

Section **16D**

Nottingham Trent University

Quality Handbook

Part E: Regulations

**Section 16D: Principles for
drafting non-degree course
regulations**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University has Common Assessment Regulations (CAR) for its degree courses which cover the award of the terminal degree award and interim awards contained within the parent degree course. However, the University has a significant number of free-standing courses that do not lead to degree awards, but instead lead to a more specialist award. Because of the diversity of provision, the University does not have CAR that universally apply to all such courses. Instead, course teams should use the principles set out in this QH Section when devising a bespoke set of assessment regulations for their non-degree courses. These regulations will be considered either through a Design Sprint or a Development and Approval Group (DAG) in order to ensure they fit appropriately with the University's principles.
- 1.2 Course teams should also take cognisance of the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
- 1.3 These principles should be applied to the following awards:
 - Foundation
 - Foundation Certificate
 - Certificate
 - Certificate in Education
 - Diploma
 - Advanced Diploma
 - Graduate Certificate
 - Graduate Diploma
 - Professional Certificate
 - Professional Diploma
 - Postgraduate Diploma in Education
 - Postgraduate Certificate in Education.

Explanatory note

- For definitions of these awards, please consult the NTU award frameworks (QH Section 3).

2. General guidance

- 2.1 Normally, course regulations need not distinguish between students on different modes of attendance.
- 2.2 The regulations should contain the following:
 - a. 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 and, if educationally appropriate, introduce such changes for all cohorts of students.

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- b. A student cannot demand reassessment in a module that is no longer offered.
- c. While the University reserves the right to modify its assessment regulations at any time, particular thought has to be given to the timescale for introducing changes and the effect on current cohorts of students. Changes will not normally be introduced for implementation in the current year of study but would take effect in the following academic year.
- d. 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 CMA guidance.
- e. Students and external examiners must 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.

3. Awards

- 3.1 The course must conform to the credit and level definition set out in QH Sections 3 or 4.
- 3.2 The regulations may allow a Board of Examiners (hereafter referred to as boards) to confer a named award to a student who has not met the precise requirements set out in the course documentation, e.g. by 'counting down' excess credits that a student may have achieved at a higher level.

4. Classifications

- 4.1 All non-degree courses may offer pass, commendation and distinction awards. The regulations should set out the criteria used in determining the classification of awards.

5. Course titles

- 5.1 The assessment regulations should contain the approved course title(s).

6. Awards: advanced standing

- 6.1 To be eligible for the named title of a non-degree course, a student who has entered with advanced standing must normally have gained at least one-third of the credits for the award by satisfactorily completing modules at the University or collaborative centre. This should be included in the regulations.

7. Registration periods

- 7.1 The regulations must set out the period in which a student should normally complete their studies. These normal periods should reflect the notional learning hours set out in the QH Sections 3 and 4. The regulations may also indicate a maximum period in which the course should be completed.

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8. Varying rate of study and leave of absence

- 8.1 The regulations may allow a student to 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 interruption of study should not be included for the purposes of calculating their maximum period of registration.

9. Extensions

- 9.1 The regulations may allow the Executive Dean of School, or agreed nominee, to extend a student's registration on an exceptional basis beyond that set out in the regulations.

10. Accreditation of prior learning

- 10.1 The regulations may allow a student to be accredited with prior learning where there is evidence of achievement comparable to the learning outcomes set out in the course specification. This may apply to certificated or experiential learning.

11. Students with disabilities

- 11.1 The regulations must state that 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 Academic Registry for guidance as necessary. Any agreed adjustments will be notified to the board.

12. External examiners

- 12.1 A course must have an external examiner(s) approved and appointed by the University's External Examiner Appointments Panel (EEAP). Any special arrangements for the appointment or duties of an external examiner must be included in the regulations.
- 12.2 The regulations must make it clear that the external examiner(s) must normally be present at the main board meeting where decisions concerning final awards are made, and they must signify their written agreement with the decisions taken by the board. An external examiner who is unable to be present at a board meeting should subsequently indicate by written notification, via the course leader, their involvement in the assessment process and their agreement to the decisions made at the board. The external examiner must also be involved in any referral board, although not necessarily through attendance. An external examiner need not attend progression boards.
- 12.3 The regulations must state that the external examiner(s) must submit an annual report within four weeks of the board meeting at which the final awards were decided.

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13. Board of Examiners

13.1 The regulations must include a provision for a Board of Examiners. They should be appointed in accordance with the requirements contained in the QH Section 15.

14. Late submission

14.1 The regulations should set out the penalties for the late submission of work, based upon the provisions contained in the QH Section 16A or 16C (depending on whether the course is at undergraduate or postgraduate level) and in conformity with the notification of extenuating circumstances procedures (NEC procedures).

15. Grades

15.1 The regulations must set out a grading scheme that should conform to that which the University utilises for either undergraduate or taught postgraduate degrees as appropriate – see appendices. Variations may be considered during the development and approval process e.g. the whole, or parts, of the course may also be graded on a pass/fail or competent/not competent basis (with commendation/distinction categories as appropriate).

16. Minimum pass

16.1 The regulations should set out the minimum pass grade for a module.

16.2 Provided the minimum module aggregate has been achieved, the regulations may allow a lower grade in an element to be deemed a pass.

17. Compensation within modules

17.1 The regulations may allow a lower grade in an element to be compensated, provided the minimum module pass result has been achieved.

18. Compensation for complete modules

18.1 The regulations may allow a Board of Examiners to compensate a module grade that falls below a minimum pass.

19. Maximum level compensation

19.1 The regulations should set out a normal credit limit for the award for compensation.

20. Module failure

20.1 The regulations must make it clear that a student who has not achieved the pass grade – and who has not been granted a compensated pass – has failed the module.

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- 20.2 Following initial failure of a module, a student shall normally be reassessed on one further occasion to achieve a pass. The maximum permitted number of attempts normally allowed for a student to pass a module will be two – first attempt and referral or repeat. The regulations may authorise a board to allow an exceptional third attempt where there is good cause to do so.
- 20.3 A student may not demand reassessment in a module that is no longer offered in the course. A board may, at its discretion, make special arrangements where it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same modules and by the same methods as at the first attempt.

21. Referral and repeat

- 21.1 For reassessment in a module, a student should either be required to:
- undertake a **referral** in the same academic year; or
 - repeat** the assessment in the following academic year with or without further attendance.

22. Maximum grade for retake

- 22.1 The maximum grade for a retake module should be the minimum pass grade.

23. Maximum grade for referral

- 23.1 The maximum grade for a referred assessment element should be the minimum pass grade. However, where a student is referred in an element, the grade for any element that was passed at the first attempt should be used in the calculation of the subsequent module result. A student may therefore achieve a grade beyond the minimum pass grade.
- 23.2 At the discretion of the board, a failed referral grade for a repeat module may be compensated.

24. Zero grade as an academic irregularities penalty

- 24.1 A student who has committed an academic irregularity may be referred in a module or element in order to provide the student with the opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. If a student subsequently demonstrates those outcomes, a pass should be recorded – the module is not compensated and the module grade remains zero.

25. Termination of studies

- 25.1 A board is authorised to terminate a student's studies for the following reasons:
- the student has exhausted the total number of attempts;
 - major academic irregularities;

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- c. the student has an overall poor record of performance, attendance, participation or commitment on the course and the board judges that there are no grounds to permit the undertaking of further remedial or retake modules.

This requirement or adaptations of it must be included in the regulations.

26. Improvement of grades

- 26.1 No reassessment is permitted for a student to improve upon a grade above the pass level required for the award (including students with substantiated extenuating circumstances).

27. Calculation of final award

- 27.1 The regulations must set out the calculation by which the overall award and its classifications will be determined. This calculation should conform to that which the University uses for its degree courses.

28. Pass and fail (competent and not competent) modules

- 28.1 The regulations must make it clear how passes in individual modules will be translated into an overall award classification.

29. Classification bands

- 29.1 The following classification bands should be adopted for courses:
 - a. Distinction
Grade: low 1st or above (u/g) / Distinction or above (p/g);
 - b. Commendation
Grade: low 2:1 – high 2:1 (u/g) / Commendation to High Commendation (p/g);
 - c. Pass
Grade: low 3rd – high 2:2 (u/g) / Pass to High Pass (p/g).

30. Extenuating circumstances

- 30.1 The regulations must conform to the University's notification of extenuating circumstances procedures.

31. Academic irregularities

- 31.1 Course regulations must establish the conditions under which examination or other assessments are carried out and specify the materials or equipment which students are permitted to use. The course should adopt the University's procedures on academic irregularities or include full details of any intended variations.

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Appendix 1: GBA scheme for undergraduate non-degree courses

Class	Grade	Grade point	Grade point range
Distinction	Exceptional 1st	16	15.5 – 16.0
	High 1st	15	14.5 – 15.4
	Mid 1st	14	13.5 – 14.4
	Low 1st	13	12.5 – 13.4
Commendation	High 2.1	12	11.5 – 12.4
	Mid 2.1	11	10.5 – 11.4
	Low 2.1	10	9.5 – 10.4
Pass	High 2.2	9	8.5 – 9.4
	Mid 2.2	8	7.5 – 8.4
	Low 2.2	7	6.5 – 7.4
	High 3rd	6	5.5 – 6.4
	Mid 3rd	5	4.5 – 5.4
	Low 3rd	4	3.5 – 4.4
Fail	Marginal fail	3	2.5 – 3.4
	Mid fail	2	1.5 – 2.4
	Low fail	1	0.5 – 1.4
Zero	Zero	0	0 - 0.4

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Appendix 2: Grade scheme for postgraduate non-degree courses

Class	Grade	Grade point	Grade point range
Distinction (excellent)	Exceptional Distinction	16	15.5 – 16.0
	High Distinction	15	14.5 – 15.4
	Mid Distinction	14	13.5 – 14.4
	Distinction	13	12.5 – 13.4
Commendation (very good)	High Commendation	12	11.5 – 12.4
	Mid Commendation	11	10.5 – 11.4
	Commendation	10	9.5 – 10.4
Pass (good)	High Pass	9	8.5 – 9.4
	Mid Pass	8	7.5 – 8.4
	Pass	7	6.5 – 7.4
Fail (insufficient)	Marginal Fail	6	4.5 – 6.4
	Mid Fail	4	2.5 – 4.4
	Low Fail	2	1.5 – 2.4
Zero	Zero	0	0.0 – 1.4

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Policy owner
CADQ

Change history			
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Sept 2016	30.09.16	01.10.16	Inclusion of further information regarding module failure – paragraph 20.3 Change of reference to 'extenuating circumstances' Change of nomenclature 'Academic Office' to 'Academic Registry'.
Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.10.17	GBA schemes updated in line with revised GBA framework.
Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	None
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Sept 2020	16.09.20	01.10.20	Renumbered from 16G to 16D
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Equality Analysis		
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