Conventions for Classifications of Awards Guidance for Examiners 2019/20

General

The information in these guidance notes is taken from the Credit Framework for Taught Programmes: Information for Students, Teachers and Examiners and the Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance of Taught Programmes.

Relevant academic regulations may be found on the Quality Assurance Office website.

It should be noted that undergraduate programmes delivered by the Medway School of Pharmacy are governed by a distinct set of academic regulations, and the procedures and conventions for classification for those programmes differ in several areas from the terms of this guidance document. Other collaborative programmes leading to joint or dual awards may also be subject to alternative sets of bespoke academic regulations.

Points of Significant Note for 2019/20

Covid-19 / Industrial Action - Dispensations from Senate

In March 2020, in response to the global Covid-19 pandemic and the industrial action taken in 2019/20 by members of UCU, Senate authorised the implementation of a number of dispensations from the University’s regulations, credit conventions and procedures which together govern the conduct of assessments, marking and associated processes, the arrangements for meetings of Boards of Examiners and their recommendations on the award of credit, referral, deferral, mitigation and student progression and classification (Senate Paper: S2019-43 / 11/03/20).

This document is informed throughout by the adjustments to the conventions for awarding credits and classifying academic awards, in particular with regard to mitigating the disruptive impact of Covid-19 on the student learning experience, and these adjustments are flagged at the relevant points in the guidance. In addition, a preface setting out the University’s approach and steps taken follows shortly in this document, with the introduction of a ‘no detriment’ policy and the calculation of an alternative ‘safety-net’ stage average calculation is given prominence in this opening section.

With regard to the Senate-approved conventions intended to mitigate the impact of the industrial action on student performance, these are 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 of assessments due to the strike action.
Accounts detailing the precise nature of the full set of the changes introduced to mitigate these extraordinary extenuating circumstances are appended as separate annexes, for ease of reference.

**Planned Changes to the Conventions for 2019/20**

A summary of the planned changes to conventions that were introduced in 2019/20 in anticipation of the KentVision student data system is also appended in annex form. Following a review conducted in 2018/19 the University substantially revised its procedures and conventions for managing the mitigation of extenuating circumstances (section 14 of the main document). Other changes—though not exclusively—impact in the main on PGT programmes of study, the conventions for which have been standardised in line with the conventions governing UG programmes. Attention is drawn in the document to where these changes affect both UG & PGT programmes of study.

**List of Relevant Annexes:**

- Annex B – C0VID-19: Use of new or adapted conventions for awarding marks, credit, mitigation, progression and classification;
- Annex C – C0VID-19: Revised Arrangements for Meetings of Boards of Examiners
- Annex D – Planned Changes to the Conventions Implemented in 2019/20;
- Annex E – C0VID-19: Guidance Note: Application of Academic Discipline Procedures;
- Annex F – Conventions to Mitigate the Impact of the Industrial Action.

**Preface: Covid-19**

**Overall Approach**

In line with UK Government advice and guidance on social isolation and closure the University began to transition all teaching and assessment activities to online platforms, with effect from the end of week 21 (14/03/20). This change of mode presented new challenges to staff and students and entailed a relaxation of the regulations governing the conduct of examinations and the development and use of new formats for assessments.

The arrangements for written examinations were adjusted to be administered online, with the scheduled start for each examination published via the examination timetable and papers released each day via Moodle. Each examination has
remained designed to be of 2 or 3 hours duration. Because of time-zone differences for internationally-based students and other concerns (i.e. special arrangements, Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs) and/or technical challenges), all students were permitted 48 hours to download, complete and submit their script.

In terms of academic integrity normal examination regulations have remained in force. Students were not expected to include enhanced outputs such as full references or bibliographies, and any quoted material should be identified using quotation marks. The University expected students to act with academic integrity when undertaking their online examinations.

In line with the University’s regulations on plagiarism, copying and pasting content from lecture slides, coursework, assessment solutions and information from the internet has remained prohibited, as has collusion with third parties and other students. All answer scripts were to be submitted via Turnitin and checked for originality on submission in line with Kent’s policies on academic offences. In addition, answer scripts and marks will be reviewed by Schools to identify and address possible anomalies. In accordance with University procedures, any student was liable to be called for an oral interview, in order to assess their personal knowledge of the subject area and/or ascertain authorship.

The date of 14/03/20, as the point at which the disruption to the student learning experience began to be experienced, became the date from which the University’s ‘no detriment’ policy became effective. The ‘no detriment’ policy provided for the calculation of an alternative weighted Stage average based on student performance in assessment up to that effective date of 14/03/20 as a safety-net against any dip in performance in the remainder of the academic year. Should a student be in a position to pass the Stage, the alternative weighted Stage average, where it is greater than the final weighted Stage average actually achieved, will be factored into the calculations undertaken for the purposes for progression or classification.

The ‘no detriment’ policy also allowed for the application of blanket extensions for coursework and for the implementation of other variations in standard credit conventions intended to safeguard student performance by mitigating the impact of Covid-19 related disruption and allow for the calculation of fair and appropriate degree outcomes. These included some allowance to vary the arrangements for trailing credit, condoning failure or awarding a limited volume of credit for classification where certain assessments became impossible to stage (with approval from the Faculty), and an expanded set of circumstances for which students might apply in advance for permission to submit some assessments at a later date without penalty.

More detail on these additional mitigating actions and procedures follows in Annex B.
Covid-19: ‘Safety-Net’ Weighted Stage Average Calculation

As noted above, 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. Where the student is in the position to pass the Stage a check will 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 and classification. In this way it will act as a ‘safeguard for students, guaranteeing a minimum baseline mark for student performance for the Stage.

It is important to note that 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 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. In this way the safety-net calculation assures that final degree outcomes reflect actual student achievement and acts as a safeguard against any unintended and unwarranted inflationary effect on classifications awarded. Piloting of this methodology in each Faculty was conducted as a way of ensuring that this would be the case, while also examining any potential impact on BAME students and attainment gaps.

A technical annex setting out the detail of the safety-net calculation is provided as Annex A to this guidance document.
Guidance for Examiners 2019/20

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1. Duties of Boards of Examiners

Each School will have a Board or Boards of Examiners, which will:

- review the marking of and confirm the marks to be awarded for all modules for which the School holds responsibility;
- make recommendations for the award of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees to students who have successfully completed programmes of study for which the School holds responsibility;
- make recommendations with regard to progression, referrals and termination of registration of students taking programmes of study for which the School holds responsibility.

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.

2. Membership

Each Board of Examiners which considers work that contributes to the award of a certificate, diploma or degree shall include one or more External Examiners whose appointment has been approved by the Vice-Chancellor acting on behalf of Senate and Council.

Other members of the Board of Examiners shall be appointed by the appropriate Faculty Board on the recommendation of the School. These members shall normally include an internal marker for each module for which the Board of Examiners holds responsibility. One of these members shall be appointed by the Faculty Board as Chair of the Board of Examiners. Faculty Boards shall be authorised to appoint representative Boards of Examiners to consider referral results. All meetings of Boards of Examiners will have a Secretary in attendance.

The Secretary to the Board is responsible for:

- advising the Board with regard to regulations and conventions and their interpretation;
- 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 borderline cases (Nb. PGT students who started before 2019/20 only) and to mitigation cases;
• confirming with the Chair the accuracy of the official record of the decisions of the Board;
• asking the External Examiner(s), where present, to sign the official record to confirm their acceptance of the decisions made by the Board.

* Covid-19: commentary:

Due to the unprecedented circumstances in which meetings of Boards of Examiners, the following extraordinary arrangements have been agreed:

Meetings of Boards of Examiners will be conducted remotely by virtual means;
The meetings of the Board convened to confirm recommendations on progression and classification should at a minimum consist of the following personnel:
The appointed Chief Examiner or an individual acting as in the capacity of Chief Examiner as nominated by the relevant Head of School;
At least one external examiner*;
The Director of Studies or equivalent for each programme under consideration;
Representative of the Mitigation Committee, such as the Senior Tutor or the Student Support Officer (or equivalent);
Secretary from the School;
Representative of the QAO/FSO, where available.

Nb. All external Examiners have the right to attend meetings of Board of Examiners where decisions are being made about academic awards.

See Annex C of this document for more details on the management of BoEs in the summer term.

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:

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 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;

and
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 or the accreditation of prior learning.

4. 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. Module specifications will state the pass mark and whether this has to be achieved overall and/or in prescribed 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, i.e. if the pass mark is 40%, an overall mark of 39% will be recorded. In certain modules, assessment may be on a Pass/Fail basis and numerical marks will not be awarded. For modules taken as part of a HNC or HND programme assessment will be graded Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction. In all other cases, the pass mark for modules taken at levels 3, 4, 5, and 6 is 40%.

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 programme of study, provided that there is evidence to show that the student has achieved the programme 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. Programme specifications specify modules in which failure cannot be condoned.

Covid-19 commentary: Please note that all students are assumed to have a case for mitigation due to the impact of Covid-19 on their studies and supporting evidence is not required in such cases. Mitigation Committees should also be

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i.e. an assessment component that the module specification states must be passed (note: this is not the same as a pass or fail component, which is simply an assessment that is not awarded a numerical mark and is not necessarily a must-pass component.)
sensitive to the fact that some evidence may be more difficult to obtain even for non-Co-19 related circumstances at present.

Boards of Examiners may apply to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) for exceptional permission to condone up to 50% of the credit for the stage should they believe the circumstances warrant such an application.

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\(^\text{(note 1)}\), 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 programme of study, 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, 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. 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 taken at levels 3 \(–\) 6; or the achievement of a mark in the range 40%-49% for modules taken at level 7.


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

**Covid-19 commentary**: This convention remains in force, except that Boards of Examiners may apply to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) for exceptional permission to condone up to 50% of the credit for the stage should they believe the circumstances warrant such an application. Where this is the case, compensation and trailing may not be applied.


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.

**Covid-19 commentary**: This convention remains in force, except that Boards of Examiners may apply to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) for exceptional permission to condone up to 50% of the credit for the stage should they believe the
circumstances warrant such an application. Where this is the case, compensation and trailing may not be applied.

Detailed guidance on the application of other mitigation measures available to Boards is provided in section 14 of this document.

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 QA Office by the end of the Autumn Term 2020/21. A template for recording this data will be provided to Schools.

9. Progression

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.

The normal requirement for progression from one Stage of a programme 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 programme specification indicates must be obtained before progression is permitted.

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 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).

Where a Board of Examiners is satisfied that a student 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 student 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 student 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 student’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.

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.

10. Referral

10.1 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 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 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 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 permitted, 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.

**Covid-19 commentary:** The University’s decision to allow a deferred attempt for all modules failed in the Summer Term will mean that, for students whose current attempt in the Summer Term is their third and final time attempt, a fourth and final opportunity will be permitted, normally in the August re-sit period. For such students this fourth and final attempt will be for a capped mark for the module.

10.1.1 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).

10.1.2 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.

10.1.3 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 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.

10.1.4 Further Guidance on Referral

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 April/May the following year with their final referral

2 Except for the dissertation element of taught postgraduate programmes of study. See 10.1.3
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 April/May of the following year. This recommendation would be based on academic judgement and there is, therefore, no grounds for appealing against the recommendation.

**Covid-19 commentary on Referral / Deferral in 2019/20:**

Unless condoned, the following protocol will apply in 2019/20:

Where the student was making either a first attempt or an AFT attempt (AFT – ‘as if for the first time’),

a. all failed modules affected by Covid-19 (i.e. for which an assessment or examination was staged after 14/03/20),

and

b. all failed modules for which an application for mitigation was received prior to 14/03/20 (including modules assessed exclusively in the Autumn or Spring Terms),

will be automatically permitted a deferred resit attempt in August or a deferred repeat in attendance attempt where this is considered appropriate.

Where the June attempt is failed and represented as an ‘as if for the second time’ attempt students will be allowed a further penalised attempt, normally as an August resit, although this will not count towards the total number of attempts permitted.

**11. Deferral**

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 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 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 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 School. Nb.3

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 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.

11.4 ‘Deferral on Pass’ / Deferral in Advance of the Meeting of the Board of Examiners:

See section 14.3 – 14.4 for guidance on these new forms of deferral.

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**Covid-19 commentary on Referral / Deferral in 2019/20:**

Unless condoned, the following protocol will apply in 2019/20:

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3 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. All deferred students should be awarded the better of the results achieved through these two means in 2019/20.
Where the student was making either a first attempt or an AFT attempt (AFT – ‘as if for the first time’),

a. all failed modules affected by Covid-19 (i.e. for which an assessment or examination was staged after 14/03/20),

and

b. all failed modules for which an application for mitigation was received prior to 14/03/20 (including modules assessed exclusively in the Autumn or Spring Terms),

will be automatically permitted a deferred resit attempt in August or a deferred repeat in attendance attempt where this is considered appropriate.

Where the June attempt is failed and represented as an ‘as if for the second time’ attempt students will be allowed a further penalised attempt, normally as an August re-sit, although this will not count towards the total number of attempts permitted.

Boards of Examiners may offer First Attempt /AFT students the choice of condonation or a deferred attempt, within the limits set for condonation.

12. Trailing and Retrieving Credit

12.1 Where a student is permitted to progress to the next Stage of a programme, 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 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:

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 programme of study are still met.

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4 Allowance for an Additional Form of ‘Trailing Credit’ in 2019/20

Covid-19 commentary. The present disruption due to Covid-19, has led in some few instances to the new situation where a student 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 form of assessment. Students in this position therefore should not be badged as having failed the module but as having been denied the opportunity to complete the assessment. They should be allowed to progress on the condition being that they complete the assessment in the next stage at a date to be confirmed by the School. This will not be regarded as a new attempt and will be unpunished.
12.3 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.

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

13. Resit Arrangements

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

Schools should:

13.1.1 require the full (summer) 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 resit Board of Examiners;

13.1.2 invite the full summer Board of Examiners to nominate representatives for the resit Board to act on behalf of the full Board of Examiners, and for this to be approved by the Dean on behalf of the Faculty Board.

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.

Except for the dissertation element of taught postgraduate programmes of study. See 10.2.
** 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

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.

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.

14.2 Principles

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 beyond the student’s control.

The following principles underpin the University’s 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/programme 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 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. Schools 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.

• In general, Schools should assume that all students have an unstated case for mitigation arising from the disruptive impact of Covid-19 on their performance and apply the conventions for mitigation as considered relevant and appropriate without requiring a formal submission. An application for mitigation is only required where:

(a) students do not submit a piece of coursework; or
(b) do not submit it in time for the School to accept work for marking before the Summer Exam boards; or
(c) they do not submit an examination script.

In such cases students should contact the Student Support Team in their School in writing to explain the non-submission.

• Supporting evidence need not be provided in relation to any Covid-19-related mitigation request. Where students need to apply for mitigation for any circumstances unrelated to the disruptive impact of the pandemic on their studies, they should do so by contacting the Student Support Team. In these cases Mitigation Committees should be sensitive to the fact that evidence may be more difficult to obtain even for non-Covid-19 related circumstances at present and students should not be expected to provide it in order for their application to be considered.

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.

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 is a new mitigation convention designed exclusively to offset the negative impact on student performance presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. 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 final stage average actually 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 must 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.

Standard mitigation conventions may be considered for all students as relevant, regardless of whether or not they qualify for the Safety-Net Stage Average Calculation to be undertaken.

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

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

Covid-19 commentary: the University authorised Schools to allow a blanket extension for coursework, subject to their requirements for marking work and processing the marks in time for them to reported to the Board of Examiners. Work submitted after this cut-off point are subject to an application for mitigation, which must be considered supportively wherever possible;

AND/OR:

14.3.3 Disregardings individual assessments for the affected module or modules, including where these contribute 20% or more to the overall mark for the

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6 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.
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;

**N.b.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;

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

**Covid-19 commentary:** equally applicable to students who qualify for the calculation of the safety-net stage average as a comparison mark and those who do not. Boards of Examiners should note that disregarding pre-14/03/20 assessed work will have the effect of raising the safety-net stage average calculation.

**AND/OR:**

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

**Covid-19 commentary:** the standard convention applies. However, Boards of Examiners may apply to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) for exceptional permission to condone up to 50% of the credit for the stage should they believe the circumstances warrant such an application.

Boards of Examiners may offer First Attempt / AFT students the choice of condonation or a deferred attempt, within the limits set for condonation;

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.

* Nb. Except where in 19/20 exceptional permission is granted by the Faculty Dean or nominee to extend use of 14.4.4 to allow up to 50% of the credit for a stage to be condoned due to the impact of Co-19 on student performance.
14.3.5 Consider recommending **deferral**, especially where a student has failed 50% or more of the credit required for the stage.

**Covid-19 commentary on Referral / Deferral in 2019/20:**

Unless condoned, the following protocol will apply in 2019/20:

Where the student was making either a first attempt or an AFT attempt (AFT – ‘as if for the first time’),

a. all failed modules affected by Covid-19 (i.e. for which an assessment or examination was staged after 14/03/20),

and

b. all failed modules for which an application for mitigation was received prior to 14/03/20 (including modules assessed exclusively in the Autumn or Spring Terms),

will be automatically permitted a deferred resit attempt in August or a deferred repeat in attendance attempt where this is considered appropriate.

Where the June attempt is failed and represented as an ‘as if for the second time’ attempt students will be allowed a further penalised attempt, normally as an August re-sit, although this will not count towards the total number of attempts permitted.

Boards of Examiners may offer students the choice of condonation or a deferred attempt, within the limits set for condonation.

**OR, where applicable:**

**14.3.5.1 Deferral 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). Students in this position will be regarded as having deferred the module.

In such cases, the following protocol will be observed:

- Undertake an assessment of the grounds for the request for seeking the delay (Nb. supporting evidence is not required);
- If the grounds suggest the student would have genuine difficulties in taking the examinations or completing the assessments in the Summer Term, grant the...
deferral 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);

- 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 deferred attempt in August will be an unpenalized attempt;
- Supporting evidence need not be provided;
- Where the deferral 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 2020. Students in this position will not be regarded as having failed their module(s) in the summer term.

Where students seek to delay taking their examinations until the August re-sit period for grounds of extenuation other than Co-19, the above protocol should still be followed, except that supporting evidence of the circumstances should be provided, though Mitigation Committees should be sensitive to the fact that some evidence may be more difficult to obtain even for non-Co-19 related circumstances at present.

**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 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).

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

**Covid-19 commentary:** The comparison point for determining if a final mark recorded for a module falls two class bands lower than the average mark for the stage will be the actual stage average mark achieved by the student, rather than the student’s safety-net stage average mark.
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.

**Covid-19 commentary:** the present disruption due to Covid-19, has led in some few instances to the new 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 form of assessment.

Where this situation applies to a finalist, Boards of Examiners may apply to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) for exceptional permission to use the ‘notwithstanding convention’ to recommend a classified award be made where students have achieved fewer then 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 the extreme impracticality of staging one or more assessments for the module(s) either during the current Co-19 related restrictions, or, for other sound reason, at a later date; and

(ii) No form of alternative assessment is possible for the assessments not staged.

14.3.7 Period of Study Abroad

**Covid-19 commentary:** the University has agreed to waive the requirement for students returning from a period of study to have achieved at least 33% of the credits available for the stage / period in order to qualify for the additional progression assessment(s). Any student who does not qualify for automatic progression to the next stage of their programme by achieving the standard minimum of 66% of the required credit will be permitted to take the progression assessment(s) at the next available opportunity.
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 programme 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. (Nb. 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 retrieval attempt), or as appropriate, as if for the second time (see Note 7).

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).

14.4.7 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 in the summer 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

\* 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.
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 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 his/her performance, has nonetheless achieved at least seven-eighths of the credit normally required for the award in question.

Covid-19 commentary: The present disruption due to Covid-19, has led in some few instances to the new 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 form of assessment.

Where this situation applies to a finalist, Boards of Examiners may apply to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) for exceptional permission to use the ‘notwithstanding convention’ to recommend a classified award be made where students have achieved fewer then the seven-eighths of the credit required in total.

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 QAO by the end of the Autumn Term 2020/21. See:

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, the submitted for 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 programme in question. Applications of this nature submitted by students registered on joint honours programmes should be considered by the Mitigation Committee of the Board of Examiners of the lead School for the programme in consultation with the joint School where appropriate.

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 awards, 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 programme of study in question. Students who wish to defer the opportunity for a repeat period of study abroad until after they have completed the final stage of their programme may only do so with the permission of the School and should be made aware that they will not be able to graduate prior to the completion of, or withdrawal from, that repeated stage.

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

Covid-19 commentary: Credit Framework, Annex 14: Study Abroad

The University has agreed to waive the requirement for students returning from a period of study to have achieved at least 33% of the credits available for the stage / period in order to qualify for the additional progression assessment(s).

See https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfoannex5.html
Any student who does not qualify for automatic progression to the next stage of their programme by achieving the standard minimum of 66% of the required credit will be permitted to take the progression assessment(s) at the next available opportunity.

15. Pre-meeting of the Board of Examiners

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.

With exclusive regard to students who registered for a PGT programme 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.

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

**Covid-19 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; (ii) Strike mitigations; (iii) Covid-19 mitigations; and (iv) adjustments to module marks arising from other factors (e.g. issues in delivery). Actions (i) – (iii) may be undertaken by the School Mitigation Committee if this works best for the School in question.

The timing of meetings of Boards of Examiners convened to confirm recommendations on progression and classification must allow for any adjustment to a student’s profile of marks to be recorded on SDS. 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 of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark.

Boards of Examiners may wish to stagger the timing of its meetings staged for the purposes of progression and / or classification so that priority is given to

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 some 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 in section 17.

16.1 General Requirements for Classification

16.1.1 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.

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 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.

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 programmes all taught programmes 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 programme 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 condonation 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 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 programme 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 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.

• 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 compositive mark sheet will not flag these 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.

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

**Covid-19 commentary:** the present disruption due to Covid-19, has led in some few instances to the new 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 form of assessment.

Where this situation applies to a finalist, Boards of Examiners may apply to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) for exceptional permission to use the ‘notwithstanding convention’ to recommend a classified award be made where students have achieved fewer then 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 to the extreme impracticality of staging one or more assessments for the module(s) either during the current Covid-19 related restrictions, or, for other sound reason, at a later date; and

(iv) No form of alternative assessment is possible for the assessments not staged.

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 programmes 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 and all 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, he/she has been invited by a Board of Examiners to consider a 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, he/she considers 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 Programmes

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

16.2.2 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.

16.2.3 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.

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 the relevant Faculty Board.

16.2.5 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.

Foundation Degrees and Postgraduate Taught Programmes

16.2.6 For the purpose of classification, modules and/or Stages may have different weightings as approved by Faculty Board. With respect to Foundation degrees, stages will be weighted equally except where a differential weighting had been agreed by the Faculty Board.
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 programmes, Foundation Degrees and Masters* degrees other than ‘Integrated Masters’ degrees (which are awarded with Honours following successful completion of an extended undergraduate Honours degree programme), the Master of Architecture programme (MArch) 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’.

17.2 With the exception of HNC/D programmes, all taught programmes 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 Dean of Faculty 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.

17.4 ‘Preponderance’ Method of Classification

i) For classification by preponderance 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

*Note that a manual check will be required at classification with respect to those part-time PGT students who registered for their programme of study under the PGT conventions in place before the start of the present 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 compositive mark sheet will not flag these students as borderline.
Note: convention 16.1.8 does not apply to PGT students who first registered for their programme of study in 2019/20 and therefore they may not be considered for raising at the borderline.

Covid-19: commentary: as set out in Annex A to 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. Where the student is in the position to pass the Stage, a check will 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 and classification.

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 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.

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 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 two decimal places, over all modules in Stages 2, 3 and, where relevant, 4 of the programme of study according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Class Honours</td>
<td>70 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Second Class Honours</td>
<td>60 – 69.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Second Class Honours</td>
<td>50 – 59.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class Honours</td>
<td>40 – 49.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Number of Credits in class or above</th>
<th>Average mark over all contributing modules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Class</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Second Class</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Second Class</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class</td>
<td>240*</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For degrees with 360 contributing credits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Number of Credits in class or above</th>
<th>Average mark over all contributing modules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Class</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Second Class</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Second Class</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class</td>
<td>360*</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For degrees/students with contributing credits other than above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>% of Credits in class or above</th>
<th>Average mark over all contributing modules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Class</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Second Class</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Second Class</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class</td>
<td>100%*</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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.
**Note 1:** Although credits are normally awarded for a mark of 40 or above in a module, a student might obtain the credits required for award of an Honours degree but have an average mark of less than 40 where some credits have been obtained via compensation and/or condonement 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.

**Note 2:** Where marks are awarded for a placement Stage either in industry or as a year abroad, these will carry the weighting approved by Faculty Board (see para. 16.2.4). Additionally, the number of credits that contribute for the purposes of classification under preponderance will reflect the total volume of credit available for the Stage.

**Covid-19: commentary:** as set out in Annex A to 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. Where the student is in the position to pass the Stage a check will 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 and classification.

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 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.

See Annex A for more detail.
18.2 Classification of Programmes 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 programmes 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 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.

19. Marking and Classification of HNC and HND Programmes 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 programme 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.

Kent’s Student Data System (SDS) has not been programmed to accommodate the reporting of this additional attempt at the component level. To ensure some form of auditable track is kept of the in-course resubmission marks for HNC/Ds, the following practice will be observed:

1. College staff to input the grade for the initial submission of the HNC/D component via SDS. The mark will be verified overnight and thereby locked on the SDS system so any update would have to be completed via Cressida by a Kent member of staff.

2. Initial mark to be reported at the HNC/D BoE, where it is likely the module will be an overall Fail, particularly if the assessment component is set to against a compulsory requirement e.g. Construction, Civil & Building Services Engineering.

3. Second attempt mark to be reported at HNC/D BoE and composite annotated accordingly at component and overall module level. If the student has passed the component, the mark will be reported as 40 or if still a fail, the new sub-40 mark to be reported to ensure latest mark is reported.

4. Post HNC/D BoE, a member of the Medway Student Administration team will input and verify the new component and overall module mark on SDS and retag as a standard first (of a maximum three), re-sit attempt if the student has not managed to retrieve their initial fail at the component level.

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
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’.

**Covid-19 commentary:** flexibility on deadlines and extensions for late-submitted work should be shown towards all assessed work due on or after 14/03/20 for HNC/D programmes of study.

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 programmes 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](#).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualify for HND</td>
<td>Achieve credit for all [normally 16] modules;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualify for HND with Merit</td>
<td>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;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualify for HND with Distinction</td>
<td>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;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualify for HNC</td>
<td>Achieve credit for all [normally 8] modules;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classification | Reasoning
--- | ---
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.

**Covid-19 commentary:** As classification of a HNC/D programme is not based on use of an average mark for the stage, the safety-net calculation of an alternative stage average mark is not appropriate for these programmes of study.

### 20. Credit Transfer, Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) on HNC/HND Programmes

20.1 Accreditation of Prior Experiential/Certificated Learning (APECL) 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 forms of accredited learning, such as the accreditation 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 programme 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 programme of
study and award concerned unless he/she has been granted exemption from these requirements via credit transfer.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Minimum number of credits required</th>
<th>Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Certificate of Higher Education</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>At least 120 credits at level 4 (C) or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>At least 90 credits at level 5 (I) or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* BTEC Higher National Diploma</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>At least 135 credits at level 5 and at least 90 credits at level 4 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* BTEC Higher National Certificate</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>At least 90 credits at level 4 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma of Higher Education</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>At least 90 credits at level 5 (I) or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation degree</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>At least 90 credits at level 5 (I) or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Honours degree</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>At least 150 credits at level 5 (I) or above including at least 60 credits at level 6 (H) or above at Stage 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honours degree</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>At least 210 credits at level 5 (I) or above including at least 90 credits at level 6 (H) or above at Stage 3 (three Stage programmes) or at Stage 4 (four Stage programmes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Top-Up’</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>At least 90 credits at level 6 or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Integrated’ Master’s degree</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>At least 330 credits at level 5 (I) or above including at least 120 credits at level 7 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>At least 40 credits at level 6 (H) or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>At least 80 credits at level 6 (H) or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>At least 40 credits at level 7 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award</td>
<td>Minimum number of credits required</td>
<td>Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>At least 90 credits at level 7 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA/MSc/LLM</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>At least 150 credits at level 7 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught MPhil</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>At least 240 credits at level 7 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught/Professional Doctorate</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>At least 510 credits at level 7 (M) or above including at least 360 credits at level 8 (D)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: This reflects Pearson’s credit requirements for new HNs from September 2010. For BTEC awards where student registration commenced prior to 31 December 2010, the minimum credit requirements are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Minimum number of credits required</th>
<th>Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher National Diploma</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>At least 90 credits at level 5 (I) or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher National Certificate</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>At least 30 credits at level 5 (I) or above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. 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.

Other than where a programme 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):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Numerical Scale</th>
<th>Programmes Classified Under P/M/D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Class</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Second Class</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Second Class</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For postgraduate taught modules (i.e. level 7):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical Scale</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
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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.

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.

24. Rounding and Display of Marks

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

i. The overall mark awarded for the coursework component of a module should
   be rounded to the nearest integer;

ii. The overall mark awarded for the project element of a module should be
    rounded to the nearest integer;

iii. The overall mark awarded for the examination element of a module should
    be rounded to the nearest integer;

iv. Noting the exception to this rule given at point v. below, the aggregated
    overall mark awarded for the module (the summation of the already
    rounded different components) should be rounded to the nearest integer;

v. Noting the exception to this rule given at point vi. below, where the
    aggregated but as yet unrounded overall mark awarded for the module falls
    within one mark of the boundary for a higher class band (e.g. a raw mark of
    39, 49 [where applicable], 59, or 69), the mark will be rounded up to the
    nearest integer;
vi. With regard to calculating the overall mark awarded for the module as per point v. above, where an element of assessment in a module has been failed for which a pass was compulsory, any aggregated but as yet unrounded overall mark awarded for the module that falls within one mark of the boundary for a higher class band (e.g. a raw mark of 39, 49 [where applicable], 59 or 69), the mark will **NOT** be rounded up to the nearest integer;

vii. The aggregated overall rounded mark awarded for the module should be displayed on composite mark sheets, student transcripts and to students electronically as a whole number after confirmation at the Board of Examiners;

viii. The overall weighted average mark for classification purposes should be calculated and displayed to two decimal places on composite mark sheets and student transcripts;

ix. Where the overall weighted average mark for classification purposes falls within 0.5 % of the boundary for a higher class band (i.e. a mark that falls in the ranges of 39.50 - 39.99; 49.50 - 49.99; 59.50 - 59.99 or 69.50 - 69.99), it will be **rounded up** to the nearest integer.

All rounding is carried out within SDS. Boards of Examiners should note that Points vi and ix above allow for marks ending in $ \geq X.50$ to be displayed legitimately on composite mark sheets. Boards are not required to undertake any further rounding of such marks manually.

25. **Viva Voce Examinations**

From 2019/20 viva voce examination for the purposes of assisting with classification may be used with exclusive regard to PGT students who first registered for their programme of study prior to the start of the present 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 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:**

\[ \text{Except where a mark in the 49.5 - 49.9 range does not fall close to the boundary for an award in the higher class band; e.g. with respect to the classification of Stage 1 undergraduate degree programmes.} \]
- 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.

**Nb.** 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 programmes 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.

**Nb.** 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 a disciplinary investigation

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 a disciplinary 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/programme 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, s/he 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 Section 28 and Annex E of this guidance document and the procedures of Annex 10: Academic Discipline of the Credit Framework.

- 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, s/he will be deemed to have lost the opportunity to improve her/his 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. Schools must therefore provide feedback at key Stages in the programme 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), Schools 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).

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 Programmes of Study).

28. Academic Offences

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

28.2 A guidance note on managing poor academic practice and potential academic offences during the period of remote assessment and examination is attached as Annex E to this document.
29. Academic Appeals

Academic Appeals should be conducted in line with the requirements of Annex 13: Academic Appeals of the Credit Framework, with the Covid-19 related exception noted in the commentary below on an allowance for student to seek early informal resolution.

**Covid-19 commentary:** The University will allow students to seek a speedy resolution of some matters directly with the School in the first instance without needing to initiate the formal appeals process. To do so, students should contact the School Office of the Board of Examiners which made the decision that requires investigation and clarification.

Such matters may include a licence for students to seek clarification of recorded marks for which an error is suspected, or of the detail how specific applications for mitigation were considered and what outcomes, if any, were applied, or of a need to supply new documentary evidence (where appropriate) or an application for mitigating circumstances not previously considered by the Board.

Boards of Examiners must provide a written response to students within 7-days of receipt of their concern.

The Faculties Support Office will provide more detailed guidance to staff and students on how to manage this informal resolution process.

30. Special Dispensation

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.

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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 Programme 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 Stage Mark is the greater of the two, it will be factored into the calculation of the Stage Mark used for progression and the Programme 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 programme (the ‘Programme Average Mark’) used for classification purposes. This additional check compares (i) the Alternative Programme Average Mark derived from the incorporation of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark, with (ii) the Programme Average Mark that would be achieved through use of the Actual Weighted Stage Average Mark, with the higher of the two Programme 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 Schools 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 14th 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 calculation. This is reported below in the generic version of the formula that will be used:

Generalised Version for Programme of Study (POS) consisting of \( n \) Stages

\[
\frac{(\text{Stage}_i \text{ average} \times \text{Stage}_i \text{ weight}) + (\text{Stage}_j \text{ average} \times \text{Stage}_j \text{ weight}) + \ldots + (\text{Stage}_n \text{ average} \times \text{Stage}_n \text{ weight} \times \text{Stage}_n \text{ % of completed assessment})}{(\text{Stage}_i \text{ weight}) + (\text{Stage}_j \text{ weight}) + \ldots + (\text{Stage}_n \text{ weight} \times \text{Stage}_n \text{ % of completed assessment})}
\]

Where POS consists of Stages i to n, where i is the first stage for classification and n is the most recent and final Stage.

Note that where all assessments contribute to 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 Programme Average Mark. At this point a second comparison will be made in order to check if the Alternative Programme Average Mark derived through incorporation of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark is greater than the Programme Average Mark based on the Actual Stage Average Weighted Mark, with the
higher of the two Programme 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 Programme 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:

  - 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 19/20, either in attendance or by re-sit assessment;
  - Students completing a deferred re-sit assessment attempt in 19/20;

As the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark will become relevant once the stage as 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 Programme Average Mark derived from the incorporation of the Safety-net Average Weighted Stage Mark, with the Programme Average Mark that would be achieved through use of the Actual Weighted Stage Average Mark, with the higher of the two Programme 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 Programme Average Mark meets the qualifying mark of X7+ in each class band for the consideration of classification under preponderance.

- Where the Alternative Programme 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.
Annex B: C0-19: Use of New or Adapted Conventions for Awarding Marks, Credit, Mitigation, Progression and Classification;

In addition to the safety-net calculation, the licence granted by Senate to adapt credit conventions to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 enabled the provision of the following measures:

(i) **Conventions allowing Adjustments to the Consideration of Assessments**

Providing that academic standards are not compromised, Senate has allowed for the following new conventions to be applied:

(a) To permit schools to adjust any assessment (including examinations) to factor out the requirement for students to demonstrate learning relevant to any undelivered material;

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

(c) Where the quality of supervision of dissertations or special projects has suffered in terms of diminished contact time and/or from supervisors, to permit the markers of such work to compensate for the deficit appropriately (e.g. by adjusting the marking criteria).

These conventions were applicable in mitigation of both the disruptive impact of both the industrial action (See Annex E) and the Covid-19 pandemic on programme delivery and student learning and achievement in 2019/20.

(ii) **Adjustments to the Standard Credit Conventions**

Providing that academic standards are not compromised Senate has permitted amendments to established conventions of the Credit Framework to be implemented for the coming rounds of meetings of Boards of Examiners, as follows:

a. **Licence for BoEs to seek approval for condoning more than 25% of the credit available for the stage**

“Condonement” refers to the award of credit for a failed module or modules where student performance has been impacted by illness or other mitigating circumstances and there is evidence to show that the student has achieved
the programme learning outcomes. It is normally limited to a maximum allowance of 25% of the credit available for the stage.

**Covid-19 commentary:** The standard convention applies. However, Boards of Examiners may apply to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) for exceptional permission to condone up to 50% of the credit for the stage should they believe the circumstances warrant such an application.

Boards of Examiners may offer students the choice of condonation or a deferred attempt;

*See Section 14 for more information.*

b. **Allowance for an Additional Form of ‘Trailing Credit’**

‘Trailing’ is where a student fails one or more modules but progresses to the next Stage of the programme and simultaneously undertakes such further assessments as the Board of Examiners specifies in relation to the failed modules. This provision is limited to a maximum allowance of 25% of the credit available for the stage.

**Covid-19 commentary:** The present disruption due to Covid-19, has led in some few instances to the new situation where a student 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 form of assessment. Students in this position therefore should not be badged as having failed the module but as having been denied the opportunity to complete the assessment. They should be allowed to progress on the condition being that they complete the assessment in the next stage at a date to be confirmed by the School. This will not be regarded as a new attempt and will be unpenalized.

c. **Permission to Defer a Module in Advance of the BoE**

**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 retrieval attempt). This is typically a decision made by the Board of Examiners.

**Covid-19 commentary:** 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). Students granted this permission will be regarded as having deferred the module in advance.

*See Section 14 for more information.*
d. **The “Notwithstanding” convention:**

The “Notwithstanding” convention allows for 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 his/her performance, has nonetheless achieved at least seven-eighths of the credit normally required for the award in question.

**Covid-19 commentary:** The present disruption due to Covid-19, has led in some few instances to the new 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 form of assessment.

Where this situation applies to a finalist, Boards of Examiners may apply to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) 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.

*See Section 14 for more information.*
Annex C: Co-19: Variations in the arrangements for the conduct of meetings of Boards of Examiners

Due to the unprecedented circumstances in which meetings of Boards of Examiners, the following extraordinary arrangements have been agreed:

i. Meetings of Boards of Examiners will be conducted remotely by virtual means;

ii. The meetings of the Board convened to confirm recommendations on progression and classification should at a minimum consist of the following personnel:

   a. The appointed Chief Examiner or an individual acting as in the capacity of Chief Examiner as nominated by the relevant Head of School;
   b. At least one external examiner*;
   c. The Director of Studies or equivalent for each programme under consideration;
   d. Representative of the Mitigation Committee, such as the Senior Tutor or the Student Support Officer (or equivalent);
   e. Secretary from the School;
   f. Representative of the QAO /FSO, where available.

   *Note that all external examiners have the right to attend meetings of Boards of Examiners where decisions are being made about academic awards.

iii. Boards of Examiners may make decisions on progression and classification of (internally) unmoderated marks;

iv. External examiners should be provided with the standard volume of samples of assessed work for review in advance of the meeting;

v. The meeting of the Mitigation Committee convened to consider confidential applications for mitigation of personal extenuating circumstances should be run as per the requirements Annex J of the Code of Practice and Annex 9 of the Credit Framework, with the exception that it may be conducted remotely;

vi. A prior meeting or meetings of relevant examiners should be staged to confirm any adjustments to the marks awards for modules or to student mark profiles for the purposes of determining and applying (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).

vii. The timing of meetings of Boards of Examiners convened to confirm recommendations on progression and classification must allow for any adjustment to a student’s profile of marks to be recorded on SDS. 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 of the ‘No Detriment’ average weighted mark for the Stage.

viii. Boards of Examiners may wish to stagger the timing of its meetings staged for the purposes of progression and / or classification so that priority is given to those meetings convened respectively for the purpose of considering UG finalists or PGT.

ix. Where a student is deemed to have passed the stage, they will qualify for inclusion in the calculation of the ‘No Detriment’ average weighted mark. Where this mark is greater than the actual weighted mark for the stage, it will be used for the purposes of progression and classification;
Annex D: Planned Changes to the Conventions Implemented in 2019/20

This Annex sets out the changes to the regulations, credit conventions and related procedures that the University implemented from the start of the academic year 2019/20, as explained in advance to students in the form of FAQs. This format is repeated here for the benefit of internal and external examiners.

The changes are relevant to taught programmes of study, both undergraduate and postgraduate, and are intended to be of benefit to the student population by simplifying regulatory requirements and by encouraging greater consistency in working practices across our academic Schools. Several of the regulatory changes have been agreed to facilitate the greater standardisation and consistency in practice across of the University’s administration, academic Schools and Faculties, a move that is in keeping with the University’s Education and Student Experience Strategy and the Kent Union Education Strategy. Such improved consistency of practice will be of benefit to the student experience, not least in terms of the fairness and transparency with which these procedures will be applied across Kent.

The changes fall into three broad categories:

1. Changes to Credit Conventions Intended to Introduce Greater Consistency in Processes
   In this category are a number of individual changes that fall under the general heading of amendments to the rules for awarding credit; these are being introduced with the dual intention of improving consistency in process management and transparency of outcomes via the implementation of the new KentVision Student Data Management system.

2. Changes to the Classification Rules for Postgraduate Taught Programmes
   The University has already introduced a new set of rules for the classification of undergraduate programmes, with a view to having a single rubric that would apply to all taught programmes of study. We are now in a position to achieve this aim in full by rolling out these changes to postgraduate taught programmes, a plan that the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) encouraged Kent to bring to a conclusion in our last Higher Education Review.

3. Changes to Procedures for Managing Discrete Areas of the Student Experience
   In this category you will find substantive changes for managing mitigation applications and requests for extensions to coursework deadlines, along with a set of new procedures and principles for managing periods of study spent abroad as part of an undergraduate programme.
Section 1: Changes to Credit Conventions Intended to Introduce Greater Consistency in Processes

1. What are these regulatory changes and why are they happening?

The University will standardise operations, so all students benefit from a common and shared experience.

All of the regulatory changes have been agreed by Senate; these changes involve:

- The requirement that the overall final weighted average mark for classification purposes for all programmes be calculated and recorded to two decimal places;
- That the reassessment mode be specified in advance as one of two methods: (i) like-for like; or (ii) by single instrument of reassessment.
- That the rules on which marks should be used respectively for the purposes of progression and for classification should be simplified (Annex 7, Credit Framework);
- An allowance for the classification of Foundation Year programmes (with Merit and Distinction).

These points are explained in more detail below:

1.1 What is the ‘overall final weighted average mark for classification’ and why is it changing?

The ‘overall final weighted mark for classification’ is the sum of all the marks awarded for the assessments taken on modules that contribute to the classification of a certificate, diploma or degree programme of study. It is arrived at via the application of the rounding algorithm for marks that is programmed into the student data system. The change to be implemented from 2019/20 is very simple. At present Kent rounds and displays the overall final weighted average mark for classification to a single decimal point on composite mark sheets. Our new student data system, KentVision, will allow us to apply the rounding algorithm in largely the same way, with the exception that it presents the ‘overall final weighted average mark for classification’ to two decimal places, providing greater granularity of information. This will apply to all taught programmes of study. It is not envisaged that this minor adjustment will prove disadvantageous to any students.

1.2 Why is the mode of reassessment being tied down so specifically?

Again, this amendment is driven by the need to have consistency and standardisation of our processes. Until this year (2018/19) Boards of Examiners had licence at their summer meetings to decide which assessments should be retaken, the format of such reassessments, and by which candidates – with one outcome of this being that the nature and format of reassessment might vary from candidate to
candidate at the same Board. These changes not only introduce a greater degree of consistency to these arrangements, but also allows for the format of any reassessment to be known in advance of the summer meetings of Boards of Examiners.

For any module, we have determined that the format of reassessment must take one of two options:

(i) ‘Like-for-Like’, in which resitting students must take a form of reassessment that maps on to those assessments failed at the earlier attempt; or by

(ii) ‘Single Instrument of Reassessment’ in which a single, pre-specified piece of reassessment is taken regardless of the assessments failed at the earlier attempt.

The mode of reassessment (i.e. either i or ii above) is declared as part of the module specification, which means that the information on the format of any reassessment is now available to students in advance of meetings of Boards of Examiners.

In preparation for the coming implementation of KentVision, modules have been adjusted to specify which mode of reassessment applies in each case. From 2018/19 students are in the position to know in advance the format of the reassessment for any module in advance of the meeting of the Board of Examiners for their programme of study.

1.3 Why are we changing the rules about which marks should be used respectively for progression and classification?

Under the existing rules there are two related scenarios in which different ‘versions’ of the overall mark for a module are used:

(a) firstly, the ‘version’ of the overall mark for the module as used to facilitate the award of credit via compensation and progression to the next stage; and

(b) secondly, the ‘version’ of the overall mark for that same module as used both for the final classification of the academic award and as a matter of record on the student transcript.

What are these scenarios?

These two scenarios where these respective ‘versions’ of the overall module mark come into play are as follows:

(i) Initial Fail/Pass on Resit or Repeat Attempt: where a module is failed (without any extenuating circumstances) but is passed at a subsequent attempt, the mark recorded for the module is, for the purposes of classification and for presentation on the student transcript, capped at the pass mark for the module. However, the actual mark achieved at the
successful resit/repeat attempt is used for the purposes of helping students to achieve the highest mark possible for the stage.

(ii) Actual Mark Achieved/Mark Awarded though Compensation: where a module has been failed with a mark that falls within 10 percentage points of the pass mark, Boards of Examiners may, under the appropriate conditions, elect to award the credit for the module via compensation (compensation is simply this – a mechanism for awarding a limited volume of credit where the earlier attempt at the module has resulted in a close fail.) Under this scenario, the compensated mark equivalent to the pass mark for the module is used for classification, but the actual (failing) mark achieved is used for progression and is recorded on the student transcript.

Why do these differences in practice exist?

These variations of practice in recording overall module outcomes were introduced with the Credit Framework and were devised to help students in this position achieve the conditions necessary for progression, or to achieve the best possible result in classification.

Under scenario (i) above, permitting the best mark achieved on resit/repeat to factor into the calculation of the stage average facilitates the award of credit through compensation (the preconditions for compensation require that the student must have an average mark for the stage that is higher than the pass mark for the module that is being compensated) – and therefore assists progression.

Under scenario (ii) above, permitting the compensated mark equivalent to the pass mark for the module to be used for classification allows for the highest mark possible to contribute towards the final outcome of the degree (this is because, where the Board awards credit through compensation, it denies the student the opportunity for recording a mark equivalent to the pass mark by their own efforts via a resit attempt).

Why it’s changing

The two scenarios outlined above result in two versions of the final mark for the module go forward for different purposes; these rules are overly complex and result in confusing outcomes. It was therefore agreed that the complicated rules that govern alternative usage under the two scenarios set out above should not continue.

How it’s changing

The University’s Credit Framework will be adjusted for 2019/20 to allow for the same mark (i.e. the pass mark for the module) to be used under the above scenarios for both compensation/progression and for classification. We will also, therefore, withdraw the requirement that the average mark for the stage must be at or above the pass mark for the module concerned in order to allow compensation to take place. In this way, no student will be disadvantaged.
** From 2019/20: Annex 7 of the Credit Framework **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Result</th>
<th>Resit Result</th>
<th>Marks to be used for Award of Credit, Progression and Eligibility for Award</th>
<th>Marks to be used for Classification/ Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Best Final Mark</td>
<td>Best Final Mark **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Minimum Pass Mark</td>
<td>Minimum Pass Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Original Final Mark</td>
<td>Original Final Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Original Final Mark</td>
<td>Original Final Mark ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** 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.

1.4 What is changing about Foundation Year Programmes?

A Foundation Year programme is a year-long programme at Level 3 that some students take in preparation for entry into an undergraduate degree. Because these are Level 3 programmes they do not lead to an academic award in their own right, and to date have not been classified. However, from 2019/20 the University will allow for student performance over the Foundation Year programme to be classified according to the same classification rubric as certificates and diplomas. While we cannot provide an academic award for Level 3 study, the achievement of students on the FY programme will be recognised in this way from 2019/20.

Section 2: Changes to the Classification Rules for Postgraduate Taught Programmes (‘PGT’) **

2. Why are the changes to Taught Postgraduate Programmes (‘PGT’) of study being made and what are they?
Several years ago, the University introduced a number of changes to the way in which UG degree programmes are classified. Subsequently, in the interests of consistency and fairness, it decided to extend these changes to cover PGT programmes also. In fact, the University was encouraged to take this step by the QAA during Kent’s most recent ‘Higher Education Review’, in which it was recommended that we bring our work in this area to its planned conclusion and by doing so “ensure consistency of implementation across all provision.”

In short, the changes involve:

- Changes to the rounding algorithm for marks contributing to PGT awards, to be made consistent with that in use currently for UG programmes;
- The cessation of the ‘Two More Marks’ rule for all PGT students enrolling from 2019/20;
- That the preponderance method of classification be made compulsory for PGT programmes;
- That viva voce examination for the purposes of determining classification be withdrawn for students on PGT programmes of study.

These points are explained in more detail below:

2.1 What is the rounding algorithm for marks?

The rounding algorithm sets out the formula through which the various components of assessment for a module are aggregated and expressed as an overall final mark for the module in the form of a whole number. It is also plays a critical role in the calculation of the overall final weighted average mark for the programme as a whole that is used to determine the classification of the award.

2.2 How is the rounding algorithm changing?

As part of the current set of changes it has been agreed that with respect to all marks awarded as part of a taught postgraduate (‘PGT’) programme in 2019/20 and thereafter, the rounding algorithm should be adjusted to incorporate the amendments set out below:

(a) where the aggregated overall mark awarded for the module falls within one mark of the boundary for a higher class band (i.e. an overall module mark of 39, 49, 59 or 69) it should not be rounded to the nearest integer as was previously the practice, but should be rounded up to the nearest integer; and

(b) where the final weighted average mark for classification is within 0.5 percentage points of a higher classification boundary, it should be rounded up for classification purposes (e.g. a mark of 59.5% would be rounded up to 60%).
These changes will make the rounding algorithm for PGT programmes and their constituent modules consistent with the algorithm that has been in use for UG programmes for some time. While it is clear that the new practice treats raw PGT marks more generously than has been the case under the present system, this development is intended to offset the removal of the use of the ‘Two More Marks Rule’, which hitherto allowed PGT Boards of Examiners to exercise their discretion and consider raising candidates to a higher classification where their marks had placed them in the borderline zone. Whereas Boards of Examiners had exercised their discretion variously and, therefore, potentially with inconsistent outcomes for similar sets of marks, the use of the revised rounding algorithm produces similar outcomes overall, but on a consistent, standardised basis (see 2.3 below).

One further minor change will also be introduced into the rounding algorithm for marks from September 2019 and will be applied to all taught programmes of study (UG and PGT). At present, the overall final weighted average mark for classification is expressed to a single decimal point on the composite mark sheet and the student transcript. From 2019/20 it will be expressed to two decimal points (see 1.1. above).

2.3 What is the ‘Two More Marks Rule’ and why is it going?

The ‘Two More Marks Rule’ was an element of the classification conventions that allowed Boards of Examiners to exercise their discretion and consider raising the degree results of borderline candidates to a higher class band where such an outcome could theoretically be achieved by the addition of two more marks to every module for that candidate. The key word here is ‘discretion’, as in practice the exercise of this discretion by Boards of Examiners was highly variable and potentially allowed for different degree outcomes to be recorded for similar mark profiles depending on which Board had considered them. This practice was removed from the UG classification conventions in 2011/12, and now the PGT conventions will be following suit, from 2019/20. As noted above, the rounding algorithm has been adjusted to allow for a similar degree of uplift overall in terms of degrees awarded as would have been achieved through the exercise of examiners’ discretion. However, this is being achieved through a more equitable means that will be applied consistently for all students regardless of School or Faculty.

2.4 What is the ‘preponderance method’ of classification and why is its use being made compulsory for PGT programmes?

For many years the University has operated two methods for the classification of taught degree awards: the average method and the preponderance method. As its name suggests, under the average method the overall final mark for classification is reached by simply calculating the average (weighted) mark achieved for all the contributing modules and making the award relevant to where that mark falls in the respective classification bands.

The preponderance method, on the other hand, is slightly more complicated and requires the achievement of a qualifying average mark and a set volume of credit in a
specific class band (Merit / Distinction) in order to be considered for an award in that class band. To date, use of the preponderance method of classification has been optional for Schools for PGT programmes (however, its use has been compulsory for UG programmes since 2011/12). From 2019/20 all programmes of study will be classified by both the **average and preponderance methods and students will be awarded a degree according to the better result achieved via the respective methods. In this way, a greater consistency of degree outcomes for all students will be achieved.**

2.5 What is viva voce examination and why is it being withdrawn for PGT candidates?

Some Schools currently use viva voce examination as a means of making decisions about candidates whose overall performance falls close to the borderline for a higher classification. However, many Schools choose not to use this form of examination at all and, where it is used, this has been inconsistent and often for reasons other than to resolve a borderline decision. **Given the other measures set out in this document, the University is now withdrawing use of this form of examination for taught postgraduate degree students admitted in 2019/20 and thereafter. Once again, this action brings the PGT procedures in line with those that have been in use for UG programmes for several years.**

Section 3: Changes to Procedures for Managing Discrete Areas of the Student Experience

3.  Along with the changes detailed above, the University will also be introducing amendments to other processes and procedures in several discrete areas in 2019/20. These include:

- The rules governing the award of credit and progression for period of study spent abroad;
- The procedures and rules for managing student concessions (i.e. mitigation of extenuating circumstances);
- That, under specified conditions, students be permitted to be deferred (i.e. have a further 'as if for first time' ['AFT'] attempt) at a module that they have passed;
- The arrangements for managing and agreeing extensions for assessments.

The changes are set out in more detail below:

3.1 How are the rules changing with regard to periods of study spent abroad?

Many students at the University spend either a term or a year studying on placement at a European or international institution as part of their programme of study. The precise arrangements for the volume of study and other related matters undertaken abroad are quite various, depending on the host institution, the country and the
purpose for which the period of study is undertaken (e.g. for some Kent Schools the purpose of the time spent abroad is about language acquisition or cultural immersion, whereas for other Schools their students are taking an alternate version of a taught stage of the programme as delivered at Kent). All such periods attract the award of University (UK) credit, but the structure of the study undertaken elsewhere does not map well to Kent’s Credit Framework. This has led to some issues about defining consistently the requirements for progression, about retrieving failed credit and how to apply mitigation to extenuating circumstances when students are studying abroad.

In response to these issues the University has devised a common, flexible framework for governing the award of credit, determining the requirements for progression, retrieving failure and managing extenuation. We are confident that this framework will allow for these matters to be managed equitably and to the benefit of students. The detail of this common framework for managing period of study spent abroad will be published in the Credit Framework for 2019/20.

Please note that these changes do not apply where study at the partner institution is taken as part of a programme leading to a dual or joint award (i.e. where the degree award is made by both Kent and the partner institution). Such collaborative programmes tend to have bespoke regulatory arrangements. The current set of changes apply only to programmes that offer a term or year abroad as a placement element of the Kent degree.

3.2 Why are the arrangements for managing student concessions (i.e. mitigation of extenuating circumstances) changing and how?

As you may be aware, the University has a set of rules and procedures that govern applications from students requesting that extenuating circumstances be taken into account when considering their (negatively impacted) performance in certain assessments and modules. The existing set of rules for managing such concessionary applications are based on a long-standing definition of what constitutes a relevant concessionary submission and a set of rules that are very complicated and, therefore, not easily understood by staff or students. There is also at present some variation in the administration of the process by respective Schools.

Two things have happened to address the matters noted above. Firstly, the University commissioned a review (with Kent Union representation) of the rules and procedures with a view to benchmarking them against practice nationally, reducing their complexity and making them easier to navigate for all users. This review took place in 2017/18 and resulted in a redrafted definition of concessionary/extenuating circumstances and a far less complex set of procedures that map more closely on to best practice elsewhere. Secondly, the administrative procedures for managing and processing applications have been incorporated into the KentVision system, a step that will go a long way to ensuring much greater consistency of practice in this area between Schools.
The revised set of procedures will be published as an updated Appendix 9: Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances (‘Concessions’) of the Credit Framework for 2019/20.

3.3 What is meant by ‘Deferral’ and what about it is changing?

This change also resulted from the review of concessions referenced at 3.2 above. At present, the result of a module is said to be ‘deferred’ where it has been failed and the Board of Examiners accepts that the failure has occurred due to the negative impact of extenuating circumstances on the student’s performance. In such cases, the Board can decide to give a student a further ‘deferred’ attempt at passing the module, and this attempt would not be capped at the pass mark and nor would it be counted towards the maximum of three attempts permitted. What’s changing from 2019/20 is that a module need not necessarily be failed as a precondition for Boards of Examiners’ considering whether or not a decision to defer would be appropriate. This will not mean, however, that it would be appropriate for any failed module to be deferred. This is likely to only apply under concessionary circumstances to modules for which there has been a narrow pass and a result that was significantly out of line with the marks recorded for any unaffected modules taken by the student. The precise conditions under which ‘defer-on-pass’ might be allowed will be set out in the University’s Credit Framework for 2019/20.

3.4 What is changing with regard to the arrangements for managing extensions for coursework assessments?

As with the arrangements for managing concessions (3.2 above), the process for submitting and approving requests for extensions to assessment deadlines was reviewed in 2017/18. The principal change in 2019/20 will be the implementation of a standard requirement across all Schools that such requests must be submitted no later than 24 hours (i.e. one working day) in advance of the deadline for the piece of work concerned. When it goes live, the new process will be managed in KentVision and so ensure consistency of practice across Schools. The details of the new procedure will be published in the Credit Framework for 2019/20.

3.4 What if any of the changes outlined in this document result in a worse outcome for me than under the regulations that were in place before their introduction?

Please be assured that in the unlikely event that any individual students should be disadvantaged by the in-course introduction of the revised processes and procedures, the University will intervene to correct any such unintended detrimental impact. The intention is, after all, to improve the student experience, and safeguarding your interests remains our primary concern.

Annex E: Guidance Note: Application of Academic Discipline Procedures
(Credit Framework: Annex 10)
Following the move to remote online assessment and examinations Schools may wish to follow the protocol set out below when considering whether or not an academic offence has been committed and, if so, what penalty would be appropriate:

1. **Poor Academic Practice:** Schools are encouraged to be mindful of the highly unusual nature of the current situation and that their students are completing assessments and taking examinations under conditions for which they have not been prepared and as a consequence may be experiencing some confusion about the expectations held by markers for the piece of work in question. For this reason Schools may treat any questionable first (i.e. the first within this marking period) instance of such a submission, whether coursework or examination script, as an example of poor academic practice and send the student concerned a letter to flag that such practice must be avoided in future submissions. Please note that:

   - the piece of work in question should be marked and an appropriate mark returned for it;
   - while no formal warning should be recorded on the student’s permanent record, a note that the letter flagging potential poor practice was sent should be retained;
   - since the letter flags potential poor practice and there is no necessity for the student to contest this flag, no mention of this letter can be made in any employment reference or similar student record;
   - any subsequent instances of such poor practice (i.e. those occurring 48 hours after the point at which the note flagging potential poor academic practice was provided to the student) should be treated as a minor offence, as set out at 2.1 below;
   - in terms of fairness and good practice this policy would best be applied for all examinations taken in the period of disruption and for coursework assessments with a deadline falling in this period, including, where relevant, any retrospective cases.

A template flag letter is provided as an attachment to this guidance note.

2. **Academic Offences:** Where an allegation is made that the student has breached Regulation V.3 of the General Regulations for Students, (for example, cheating in examinations, plagiarism, duplication of material and conspiring with others) Schools should continue to follow the standard procedure laid out in Annex 10: Academic Discipline of the Credit Framework. Sufficient flexibility exists to allow for an accelerated process where needed (see section 3 below).

Minor offences and serious offences should treated as follows:

2.1 **Minor Offences:** Where a student is in receipt of the letter flagging potential poor academic practice set out at section 1 above and is suspected subsequently of a minor offence, the procedure set out in CF, A10, 1.5.1 or 1.7.1 should be followed:
1.5.1 “Where a first offence of plagiarism is suspected in a piece of work submitted by a stage 1 undergraduate student, discretion is afforded the Chair to treat the case as warranting only a **formal warning**; or

Where a first offence of plagiarism is suspected in a piece of work submitted by a student other than a Stage 1 undergraduate student, the Chair has discretion to treat the case as warranting a **formal warning and a minor penalty**.”

Or:

1.7.1 “The Chair will also propose a penalty for the offence; the Secretary will inform the student of the proposed penalty and that it will be automatically applied should the student either decide not to contest the allegation or fail to respond to the Secretary within the prescribed deadline (normally 14 days, though this may be a shorter period if this is necessary to ensure that the outcome can be made available to a meeting of the Board of Examiners)”.

2.2. **Serious Offences:** Where a student is suspected of a serious offence; CF, A10, 1.8.1 should be followed (note that the receipt of a letter flagging potential poor academic practice by the student(s) concerned is **not** a prior condition for the prosecution of a serious offence):

“The student shall be informed by the Secretary of the date on which the School Disciplinary Committee will consider the case; that they may submit evidence to the Committee in writing or, where the Chair considers an oral hearing appropriate, in person; that, except where the Chair decides that evidence provided by either party should be confidential to the Committee, they will each be provided with copies of the written evidence submitted by the other and, where an oral hearing is held, that they will both be permitted to hear the other’s verbal evidence”. **Note that no deadline is prescribed.**

3. When exercising the flexibility in timing allowed by Annex 10 for processing cases, Schools should ensure that each deadline given to the student is fair, allows sufficient time for the student to respond and put together a written submission, where required. None of the usual steps should be omitted as this would contravene the University’s quality assurance regulations and disadvantage the student.

If the timeline means that academic discipline cases cannot be resolved prior to the Board of Examiners’ meeting, the Board may agree that action may be taken by the Chair of the Board of Examiners once the outcome of the case is known. In this situation, the Chair must consult with at least two members of the Board of Examiners in order to agree the Board’s final recommendation.

4. **Exam Hall Offences and Penalties:** While Annex 10, 2.1 allows for the application of serious penalties for offences committed in the examination hall,
such as possession or use of unauthorised materials, devices, copying work of another, communicating with others (e.g. “Termination of registration/ineligibility for award or to re-sit examinations”), please note that these serious penalties are considered inappropriate for the present round of remotely conducted examinations. Under the present circumstances, penalties applied in any such cases (where found relevant) should be proportionate to the offence committed.

Appendix - Template for Warning Letter

Dear sss

The markers for the module/s ZZXXX have marked your exam/online assessment and noted that there is a portion of your submission that could be deemed to be in breach of the University’s academic integrity standard. As this is a first time this concern has been flagged for your work during this assessment/examination period, and as this exam/assessment is being conducted in a new, unfamiliar manner, a direct penalty or formal warning will not be applied to you in this instance.

The reason that we are flagging this up to you is to make you aware and give you the opportunity to improve on your academic practice for future submissions from the date of receipt of this letter (both during the examination period and beyond).

To avoid any future issues and potential penalties, please make sure that you only submit your assessment in line with normal expectations or your examination answer script as you would a standard onsite exam. You can see more information on how to approach these exams:

Additionally, you can see full guidance on how the University approaches breaches of academic discipline via Annex 10 to the Credit Framework:

Please also make sure that you look at the information about Academic Integrity.

The aim of this email is to provide you with proactive support for your future submissions, and we wish you the best of luck for any further papers and assessments over this examining period.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact XXXX.
### Annex F: Conventions for Assessing the Level of Disruption of the Industrial Action to Specific Modules

#### Part A:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Level of Disruption</th>
<th>Nature of Disruption</th>
<th>Possible Mitigating Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Nil disruption</td>
<td>All delivery and assessment took place outside of the period of the dispute, hence no disruption.</td>
<td>None required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Nil disruption</td>
<td>Delivery and / or assessment took place during the period of the dispute but there was no disruption to this module.</td>
<td>None required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Limited disruption to the delivery and / or assessment of the module</td>
<td>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;</td>
<td>Disregard individual assessments for the affected students; or, 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;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Moderate disruption to the delivery and / or assessment of the module</td>
<td>Some few components of the curriculum were not delivered; and / or</td>
<td>Adjust assessment either to exclude undelivered material / content or to not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Level of Disruption</td>
<td>Nature of Disruption</td>
<td>Possible Mitigating Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Substantial</strong> disruption to the delivery and / or assessment of the module</td>
<td>A substantial proportion of the curriculum were not delivered; and / or 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 Some academic guidance (e.g. dissertation supervision) was withdrawn.</td>
<td><strong>Adjust</strong> assessment either to exclude undelivered material / content or not to require that students be tested on that material / content; <strong>Disregard</strong> individual assessments for the affected students; and/or <strong>Substitute</strong> 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 Adjust the marking criteria to compensate for any deficit in supervision or similar academic guidance on assessed work;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Level of Disruption</td>
<td>Nature of Disruption</td>
<td>Possible Mitigating Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>The level of disruption is still <strong>Unclear</strong></td>
<td>Standard academic guidance (e.g. dissertation supervision or similar) was substantially withdrawn.</td>
<td><strong>Substitute</strong> 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. <strong>Adjust</strong> the marking criteria to compensate for any deficit in supervision or similar academic guidance on assessed work; and / or Any actions available for Grades B &amp; C above;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examiners should note that the above rubrics should not apply in instances where students have failed to submit work for reasons unrelated to the industrial action.

**Part B:**

Assessment of Level of Disruption on **Module Title**: ................................................................. **Module Code**: ..................
Notes

Purpose

1. The purpose of this document is to provide a framework and associated guidance to staff and students with regard to the concessionary options available for making adjustments to offset the impact of disruption caused by the industrial action on student performance in particular modules. This document is focused solely on academic interventions. It is not concerned with matters of financial or other compensation for students arising from the impact of the dispute.

1.1 Part A sets out a table to assist Schools in grading the extent of any disruption to the delivery and assessment of modules. It offers a range of interventions that might be undertaken to offset the disruption suffered on specific modules, for the purpose of arriving at a fair outcome for students in terms of the overall mark awarded for a module. The University’s declared intention is that students should not be penalised as a result of its failure to deliver or assess curriculum content in modules disrupted by the dispute. As with any mitigatory intervention, however, the final mark awarded as a result of the intervention taken should be reflective of the student’s level of achievement as a whole on the module in question and the core requirements for a pass to be awarded. **The University has indicated previously that any curriculum content and/or assessment necessary as a condition of PSRB accreditation should have proceeded as required.** Where this applies to particular modules, it should be noted on the table, with details of the mitigations involved.
1.2 **Part B** is intended to be used as a *pro forma* for recording the School's assessment of the extent of the disruption suffered on specific modules and for setting out any mitigating actions already undertaken and any further actions that it considers might still be required. Schools should note that Category ‘X’ should only be entered where no information is available, and that a date should be specified when such details will be available.

1.3 As a general principle, the application of the framework should result in common ‘class-action’ outcomes, applicable to the affected students on a module as a group. Scope remains to make interventions specific to a sub-set or an individual member of the affected group, however, as appropriate to the circumstances (see point 4 below). The ultimate intention is to arrive at a fair result that reflects student achievement, while minimising the need for many individual students to seek concessionary arrangements separately.

**Guidance on Use**

2. The table set out at Part A provides a set of gradated criteria for assessing the level of disruption incurred on particular modules and a sliding scale of possible interventions considered to be proportionate to remedy the deficit in delivery or assessment experienced. These interventions are set out in the right-hand column. They are not intended to be exhaustive. Should a School consider some alternative intervention to be appropriate, it should approach the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) for guidance on implementing its proposals.

3. Concessionary interventions undertaken to offset the disruption caused by the industrial action and the impact of this on student performance on affected modules should be regarded as allowable in addition to the standard set of interventions permissible under the standard conventions for applying concessions. 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 concessionary processes.

4. These interventions are aimed at providing appropriate redress to *affected* students. In some cases, this may be all 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 School is able to derive a mark for a student for an assessment, that mark should be allowed to stand - on the grounds 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. Alternatively, should students feel that their performance on particular assessment(s) was compromised due to the strike in a manner not addressed by the School via the present process, they may submit a standard concessionary application to seek further redress (see point 5 below).

5. Where students feel that the interventions proposed through this process (as recorded in Part B) to provide a common corrective response for particular affected modules do not provide an outcome proportionate to the impact on their academic performance in that module or modules or where there has been a particular personal, medical impact on them as a result of the disruption suffered, they may submit a standard concessionary application to detail the nature of this additional impact in the normal way.
Conventions for Classifications of Awards Guidance for Examiners 2019/20

General

The information in these guidance notes is taken from the Credit Framework for Taught Programmes: Information for Students, Teachers and Examiners and the Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance of Taught Programmes.

Relevant academic regulations may be found on the Quality Assurance Office website.

It should be noted that undergraduate programmes delivered by the Medway School of Pharmacy are governed by a distinct set of academic regulations, and the procedures and conventions for classification for those programmes differ in several areas from the terms of this guidance document. Other collaborative programmes leading to joint or dual awards may also be subject to alternative sets of bespoke academic regulations.

Points of Significant Note for 2019/20

Covid-19 / Industrial Action - Dispensations from Senate

In March 2020, in response to the global Covid-19 pandemic and the industrial action taken in 2019/20 by members of UCU, Senate authorised the implementation of a number of dispensations from the University's regulations, credit conventions and procedures which together govern the conduct of assessments, marking and associated processes, the arrangements for meetings of Boards of Examiners and their recommendations on the award of credit, referral, deferral, mitigation and student progression and classification (Senate Paper: S2019-43 / 11/03/20).

This document is informed throughout by the adjustments to the conventions for awarding credits and classifying academic awards, in particular with regard to mitigating the disruptive impact of Covid-19 on the student learning experience, and these adjustments are flagged at the relevant points in the guidance. In addition, a preface setting out the University's approach and steps taken follows shortly in this document.
Determining Minor Offences/Serious Offences

Whether for a first or subsequent offence, where the Chair considers the evidence is substantive he/she will determine if the breach should be regarded as constituting a minor or a more serious offence. In reaching this determination, the Chair will take into account such factors as the following:

- The contribution to the overall mark for a module made by the piece of work in which the instance of alleged plagiarism has been detected;
- The proportion of the piece of work that is plagiarised;
- Whether the student is in receipt of a formal warning, issued under section 1.5 of this Annex;
- The number of previous or contemporaneous offences, if any, with any instances of repeat offending normally to be regarded as constituting a more serious offence;
- Evidence of intent to deceive, with any such evidence normally to be regarded as requiring the treatment of the case as per a more serious offence;