

UNIVERSITY OF KENT
CREDIT FRAMEWORK FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

Information for Students, Teachers and Examiners

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Credit Framework for Taught Programmes, as described in this document, applies to all taught programmes of study leading to awards of the University of Kent, with the exception of programmes leading to joint awards where Kent is not the Primary Administering University. It does not normally apply to programmes leading to the award of a research degree except where (i) such programmes consist at least in part of modules approved and credit-rated by the University; (ii) the Programme Approval Sub-Committee has approved the research programme in question as credit-bearing and (iii) as explicitly subject to the requirements of this document.
- 1.2 All University modules, even if not taken as part of a programme of study leading to an award of the University, are regarded as credit-bearing and are subject to the requirements of the Credit Framework.
- 1.3 The Credit Framework will be reviewed from time to time by the University Education Board and the University reserves the right to modify the Framework in the light of such reviews.
- 1.4 This document is intended to provide information about the Credit Framework to students, teachers and examiners. Any queries should be addressed in the first instance either to the Quality Assurance Office or the Faculties Support Office.
- 1.5 For information on quality assurance of programmes of study, see the University Code of Practice for Quality Assurance. For information about Meetings of Boards of Examiners and about the role and responsibilities of External Examiners, see Annexes J and K of the Code of Practice for Quality Assurance¹.

2. OUTLINE OF CREDIT FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 In order to be eligible for an award of the University, a student must take an approved programme of study, obtain a specified number of credits, the number required depending on the award in question, and meet such other requirements as may be specified for the programme of study in question. Each programme of study comprises a number of modules, usually at different levels and each worth a specified number of credits. In order to be awarded the credits for a module, the student must normally demonstrate, via assessment, that he/she has achieved the learning outcomes specified for the module. Limited credit may also be awarded where assessment has been affected by illness or where the student has demonstrated in other modules that all programme learning outcomes have been achieved (see sections 6.2: Condonement and 6.3: Compensation).
- 2.2 Most programmes of study are divided into stages, usually equivalent to one year of full time study. A student must satisfy prescribed requirements for each stage of a programme before being permitted to proceed to the next stage.
- 2.3 Many programmes of study lead to 'classified' awards. For example, most undergraduate degrees are awarded with First Class, Upper Second Class, Lower Second Class or Third Class honours and Certificates may be awarded with Merit or with Distinction.

***Example:** a student taking a three year full-time undergraduate honours degree programme is required to obtain a total of 360 credits of which at least 90 must be at level 6 or above at Stage 3 and at most 150 may be at level 4 (Stage 1 modules are normally at level 4). Many three year full-time honours degree programmes comprise 120 level 4 credits in Stage 1, 120 level 5 or 6 credits in Stage 2 and 120 level 6 credits in Stage 3. At least 90 credits must be obtained in Stage 1 before the student is permitted to proceed to Stage 2 and at least 90 credits must be obtained in Stage 2 before the student is permitted to proceed to Stage 3.*

¹ See <https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/index.html>

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- 2.4 The remainder of this document describes the Credit Framework in detail. A glossary of terms used may be found at Annex 1.

3. PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Each programme of study comprises an approved set or sets of **modules** and is divided into a number of **stages**. Each module is at a specified **level** and a student is awarded a specified number of **credits at that level** following successful completion of the module. The University defines these terms as follows:

3.1 Credits

One credit corresponds to approximately ten hours of 'learning time' (i.e. including all taught or supervised classes and all private study and research). Thus obtaining 120 credits in an academic year of 30 weeks requires 1200 hours of learning time, equivalent to 40 hours per week.

3.2 Module

A module is a self-contained component of a programme or programmes of study with defined learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods and assessment requirements. The University has agreed that each module should normally correspond to a multiple of 15 credits i.e. to 15, 30, 45...credits but that this should not apply to taught postgraduate programmes where this was not the case prior to the introduction of the Credit Framework; and that Faculties should be authorised to approve exceptions where they are satisfied that there is good reason to do so.

Modules shall be described in programme and module specifications only as either 'compulsory' or 'optional'.²

3.3 Level

Each module must be at one, and only one, of the following levels:

level 3	Foundation
level 4	Certificate
level 5	Intermediate
level 6	Honours
level 7	Master's
level 8	Doctoral

The level descriptors adopted by the University for these levels can be found in Annex 2. Where there are modules at different levels which have the same or similar curriculum, they may share some or all of their teaching but will normally have different learning outcomes and assessment.

Where module specifications relate to a placement year, year abroad or term abroad the module specification shall be set at level 5 or 6.

3.4 Stage

Most programmes of study are divided into a number of stages and students must achieve specified requirements in each stage except the final stage before being permitted to progress to the next stage. For undergraduate honours degree programmes, a stage will normally consist of modules amounting to 120 credits. Programmes of study comprising 120 credits or less will normally consist of a single stage.

² Except where the specification was last approved prior to December 2012, as other terms may have been used.

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3.5 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 specified for that award at the specified levels. These requirements are set out in Annex 4. Individual programmes or groups of programmes will normally specify additional requirements which must be met for the award of the qualification in the subject concerned, for example by requiring the student to take and obtain credits for specified modules.

4. AWARD TITLES

4.1 Single Subject Awards

Qualifications other than Honours degrees may be awarded in a single subject (e.g. Certificate in French) provided that at least 75% of the credits required for the award are in the subject concerned.

Honours degrees may be awarded in a single subject provided that at least 75% of the credits used for determining the class of Honours are in the subject concerned.

4.2 Awards in Two Subjects

Qualifications other than Honours degrees may be awarded in two subjects (e.g. Certificate in French and German) provided that credits in each of the subjects contribute at least 37.5% of the credits required for the award.

Honours degrees may be awarded in two subjects provided that credits in each of the subjects contribute at least 37.5% of the credits used for determining the class of Honours.

4.3 Major/Minor Awards

Qualifications other than Honours degrees may be awarded in a major subject with a minor subject (e.g. Certificate in French with German) provided that credits in the major subject contribute at least 65% of the credits required for the award and credits in the minor subject contribute at least 25% of the credits required for the award.

Honours degrees may be awarded in a major subject with a minor subject provided that credits in the major subject contribute at least 65% of the credits used for determining the class of Honours and credits in the minor subject contribute at least 25% of the credits used for determining the class of Honours.

4.4 Major/Major/Minor Awards

Qualifications other than Honours degrees may be awarded in two major subjects with a minor subject (e.g. Certificate in French and Spanish with German) provided that credits in each of the major subjects contribute 37.5% of the credits required for the award and credits in the minor subject contribute 25% of the credits required for the award.

Honours degrees may be awarded in two major subjects with a minor subject provided that credits in each of the major subjects contribute at least 90 of the credits used for determining the class of Honours and credits in the minor subject contribute at least 60 of the credits used for determining the class of Honours.

4.5 Award of Programme of Study including a Pathway

A programme of study may include one or more pathways. Where a programme is designed to include a pathway, the pathway will be defined in the programme specification(s) by the articulation of programme-level learning outcomes that are exclusive to the pathway concerned. The programme specification will state which modules must be taken in order to satisfy the requirements of the pathway (see the note below). The pathway will be reflected in the title of the programme of study by the addition of a subject-related defining term in parentheses, indicating the distinctive nature of the pathway's content and learning.

It is suggested, though not required, that all the pathways of a programme are set out in a single specification, in order to make explicit the pathway variants. Programme learning outcomes that apply to specific pathways should be clearly indicated as such (e.g. by the subheading 'Additional learning outcomes for the pathway in X').

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A programme with pathways is distinct from an award in two subjects or with major/minor subjects (see section 4.2 – 4.4 above), as a programme pathway is designed to allow a specialism within a single subject, rather than the study of two separate subjects,

Note: the distinctive programme-level learning outcomes of the pathway may be provided by compulsory modules that are also optional in other pathways or an associated generalist programme specification.”

4.6 **Other Awards**

Where none of the above requirements are met or a programme of study covers more than three substantive subjects, awards should be in a generic subject area which includes the subjects in question, for example Physical Sciences or Social Sciences or Humanities, or in Combined Studies.

Note: Where an award includes a Year Abroad or Year in Industry, the credits relating to that year are excluded when calculating the balance of contributing credits in order to determine the final award title.

5. **TIME LIMITS**

5.1 **Programmes of Study**

In order to remain eligible for an award, students must complete their programme of study within the time limits set out below. These time limits include any periods of intermission and any period of time in which a student is repeating part of the programme of study and apply to both full time and part time students. Programme specifications specify the normal period of time over which the programme will be completed.

Undergraduate Certificate or Diploma	6 years
Foundation Degree	6 years
Non-Honours Bachelor's Degree	8 years
Bachelor's Degree with Honours	8 years
Graduate Certificate or Diploma	4 years
Extended Master's Degree	8 years
Postgraduate Certificate	4 years
Postgraduate Diploma	6 years
Master's Degrees (graduate entry)	6 years
Master of Clinical Science	8 years

5.2 **Modules**

Credits awarded for successful completion of a module will remain eligible to contribute towards an award for a prescribed period and up to a maximum of 8 years from the date on which the credits are awarded. Module specifications, particularly in rapidly developing subjects, may specify that credit obtained will remain eligible to contribute towards an award for less than 8 years. Where the module specification does not specify any period of eligibility, this will be taken to be 8 years.

6. **AWARD OF CREDITS**

6.1 **Successful Completion of Module**

A student who successfully demonstrates via assessment that he/she has 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

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elements of assessment. Where a student has an overall mark for a module which is above the pass mark but has failed a component of the assessment which must be passed, 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%.³

- 6.1.1 Where modules are marked on a Pass/Fail or a Fail/Pass/Merit/Distinction basis (other than for BTEC Higher Nationals), the following shall apply:
- i) Programmes graded in this way need not result in a classified award.
 - ii) Where classification is permitted:
 - with Merit':**
a mark of merit or above for more than 50% of the credits obtained in the modules contributing to classification
 - 'with Distinction':**
no module marks of 'pass' and a mark of distinction for more than 50% of the credits obtained in the modules contributing to classification
 - iii) Failed modules passed on a second or third attempt will be awarded a mark of 'pass'.
 - iv) Honours degrees may not be classified by this algorithm.

6.2 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 programme of study (Annex J section 5.2) and with the possible application of additional measures (Annex J section 5.3), provided that there is evidence to show that the student has achieved the programme learning outcomes and provided that the student has submitted written medical or other evidence to substantiate any claim of illness or other mitigating circumstances. 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. Programme specifications specify modules in which failure cannot be condoned.

Note: The above does not preclude a Board of Examiners from adjusting a module mark where a student has failed to complete assessment requirements for good reason as described in Annex 6, paragraph 24.

6.3 Compensation

Where a student fails a module or modules, but has marks for such modules that are within 10 percentage points of the pass mark for the module in question (see note 1 below), 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 programme of study, provided that the student has an average mark for the stage which is at or above the pass mark and provided that there is evidence to show that programme 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 when an award is classified, where credit for a module is awarded by compensation, the mark used for classification should be the pass mark for the module. The mark

³ The pass mark of 50% for level 7 modules is in place from 2015-16. Prior to that, the pass mark for all level 7 modules was 40%.

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on the transcript will not be adjusted. Programme 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 at levels 3 to 6; the achievement of a mark in the range 40-49% for modules at level 7.

Note 2: The above does not preclude a Board of Examiners from adjusting a module mark where a student has failed to complete assessment requirements for good reason as described in Annex 6, paragraph 23.

6.4 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.

6.5 Application of the Condonement, Compensation and Trailing Provisions

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.

7. PROGRESSION

7.1 When a student has completed a stage of a programme 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 programme of study, or to another programme of study.

7.2 The normal requirement for progression from one stage of a programme of study to the next is that the student should have obtained 100% of the credits for the stage. Where a student has failed to obtain 100% of the credits for the stage, but has obtained at least 75% of the credits and has obtained credits for those modules which the programme specification indicates must be obtained before progression is permitted, the appropriate Board of Examiners might require the student to repeat or resit the failed modules or it might give permission for the failed modules to be compensated, condoned or trailed into the next stage.

7.2.1 Boards of Examiners for Schools 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 programme 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 programme of study or (ii) receive an appropriate exit award (as outlined in the approved programme specification for the cohort under consideration).

7.2.2 Where a Board of Examiners is satisfied that a candidate has attained the minimum learning outcomes for Stage 1 of an undergraduate degree programme, it shall have discretion to award the necessary credits for progression notwithstanding the marks obtained on particular modules.

Note: This discretion will be used only in exceptional circumstances where a candidate has failed to obtain marks necessary to proceed on modules whose learning content is not central to the learning outcomes of the programme, where the marks on the failed modules are inconsistent with the overall performance of the candidate and where they have been able to demonstrate achievement of the minimum programme 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 candidate's core programme, such as languages or interfaculty 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.

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7.3 When a student has completed a year of study but has not completed a stage of a programme of study, the Board of Examiners will recommend whether the student may continue with his or her studies.

7.4 Referral

7.4.1 Where a student is not permitted to progress to the next stage of a programme, or at the end of a year of study other than the end of a stage of a programme 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 that 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 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 so 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 Individual 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 repeating the entire module. 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 programme of study.

Two referral opportunities per module will be automatically permitted⁴, 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.

7.4.2 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).

7.4.3 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 programme, 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 programme of study are still met, but must do so before progressing to the next stage of the programme.

7.4.4 Referral - Taught Postgraduate Dissertation

A student who is referred in the dissertation element of a taught postgraduate programme may resubmit the dissertation **on one occasion only** in a revised form not later (except in

⁴ Except for the dissertation element of taught postgraduate programmes of study, see 7.4.4

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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.

7.5 **Trailing and Retrieving Credit**

Where a student is permitted to progress to the next stage of a programme but has not been awarded full credit for the previous stage, the student will still need to obtain credits for modules for which he/she has so far not been awarded credit in order to meet requirements for the award of the certificate, diploma or degree for which he/she is registered. 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:

- 7.5.1 By undertaking further assessment, for example a resit 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 programme of study are still met.
- 7.5.2 By progressing to the next stage of the programme 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 programme 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 programme e.g. a student will not be permitted to progress to Stage 3 of a programme unless he/she has obtained all Stage 1 credits and met the minimum progression requirements in Stage 2.
- 7.5.3 At most two such retrieval opportunities per module will be permitted.

7.6 **Deferral**

- 7.6.1 Where a student has failed due to circumstances such as illness, and where there is written evidence to support this, the Board of Examiners may permit the student to undertake some or all of the 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. Where the student has met requirements for progression to the next stage of the programme, he/she 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 7.5.2 above).
- 7.6.2 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 that 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 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

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the School. Nb⁵: 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.

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.

7.7 Students may be permitted to take a Stage 2 module before completing Stage 1 or a Stage 3 module before completing Stage 2 provided:

- i) that the Dean of the relevant Faculty has approved the arrangement in advance;
- ii) that 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 and;
- iii) that any relevant prerequisite module for the current stage has been successfully completed by the student concerned.

8. INTERIM AWARDS

The University does not award interim qualifications. Thus, for example, a student who is taking a programme of study leading to an Honours degree will not automatically be awarded a Certificate when the credits required for a Certificate have been obtained. However, in some programmes, students register initially on a Certificate programme, may then proceed to a Diploma programme and may then proceed to a degree programme. In these circumstances, successful students are awarded all three qualifications. See also section 9: Alternative Exit Awards.

9. ALTERNATIVE EXIT AWARDS

A student who successfully completes an appropriate volume of credit as part of a programme of study, but who does not successfully complete the whole programme will be entitled to receive an alternative exit award from the relevant Board of Examiners, for example, the award of a Certificate, Diploma or non-Honours degree, where he/she has achieved sufficient credit at the appropriate level required for the award concerned and has satisfied any further requirements for the particular programme of study where such have been specified in the relevant approved programme specification.

For full details refer to Annex 5: *Alternative Exit Awards* of the Credit Framework.

10. CREDIT TRANSFER

10.1 A student who can provide evidence of previous relevant successful learning, either at this University or elsewhere, may, within specified limits, be exempted from part of a programme of study. Annex 3 sets out, for each award, the minimum number and levels of credits which must be obtained by taking part of the programme of study leading to the award concerned. Where the prior learning has taken place at a UK HEI it will be regarded as Credit Transfer and may be processed as below:

⁵ Nb. Schools 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. Students should be awarded the better of the results achieved through these two means.

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- 10.1.1 Admissions Officers, in consultation with appropriate Directors of Studies, are authorised to approve requests for credit transfer within the limits specified in 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. The level and volume of credits from which the applicant is granted exemption may be less than those on which the application is based. A record of all such decisions and a copy of the evidence on which they were based will be kept by the Admissions Officer concerned. These records will be reported annually in the Autumn Term by the Admissions Officer to the relevant Faculty Committee for sampling and monitoring purposes.
- 10.2 Where a student is granted exemption from part of a programme of study on the basis of credit transfer, the marks obtained by the student for such prior learning will not be used for classification purposes i.e. for determining an Honours classification or in deciding whether an award should be made with Merit or with Distinction except where it is agreed as part of an inter-institutional agreement that they should be so used.
- 10.3 **'Spent' Credit**
- 10.3.1 The University will permit a limited volume of credit "spent" on the achievement of an award to be "re-spent" on a second award of an equal or lower level subject to the following conditions:
- i) That, with the exception noted below at 10.4.1.2, the maximum volume of spent credit that might be permitted to contribute to an award should be governed by the limits established in Annex 3 of the Credit Framework;
 - ii) That with regard to importing credit spent in the award of undergraduate Honours degrees and Integrated Master's degrees such spent credit may only be used to gain exemption from the requirements of Stage 1 of the relevant programme specification;
 - iii) That, except where programmes share a common title for separate awards (i.e. PGCert/PGDip/Master's in X), credit spent on a University of Kent award may not be re-spent on another Kent award of the same or lower level where the credit derives from modules shared by the programmes leading to the awards in question;
 - iv) That such credit may not be "re-spent" on more than one occasion.
- 10.3.2 Applications for the re-use of such credit should be governed by the procedures for APECL set out in Annex R⁶ of the Code of Practice.

11. GENERAL CREDIT

- 11.1 General Credit may be defined as follows:

"All assessed learning can be awarded credit. The credit gained is a general recognition of assessed learning at specified levels. It is general credit. When the credit is recognised through the admissions procedure of an HEI as directly contributing to a programme it becomes specific. The change in designation from general to specific relates directly to the relevance of the learning to the proposed programme.⁷"

General credit therefore represents the whole of the learning achieved on an accredited programme of study. An honours degree would have a General Credit value of 360 credits. Specific Credit is the volume and level of credit which can be used from the General Credit value for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning into another programme.

For example: a student gains a qualification in History, worth 120 credits at level 4 from a UK Higher Education Institution.

The **General Credit** value of this qualification is 120 credits at level 4. If the applicant requests APCL on the basis of this to a similar Kent degree programme in History, it is probable that all of

⁶ See <https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexr.html>

⁷ See <https://www.seec.org.uk/for-learners/> (last accessed April 2019)

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*the General Credit value could be recognised. However if the applicant requests APCL with the same level 4 qualification to a Kent degree programme in History and Politics, only a limited amount of the credit might be recognised. This would be determined by the academic staff mapping between the external and Kent programme/module learning outcomes to identify how much credit could be used for APCL. It may be that 60 credits of the History qualification could be used for the History part of the first year of the History and Politics programme. These 60 credits would be the **Specific Credit value**.*

If the application for APCL were to a completely unrelated programme, e.g. Forensic Science, then it is less likely that any of the General Credit could be recognised as Specific Credit, since it may not be possible to map the learning outcomes from the external History course to the Forensic Science learning outcomes. There may be exceptions to this if a programme has modules covering more generic skills, such as research skills.

- 11.2 For APEL a General Credit value can be awarded to the APEL Portfolio submitted. As with APCL, if appropriate, the General Credit value can then be used in its entirety if it can be mapped to the learning outcomes of the module(s) for which credit is being claimed. Again as with APCL it may be that only a specific amount of the General Credit can be mapped to the learning outcomes of the module(s) for which credit is sought.
- 11.3 For all APECL claims it should be noted that the Kent Credit Framework and programme rules may limit the amount of credit than can be applied for.
- 11.4 Kent recognises the validity of studies undertaken at other UK Higher Education Institutions, therefore, it will normally recognise the General Credit value of qualifications obtained from these institutions. Note, however, that it cannot be assumed that the General Credit value can automatically be fully recognised as credit into a Kent award. As per the example in 11.1.1, a mapping must first be carried out to determine what level and volume of credit can be used for an APECL claim. In addition the Kent Credit Framework and programme rules may limit the amount of credit that can be used for APECL.

The Specific Credit value can never exceed the General Credit value of the qualification being used to apply for APCL.

12. CONVENTIONS FOR AWARD AND CLASSIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

12.1 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:

- 12.1.1 he/she meets the minimum requirements in terms of the number and levels of credits for the award in question as set out in Annex 4, 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
- and**
- 12.1.2 he/she meets the requirements of the programme 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, accreditation of prior learning or accreditation of prior experiential learning.

12.2 Referral

Where a student, on completion of a programme of study leading to a named award, fails to meet the requirements for that award, the Board of Examiners may permit the student to undertake further assessment in failed modules. The Board of Examiners will specify which elements of assessment the student is required to undertake. Except in cases where students have been informed in advance that alternative assessment will not be permitted, elements of assessment that are unrepeatabe, 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 unrepeatabe elements may only retrieve credit by repeating the entire module. Marks already obtained for elements of assessment which the student is not required to undertake again will be carried forward unless the Board of Examiners specifies otherwise.

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A student who is so referred in a module may be required to, or 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 programme of study are still met. Two such opportunities per module will be automatically permitted, the first of which is normally available during the long vacation following the initial failure. Marks for modules in which a student has been referred or which a student has repeated or in which a student has attempted to retrieve an initial failure should be treated as set out in Annex 7.

A student who is referred in the dissertation element of a taught postgraduate programme 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.

12.3 Deferral

Where a student has failed due to circumstances such as illness, and where there is written evidence to support this, the Board of Examiners may permit the student to undertake some or all of the assessment for some or all of the failed modules concerned 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.

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.

12.4 Classification of Awards

Students who successfully complete an Honours degree programme will be awarded a degree with First Class, Upper Second Class, Lower Second Class or Third Class honours. Students who successfully complete a programme 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 programmes 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.

12.4.1 General Requirements

- 12.4.1.1 Marks obtained for all modules taken as part of the programme of study will contribute to the classification of an award except in the case of Honours degree programmes 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 programme and marks obtained in any foundation year will not contribute to Honours classification.
- 12.4.1.2 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 programme, will be 120 credits. The level of the credits will be stated in programme 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.
- 12.4.1.3 Where a student fails to achieve the required credits for successful completion of a year in industry or a year at an academic institution overseas, the student will be required to recover the failed credits. Where the year in industry or year abroad is not integral to the subject matter of the qualification overall, the student might alternatively be awarded a degree with no 'year in industry' or 'year abroad'.
- 12.4.1.4 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.

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12.4.1.5 Where a student is exempted from part of the programme of study on the basis of credit transfer, marks obtained for such prior learning will not be used for classification purposes except where it is agreed as part of an inter-institutional agreement that they should be so used.

12.4.1.6 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 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.

12.4.1.7 Where a student fails a module at the first attempt and subsequently passes the module, or takes and passes an alternative module in place of a module which has been failed, the minimum pass mark will be used for classification.

12.4.1.8 With respect to students registered for a programme leading to a postgraduate taught award⁸, 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 he/she 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.

- a) Documented evidence of significant medical or personal problems or of unexpected hardship.
- b) Evidence obtained from a viva voce examination.
- c) The views of an External Examiner on the quality of work of the candidate
- d) Significant improvement in final stage performance. (Note: This factor should not be taken into account where final stage marks are weighted more heavily than marks obtained in earlier stages.)
- e) Performance in one module substantially below that on other modules.
- f) 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.

Credit may not be awarded through this means.

12.4.1.9 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 concessionary circumstances of individual candidates.

12.4.1.10 The views of the External Examiner(s) shall be particularly influential in the case of disagreement on the final classification for a particular candidate.

12.4.1.11 The signature of all the External Examiners present shall be appended to the final list of results as evidence that they endorse the classifications.

12.4.1.12 Students who successfully complete the stated requirements are entitled to receive the award for which they are registered at the University. Where programmes of study allow for

⁸ Or students who entered Stages 2, 3 or 4 of their undergraduate programmes of study in 2011-12.

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'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 programmes:** where students are permitted to register on an incremental programme 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 programme. 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 programme from another institution, or to students taking 'top-up' degrees, or students progressing into the final stage of a degree programme 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 programmes:** where students are permitted to register on an incremental programme 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.

12.4.1.13 It may be appropriate for programmes of study validated at other institutions by the University to operate alternative marking and classification schemes. Decisions to operate alternative marking schemes will normally require approval by the Working Group for Regulations and Conventions. The decision will be recorded in the programme approval documentation. Where such a decision has been approved, programmes may be exempt from the classification methods set out in Annex 6 of the Credit Framework.

12.4.2 Stage Weighting

12.4.2.1 Undergraduate Degree Programmes

12.4.2.1.1 The standard weighting of stages for three year undergraduate degree programmes will be 40% for Stage 2 and 60% for Stage 3.

12.4.2.1.2 The standard weighting of stages for four year undergraduate degree programmes (i.e. degree programmes 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.

12.4.2.1.3 Where a student completes Stages 1 to 3 of a four stage Bachelor's or undergraduate integrated Master's degree programme, 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.

12.4.2.1.4 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 the relevant Faculty Board;

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(iii) Where a stage includes a term abroad, that stage will make a contribution to the final classification in the normal way. The standard weighting of 40/60 will apply in such cases.

12.4.2.1.5 Where individual assessment elements of any module are marked by a non-Kent marker the principle of point (i) above will also apply.

12.4.2.1.6 Schools seeking to apply non-standard weightings to stages may only do so with the approval of the relevant Faculty Board. 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.

12.4.2.2 Foundation Degrees and Postgraduate Taught Programmes

For the purpose of classification, modules and/or stages may have different weightings as approved by Faculty Board.

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

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 Degrees and Master's* degrees other than 'Extended Master's' degrees (which are awarded with Honours following successful completion of an extended undergraduate Honours degree programme), the Master of Architecture programme (M.Arch) and to Stage 1 of Honours degree programmes.

*Some programmes 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'.

12.4.2.3.1 Each Faculty Board may decide or may authorise Schools in the Faculty to decide whether the award of **Merit** and **Distinction** will be based on:

either the '**average**' method,

or the '**preponderance**' method

or **both the 'average' and the 'preponderance'** methods.

If a Faculty Board fails to agree on the classification method to be used then both methods should be used. Where a School is authorised to decide which method is to be used for programmes of study specified as within its area of responsibility, the School shall have authority to do so on a programme by programme basis.

12.4.2.3.2 '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.

12.4.2.3.3 'Preponderance' Method of Classification⁹

Note: The parameters for calculation of the preponderance method of classification have been adjusted from 2015-16, to ensure that the qualifying mark and volume of credit required in each band are equivalent for all awards.

i) For students enrolled on a programme of study **prior to 2015-16** the following calculation is to be used:

'**with Merit**':

an average mark over all contributing modules of 57 or above and

⁹ Learning and Teaching Board agreed that the Graduate Certificate in Endangered Species Management should be exempt from the preponderance method of classification, due to the small number of modules in that programme.

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a mark of 60 or above for 55% or more of the credits obtained

'with Distinction':

an average mark over all contributing modules of 65 or above and

a mark of 70 or above for 50% or more of the credits obtained

- ii) For students enrolled on a programme of study **in 2015-16 or thereafter** the following calculation is to be used:

'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

12.4.2.3.4 'Average' and 'Preponderance' Methods of Classification

Where both methods of classification are used, in the event of a difference in the classification derived for a particular student, the higher of the two classifications will be awarded.

12.4.2.4 Classification of Honours Degrees

Undergraduate degree programmes 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 that there is a PSRB requirement for an undergraduate programme of study to be classified by a single method, Schools must seek the prior approval of the relevant Faculty Board 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 programme. 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 Faculty Board and calculated to one decimal place, over all modules in Stages 2, 3 and, where relevant, 4 of the programme of study according to the following table:

First Class Honours	70 and above
Upper Second Class Honours	60 – 69.4
Lower Second Class Honours	50 – 59.4
Third Class Honours	40 – 49.4

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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For degrees with 240 contributing credits:

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

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

13. Special Dispensation

- 13.1 The Education Board is authorised to approve exceptions to the requirements of the Credit Framework for Taught Programmes in individual cases under special circumstances provided that it is satisfied that there is good reason to do so. Such special circumstances would encompass extreme events beyond the control of the student concerned and which caused severe difficulty.
- 13.2 Where an exemption from the requirements of the Credit Framework is sought the procedure to be followed is:
- i) The relevant School or Partner Institution (as appropriate) should determine whether there is good reason for an exemption and that there is support for making the request. If it is determined at this stage that there is not good reason and/or support for the exemption the student should be so informed and the matter will be closed. Note that without support from the School or Partner Institution the request for an exemption will not be considered further.
 - ii) If it is determined that there is good reason and support for the request, the details and a rationale for the required exemption should be forwarded to the Quality Assurance Office. The QA Office will confirm the particular requirements of the Credit Framework for which the exemption is sought and review whether the rationale addresses those requirements.

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- iii) The QA Office will submit the request and rationale to the Chair of the Education Board (or his/her nominee) with any accompanying comments. The Chair will approve or not approve the exemption request on the basis of this submission. The QA Office will inform the School or Partner Institution concerned of the decision.
 - iv) Exemption approvals will be reported to the next meeting of the Education Board.
 - v) The approval or non-approval of an exemption request is a discretionary power and no appeal is permitted.
- 13.3 Where the request is for a deviation from the programme specification, but it does not require an exemption from the Credit Framework, the request can be considered and approved/not approved by the Associate Dean.