

Section **16**

Nottingham Trent University

Quality Handbook

Part E: Regulations

Section 16:

**Taught course awards and
registration periods**

Section 16

Contents

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| 1. | Scope of the regulations | 2 |
| 2. | Changes to the regulations..... | 2 |
| 3. | Course requirements..... | 3 |
| 4. | Students with disabilities | 3 |
| Awards, levels and classifications | | 3 |
| 5. | Credit and level requirements..... | 3 |
| 6. | Entitlement to an interim award..... | 4 |
| 7. | Posthumous and aegrotat awards..... | 4 |
| 8. | Stages and levels of study for undergraduate awards | 5 |
| 9. | Levels of study for postgraduate awards..... | 6 |
| 10. | Classifications | 7 |
| Award titles..... | | 7 |
| 11. | Course titles | 7 |
| 12. | Course and interim titles: advanced standing | 8 |
| Registration matters | | 8 |
| 13. | Registration periods | 8 |
| 14. | Varying rate of study and leave of absence | 10 |
| 15. | Credits per year | 10 |
| 16. | Extension of registration | 10 |
| 17. | Accreditation of prior learning..... | 10 |
| Placement learning | | 11 |
| 18. | Sandwich awards..... | 11 |
| 19. | Certification | 11 |
| 20. | Exemption..... | 11 |
| 21. | Shortfall in weeks | 12 |
| 22. | Failure | 12 |

Section 16

1. Scope of the regulations

- 1.1 This document sets out the regulations relating to awards and registration periods for all taught courses in the University. The regulations relating to results and classifications are provided in three individual sections, as follows:
 - a. Section 16A: Common Assessment Regulations for Bachelor's and Integrated Master's Degrees *Results and Classifications*
 - b. Section 16B: Common Assessment Regulations for Foundation Degrees *Results and Classifications*
 - c. Section 16C: Common Assessment Regulations for Taught Postgraduate degrees *Results and Classifications*
- 1.2 These regulations apply to all students registered on the University's undergraduate and taught postgraduate degree courses, and their associated interim awards with effect from the 2019/20 academic year, with the exception of Apprenticeships and online postgraduate degrees with Wiley for which separate regulations exist, and unless the University's Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) has approved specific alternative arrangements.
- 1.3 Unless specific mention is made, the regulations do not distinguish between students on different modes of attendance.
- 1.4 Where indicated, the Board of Examiners (hereafter referred to as the board) and students must refer to the course specific documents for further details of the regulations for the course.

2. Changes to the regulations

- 2.1 The regulations will be reviewed and updated periodically in line with developments in University policy and practice. There may be differences in regulations as they apply to different cohorts of students registered for the same award. Every effort will be made to inform students about proposed changes. Changes will not normally be introduced for implementation in the current year of study but would take effect in the following academic year.
- 2.2 Changes to the regulations are made after appropriate consultation. At University level, proposed changes will be discussed with staff who will be given the opportunity to comment on such changes. Students and external examiners will also have an opportunity to comment. Proposed changes may be modified in the light of feedback.
- 2.3 At course level, students and external examiners should be consulted on any proposed changes to the assessment regime which may affect progression and award requirements. Students must be kept fully informed as to any changes to the regime which affects them.
- 2.4 Where changes affect the material information provided to current and prospective students, the University will ensure appropriate and timely communication of these changes in line with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance.
- 2.5 The above processes apply to all award bearing courses.

Section 16

3. Course requirements

3.1 Course specific requirements are set out in course documentation and include:

- a. the approved awards to which the course leads;
- b. the approved title(s) of the course awards;
- c. the course learning outcomes (and those of interim awards);
- d. the curriculum map showing where the course learning outcomes are assessed;
- e. the assessment schedule; assessment and feedback plan;
- f. the criteria for determining each award – including the criteria for classification;
- g. specific applications, interpretations or dispensations of these regulations;
- h. agreed statements on any requirements for work-based learning, professional practice or residence abroad, especially in respect of sandwich awards;
- i. details of any special professional body, statutory or collaborative arrangement;
- j. requirements that affect progression or awards.

4. Students with disabilities

4.1 Reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements will be made to ensure that students with disabilities are not substantially disadvantaged. The Course Leader will ensure that students are made aware of the procedures for requesting adjustments, will consider such requests and will agree arrangements, referring to Student Support Services and the Academic Registry for guidance as necessary. Any agreed adjustments will be notified to the board.

Awards, levels and classifications

5. Credit and level requirements

5.1 Courses incorporate the relevant interim awards set out in the table below. Awards are aligned to the appropriate level of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). Each award has a credit definition. Specific course outcomes for each course are articulated in course documentation.

Section 16

| Course | Award | Number and level of credits required for successful completion |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Foundation | Higher Certificate | 120 credits at level 4 |
| | Foundation degree | 120 credits at level 4 and 120 credits at level 5 |
| Bachelor's | Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) | 120 credits at level 4 |
| | Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) | 120 credits at level 4 and 120 credits at level 5 |
| | Ordinary degree | 120 credits at level 4, 120 credits at level 5 and a minimum of 60 credits at level 6 (see reg. 8.3 for an exception to this) |
| | Honours degree | 120 credits at level 4, 120 credits at level 5 and 120 credits at level 6 |
| Integrated master's | Integrated master's degree | 120 credits at level 4, 120 credits at level 5, 120 credits at level 6 and 120 credits at level 7 |
| Master's | Postgraduate Certificate | 60 credits at level 7 (but see reg. 21.2 QH Section 16C) |
| | Postgraduate Diploma | 120 credits at level 7 (but see reg. 21.2 QH Section 16C); |
| | Master's degree | 180 credits at level 7 |

6. Entitlement to an interim award

- 6.1 Students proceeding through the course will not be recommended for interim awards. A student will normally be entitled to receive one award as a result of a continuous period of registration.

7. Posthumous and aegrotat awards

- 7.1 An award may be offered posthumously to a student who has died during the course of their studies. The level of the award will be determined by the number of credits completed by the student, as in 5.1.

Section 16

7.2 An aegrotat award may be offered where a student has been forced to withdraw from their studies due to serious illness. This is an unclassified exit award and can be considered by the Board of Examiners where a student has failed one or more modules at level 6 (or level 5 for foundation degrees, or level 7 for integrated master's), or has failures in trailing modules.

8. Stages and levels of study for undergraduate awards

8.1 A stage of study refers to the period of study in which the student achieves the learning outcomes associated with a particular level of study. For full-time courses, stages usually correspond to years of study – such that one year of study equates to one stage. For part-time courses, stages may last more than one academic year. See table below:

| | | Stage of study | FHEQ level at which learning outcomes are achieved | Year of study |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|--|---------------|
| Foundation | Full-time | Stage 1 | Level 4 | Year 1 |
| | | Stage 2 | Level 5 | Year 2 |
| | Part-time | Stage 1 | Level 4 | Years 1 and 2 |
| | | Stage 2 | Level 5 | Years 3 and 4 |
| Bachelor's | Full-time | Stage 1 | Level 4 | Year 1 |
| | | Stage 2 | Level 5 | Year 2 |
| | | Stage 3 | Level 6 | Year 3 |
| | Part-time | Stage 1 | Level 4 | Years 1 and 2 |
| | | Stage 2 | Level 5 | Years 3 and 4 |
| | | Stage 3 | Level 6 | Years 5 and 6 |
| Integrated master's | Full-time | Stage 1 | Level 4 | Year 1 |
| | | Stage 2 | Level 5 | Year 2 |
| | | Stage 3 | Levels 6/7 | Year 3 |
| | | Stage 4 | Levels 7/6 | Year 4 |
| | Part-time | Stage 1 | Level 4 | Years 1 and 2 |
| | | Stage 2 | Level 5 | Years 3 and 4 |
| | | Stage 3 | Levels 6/7 | Years 5 and 6 |
| | | Stage 4 | Levels 7/6 | Years 7 and 8 |

Section 16

| | | Stage of study | FHEQ level at which learning outcomes are achieved | Year of study |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------|--|---------------|
| Master's | Full-time | Stage 1 | Level 7 | Year 1 |
| | Part-time | Stage 1 | Level 7 | Years 1 and 2 |

- 8.2 A stage of study may incorporate modules with a value of up to 20 credits from a lower level than the level of the majority of credits of that stage (or exceptionally a higher level) – provided this fits with the course aims, outcomes and specification, and is approved accordingly. Course documentation will describe any such dispensation. Exceptionally, a course may incorporate 40 credits provided that amount of dispensation is approved through the Development and Approval Group (DAG) procedures (see Quality Handbook (QH) Section 5).
- 8.3 This flexibility does not apply to stage 3 of the ordinary degree – it must contain at least 60 credits drawn from level 6 modules. An exception to this is for large level 6 modules which are over 60 credits. In this case, a board may award an ordinary degree to a student who fails that module provided the board is assured that the student's assessment(s) provide sufficient evidence that the student has met the course learning outcomes for the ordinary degree.
- 8.4 A module used in this way becomes attached to the stage to which it is contributing. So that, for example, if a level 5 module in French is used as part of the final stage of study on a Management Studies degree, this module would contribute to the final award and classification determination.
- 8.5 Integrated master's courses contain 120 credits at level 7 which are taken in stages 3 and/or 4 of an undergraduate course.
- 8.6 A board may determine an award by 'counting down' excess credits that a student may have achieved at either level 5 or level 6 in order to make up for a failed module(s) at either level 4 or level 5.

9. Levels of study for postgraduate awards

- 9.1 Normally, only one academic level – level 7 – is used in postgraduate courses. This corresponds to the level defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
- 9.2 A master's course may incorporate modules with a value of up to 20 credits from an undergraduate level (normally level 6), provided this fits with the course's aims, outcomes and specification, and is approved accordingly. Course documentation should describe any such dispensation. This level of dispensation may be exceptionally exceeded, provided this is justified and approved by a DAG (see QH Section 5).
- 9.3 A module used in this way becomes attached to master's level rather than retaining its actual academic level. So that, for example, an existing level 6 module in Psychology when used in a master's degree in Business Studies should be regarded as a level 7 module for the purposes of determining awards and classification.

Section 16

9.4 A board may award an interim award by 'counting down' excess credits that a student may have achieved beyond the postgraduate certificate or postgraduate diploma stage in order to make up for an earlier failed module(s).

10. Classifications

10.1 Course documentation sets out the specific criteria used in determining the classification of awards which follows the relevant grade based assessment (GBA) scheme as set out in Common Assessment Regulations 16A, 16B and 16C.

10.2 The specific classifications associated with each award are as follows:

| Course | Award | Available classifications |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| Foundation | Higher Certificate | distinction, commendation, pass |
| | Foundation degree | distinction, commendation, pass |
| Bachelor's | Honours degree | first class; upper second class; lower second class; and third class |
| <p><i>Provision for the award of a distinction for the CertHE, DipHE and ordinary degree may be made in the course documentation. A distinction is awarded on the basis of an award grade of low 1st or higher. See Common Assessment Regulations 16A for further regulations about Board of Examiner discretion.</i></p> | | |
| Integrated masters | Integrated master's degree | first class; upper second class and lower second class |
| Master's | Postgraduate Certificate | distinction, commendation or pass |
| | Postgraduate Diploma | distinction, commendation or pass |
| | Master's degree | distinction, commendation or pass |

Award titles

11. Course titles

11.1 The course specification will contain the course title(s) that will have been approved according to criteria set out in the Quality Handbook.

11.2 A board may recommend an award with the course title for a student who has not met the precise requirements set out in course documentation. In doing so, a board must be satisfied that a named award is fair and appropriate.

Section 16

11.3 Where a board cannot award the course's named interim awards because the student has failed in the appropriate learning outcomes, the student will only be entitled to receive a transcript.

12. Course and interim titles: advanced standing

12.1 To be eligible for the named title, a student who has entered with advanced standing must normally have gained the following number and level of credits by satisfactorily completing modules at the University or collaborative centre:

| Course title (interim title) | Required NTU (or collaborative partner) credit to be awarded named title after advanced standing entry |
|---|---|
| Foundation degree | at least 80 credits at level 5 |
| Higher Certificate | 40 level 4 credits |
| Ordinary degree | at least 60 credits at level 6 |
| Honours degree | at least 120 credits at level 6 |
| CertHE | 40 level 4 credits |
| DipHE | 80 level 5 credits |
| Integrated master's degree | at least 160 credits (120 at level 7) |
| Master's degree | at least 60 credits at level 7 |
| Postgraduate Certificate | 20 level 7 credits |
| Postgraduate Diploma | 40 level 7 credits |

Registration matters

13. Registration periods

13.1 A student who enters the beginning of a course should normally complete their studies within the following periods:

| Course title | | Normal length | Maximum length |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Higher Certificate | Full-time | 1 year | 2 years |
| | Part-time | 2 years | 4 years |

Section 16

| Course title | | Normal length | Maximum length |
|--|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| Foundation degree | Full-time | 2 years | 4 years |
| | Sandwich | 3 years | 5 years |
| | Part-time | 3 years | 5 years |
| CertHE | Full-time | 1 year | 2 years |
| | Part-time | 2 years | 4 years |
| DipHE | Full-time | 2 years | 4 years |
| | Sandwich | 3 years | 5 years |
| | Part-time | 3 years | 5 years |
| | Full-time | 1 year | 2 years |
| Level 6 top-up (Hons) | Part-time | 2 years | 4 years |
| | Full-time | 3 years | 5 years |
| Ordinary degree or honours degree | Sandwich | 4 years | 6 years |
| | Part-time | 4/5 years | 7 years |
| | Full-time | 4 years | 6 years |
| Integrated master's degree | Sandwich | 5 years | 7 years |
| | Part-time | 5/6 years | 8 years |
| | Full-time | 6 months | 18 months |
| Postgraduate certificate | Part-time | 9-12 months | 3 years |
| | Full-time | 9 months | 2.5 years |
| Postgraduate diploma | Part-time | 18-24 months | 5 years |
| | Full-time | 1 year | 3 years |
| Master's degree | Sandwich | 2 years | 4 years |
| | Part-time | 2/3 years | 6 years |
| | Full-time | 1 year | 3 years |

Section 16

Explanatory note

- Accelerated routes may be designed to allow students to complete a full-time or part-time route in less than the normal duration. If a course has been designed in such a way, then the details will be set out in the course specification.
- A part-time mode is taken to include flexible learning that may comprise distance learning, block-release, work-based learning etc.

14. Varying rate of study and leave of absence

14.1 Subject to approval, a student may vary their rate of study to suit their individual needs and circumstances. Where a student has formally taken leave of absence from their studies, the period of absence will not be included for the purposes of calculating their maximum period of registration.

15. Credits per year

- 15.1 Students should study a certain number of credits in an academic year.
- Full-time undergraduate students normally study 120 credits. The maximum credits are 160, except in the case of accelerated courses where use is made of the summer vacation and students study 180 credits.
 - Full-time postgraduate students normally study 180 credits in a 45 week year.
 - The maximum number of credits for part-time students should be outlined in course documentation. The minimum for undergraduate courses will normally be 20 credits; the minimum for postgraduate courses will normally be 30 credits.

16. Extension of registration

16.1 The Executive Dean of School or agreed nominee, can extend a student's registration on an exceptional basis beyond that set out in course documentation.

17. Accreditation of prior learning

- 17.1 A student may be accredited with prior learning where they can demonstrate evidence of achievement comparable to the learning outcomes set out in the course specification. This may apply to certificated or experiential learning.
- 17.2 A student can be admitted directly to level 5 or, exceptionally, level 6 of an undergraduate course. For foundation awards, in some cases a further 40 credits of level 5 can be recognised at admission. However, the student will not be able to claim an interim award of the University unless they meet the credit requirements set out in reg. 12.1.

Section 16

17.3 A student can be admitted to a master's course with 120 prior credits. However, the student will not be able to claim an interim award of the University unless they meet the credit requirements set out in reg. 12.1.

Explanatory note

- Course teams must have procedures for granting accreditation of prior learning (see QH Supplement 15C). A student's prior learning claims should be approved before they commence the course. Special arrangements will be approved for students progressing from foundation degrees to bachelor's degrees.

Placement learning

18. Sandwich awards

18.1 A student will be eligible for a sandwich award if they:

- complete the required number of weeks of placement activity;
- achieve the competencies, learning outcomes and workplace experience as required in the placement specification;
- submit and pass the specified assessment requirements.

19. Certification

19.1 A student who successfully completes a placement will be entitled to a placement award (the precise award and title will have been approved and will be set out in the course specification).

19.2 A placement award (certificate or diploma) may be conferred with commendation and distinction.

Explanatory note

- Further information about placement certification requirements can be found in QH Section 10D.

20. Exemption

20.1 Exemptions from part of the placement year may be authorised by the Course Leader. The student must have completed supervised placement activities that can be certified as at least equivalent, in terms of length and in terms of the learning outcomes, competencies or rationale, to the normal placement experience.

Section 16

21. Shortfall in weeks

- 21.1 Where a student has not completed the minimum number of weeks of placement activity to be awarded a sandwich placement, the board may enact one of the following options:
- a. require the student to make good the shortfall by undertaking supervised placement activity during vacations or other appropriate times within their initial period of registration;
 - b. exceptionally, where (a) above cannot be satisfied due to illness or some other valid cause, require a student to complete satisfactorily an alternative form of assessment which simulates some of the characteristics of supervised placement activity within the student's initial period of registration;
 - c. recommend a placement award if there is a sufficiently minor shortfall in the number of weeks and regs. 18.1b and 18.1c have been satisfied.

22. Failure

- 22.1 Where a student's performance fails to satisfy the requirements of regs. 18.1b and / or 18.1c, the board may enact one of the following options:
- a. require the student to undertake another period of supervised placement lasting no longer than the first and indicating the criteria the student needs to satisfy;
 - b. exceptionally, require the student to complete satisfactorily an alternative form of assessment which simulates some of the characteristics of the supervised placement;
 - c. where course documentation allows and the student's overall performance justifies, amend their registration in order to take modules that lead to a non-sandwich award. The student will need to give written agreement to this action;
 - d. withdraw the student from the course.
- 22.2 At the board's discretion, a student on an undergraduate sandwich course who does not satisfactorily complete level 5 (or level 4 for foundation degrees) may be allowed to proceed to the placement with trailing modules (see QH Sections 16A and 16B for regulations around trailing modules).

Section 16

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| Policy owner |
| CADQ |

| Change history | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>Version:</i> | <i>Approval date:</i> | <i>Implementation date:</i> | <i>Nature of significant revisions:</i> |
| Sept 2016 | 30.09.16 | 01.10.16 | Change of reference to 'extenuating circumstances' Additional guidance on sub-elements and minimum pass grades Additional requirement for conventions to be agreed before the examination board Change of nomenclature 'intercalation' to 'leave of absence' |
| Sept 2017 | 30.09.17 | 01.10.17 | New section created from extracts of 16A, 16B and 16C to reduce repetition and redundancy. Addition of minimum credit to be awarded a named title after advanced standing entry for integrated master's courses (12.1) |
| Sept 2018 | 12.09.18 | 01.10.18 | Some changes to normal and maximum registration periods for PG Cert, PG Dip and Master's awards |
| Sept 2018 | NA | 28.03.19 | Para 7.2 corrected to include provision for an aegrotat award for foundation degrees. |
| Sept 2019 | 11.09.19 | 01.10.19 | None |
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| Equality Analysis | | |
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