

Where a deferred student repeats a module or modules in attendance, all marks achieved during previous attempts at those modules will be discounted and overwritten by the marks achieved during the repeat attempt.

- 11.3** Please note that it would be appropriate and necessary to offer a deferral **as if for the second time** only in the circumstances where a student had been referred in a previous attempt at the module(s) in question. Under such circumstances it would be inappropriate to offer a student the possibility of an uncapped module mark. Any deferred attempt, however, would not further reduce the number of resit opportunities. Where the student has met requirements for progression to the next stage of the course, they may be permitted to 'trail' the deferred assessment, i.e. to proceed to the next stage and simultaneously undertake the deferred assessment as for the first time.

Note: For 'Deferral on Pass' and 'Delayed Assessment', see sections 14.3 – 14.4 for guidance on these forms of deferral.

12. Trailing and Retrieving Credit

- 12.1** Where a student is permitted to progress to the next stage of a course, but, due to the failure of one or more modules, has not been awarded full credit for the previous stage, the student will still need to obtain credits for modules for which they have so far not been awarded credit in order to meet requirements for the award of the certificate, diploma or degree for which they are registered.

- 12.1.1** The student may be permitted to 'retrieve' such credits, up to a maximum of 25% of the credits for the stage, in one of two ways as follows:

² **Note:** With regard to students who entered the University under the **2017/18** credit conventions, Boards of Examiners are required when reassessing deferred students via the single instrument method to check that the result achieved via this method does not result in a worse outcome than would have been achieved under the 2017/18 deferral conventions, which allowed for marks awarded for assessments passed to contribute to the calculation of the overall mark for the module. All such deferred students should be awarded the better of the results achieved through these two means in 2021/22.

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12.2 By undertaking further assessment, for example a re-sit examination, before the start of the next academic year. A student who is permitted to retrieve credit in this way may elect to repeat the module, provided that it is being taught in the year in question, or may choose to take a different module, provided that the requirements of the course of study are still met.

12.3 By progressing to the next stage of the course and simultaneously undertaking such further requirements as the Board of Examiners specifies in relation to the failed modules. This is known as trailing credit. Where credit is trailed, the Board of Examiners may permit the student to repeat the failed module(s) provided it/they are available and the timetable permits or to take an alternative module as permitted by the course specification or may specify assessment to be undertaken satisfactorily for the award of the credits in question. Where a student trails credit in this way and again fails to obtain the credits, the credit may not be trailed to the next stage of the course, e.g. a student will not be permitted to progress to Stage 3 of a course unless they have obtained all Stage 1 credits and met the minimum progression requirements in Stage 2.

12.3.1 Students may be permitted to progress to the next stage of the course and retrieve credits through trailing normally up to a maximum of 25% of the credit available for the stage. **However, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, students on PGT courses may be permitted to progress to the next stage and 'trail' up to 50% of the credit for the stage where such trailing will take place through reassessment/resit at the next available opportunity and not via repeat in attendance.**

This means that where a student is failing credit at May/June, Divisions can determine the conditions by which they continue: e.g.

- 1) continue to August resits alongside dissertation with September submission; OR
- 2) continue to August resits with 3 month delay to commencement and subsequent submission of dissertation.

12.4 Where a student is referred in a module, two (and no more than two) referral opportunities per module will be automatically permitted³, the **first** of these will normally be available during the long vacation following the initial failure.

³ Except for the dissertation element of taught postgraduate courses of study. See 10.5.

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13. Referral Arrangements

13.1 Arrangements for the involvement of Boards of Examiners and External Examiners

Divisions should:

- 13.1.1 require the full (summer) UG Board of Examiners to set the parameters regarding progression possibilities for those students who are required to re-sit; therefore, the External Examiner will not be required to be present at the referral Board of Examiners;
 - 13.1.2 invite the full summer Board of Examiners to nominate representatives for the referral Board to act on behalf of the full Board of Examiners, and for this to be approved by the DDSSE or DDGSSE for the Division (as relevant to the provision).
 - 13.1.3 External Examiners should be invited to, but are not required, to attend Referral Boards of Examiners. This is because consideration of student outcomes will have already taken place at the Board of Examiners.
 - 13.1.4 Where an External Examiner does not attend a Referral Board they should be provided with the recommendations of the Referral Board to consider and should confirm by correspondence (i.e. email) if they agree.
 - 13.1.5 Referral Boards of Examiners may meet in person, be carried out by correspondence (i.e. email), or by other appropriate means (i.e. video conferencing).
 - 13.1.6 The Secretary to the Referral Board of Examiners should ensure that a record of recommendations is kept, in line with the requirements for a Board of Examiners meeting, with the outcomes reported at the next full Board of Examiners meeting.
- 13.2 Where a student resits a module or modules, the marks obtained should be used as set out in the table below. Assessment on repeating a module or taking an alternative module following initial failure of a module will be treated as a resit unless it has been agreed, in a particular case, that the result of the earlier assessment should be set aside.

Initial Result	Resit Result	Marks to be used for Award of Credit, Progression and Eligibility for Award	Marks to be used for Classification/ Transcript
Fail	Fail	Best Final Overall Module Mark	Best Final Overall Module Mark **

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Initial Result	Resit Result	Marks to be used for Award of Credit, Progression and Eligibility for Award	Marks to be used for Classification/ Transcript
Fail	Pass	Minimum Pass Mark	Minimum Pass Mark
Pass	Fail	Original Final Overall Module Mark	Original Final Overall Module Mark
Pass	Pass	Original Final Overall Module Mark	Original Final Overall Module Mark ***

** Where credit for a failed module is awarded via compensation, the mark used for the purposes of progression and classification will be the pass mark for the module (see paragraphs 6.3 and 12.4.1.6 of the Credit Framework). The mark shown on the transcript **will not** be adjusted to the pass mark, but will show the best final mark achieved by the student.

*** Except where a student is permitted and undertakes a further attempt as if for the first time ('AFT') on grounds of extenuation, as per the main Credit Framework, clause 7.6.1 (ii), in which case the overall final mark achieved at the AFT attempt will stand.

14. Mitigation

14.1 Mitigation Committee

- 14.1.1** Before each meeting of a Board of Examiners, the Chief Examiner will convene a meeting of a small number of internal members of the Board of Examiners (i.e. normally no more than three members, to include the Chief Examiner, the Senior Tutor, a third member and, typically, with the Student Support Officer in attendance) to assess the severity of the impact on student performance of relevant extenuating circumstances. The Mitigation Committee will be chaired by the Chief Examiner or by a nominee of the Chief Examiner, drawn from the members of the Mitigation Committee. Any such nominee must also be a member of the relevant Board of Examiners. A secretary should also be present to record decisions.
- 14.1.2** In order to prevent any unconscious bias intruding upon the proceedings it is recommended that, wherever practicable, the business of the committee should be conducted with the identities of students withheld from all present except for the secretary.

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14.2 Established Principles for Mitigation

14.2.1 Mitigation is a corrective measure that allows Boards of Examiners to make adjustments to module marks and/or award credit where student performance in assessment has been impacted negatively by extenuating circumstances that have.

- caused the student to perform less well in their assessed work than they may otherwise have been expected to do; and/or
- impact their ability to attend examinations/practical assessments; and/or
- submit work to deadlines.
- They should normally be beyond the student's control.⁴

14.2.2 The following principles underpin the University's standard procedures for mitigation:

- The purpose of making such interventions is to arrive at an outcome that properly reflects the student's level of achievement on the affected module(s) and therefore on the stage/course of study as a whole.
- In making such interventions examiners must determine that the extenuating circumstances have produced a demonstrably negative impact on student performance in particular assessments. Wherever possible, such judgements should be made on the basis of a comparison to the marks achieved by the student on other assessments in the module and/or on other modules.
- It is important to note that mitigation is not concerned with assessing the severity of any particular set of extenuating circumstances. It is concerned with assessing the impact of extenuating circumstances on student performance on affected assessments. Where the reported circumstances are considered not to have impacted on student performance, no mitigating intervention is required.
- Mitigation, therefore, does not involve awarding students 'extra' marks as compensation for suffering misfortune. On the contrary, it involves finding ways to reward students for demonstrating learning by ensuring that the marks/credit awarded for that learning reflect their true level of

⁴ The University recognises that some students will start their studies with family or caring responsibilities that are likely to affect their studies. Their circumstances may not be "unexpected" or "out of control" and it may be difficult for the Mitigation Committee to judge how big an impact those circumstances will have. However, where those circumstances are putting the student at a disadvantage compared with other students, it would be unfair to exclude the student from the consideration process and so applications for mitigation on these grounds should be considered.

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achievement. Such interventions might involve allowing students a further attempt at an affected assessment or factoring an affected assessment or assessments out of the calculation of the overall mark awarded for the module(s) concerned.

- Mitigation should not compromise academic standards. Examiners should be satisfied that the overall mark arrived at via mitigation reflects the student's level of achievement as a whole on the module in question and the core requirements for a pass to be awarded.
- Students submitting applications for mitigation should not routinely be regarded with suspicion or of seeking to gain an unwarranted advantage by doing so. While some few may indeed be looking to 'game the system', the great majority will not. Divisions should approach all applications for mitigation supportively and, given the unprecedented disruption to student learning caused by the pandemic, be as flexible as possible in applying the conventions for mitigation and achieving the best, most appropriate outcome.
- As part of the University's business as usual ('BAU'), Annex 9 of the Credit Framework (Mitigation) allows for self-certification for periods of absence and the non or late submission of assessed work. The sudden and severe worsening of the pandemic in December 2021 and the government's subsequent extension of the period of self-certification for periods of illness to twenty-eight days. This development required a reconsideration of the return to BAU and necessitated the adoption once again of a more flexible approach with regard to the submission of medical evidence generally in support of applications for extension and other forms of mitigation.
- As a result of these changing circumstances, Divisions were therefore advised to allow any application submitted for the mitigation of extenuating circumstances on medical grounds to be treated as follows:
 - a) Where the application is made as a result of illness from Covid-19, the University's COVID Tracker should be used as the source of evidence in support of these applications.
 - b) Where the application is made as a result of illness other than from Covid-19 that resulted in a period of absence that commenced before 10 December 2021, the University's rules on self-certification and the submission of supporting medical evidence will apply.
 - c) Where the application is made as a result of illness other than from Covid-19 that resulted in a period of absence that commenced on or after 10 December 2021, the length of time for

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which self-certification can be used as evidence in support of the application is extended to twenty-eight days.

- d) Where the application for mitigation takes the form of a request for an extension to a coursework submission deadline, self-certification on medical grounds will be permissible even where the student has remained in attendance.

Miscellaneous

- Resit examinations will be offered free of charge and the University will support students through the examination process.
- Students may apply at any point to be granted advance permission on grounds of extenuation or other good reason to delay taking an examination or submitting a significant piece of assessed work* until the next available opportunity (*such as a UG dissertation or large project or similar significant item of assessment). Students in this position will be regarded as not having failed the module but as having elected to delay its completion. They therefore remain on a first attempt and retain the original assessment pattern. When considering such an application students must be advised that such a major decision needs careful consideration as this procedure entails an inevitable delay to their progression to the next stage of their course or, if a finalist, to the award of their degree. Students in this position must be made aware that if their application is successful, then the marks they achieve in their other modules will not be considered by the Board of Examiners until after the August examination period. This means that where any module(s) is failed, the next available opportunity to retrieve credit will be May/June of the following academic year. There may also be financial and other impacts that they may wish to consider in the light of their personal circumstances.
- Boards of Examiners may elect not to apply the above measures for mitigation where there is clear evidence of non-engagement with their studies by a student, such as extensive failure to attend timetabled teaching sessions (on campus or online), no attempt to submit assessed work for any module and a failure to engage with interventions made by the University to correct this situation.

14.3 Conventions

Where mitigation of extenuating circumstances is considered appropriate, the interventions set out below should be taken into account, as relevant. All such interventions should be undertaken in response to the examiners' assessment of the severity of the impact of the extenuating circumstances on student performance and should be calibrated in order to arrive at the outcome for the affected module(s) that most accurately reflects the student's true level of achievement on those modules and with respect to the satisfaction of the requirements for a pass.

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The following conventions for the mitigation of extenuating circumstances are applicable (where these have been inflected to reflect the impact of Covid-19, the relevant sections are highlighted):

14.3.1 Safety-Net Stage Average Calculation

This was a new mitigation convention introduced in 2019/20 and designed exclusively to offset the negative impact on student performance presented by the Covid-19 pandemic in the unique context of that academic year. It consists of the calculation of an alternative stage average based on marks achieved up to the initial point of the disruption, i.e. the end of Week 21 (14/03/20). It mandates the comparison of this safety-net stage average with the actual stage average achieved, and for the former to be substituted for the purposes of progression and classification where it exceeds the latter actual stage average mark. In this way any falling off in student performance post the point of initial disruption is safeguarded against.

For the safety-net stage average calculation to be activated students had to be in the position to pass the stage on the basis of results achieved (past the application of any relevant standard mitigation conventions), a requirement that protects the achievement of threshold academic standards.

No safety-net calculations were undertaken in 2020/21 or 2021/22.

The detail of the 19/20 safety-net stage average calculation is presented elsewhere in this guidance document (see Annex A).

2021/22 Commentary: Impact of Covid-19 in 19/20

It is important to remember that the safety-net calculation undertaken in 2019/20 for current Finalists must be carried forward and taken into account by Boards of Examiners at classification in 2021/22.

These include:

1. Inclusion of any better average for a stage relevant to classification arrived at under the 'Safety-Net Calculation' undertaken in 2019/20 with regard to Stage 2 of a four year UG degree course; and
2. Inclusion of any better average for a stage relevant to classification arrived at under the 'Safety-Net Calculation' undertaken in 2019/20 with regard to Stage 2 of a three year UG degree course where a student intermitted for the year in 2020/21.

14.3.2 Overriding late submission penalties; granting time-limited extension; offering equivalent assessment, where appropriate;

AND/OR:

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14.3.3 Disregarding⁵ individual assessments for the affected module or modules, including where these **contribute 20% or more to the overall mark** for the module(s) in question, provided that (i) the learning outcomes for the module(s) are achieved; and (ii) such adjusted marks properly represent the student's achievement on the module(s) as a whole;

Note 1. Where the modules in question have been **failed**, the above disregard measures may only be used either individually or in combination with respect to a maximum of 25% of the credit available for the stage;

Note 2. Where the modules in question have been **passed**, the above disregard measures may be used without restriction.

⁵ Some explanatory footnotes on the combined use of 14.4.3 ('disregarding marks') and 14.4.4 (condoning') under mitigation:

1. Where students have failed, the measure of disregarding marks can be applied to 25% of the credit for the stage.

1.1 Applying this measure allows for Boards to arrive at a pass for these credits.

2. **In addition to 1 and 1.1 above**, students can be condoned for up to 25% of the stage.

3. Thus, where as much as 50% of the credit for the stage has been failed (i.e. before any disregarded adjustments come into play), there is scope for Boards to award the credit for the failed modules by applying the measure set out at 1 above **and** to apply condonement.

4. Condonement cannot normally* be applied where a student failed (post applying mark adjustments at 1) more than 25% of the credit for the stage. This principle is unchanged.*

4.1. So, where a student has failed **more than 50%** of the credit for the stage (i.e. before any disregarding and mark substitution adjustments come into play), condonement cannot normally* be applied, because applying the mark adjustments via disregarding would leave more than 25% of the credit for the stage as failed. In such mitigation cases, the failed credit would have to be deferred.

5. In summary of 1-4 above:

(a) If a student has initially failed up to 50% of the credit for the stage, credit can be awarded via mark adjustments for up to 25% of the credit for the stage. Condonement may then be applied.

(b) If a student has initially failed more than 50%, the credit remaining as failed (post any disregarded mark adjustments) must be deferred.

6. Where a student has **passed** the modules to which this applies, the marks may be adjusted for the full set of affected modules in order to arrive at a mark or marks that properly represent the student's level of achievement.

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2021/22 Commentary: Impact of Industrial Action

Note that where mark adjustment is considered appropriate by Boards of Examiners in order to **offset the marking and assessment boycotts** (via disregarding assessments or substituting marks awarded for other assessments completed in that module), such interventions may be made in addition to the standard limits set above for mitigation on grounds of other extenuating circumstances.

However, the intervention made in this regard should remain appropriate to the outcome of achieving a fair overall mark for the module for the affected students, as proportionate to the disruption suffered.

AND/OR:

14.3.4 Where student has failed up to a maximum of 25% of the credit for the stage, consider **condoning**;

AND/OR:

14.3.5 Consider recommending **deferral**, especially where a student has failed 50% or more of the credit required for the stage.

OR, where applicable:

14.3.5.1 Option to Delay Assessment in Advance of the Meeting of the Board of Examiners

Students may apply at any point to be granted advance permission to delay taking an examination or submitting a significant piece of assessed work* until the next available opportunity (*such as a UG dissertation or large project or similar significant item of assessment - Schools to decide the relevance of the latter significant coursework items to this convention). Where on grounds of extenuation or other good reason a student elects in advance to delay the taking or submission of a significant piece of assessment this is not to be regarded as constituting the failure of the relevant module and the delayed attempt is therefore not to be treated as a reassessment but as the completion of the original assessment diet at the first attempt.

In such cases, the following protocol will be observed:

- Undertake an assessment of the grounds for the request for seeking the delay (Note: supporting evidence should be provided);
- If the grounds suggest the student would have genuine difficulties in taking the examinations or completing the assessments in the Summer Term, grant the delayed attempt and inform the student as soon as possible (these requests do not need to wait for the BoE to meet for them to be confirmed);

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- Unless the student's attempt in the Summer Term would have been a penalised attempt (due to previous failure or academic offence), confirm to the student that the delayed attempt in August will be an unpenalised attempt;
- Where the delay is granted, report this outcome to the Board of Examiners.

Where a student is granted permission not to take one or more of their examinations or submit other relevant assessments in the summer term, they will be permitted to take an AFT attempt in August 2022. Students in this position will not be regarded as having failed their module(s) in the summer term.

When considering such an application students must be advised that such a major decision needs careful consideration as this procedure entails an inevitable delay to their progression to the next stage of their course or, if a finalist, to the award of their degree. Students in this position must be made aware that if their application is successful, then the marks they achieve in their other modules will not be considered by the Board of Examiners until after the August examination period. This means that where any module(s) is failed, the next available opportunity to retrieve credit will be May/June of the following academic year. There may also be financial and other impacts that they may wish to consider in the light of their personal circumstances.

14.3.5.2 Deferral on Pass

The licence introduced in 2019/20 to allow students, under specified conditions, the opportunity to retake as if for the first time a module passed at the previous attempt ('deferral on pass') is intended to be used as a mitigating adjustment on grounds of extenuation for a limited number of modules in any stage. The qualifying condition for use of this convention normally is that the final mark(s) achieved for the affected module(s), while sufficient for a pass for the module(s), are significantly out of line with the final marks achieved for the student's unaffected modules. For a final module mark to be considered as 'out of line' it must fall in a range of marks that is at least two classification bands beneath the average for the stage.

Where student performance has been significantly affected in line with the specified conditions (while resulting in passes for the affected modules) for 50% or more of the credit required for the stage, students should be allowed the option to repeat these modules in attendance as if for the first time in the following academic year).

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To identify students who might benefit from the application of this convention, Mitigation Committees are advised to look for profiles of module marks across a stage which contain one or two overall module marks which, in terms of low performance, constitute obvious outliers in comparison to the overall marks earned on the students' other modules. In such cases the form of reassessment will be the selected mode for the module.

See 14.4.4ii – 14.4.9 below for the full standard set of conditions required for this convention to be used.

OR, where applicable:

- 14.3.6** Where a finalist has achieved seven-eighths of the credit required for the award (including credits awarded via condonement and/or compensation), consider use of the “**notwithstanding**” convention.

2021/22 Commentary: Impact of Industrial Action

The present disruption due to industrial action may lead in some instances to the situation where a finalist has not failed a module but is unable to complete the assessment requirements for one or more modules as the School has not been able to stage them, disregard them or to provide an alternative restaging of the assessment.

Where this situation applies to a finalist, Boards of Examiners may apply to the DVC Education and Student Experience for exceptional permission to use the 'notwithstanding convention' to recommend a classified award be made where students have achieved fewer than the seven-eighths of the credit required in total.

The following conditions must be met for the application to be considered:

- (i) The module(s) for which the credit is being awarded are incomplete due to a failure to stage and/or mark one or more assessments for the module(s) as a result of the industrial action;
- (ii) Restaging of the assessment has not taken place.

The Chair of the Board of Examiners should seek the permission of the DVC: Education and Student Experience before implementing this special measure.

Note: It should be noted that where the notwithstanding convention is used it will be badged on KentVision as a form of condonement in order to provide an auditable trail within the system.

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14.4 Glossary of Terms

- 14.4.1 Disregarding of assessments:** the exclusion of the piece or pieces of assessment affected by illness or other mitigating circumstances from the calculation of the final module mark;
- 14.4.2 Condonement:** the award of credit for a failed module where student performance has been impacted by illness or other mitigating circumstances and there is evidence to show that the student has achieved the **course** learning outcomes; where credit for a module is awarded by condonement, the mark awarded for that module should be excluded from the calculation of the classification of the award. (Note: the marks achieved for such modules will not be adjusted to take account of the extenuating circumstances, but transcripts issued to the student will indicate modules for which credits have been awarded via condonement).
- 14.4.3 Deferral:** the decision on grounds of mitigation to allow a student to undertake reassessment for a module or modules as if for the first time (i.e. an uncapped/unpenalised retrieval attempt), or as appropriate, as if for the second time (see *Note*⁶).
- 14.4.4** A student may be deferred on a module or modules for reasons of extenuation under the following scenarios:
- (i) where the module(s) have been failed; or
 - (ii) where the module(s) have been passed but the final mark(s) achieved for the affected module(s) are significantly out of line with the final marks achieved for the student's unaffected modules.
- 14.4.5** Under scenario ii, **the final module mark** should be judged as 'significantly out of line' where it falls in a range that is at least two classification bands below the student's mean average level of achievement as derived from those modules that were unaffected by the mitigating circumstances reported;
- 14.4.6** Where a module has been passed it would be inappropriate to defer the student on that module as if for the second time (as the final module mark could not be improved upon under this scenario).

⁶ **As if for the second time:** i.e. where a student may have suffered extenuating circumstances but had been referred in a previous attempt at the module(s) in question. Under such circumstances it would be inappropriate to offer a student the possibility of an uncapped module mark. Although the student will be permitted to retrieve the credits for a capped module mark, this would take place without incurring a further reduction in the number of permitted attempts.

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- 14.4.7** Under the standard protocol students so affected are to be given the choice whether they will re-sit the assessments concerned or will accept the pass mark already achieved. Such reassessment opportunities will normally take place at the next available opportunity before the next academic year.
- 14.4.8** Where student performance has been significantly affected in line with the specified conditions specified under 14.4.5 above (while resulting in passes for the affected modules) for 50% or more of the credit required for the stage, students should be allowed the option to repeat these modules in attendance as if for the first time in the following academic year.
- 14.4.9** Under the standard protocol where a student elects to take up the opportunity to re-sit or repeat in attendance a module that they have already passed, the mark achieved at the earlier attempt will be struck from the record. Students will not be given the opportunity to choose between the better of the marks achieved. The mark achieved at the AFT attempt will stand, even where this results in the failure of the module(s) concerned.
- 14.4.10 The “Notwithstanding” convention:** recommendations by Boards of Examiners on the classification of awards made notwithstanding the conventions of the Credit Framework where a student who, despite suffering extenuating circumstances judged as having a severely negative effect on their performance, has nonetheless achieved at least seven-eighths of the credit normally required for the award in question.

This means that where any module(s) is failed, the next available opportunity to retrieve credit will be May/June of the following academic year.

Note: It should be noted that where the notwithstanding convention is used it will be badged on KentVision as a form of condonement in order to provide an auditable trail within the system.

2021/22 Commentary: Impact of Industrial Action

Disregarding and Mark Substitution:

In addition to the standard provisions for mitigation by the disregarding of marks on grounds of extenuation, the special conventions approved by Senate allow for the following actions:

Where particular assessments have not been staged, the contribution of the assessments concerned should be disregarded from the calculation of the overall mark for the module for the affected (i.e. non-participating) student(s); and

Where, due to the industrial action, the mark for an assessed coursework element for a module is missing due to the impact of the dispute, the Board

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may elect to substitute the best coursework mark achieved for that module. This action may also be undertaken to substitute the overall aggregated mark for the coursework components of a module with that achieved for the examinations, and vice versa.

NB. Boards may implement this special measure without seeking the further permission of the DVC: Education and Student Experience.

Some guidance on the implementation of these special conventions is given at Annex B. Implementation should not compromise academic standards or contravene any requirements set by relevant accrediting PSRBs for the course concerns, but should be used to arrive at a final mark for the module that reflects the student's true level of achievement.

Miscellaneous

- 14.5** A written record shall be kept of all decisions reached at the meeting of the Mitigation Committee, the rationales for the decisions, and of the extenuating evidence considered (see 14.10 below).
- 14.6** The Mitigation Committee should advise the Board of Examiners as to whether the recommendation is for a general mitigation, or if it might have application only to specific assignments or modules.
- 14.7** A template in Excel for reporting the decisions of Boards of Examiners with respect to the application of mitigation measures and compensation will be provided, for return to the QACO by the end of the Autumn Term 2022/23.
- 14.8** Where a student submits a request for mitigation relating to **a minor or short-term problem incurred during the delivery of a specific module**, which might include, for example, an application submitted in support of an extension to a coursework deadline, or to a failure to submit coursework by a deadline or a failure to attend classes, the application in question **should be considered by the 'module-owning' school**.
- 14.9** Where a student submits an application for mitigation in support of a long-term problem with academic performance, which may have impacted on one or more modules, or where there has been a failure to attend an examination or the student has suffered an impaired exam performance due to extenuating factors, **the application should be considered by the Mitigation Committee of the Board of Examiners for the course in question**. Applications of this nature submitted by students registered on joint honours courses should be considered by the Mitigation Committee of the Board of Examiners of the lead Division for the course in consultation with the joint Division where appropriate.

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14.10 The Board of Examiners should normally follow the recommendations of the Mitigation Committee, which has assessed the impact of the extenuating circumstances on student performance in advance on its behalf.

Mitigation of the Year/Term Abroad

14.11 Where extenuating circumstances exist that prevent the student from successfully completing the period of study abroad requirements, as per points i - iii above, the student will be eligible for the appropriate [alternative exit award](#), or may transfer to an appropriate degree without a period abroad, or may be offered a deferral opportunity to repeat the whole period abroad as if for the first time.

Opportunities for deferral should be offered only where the Board of Examiners is confident that the circumstances that prevented completion at the initial attempt have been mitigated and that it would, therefore, be reasonable to assume that the deferral attempt would be successful. Where such opportunities are offered, the students concerned should be consulted about whether or not they wish to take up the opportunity before the deferral decision is confirmed. Students should normally undertake the deferred repeat period of study before they progress to the final stage of the course of study in question.

There will be no compensation, no condonement, and no mitigatory adjustment of any marks awarded by the partner provider.

15. Pre-meeting of the Board of Examiners

15.1 Before each meeting of a Board of Examiners, and separate to the Mitigation Committee meeting, the Chair may convene a pre-meeting to consider such matters as it deems appropriate. These might include reviewing the range of marks awarded for each module and the identification of any other issues that might require discussion by the Board of Examiners.

15.2 With exclusive regard to students who registered for a PGT course of study before 2019/20, the pre-meeting also might entail, deciding which candidates for the award of a degree should have a viva voce examination (see section 25 for detail) and formulating any recommendations to be made regarding borderline candidates (see section 16.1.7 for detail). The identities of candidates shall not be made known to examiners during the course of this meeting.

***Note:** *It should be noted that the revised conventions for classification of postgraduate degrees introduced in 2019/20 no longer allow for the discretionary consideration of candidates at the boundary for a higher classification or for the use of a viva voce examination for the purposes of determining undergraduate student classification. These measures therefore*

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only remain in force for PGT students whose initial registration for their course of study preceded the introduction of the new conventions in 2019/20.

2021/22 Commentary: a prior meeting or meetings of relevant examiners should be staged to confirm any adjustments to the marks awarded for modules or to student mark profiles for the purposes of determining and applying (i) standard Annex 9 mitigations; and (ii) additional adjustments to module marks arising from other factors such as issues in delivery or assessment arising from the industrial action. Actions (i) and (ii) may be undertaken by the Division Mitigation Committee if this works best for the Division in question.

16. Classification of Awards in 2021/22

Students who successfully complete a course of study leading to the award of a Certificate or Diploma may be awarded a Certificate or a Diploma with Merit or with Distinction. Students who successfully complete some courses of study leading to the award of a Foundation degree or Master's degree may be awarded the degree with Merit or with Distinction.

The requirements for such awards are set out below in section 17.

A Note on Classification Methods

The University operates two methods of final degree classification, the average method and the preponderance method. Under the **average method**, which determines the student's final class band by aggregating overall marks over contributing modules into a final overall average mark for classification, it is possible to achieve a strong final degree outcome with a more mixed set of results in which there might be comparatively few high scoring modules that boost the final overall average mark into the higher class range.

The **preponderance method**, on the other hand, stipulates a minimum level of achievement in the higher class band as a criterion for classification, along with a requirement for a slightly lower final overall mark than is required by the average methodology. It is important to note that the two methodologies work in tandem by rewarding more than one type of excellent performance over a course of study, and that their relative strengths and weaknesses provide sufficient coverage to reward strong student performance of either type. The preponderance method is not a discretionary means of raising candidates whose performance falls at the borderline to a higher class band, but is a methodology intended to be applied to all students in order to recognise their true level of achievement.

A diagrammatic representation of the preponderance method is set out in Annex D.

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16.1 General Requirements for Classification

- 16.1.1** Marks obtained for all modules taken as part of the course of study will contribute to the classification of an award except in the case of Honours degree courses where classification will be based only on Stages 2 and 3 and, where relevant, Stage 4: i.e. marks obtained in the first year of a full time honours degree course and marks obtained in any foundation year will not contribute to Honours classification.
- 16.1.2** The volume of credit to be awarded for the successful completion of student placement years, whether taken in industry or in academic institutions overseas as part of an approved undergraduate course, will be 120 credits. The level of the credits will be stated in course specifications. While such credits will contribute to the total volume of credits required for an award, they should not be included in any calculations undertaken for the purpose of determining fields of study for joint awards, major/minor awards or major/major/minor awards.
- 16.1.3** While modules taken on a pass/fail basis contribute towards the volume of credit required for an award, they should be discounted when calculating overall average marks.
- 16.1.4** With the exception of HNC/D courses all taught courses will be classified by **both the 'average' and the 'preponderance'** methods, with students to benefit from the better result derived from each method.
- 16.1.5** Where a student is exempted from part of the course of study on the basis of credit transfer, marks obtained for such prior learning will not be used for classification purposes except where (a) it is agreed as part of an inter-institutional agreement that they should be so used, or (b) where the marks in question contribute to the award of a HNC or HND offered under licence with Pearson.
- 16.1.6** In order to ensure that the application of compensation and condonement do not disadvantage a student when an award is classified:
- Where credit for a module is awarded by compensation, the mark used for progression and classification should be the Pass mark for the module.
 - Where credit for a module is awarded by condonement, the mark awarded for that module should normally be excluded from the calculation of the classification of the award.
- The marks on the transcript will not be adjusted.
- 16.1.7** Where a student fails a module at the first attempt, is referred and subsequently passes the module, or is referred and takes and passes an

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alternative module in place of a module which has been failed, the minimum pass mark will be used for classification.

16.1.8 With exclusive regard to students who registered for a course leading to a **postgraduate taught award prior to 2019/20***, Boards of Examiners may recommend the award of a higher classification than that indicated by the marks obtained provided that the student would have qualified for a higher classification if they had obtained two more marks for each module and provided that the Board of Examiners is satisfied that there is substantial evidence that the marks obtained do not fully reflect the candidate's overall achievement. Such evidence should normally take one or more of the forms stated below. The marks obtained should not be changed.

- Extenuating circumstances that have negatively impacted on student performance.
- Evidence obtained from a viva voce examination.
- The views of an External Examiner on the quality of work of the candidate.
- Performance in one module substantially below that on other modules.
- Evidence of achievement commensurate with the higher classification. Such evidence might include a significant number of answers to individual questions which are of appropriate quality or, in appropriate subjects, evidence of problem solving ability. (**Note:** this factor should not be taken into account where the preponderance method is used in classification.)

Students in this category may be regarded as borderline on the basis of both the average and preponderance methods of classification.

Credit may not be awarded through this means.

Note that the KentVision composite report screen will **not flag any such pre-2019/20 PGT students as borderline under either the average or preponderance methods and a manual check will be required.*

16.1.9 Boards of Examiners have discretion to make recommendations **notwithstanding** the Conventions in exceptional cases provided that such recommendations do not lower the classification arising on the application of the Conventions and provided always that the student has obtained at least seven eighths of the credits normally required for the award of the qualification in question (including credits awarded via condonement and/or compensation). "Exceptional" in such cases should be interpreted as having reference to the unique and severe extenuating circumstances of individual candidates.

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Detailed guidance on the application of this conventions on mitigation application is provided in section 14 of this document.

2021/22 Commentary: Impact of Industrial Action

The recent disruption due to industrial action may lead in some instances to the situation where a finalist has not failed a module but is unable to complete the assessment requirements for one or more modules as the School has not been able to stage them, disregard them or to provide an alternative restaging of the assessment.

Where this situation applies to a finalist, Boards of Examiners may apply to the DVC Education and Student Experience for exceptional permission to use the 'notwithstanding convention' to recommend a classified award be made where students have achieved fewer than the seven-eighths of the credit required in total.

The following conditions must be met for the application to be considered:

- (iii) The module(s) for which the credit is being awarded are incomplete due a failure to stage and/or mark one or more assessments for the module(s) as a result of the industrial action;
- (iv) Restaging of the assessment has not taken place.

The Chair of the Board of Examiners should seek the permission of the DVC: Education and Student Experience before implementing this special measure.

Note: It should be noted that where the notwithstanding convention is used it will be badged on KentVision as a form of condonement in order to provide an auditable trail within the system.

- 16.1.10** The External Examiner has the right to see all work submitted for assessment except for work submitted for modules within Honours degree courses for which the marks obtained do not contribute to the Honours classification and should see at least a reasonable selection of such work. In those cases where it is agreed that the Chair of the Board of Examiners should make a selection of assessed work to be seen by an External Examiner, the principles for such selection should be agreed in advance.
- 16.1.11** Where a selection is made, External Examiners should normally see a reasonable sample of assessed work taken from each class band, including a sample of fails.
- 16.1.12** An External Examiner should only change a mark for an individual candidate where, (i) **having seen all the scripts for the module in question**, they have been invited by a Board of Examiners to consider a

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mark for an individual candidate; or (ii), where there is disagreement between two internal markers about the mark to be awarded. Alternatively, an External Examiner may ask that the marks for all candidates for a module be systematically adjusted where, having seen either all scripts or a sample of scripts, they consider this to be appropriate.

- 16.1.13** The signature of all the External Examiners present shall be appended to the final list of results as evidence that they approve the classifications.

16.2 Stage Weighting

Undergraduate Degree Courses

- 16.2.1** The standard weighting of Stages for three year undergraduate degree courses will be 40% for Stage 2 and 60% for Stage 3.
- 16.2.2** The standard weighting of stages for four year undergraduate degree courses (i.e. degree courses leading either to Bachelor's or Integrated Master's awards) will be 20% for Stage 2, 30% for Stage 3 and 50% for Stage 4.
- 16.2.3** Where a student completes Stages 1 to 3 of a four-Stage Bachelor's or undergraduate Integrated Master's degree course, but does not complete Stage 4 and, therefore, qualifies for the award of an approved alternative exit Bachelor's degree, the standard Stage weighting in such cases will be 40% for Stage 2 and 60% for Stage 3.
- 16.2.4** With regard to stages or terms taken in placement either abroad or in industry, the following rubric will apply:
- (i) where the student's mark or marks have not been awarded by Kent staff, the placement will be graded on a pass/fail basis and will therefore be zero-weighted with respect to classification;
 - (ii) where the student's mark or marks have been awarded by Kent staff, the mark or marks achieved will be recorded and will carry such weighting towards classification as has been approved by relevant Divisional committee (i.e. DESEC/DGSSEC).
- 16.2.5** Where assessments are marked by a non-Kent staff member as part of the arrangements leading to a University of Kent award for a franchised, validated, dual or joint course of study, the marks awarded will make the same contribution as if they had been recorded by a Kent member of staff.
- 16.2.6** Schools seeking to apply non-standard weightings to stages may only do so with the approval of the relevant Divisional committee (i.e. DESEC/DGSSEC). Such applications should demonstrate that there is sound pedagogical reason for applying the non-standard weighting or provide evidence that the non-standard weighting meets a PSRB requirement.

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Foundation Degrees and Postgraduate Taught Courses

16.2.7 For the purpose of classification, modules and/or stages may have different weightings as approved by the relevant Divisional committee (i.e. DESEC/DGSSEC). With respect to Foundation Degrees, stages will be weighted equally for classification unless a specific differential weighting has been approved.

17. Classification of Awards other than HNC/Ds or Honours Degrees and of Stage 1 of Honours Degrees

17.1 The following classification rules apply to all Certificates and Diplomas, including Certificates and Diplomas of Higher Education, Graduate Certificates and Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas, to Foundation Year courses, Foundation Degrees and Masters* degrees other than 'Integrated Masters' degrees (which are awarded with Honours following successful completion of an extended undergraduate Honours degree course), the Master of Architecture course (MArch) and to Stage 1 of Honours degree courses.

** Some courses leading to the award of a Master's degree do not make provision for the award to be made 'with Merit' or 'with Distinction' while others make provision for the degree to be awarded 'with Distinction' but not 'with Merit'.*

17.2 With the exception of HNC/D courses, all taught courses (UG/PGT) will be classified by **both the 'average' and the 'preponderance'** methods, with students to benefit from the better result derived from each method.

For reasons of PSRB prescription, a School may apply to the relevant Divisional committee (i.e. DESEC/DGSSEC) for permission for only one of the classification method to be used.

17.3 'Average' Method of Classification

'with Merit': an average mark of 60* or above but less than 70.

'with Distinction': an average mark of 70* or above.

**Please note that the University's conventions for classification under the average method require that a raw mark falling at either the 59.50 – 59.99 or the 69.50 – 69.99 merit / distinction boundary zones be regarded as though rounded up to the next integer and be classified appropriately.*

17.4 'Preponderance' Method of Classification

i) For classification by preponderance the following calculation is to be used:

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‘with Merit’:

an average mark over all contributing modules of **57** or above and
a mark of **60** or above for **50%** or more of the credits obtained

‘with Distinction’:

an average mark over all contributing modules of **67** or above and
a mark of **70** or above for **50%** or more of the credits obtained

Note that a manual check will be required at classification with respect to those part-time PGT students who registered for their course of study under the PGT conventions in place before the start of the 2019/20 academic year. Where their profile of marks and credits places them the borderline to a higher classification band under either the average or preponderance methods, they may be considered for raising their classification to that band under convention 16.1.8. above. **The KentVision composite report screen will not flag these students as borderline.*

**Note: convention 16.1.8 does not apply to PGT students who first registered for their course of study in 2019/20 or thereafter and they may not be considered for raising at the borderline.*

2021/22 Commentary: Impact of Covid-19 in 19/20

The alternative ‘safety-net’ Stage average calculated in the 19/20 academic year for progressing students will need to be taken into consideration in the coming round of Boards of Examiners’ meetings where these students now face classification, i.e. with regard to students who in 2019/20 were studying on either:

- (i) Stage 2 of a four year UG degree course or
- (ii) Stage 2 of a three year UG degree course who intermitted for the year in 20/21.

As set out in Annex A to this guidance document, the University’s ‘no detriment’ policy for 19/20 allowed for the calculation of an alternative average for the stage based on the marks achieved for assessments completed in that stage up to and including 14/03/20. Where the student was in the position to pass the stage in 19/20 a check must be made to see if the ‘Safety-net average weighted mark for the stage’ is greater than the actual weighted stage average achieved after all of the assessments have been completed. Where the safety-net average weighted mark for the stage is the greater of the two, it will be used instead of the actual weighted average stage mark for the purposes of progression (where relevant) and classification.

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Marks for individual assessments will not make a raw contribution to the calculation of the safety-net average weighted mark for the stage but will make a proportionate contribution based on the weighted contribution that each piece of assessment makes to the module in which it takes place and the credit weighting of that module;

Although the information about this weighted contribution of individual marks is held at the module level, it will be used to generate a stage calculation that yields a weighted overall stage average based on the assessment marks, assessment weights and credit weight of each module.

The sum of weights for assessment completed by 14 March 2020 for the stage will provide an indication of the volume of assessment completed across the stage by the ND date. This information is required both for the safety-net stage average calculation and a revised classification calculation for use with the safety-net average.

No safety-net calculation of an alternative average mark for the stage was undertaken in 20/21 or 21/22.

See **Annex A** for more detail.

17.5 Alternative Exit awards

In cases where the volume of credit achieved by a non-completing student exceeds the volume of credit required for the alternative exit award, the following principles should be applied when selecting which modules should be chosen for use in classification:

- (a) Firstly, the examiners should select the modules - and therefore the marks for the modules – which are most relevant to the exit award in question;
- (b) However, where either (i) the volume of credit from modules most relevant to the exit award exceeds the volume required; or (ii) none of the modules are more relevant than any other, the examiners should select the modules with the best marks for the purposes of classification, up to the volume of credit required for the award.

18. Classification of Honours Degrees

18.1 Undergraduate degree courses will be classified by **both the ‘average’ and the ‘preponderance’ methods**, with students to benefit from the better result derived from each method.

Where there is clear evidence, however, that there is a PSRB requirement for an undergraduate course of study to be classified by a single method, Schools must seek the prior approval of the relevant Divisional committee (i.e.

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DESEC/DGSSEC) to classify solely by either the ‘**average**’ method or the ‘**preponderance**’ method.

i) **Weighted Average Mark**

The final weighted average mark for classification purposes will be determined by the application of weighting to the average marks achieved for each relevant stage of the degree course. The final weighted average mark will be used for classification under both the average and preponderance methods of classification.

ii) ‘**Average**’ Method of Classification

A candidate who has met the requirements for the award of an Honours degree will be placed in an Honours class based on the rounded weighted average mark, with modules weighted as agreed by the relevant Divisional committee i.e. DESEC /DGSSEC) and calculated to two decimal places, over all modules in Stages 2, 3 and, where relevant, 4 of the course of study according to the following table:

Classification	Mark
First Class Honours	70 and above
Upper Second Class Honours	60 – 69.49*
Lower Second Class Honours	50 – 59.49*
Third Class Honours	40 – 49.49*

**Please note that the University’s conventions for classification under the average method require that a raw mark falling at X9.50 – X9.99 boundary zone in each class band be regarded as though rounded up to the next integer and be classified appropriately.*

iii) ‘**Preponderance**’ Method of Classification

A candidate who has met the requirements for award of an Honours degree will be placed in an Honours class on the attainment of:

at least the following number of credits in that class or above **AND**

at least the following weighted average mark over the examination as a whole:

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Class	Number of Credits in class or above	Average mark over all contributing modules
First Class	120	67
Upper Second Class	120	57
Lower Second Class	120	47
Third Class	240*	Not Applicable

For degrees with 360 contributing credits:

Class	Number of Credits in class or above	Average mark over all contributing modules
First Class	180	67
Upper Second Class	180	57
Lower Second Class	180	47
Third Class	360*	Not Applicable

For degrees/students with contributing credits other than above:

Class	% of Credits in class or above	Average mark over all contributing modules
First Class	50%	67
Upper Second Class	50%	57
Lower Second Class	50%	47
Third Class	100%*	Not Applicable

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* where credits have been awarded via compensation or condonement for a module mark of less than 40, the credits should be treated as being in the Third Class category.

18.2 Classification of Courses that Allow for Incremental Registration

Students who successfully complete the stated requirements are entitled to receive the award for which they are registered at the University. Where courses of study allow for 'incremental registration' a successful student will, therefore, pick up each award in turn. The classification of such awards will be managed as follows:

- (i) Undergraduate courses:** where students are permitted to register on an incremental course basis (Certificate > Diploma > Degree) they should normally be classified for their degree not only on the basis of their performance in the degree, but also with regard to their performance in the diploma course. Such students will, therefore, be classified over two 'stages' (diploma and degree).

Note: This regulation does not apply to students entering the University for the final stage of a degree course from another institution, or to students taking 'top-up' degrees, or students progressing into the final stage of a degree course from either a HND or Foundation Degree (i.e. the marks obtained at another institution or in the final stage of either a FD or a HNC/HND cannot be factored into a calculation of degree classification).

- (ii) Postgraduate courses:** where students are permitted to register on an incremental course basis (PG Certificate > PG Diploma > Master's Degree, or PG Diploma > Master's Degree) they should normally be classified for their award on the following basis:
- a) PG Certificate – students to be classified on the basis of their performance on the PG Certificate.
 - b) PG Diploma – classification will be made on the basis of student performance across both the PG Cert and PG Dip 'stages'; or, where the PG Dip consists of a single 120 credit stage, across the PG Diploma as a whole.
 - c) Master's – award to be made on the basis of either student performance across the PG Cert, the PG Dip and the Master's 'stages'; or, where the PG Dip consists of a single 120 credit stage, on the basis of student performance on the PG Dip and the Master's together.

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18.3 Conventions for Managing Progression, Resits and the Award of Credit on Distance Learning Courses (including Apprenticeship Courses)

Courses delivered by distance learning may be designed to permit multiple in-stage attempts by students to pass modules. The conventions set out in this document are, therefore, established in order to accommodate this greater flexibility in design that are a feature of such courses of study.

18.3.1 Conventions

Where a course of study is delivered to a significant proportion via distance learning the following conventions may be used to manage progression, resits and the award of credit:

- 18.3.2** Distance Learning Courses should retain the standard volume of credit per stage for the award in question;
- 18.3.3** Students will be permitted no more than three attempts to pass any module;
- 18.3.4** Resit or repeat attempts will be permitted in the term following the failed attempt;
- 18.3.5** Referral/Deferral Boards may be staged at the end of any term in order to make decisions on permitting a resit or repeat attempt in the following term.
- 18.3.6** Referral/Deferral Boards will operate on a membership of Chief Examiner, one other examiner involved in the assessment of the modules and a secretary.
- 18.3.7** A Progression and Award Board of Examiners will be staged at least annually in order to make decisions on progression, the award of credit and the award of qualifications; such Boards will comprise the standard membership for Boards of Examiners;
- 18.2.8** Decisions on condonement, compensation and the trailing of credit will remain end-stage decisions and will be considered by the Progression and Award Board;
- 18.3.9** Students who have not exhausted the maximum number of permitted attempts at a module may, at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board, be allowed to trail up to 30 credits to the next stage of the course.
- 18.3.10** Progression and Award Boards may permit a student to take up to 30 credits from the next stage of the course before the student has formally progressed to that stage. Such higher stage credit should not be used for the purposes of progression or be permitted to contribute to an award until the progression requirements for the current stage have been confirmed by the Board of Examiners.

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18.3.11 Other than the provisions set out in these conventions, Distance Learning courses will be subject to the standard requirements of the Credit Framework.

19. Marking and Classification of HNC and HND Courses Under Licence

19.1 Rules for the In-Module Resubmission and Marking of Failed Assignments on HNC/Ds

- 19.1.1** Failed assignments may be resubmitted on one further occasion during the module.
- 19.1.2** Revised deadlines for resubmitted assignments must allow sufficient time for such assignments to be marked and, as appropriate, considered by the External Examiner ahead of the Board of Examiners.
- 19.1.3** Such resubmitted assignments may achieve no higher mark than 'pass'.
- 19.1.4** Two failures of an assignment will entail the failure of the module.
- 19.1.5** Failed HN modules will be subject to the conventions of the Credit Framework with regard to the number and nature of further attempts permitted.*

***Note:** In practice 19.1.1 – 19.1.5 mean that a student on a HNC or HND Partner College course who initially submits a piece of work which is marked as a Fail (below a mark of 40) has the opportunity, prior to a Board of examiners (BoE), to resubmit the work and only the component mark will be capped at 40 (evidence of extenuation may mean this is not capped), rather than the overall, aggregate module mark as is standard practice elsewhere under the credit framework.

Partner College BoEs will need to be explicit as to what is being defined as a second attempt at the component level for HNC/Ds (timeframe may be too tight for the second piece of assessment to be set, taken and marked pre-BoE) and what should be a resit attempt where the overall module mark will potentially be capped so that the Medway team can annotate and retag modules accurately.

19.1.6 Late-Submitted Work – HNC/D

Unauthorised late-submitted work will be accepted for marking at the discretion of the tutor concerned, and providing there is sufficient time allowing before the Board of Examiners, but may receive a mark no higher than 'pass'.

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19.1.7 Condonement, Compensation and mitigation on HNC/Ds

Failing performance may not be condoned or compensated. Students may not submit mitigation applications or appeal on the grounds of extenuating circumstances or the failure of examiners to consider evidence, except where the appeal is made on mitigation grounds against the decision of examiners to reject or fail work for reason of lateness.

Classification of HNC/Ds

19.2 HNC and HND courses leading to awards of the University of Kent under licence are subject to the conventions and procedures of the Credit Framework except insofar as they are amended or qualified by Annex 12 of that document.

19.3 HNC/D courses will be classified according to the following rubric:

Classification	Reasoning
Qualify for HND	Achieve credit for all [normally 16] modules;
Qualify for HND with Merit	Achieve credit for all [normally 16] modules with at least 55% or more of the credits [normally 9 modules] obtained at merit or distinction grade of which at least 75 credits [normally 5 modules] must be at Stage 2;
Qualify for HND with Distinction	Achieve credit for all [normally 16] modules with at least 50% or more of the credits [normally 8 modules] obtained at distinction grade of which at least 75 credits [normally 5 modules] must be at Stage 2 and at least 50% or more of the remaining credits [normally 4 modules] obtained at either merit or distinction grade;
Qualify for HNC	Achieve credit for all [normally 8] modules;
Qualify for HNC with Merit	Achieve credit for all [normally 8] modules with at least 55% or more of the credits [normally 5 modules] obtained at merit or distinction grade;
Qualify for HNC with Distinction	Achieve credit for all [8] modules with at least 50% or more of the credits [normally 4 modules] obtained at distinction grade and at least 50% or more of the remaining credits [normally 3 modules] obtained at either merit or distinction grade.

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20. Credit Transfer, Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) on HNC/HND Courses

20.1 Recognition of Prior Experiential/Certificated Learning (RPECL) is subject to the regulations and procedures of the Code of Practice as set out in [Annex R](#).

20.2 Where the prior learning has taken place at another UK HEI it will be regarded as Credit Transfer. Admissions Officers, in consultation with appropriate Directors of Studies, are authorised to approve requests for Credit Transfer within the limits specified in CF, Annex 3, which are supported by official transcripts or equivalent provided that they are satisfied that the applicant has achieved learning outcomes equivalent to those of the stage(s) or module(s) from which exemption is to be granted.

20.3 Where considered appropriate by the Board of Examiners, and within the limits set by the University, the following conventions will apply:

20.3.1 Credit awarded via processes such as the recognition of prior learning or Credit Transfer will be treated as a pass for the purposes of classification, except with respect to the exceptions set out at 20.3.2 below.

20.3.2 Where credit is imported via Credit Transfer, the marks achieved by a candidate at another institution **on a cognate HNC or HND course** will be used for the purposes of classification (see 16.1.4b above).

21. Minimum Credit Requirements for Awards

In order to be eligible for the award of a certificate, diploma or degree by the University, a student must obtain at least the minimum number of credits at the levels prescribed for the award in question as set out in Annex 4 of the Credit Framework and must meet any further requirements specified for the particular course of study and award concerned unless they have been granted exemption from these requirements via credit transfer.

The minimum credit requirements for awards are set out in the following table:

Award	Minimum number of credits required	Levels
Certificate of Higher Education	120	At least 120 credits at level 4 or above
Diploma	120	At least 90 credits at level 5 or above
* BTEC Higher National Diploma	240	At least 135 credits at level 5 and at least 90 credits at level 4

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Award	Minimum number of credits required	Levels
* BTEC Higher National Certificate	120	At least 90 credits at level 4
Diploma of Higher Education	240	At least 90 credits at level 5 or above
Foundation degree	240	At least 90 credits at level 5 or above
Non-Honours degree	300	At least 150 credits at level 5 or above including at least 60 credits at level 6 or above at Stage 3
Honours degree	360	At least 210 credits at level 5 or above including at least 90 credits at level 6 or above at Stage 3 (three stage courses) or at Stage 4 (four stage courses)
'Top-Up' Honours degree	120	At least 90 credits at level 6 or above
'Integrated' Master's degree	480	At least 330 credits at level 5 or above including at least 120 credits at level 7
Graduate Certificate	60	At least 40 credits at level 6 or above
Graduate Diploma	120	At least 80 credits at level 6 or above
Postgraduate Certificate	60	At least 40 credits at level 7
Postgraduate Diploma	120	At least 90 credits at level 7
MA/MSc/LLM	180	At least 150 credits at level 7
Taught MPhil	360	At least 240 credits at level 7
Taught/Professional Doctorate	540	At least 510 credits at level 7 or above including at least 360 credits at level 8

22. Alternative Exit Awards

A student who successfully completes an appropriate volume of credit as part of a course of study, but who does not successfully complete the whole course **will be entitled** to receive an alternative exit award from the relevant Board of

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Examiners, for example, the award of a Certificate, Diploma or non-Honours degree, where they have achieved sufficient credit at the appropriate level required for the award concerned and have satisfied any further requirements for the particular course of study where such have been specified in the relevant approved course specification.

Other than where a course is studied on a pass/fail basis, alternative exit awards should be classified. In cases where the volume of credit achieved by a non-completing student exceeds the volume of credit required for the alternative exit award, the following principles should be applied when selecting which modules should be chosen for use in classification:

- (a) Firstly, the examiners should select the modules - and therefore the marks for the modules – which are most relevant to the exit award in question;
- (b) However, where either (i) the volume of credit from modules most relevant to the exit award exceeds the volume required; or (ii) none of the modules are more relevant than any other, the examiners should select the modules with the best marks for the purposes of classification, up to the volume of credit required for the award.

[Annex 5: Alternative Exit Awards of the Credit Framework](#) sets out the detail of these arrangements.

23. Categorical Marking

23.1 Use of the categorical marking scales below **for relevant assessments** is compulsory for all modules where a numerical mark is awarded:

For undergraduate modules (i.e. levels 3 to 6):

Classification	Numerical Scale	Courses Classified Under P/M/D
First Class	100 95 85 82 78 75 72	Distinction
Upper Second Class	68 65	Merit

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Classification	Numerical Scale	Courses Classified Under P/M/D
	62	
Lower Second Class	58 55 52	Pass
Third Class	48 45 42	
Fail	38 35 32 25 20 10 0	Fail

For postgraduate taught modules (i.e. level 7):

Numerical Scale	Classification
100 95 85 82 78 75 72	Distinction
68 65 62	
58	

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Numerical Scale	Classification
55	Pass
52	
48	Fail
45	
42	
38	
35	
32	
25	
20	
10	
0	

23.2 The scale should be regarded as readily lending itself to use with respect to single pieces of work that currently attract a mark out of 100, such as essays, dissertations, reports or any similar individual assessment that requires a qualitative judgement by the marker against criterion referenced standards. Examples of assessed work that may not be suitable to be marked with reference to the categorical marking scale include assessments that take the form of tests of complex calculation or knowledge that allow for an accumulation of marks on an objective basis, or which are composed of a large number of questions, or questions where there is a single correct answer (such as numerical questions). In such cases markers will not be restricted to its use.

23.2.1 Similarly, where an examination paper or a project consists of a number of assessment tasks, some of which may lend themselves to the use of the scale (e.g. one or more responses in essay format which attract a mark out of 100), it is not intended that the overall aggregated mark awarded for the examination or the project should be selected from one of the marks set out on the categorical scale. The purpose of the scale is to aid the marker in making a judgement on relevant individual assessment tasks and it should play no part in determining the overall mark for an assessment where this mark results from the aggregation of a number of sub-component elements. Therefore, while the categorical scale may be used when marking a relevant assessment element of a project or an examination, such as an answer in essay format, it should not be used for deriving the mark for the assessment as a whole where this has been reached by the aggregation of the marks for a number of such sub-component elements.

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- 23.2.2** Where the format of assessment precludes use of the scale, markers are encouraged to consider whether they can avoid awarding marks that fall immediately below a class boundary.
- 23.2.3** A diagrammatic representation of how to use the Categorical Marking Scheme is included at Annex E.

24. Rounding and Display of Marks

With respect to the rounding and display of marks, the University applies the following rubric in KentVision (with the exception of marks recorded for HNC/D courses):

1. Each item of assessment for a module will make an unrounded weighted contribution to the calculation of the aggregated overall mark for the module;
2. The aggregated overall mark for the module will be rounded to the nearest integer;
3. Noting the exception to this rule given at point 4. below, where the rounded aggregated overall mark for the module falls within one mark of the boundary for a higher class band (e.g. a rounded mark of 39, 49 [where applicable], 59, or 69), the mark will be rounded up to the nearest integer.
4. With regard to calculating the overall mark awarded for the module as per point 3. above, in the scenarios where either (i) one or more elements of assessment in a module have been failed for which a pass is compulsory, or (ii) where the qualifying mark for a group of assessments that must be passed collectively has not been achieved, the module will be deemed to have been failed and the overall final mark for the module will be capped at the numerical value that is one mark lower than this pass mark and will not be rounded any further.
5. The final rounded mark for the module arrived at though 1- 3 above will make a contribution to the calculation of the final overall average course mark for classification purposes in line with the weighting allocated to the module and to the stage.
6. The final overall weighted average course mark for classification purposes should be calculated and displayed to two decimal places on composite mark screens.
7. Where the final overall weighted average course mark for classification purposes falls within 0.5% of the boundary for a higher class band (i.e. a

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mark that falls in the ranges of 39.50 - 39.99; 49.50 - 49.99⁷; 59.50 - 59.99 or 69.50 - 69.99), it will be regarded as though rounded up to the nearest integer. *Nb.*

Nb. As noted in the introductory section to this document (4.C, Pg 6), It was suggested in some quarters in 2020/21 that, with regard to point 7 above, there might be a 'double boost' effect evident at the classification stage, where a final overall average mark was rounded twice, resulting in a candidate's profile of marks earning a higher classification than might have been awarded in previous years.

For the avoidance of doubt the final overall mark for classification purposes will be expressed in KentVision as the raw mark as calculated to two decimal places.

Where, however, the raw mark falls at X9.50 – X9.99 boundary zone in each class band, it will under the University's conventions for classification by the average method be regarded as though rounded up to the next integer and be classified appropriately.

For example, for an undergraduate honours degree, a raw mark displayed by KentVision in the range of 69.00 – 69.49 will be awarded an Upper Second class degree; whereas a raw mark displayed in the range 69.50 – 69.99 will be awarded a First.

This will ensure that there is both clarity with regard to the raw mark under consideration and consistency in terms of degree outcomes awarded for marks under the University's classification conventions since 2012/13.

25. Viva Voce Examinations

Viva voce examination for the purposes of assisting with classification may be used with **exclusive regard to those PGT students** who first registered for their course of study prior to the start of the 2019/20 academic year.

Where a viva voce examination is held for a proportion, but only a proportion, of the candidates, the criteria for the selection of candidates, the purpose of the

⁷ Except where a mark in the 49.5 - 49.9 range does not fall close to the boundary for an award in the higher class band; e.g. with respect to the classification of Stage 1 undergraduate degree courses or for PGT awards.

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viva and the scope of the panel of viva voce examiners decision shall be agreed with the External Examiner.

The use of the viva voce examination can be considered under four categories:

25.1 Categories of viva voce examinations

25.1.1 As part of the approved diet of assessment for a module, as for example:

- Extended pieces of work such as dissertations/projects/theses may be partly assessed by an oral examination.
- Oral examinations are generally used in language modules to test communication skills.
- To test the achievement of professional competencies during or at the completion of a vocational placement

These assessments should form part of the approved diet of assessment for the module, be designed to test specific module learning outcomes and should be taken by all candidates. External Examiners are sometimes involved in these examinations.

***Note:** Oral assessments described in 25.1.1 above are distinctly different to the examinations which are used for the purposes of determining classification as described in 25.1.2 below.*

25.1.2 As a means of assisting in decision-making with regard to borderline classifications (i.e. only for PGT students who registered for their courses of study prior to 2019/20).

Examiners may exercise discretionary powers to require a viva voce examination under certain circumstances to assist decision making on borderline cases and/or provide an alternative or additional assessment where valid reasons for poor performance [mitigation cases] have been established. With respect to borderline cases, examiners will normally focus on specific areas of weakness in the candidate's performance as might be indicated by poor results in particular module(s) or assessment(s). It should be clear which learning outcomes are under test.

25.1.3 Benchmarking

Examiners may use interviews with candidates from across the performance range to monitor academic standards.

***Note:** this is an interview not an examination as the process is not designed to benefit individual students, but to monitor the cohort's academic standards of achievement.*

25.1.4 As part of an academic misconduct investigation

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A disciplinary committee might require examiners to test students via oral examination in order to authenticate the authorship of pieces of work. Such examinations must take place under the auspices of an academic misconduct committee established for this purpose and must not be conducted independently by examiners or by Boards of Examiners.

25.2 Conduct of the Viva Voce

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a set of principles in order to achieve good practice in the conduct of viva voce examinations for taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses where there is external examiner involvement in any of the scenarios identified under 25.1.2 above.

25.2.1 Before the Viva Voce

- Students must be advised why they have been called for a viva, to enable them to prepare in an informed way.
- Examiners should give students as much notice as possible regarding timing and arrangements for the viva voce examination. Examiners should inform students if the external examiner(s) will attend or conduct the viva voce examination and should remind students of their responsibility to attend. Operational arrangements should be clarified as early as possible by the module/course teaching team.
- Students should be advised of the anticipated length of the examination.
- Where the viva voce is being used to determine borderline or cases of mitigation for the relevant cohort of PGT students, they must be reminded that the viva voce can only be used to raise, not lower, the mark/grade.

25.2.2 During the Viva Voce

- When the student attends for the viva voce, they should be verbally reminded of its purpose.
- The purpose of the viva will determine how the student's viva performance is to be assessed, i.e. what criteria might be used.
- The purpose of the viva voce will determine who should be present. The number of individuals present, while normally never fewer than two members of academic staff, should be the minimum required to carry out an effective assessment. Examiners should avoid overwhelming the student with an excessive number present. Vivas conducted for the purposes of considering a potential academic offence should be conducted in line with Annex 10: Academic Misconduct: Principles and Procedures of the Credit Framework.

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- A student's identity should be confirmed against their student ID card. (Note that students are required to have their student ID cards for invigilated written examinations.)
- A brief record of the outcome of the viva should be made.

25.2.3 Outcome of the Viva Voce Examination

- Where viva voce examinations have been used to help determine borderline cases, the outcomes should be discussed at the relevant Board of Examiners.
- When a student fails to attend a viva voce examination convened for the purposes described at 25.1.2 above, they will be deemed to have lost the opportunity to improve their performance.

26. Comments on Examination Scripts

26.1 There is no requirement to provide comments on examination scripts.

26.2 However, where comments are provided, these should be used to provide the examiner(s) and the External Examiner(s) with the rationale for grading in accordance with the agreed marking criteria. They are not intended to provide feedback to the student per se, although must be written in the knowledge that a student may access the script at a later date. Examiners should note the following:

26.3 Where provided, comments should be presented in a format that satisfies both the discipline concerned by adhering to the relevant marking practices and addresses the requests of the external examiners. For example, in cases where marks are to be moderated, annotation of the script may be appropriate; for double blind marking, comments may be recorded on a separate sheet.

26.4 Such comments should be intelligible - in the sense that they should clearly indicate how the marks have been allocated to the work.

26.5 All examiners should be aware that any comments or markings, either on scripts or on a separate sheet of paper, may potentially be made available to the examinee on request under the terms of current Data Protection legislation.

26.6 Please note that the University's policy is that students are entitled to receive examination feedback. Divisions must therefore provide feedback at key stages in the course to support successful progression for students. In order to provide this in a timely fashion (e.g. prior to resits; by the beginning of Autumn term at progression between stages), Divisions should advise students of the timeframe for providing generic examination feedback and for responding to requests for feedback on an individual basis ([examination feedback policy](#)).

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27. Representation

Individual members of Boards of Examiners should not take on a formal role of representing or advocating the interests of an individual student on examination panels (see [Annex G of the Code of Practice for Taught Courses of Study](#)).

28. Academic Misconduct

28.1 Boards of Examiners are not the appropriate forum for considering the application of penalties for academic discipline offences. Academic misconduct offences should have already been considered by Divisional Disciplinary Committees and any penalties applied by that body.

29. Academic Appeals

Academic Appeals should be conducted in line with the requirements of [Annex 13: Academic Appeals](#) of the Credit Framework.

30. Special Dispensation

The University's Education and UG Student Experience Board is authorised to approve exceptions to the requirements of the Credit Framework for Taught Courses in individual cases under special circumstances provided that it is satisfied that there is good reason to do so. Such exceptions may be agreed by Chair's Action and reported to the Board at a later date.

MD/QACO/09.05.22

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Annex A: Technical Guidance on the 'Safety-Net' Calculation

The guidance below was drawn up with respect to the operation of the 'Safety-Net' calculation as implemented for the academic year 2019/20 in order to offset the disruptive impact of the sudden transition to online learning and assessment that was undertaken in response to the pandemic. As the circumstances have been different in this academic year it would be inappropriate to provide a similar alternative average stage mark as a benchmark for student performance. For those students who were not finalists last year, however, the 2019/20 safety-net calculation remains relevant and should be used as a point of comparison with the actual average stage mark achieved in 2019/20, with the greater of the two marks being factored into the calculation of the students' final overall average mark to be used in classification.

It is important to remember, therefore, that the safety-net calculation undertaken in 2019/20 for current Finalists must be carried forward and taken into account by Boards of Examiners at classification in 21/22.

These include:

1. Inclusion of any better average for a stage relevant to classification arrived at under the 'Safety-Net Calculation' undertaken in 2019/20 with regard to Stage 2 of a four year UG degree course; and
2. Inclusion of any better average for a stage relevant to classification arrived at under the 'Safety-Net Calculation' undertaken in 2019/20 with regard to Stage 2 of a three year UG degree course where a student intermitted for the year in 2020/21.

For this reason the 2019/20 technical guidance below remains relevant and is retained in the guidance document for 2021/22.

Technical Guidance – 2019/20

As reported in the opening section of this guidance document, the 'no detriment' policy allows for the calculation of an alternative average for the stage based on the marks achieved for assessments completed up to and including 14/03/20. This is known as the 'Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark'. Assuming that a student has passed the stage and that the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark is greater than the Actual Weighted Average Stage Mark, the former will be factored into the calculation of the stage mark used for progression and the Course Average Mark used for classification.

In practice, this means that two actions take place:

1. Where the student is in the position to pass the stage an initial comparison check is made to see if the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark is greater than the Actual Weighted Stage Average Mark achieved after all of the assessments have been completed. Where the Safety-net Average Weighted

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Stage Mark is the greater of the two, it will be factored into the calculation of the Stage Mark used for progression and a revised Course Average Mark used for classification.

2. A second comparison check is made at the point of classification to ensure that the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark has no negative impact on the calculation of the Final Overall Weighted Average Mark for the Course (the 'Course Average Mark') used for classification purposes. This additional check compares (i) the Alternative Course Average Mark derived from the incorporation of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark, with (ii) the Course Average Mark that would be achieved through use of the Actual Weighted Stage Average Mark, with the higher of the two Course Average Marks to be factored into the classification of the award under both the average and preponderance methods.

Through these two comparison checks, use of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark acts as a safeguard for students, guaranteeing a minimum baseline mark for student performance for the stage and allows for this to substitute for the Actual Stage Average Weighted Mark achieved where to do so would be advantageous for the classification of the award.

The two comparison checks will be facilitated through the Comparison Report that will be made available to Divisions in time for the final meetings of Boards of Examiners.

Some important relevant detail to note:

- Marks for individual assessments will not make a raw contribution to the calculation of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark but will make a proportionate contribution based on the weighted contribution that each piece of assessment makes to the module in which it takes place and the credit weighting of that module;
- Although the information about this weighted contribution of individual marks is held at the module level, it will be used to generate a Stage calculation that yields a weighted overall Stage average mark based on the assessment marks, assessment weights and credit weight of each module.
- The sum of weights for assessment completed by 14 March (when the 'No Detriment' policy became effective) will provide an indication of the volume of assessment completed across the Stage by that cut-off date. This information is required both for the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark calculation and a revised classification calculation for use with the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark.
- The calculation for the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark will adjust for the volume of assessment which contributes to the safety-net

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calculation. This is reported below in the generic version of the formula that will be used:

Generalised Version for Course of Study (POS) consisting of n Stages

$$\frac{(S_i \text{ average} \times W_i) + (S_j \text{ average} \times W_j \times S_j \% \text{ of completed assessment}) \dots + (S_n \text{ average} \times W_n)}{(W_i) + (W_j \times S_j \% \text{ of completed assessment}) \dots + (W_n)}$$

Where POS consists of stages (S) and weights (W) i to n , where i is the first stage for classification, j is the academic stage in 2019/20, and n is the most recent and final Stage. Weights for each stage are determined by the Course of study.

Note that where all assessments contribute to the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark across the current stage, the revised classification calculation collapses to the normal classifier rule.

- Where the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark is greater than the Actual Weighted Average Stage Mark it will factor into the revised classification calculation in the form of a revised Alternative Course Average Mark. At this point a second comparison will be made in order to check if the Alternative Course Average Mark derived through incorporation of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark is greater than the Course Average Mark based on the Actual Stage Average Weighted Mark, with the higher of the two Course Average Marks to be used for classification under both the average and preponderance methods.
- The purpose of these revisions to the calculation of Stage Marks and Course Average Marks and their incorporation into the classification rules is to mitigate against any unintended grade inflation that might arise when using the safety-net calculation. This is likely where:
 - i) The volume of completed assessment at 14 March is low and hence not representative of the stage;
 - ii) Where the performance in course work assessment is perhaps higher and significantly out-of-line with standard exam performance.

In essence, weighting the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark by the volume of assessment scales the contribution of the current stage to reflect the contribution of assessment to the stage at that point in the academic year. Student achievement is safeguarded but scaled to be representative as of 14 March.

- The following modules/assessments will be factored out of the calculation of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark:

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- Modules for which no assessments have taken place by 14 March;
- Condoned modules;
- Modules that are non-contributory to progression or classification;
- Modules with non-numeric final grade outcomes (pass/fail);
- Assessments with non-numeric grade outcomes (pass/fail);
- Assessments that are non-contributory to progression or classification;
- The calculation of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark undertaken for the purpose of consideration by the June 2020 round of meetings of Boards of Examiners will **not** be relevant to students in the following categories:
 - Students who have failed the stage;
 - Students not in a position to pass the stage in June 19/20;
 - Students returning from a Year in Industry or a Year Abroad;
 - Students completing a referred attempt in 2019/20, either in attendance or by re-sit assessment;
 - Students completing a deferred re-sit assessment attempt in 2019/20;

As the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark will become relevant once the stage has been passed (which could be via AFT resit in August), it will be recorded for all students who have studied full-time or part-time in attendance with respect to modules completed under deferral or as if for the first time at that point in the academic year.

- The calculation of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark **WILL** be relevant to students completing a deferred attempt in attendance in 2019/20;
- The Comparison Report will allow for the check of (i) the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark against the Actual Weighted Stage Average Mark; and (ii) the Alternative Course Average Mark derived from the incorporation of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark, with the Course Average Mark that would be achieved through use of the Actual Weighted Stage Average Mark, with the higher of the two Course Average Marks to be factored into the classification of the award under both the average and preponderance methods. The Comparison Report will also flag where the Alternative Course Average Mark meets the qualifying mark of X7+ in each class band for the consideration of classification under preponderance.

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- Where the Alternative Course Average Mark meets the qualifying mark of X7+ in each class band for the consideration of classification under preponderance, Boards of Examiners will need to conduct a manual check to see whether or not the candidate's credit profile is sufficient for classification in the higher class band as based on the actual credit profile as achieved at the end of the stage. **Preponderance classification will not be based on the indicative credit profile in modules as it stood on 14 March.**
- The calculation for the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark will be run after the meetings of examiners staged for the purpose of applying mitigation adjustments to student mark profiles for (i) standard Annex 9 mitigations; (ii) Strike mitigations; (iii) Covid-19 mitigations; and (iv) adjustments to module marks arising from other factors (e.g. issues in delivery). This is to ensure that any student in a position to pass the stage after these adjustments have been completed may be included in the calculation.

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Annex B: Framework for Implementation of the Special Conventions – 2021/22

To facilitate the implementation of the special conventions the University formed a Academic Assessment Mitigation Group (AAMG). The AAMG authorised the following framework as a reference point for Schools when making interventions to offset disruption under the special conventions:

NATURE OF DISRUPTION	POSSIBLE MITIGATING ACTIONS
Grade A	No Disruption
All delivery and assessment took place outside of the period of the dispute, hence no disruption.	None required.
Delivery and/or assessment took place during the period of the dispute but there was no disruption to this module.	None required.
Grade B	Limited Disruption
Delivery and assessment took place but some students underperformed on specific assessments as a consequence of the action; Some indirect disruption occurred: e.g. the rescheduling of timed assessments had the effect of “bunching” tests/presentations which would have been more spaced out;	Disregard individual assessments for the affected students; <i>or</i> , Substitute the mark awarded for a similar individual assessment in that module, provided that (i) the learning outcomes for the module(s) are achieved; and (ii) such adjusted marks properly represent the student’s achievement on the module as a whole;
Grade C	Moderate Disruption
Some few components of the curriculum were not delivered; and/or A proportion of the assessment (i.e. contributing in aggregate less than 20% of the weighted mark for the module) did not take place for some or all of the students; and/or Some academic guidance (e.g. dissertation supervision) was withdrawn.	Adjust assessment either to exclude undelivered material/content or to not require that students be tested on that material/content; Disregard individual assessments for the affected students; <i>or</i> , Substitute the mark awarded for a similar individual assessment in that module, provided that (i) the learning outcomes for the module(s) are achieved; and (ii) such adjusted marks properly represent the student’s achievement on the module as a whole; and/or , where relevant:

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	Adjust the marking criteria to compensate for any deficit in supervision or similar academic guidance on assessed work
Grade D	Substantial Disruption
<p>Substantial components of the curriculum were not delivered; and/or</p> <p>A substantial proportion of the assessment (i.e. contributing in aggregate 20% or more of the weighted mark for the module) did not take place for some or all of the students; and/or</p> <p>Standard academic guidance (e.g. dissertation supervision or similar) was substantially withdrawn.</p>	<p>Adjust assessment either to exclude undelivered material/content or not to require that students be tested on that material/content;</p> <p>Disregard individual assessments for the affected students; and/or</p> <p>Substitute c/w for exam mark or vice versa, or, where the assessment pattern does not include an examination, c/w mark for c/w mark, provided that (i) the learning outcomes for the module(s) are achieved; and (ii) such adjusted marks properly represent the student's achievement on the module as a whole.</p> <p>Adjust the marking criteria to compensate for any deficit in supervision or similar academic guidance on assessed work; <i>and/or</i></p> <p>Any actions available for Grades B & C above; <i>and/or</i></p> <p>Consult the Head of QACO for possible intervention to mitigate the impact of industrial action under the authority of the DVC: Education & Student Experience, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The award of credit for the stage at Stage 1 • The use of compensation for optional modules at Stage 2 up to a maximum of 50% of the credit for the stage. • Extending the use of the notwithstanding convention to make awards to finalists.

5. Some Explanatory Notes on the Use of the Framework

5.1 Affected modules have been graded by Schools using the scale set out in the framework in Section 4 above, with modules assessed in the 'A' range being

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the least disrupted and the most affected modules graded in category 'D'. The greater the level of disruption experienced, the more extensive are the interventions permitted, on the assumption that the most substantial corrective intervention is required where student performance has been most impaired as a result of the strike. Of course, all interventions should be directly proportionate to the disruption incurred and tailored to the purpose of arriving at a fair result, one that (with the impact of the strike factored out) reflects the true level of student achievement and safeguards academic standards.

- 5.2 When considering interventions, Boards of Examiners should consult their own graded assessments of the scale of the disruption experienced on each of their modules. Some of the interventions listed in the framework, for example, to allow for the alternative delivery of content or the reformulation of assessments, may have already been made in-course. Where mark adjustment is considered appropriate by Boards of Examiners (via disregarding assessments or substituting marks awarded for other assessments completed in that module) the intervention made should be appropriate to the outcome of achieving a fair overall mark for the module for the affected students, as proportionate to the disruption suffered.
- 5.3 The allowance for adjusting grade criteria should not give a licence for examiners to award extra marks. Rather it suggests that markers have adapted the grade criteria for specific affected assessments in a reasonable way to reflect revised expectations of achievement as a result of the disrupted student learning experience. Any revised grade criteria should remain appropriate to the level of achievement required for the marks awarded.
- 5.4 Boards of Examiners may find it useful to calibrate the outcomes of adjusted modules against the range of marks and the overall average marks achieved on the same modules in 2020/21. While bearing in mind the relative abilities of the respective cohorts, this exercise will allow Boards to ensure that their interventions for the purposes of mitigation have not skewed the achievement of academic standards on affected modules in either an overly negative or unduly positive manner. This year-on-year data will also be provided for modules unaffected by the strike so that Examiners might take this into account where they consider it to be useful to do so. The Planning and Business Information Office will provide the necessary comparative data on module marks. It is hoped that this data will be available in time for the internal preliminary meeting of the Board of Examiners.
- 5.5 Decisions on interventions will be made by the module-owning Board, based on its assessment of the nature of the level of the disruption suffered and the mitigations necessary as a corrective measure. There is therefore no need for Schools to share these assessments with Boards in other Divisions. Final overall adjusted marks will be shared by Boards as normal for modules that are taken by students studying on joint honours courses and with regard to

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- students registered on elective modules. Boards must not attempt to adjust the marks allocated by the module-owning Division as a result of the mitigation process.
- 5.6 Boards must apply any required adjustments to module outcomes in the present rounds of meetings of examiners. Decisions on Stage 1 and Stage 2 modules should not be deferred until 2022/23 or 2023/24.
 - 5.7 The application of the framework should result in common 'class-action' outcomes, applicable to the affected students on a module as a group. Interventions undertaken to offset the disruption caused by the industrial action on affected modules should be regarded as allowable in addition to the standard set of interventions permissible under the standard conventions for mitigation. Adjustments to marks undertaken as a result of this process and the volume of any credit awarded as a result should therefore be viewed as allowable in addition to any such measures undertaken for individual students through the standard mitigation processes.
 - 5.8 These interventions are aimed at providing appropriate redress to *affected* students. In some cases, this may be all of the students registered on a module; alternatively, it may only be a portion of the module cohort that was affected (e.g. where some students completed an assessment that was not available to some of their peers). As a general principle where a Division is able to derive a mark for a student for an assessment that mark must be allowed to stand - provided that it is indicative of actual achievement. However, where a School considers that student performance (individual or cohort) on a particular assessment or assessments was compromised due to the impact of the strike, it might apply the appropriate corrective measure.
 - 5.9 Special conventions flagged in the body of the guidance document as requiring the permission of the DVC: Education and Student Experience for implementation should be routed for approval via the Head of Quality Assurance and Compliance.
 - 5.10 As matters of academic judgement the adjustments applied in mitigation on a cohort basis in agreement with the procedures set out in this document would not constitute grounds for appeal. Of course, where individual students have evidence that their performance on particular assessment(s) was compromised due to the strike in a manner not addressed or taken into account by the School via the present process, it is open to them to submit a standard application for mitigation in advance of the meeting of the Board or Examiners or subsequently to make an appeal in order to seek further redress.
 - 5.11 External examiners should be briefed by the Chief Examiner of the Board on the process of intervention undertaken for these purposes, the rationale for making adjustments to marks and the overall outcomes achieved. While external examiners should ideally be reassured by this account and by the

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safeguards for assuring standards built into the procedures (e.g. the use of comparative year-on-year data on modules marks) the University takes the view as that these decisions have been made in accordance with an institutional-level framework developed for the purposes of ensuring parity of outcome for students across all academic disciplines, these outcomes must not be recalibrated by external examiners in individual Boards.

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Annex C: Procedure for Disregarding Assessment on a Module or Cohort Basis in Advance

This annex sets out the procedure that should be followed in order to process a request to disregard an assessment component in advance of the Exam Boards, as a result of mitigation due to industrial action. This process is for whole or partial groups (e.g., a seminar group) of students that have been affected, not for individual students – individual students will be considered by the Mitigation Committee in the usual way.

This measure can be actioned in advance of the Exam Boards where it is clear that disregarding is the only appropriate action because **all other potential mitigations have been considered and deemed unsuitable**. (Other available actions include rescheduling assessments, one-to-one drop ins, the provision of extra resources and materials, offering extra feedback sessions, replacement workshops, covering content in another seminar, on-line discussions, amending assessment topics, setting questions only on topics covered, extending deadlines and using academic judgement when marking in order to ensure that students are not disadvantaged).

Note: All requests by module convenors to disregard elements of assessment must be made in consultation with the Chief Examiner and Divisional Quality Assurance and Accreditations Manager. The QA&A Manager should keep the Divisional Directors of Education and Student Experience/Graduate Studies and PG Student Experience informed so that they have oversight.

1. The Divisional QA&A Manager (or nominee) will be responsible for recording and reporting requests to disregard an assessment component to the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office (QACO), Mitigation Committees, Boards of Examiners and External Examiners.
2. All requests must be recorded on the attached template spreadsheet prior to sending to QACO.
3. QA&A Manager (or nominee) to send requests to gaco@kent.ac.uk.
4. QACO will be responsible for holding a central record for reporting to the Central Student Administration Office and the Office for Students.
5. QACO will send requests to CSAO so that they can be actioned.
6. CSAO will update KentVision.

Please note: It is essential that Mitigation Committees, Boards of Examiners and External Examiners are made aware of assessment components that have been disregarded in this manner.

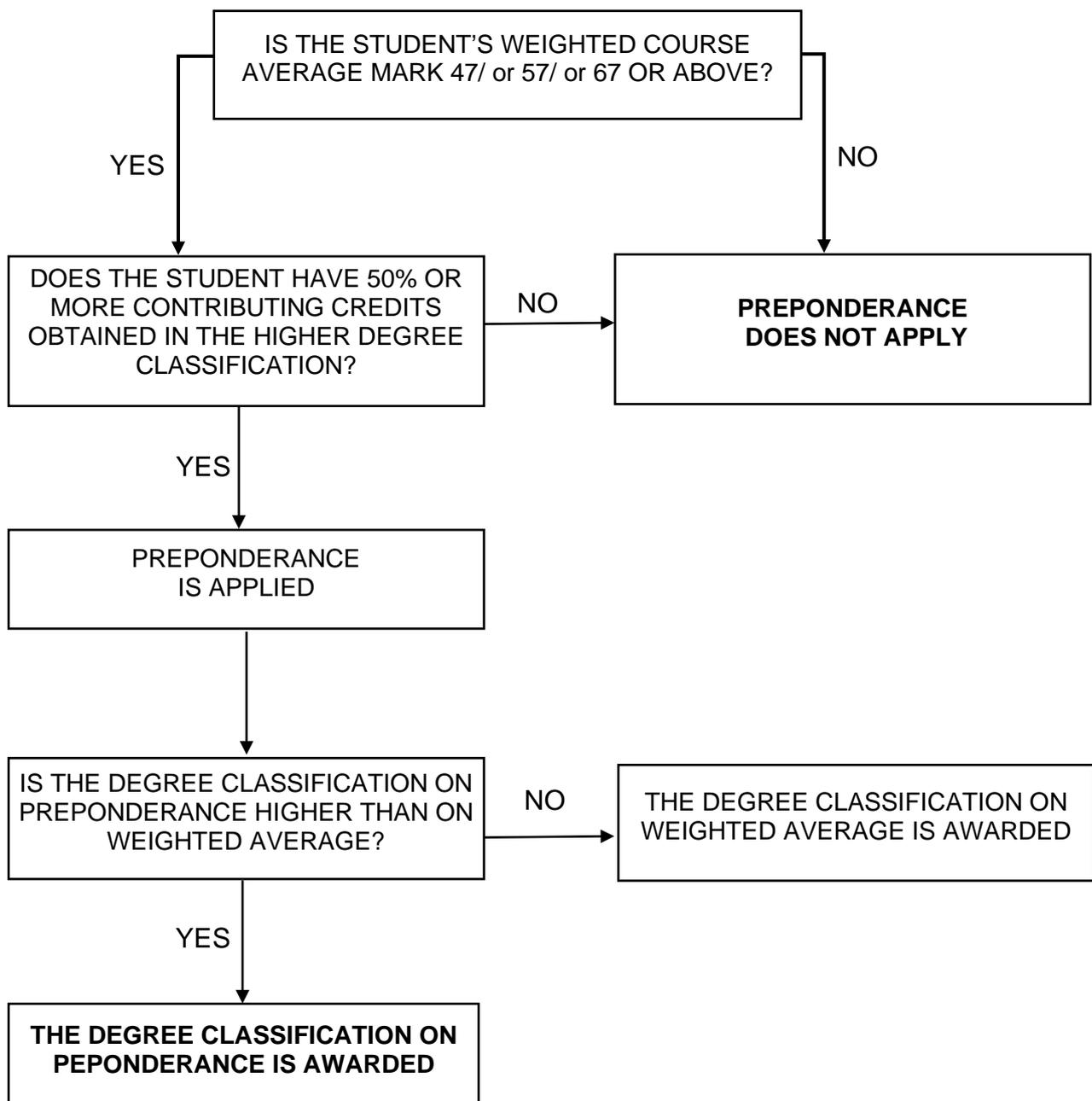
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1. Limits on disregarding, as laid out in [Annex 9 Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances](#), Appendix 1, should be adhered to. Please be aware that Senate approved Reserve Powers on 07/03/2022 that, with the permission of the DVC Education and Student Experience, allows Boards to request dispensations during the examination period, ***if appropriate.***
2. Academic standards must continue to be maintained, i.e., module learning outcomes must still be met and the student's marks should accurately reflect their overall achievement.

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Annex D: Diagrammatic Representation of Preponderance Method of Degree Classification

Taught courses at both UG and PGT level will normally be classified by both the 'average' and the 'preponderance' methods, with students to benefit from the better result derived from each method.



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Annex E: Diagrammatic Representation of Categorical Marking Scale

For each student and each module the outcome of assessment shall be recorded as a mark out of 100 except where it has been agreed that a module shall be assessed on a pass/fail or a fail/pass/merit/distinction basis. **Use of the categorical marking scales is compulsory for all modules** (where appropriate - see below). The purpose of the marking scale is to (i) encourage markers to make firm decisions (no work is regarded as borderline) and (ii) use the full range of the marking scale, particularly in the first class band.

