



TAUGHT MASTERS DEGREES

SCHEME FOR THE AWARD OF A TAUGHT MASTERS DEGREE: PROGRAMMES COMPRISING COURSES TO THE VALUE OF FIVE UNITS FOR STUDENTS ENTERING BETWEEN THE 2008/09 to 2019/20 ACADEMIC YEARS

This Classification Scheme is approved by the Graduate School Board of Examiners. Last updated: November 2020

This scheme should be read in conjunction with the General Academic Regulations, Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees, the relevant Taught Master's degree programme regulations, the relevant online Taught Masters course guides and the Code of Good Practice for Undergraduate, Diploma and Postgraduate Programmes: Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

1. Mark and Grade for a Course:

- 1.1 The examiners for each course will decide a numerical mark for each student using the following scale:

Grade	Mark
Distinction	70 - 100
Merit	60 - 69
Pass	50 - 59
Fail	(x+1) - 49
Bad Fail	0 - x

Each Department, Institute and Group shall specify the value of **x** as 19, 29 or 39 for all its courses, and this shall be clearly published in the School Calendar and in departmental student handbooks.

- 1.2 The grade of Bad Fail will be used internally to indicate when a fail cannot be compensated and, therefore, must be re-attempted. It will not appear on official transcripts.

2. Eligibility for Award

- 2.1 In order to be considered for a degree, a student must have attempted and completed all summative components of assessment required for all courses as listed in the corresponding programme regulations.
- 2.2 A student who makes no attempt at any component of summative assessment for a course, as set out in the General Academic Regulations, will be considered not to have completed the course. Moreover, the absence of an attempt will count as one of the two attempts allowed for the course unless it is authorised by the Chair of the Sub-Board of Examiners responsible for the programme, in accordance with section 10 of the Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees.
- 2.3 A student will not be recommended for the award of a degree if they have failed courses to the value of one or more units, subject to the penalty rules for failed courses in section 3.2 or, if in the judgement of the examiners, the fail is a direct result of medical and / or exceptional circumstances in accordance with section 10 of the Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees.

3. Calculation of the Award

- 3.1 The Sub-Board of Examiners can designate a full-unit course (or equivalent) as being critical to assessment for a programme and establish a 'local rule' whereby it will be given special consideration in the awarding of the degree: for example, a degree cannot be awarded unless the designated course has been passed or the award classification cannot be higher than the result awarded in the designated course¹.
- 3.2 Where a student receives a Fail mark in any course, the following penalty rules shall apply:
- 3.2.1. A Bad Fail mark in any course of any unit value will result in an overall Fail for the degree.
- 3.2.2. A Fail (but not a Bad Fail) in a course of 0.5 unit value does not require compensation.
- 3.2.3. A Fail (but not a Bad Fail) in a course(s) to the value of 1.0 unit will result in an overall Fail unless compensated either:
- by a mark of at least 60% in: a) one full unit course; or b) each of two half unit courses; or
 - by a compensation aggregate mark of 220 in the non-failed courses.

If compensated, a Fail shall result in a drop in the overall award classification where a Distinction or Merit would otherwise have been awarded. It shall have no further impact where a Pass is to be awarded².

- 3.3 The overall classification of an award shall, subject to the penalty rules for failed courses in section 3.2 above, be calculated as follows:
- 3.3.1. For a Distinction:
- (a) marks of a Distinction grade in courses to the value of 3.5 units or more, but no marks of a Merit grade in any course;
 - (b) marks of a Distinction grade in courses to the value of 3.0 units and marks of a Merit grade in courses to the value of 1.0 unit
- 3.3.2. Either a Distinction (if no failed course) or a Merit according to the 'local rules' of the Sub-Board¹
- (c) marks of a Distinction grade in courses to the value of 3.0 units and a mark of a Merit grade in a course of 0.5 unit value;
 - (d) marks of a Distinction grade in courses to the value of 2.5 units and marks of a Merit grade in courses to the value of at least 1.5 units and an overall Distinction aggregate mark of at least 320²
- 3.3.3. For a Merit:
- (e) marks of a Distinction grade in courses to the value of at least 2.5 units;
 - (f) marks of a Merit grade (or higher) in courses to the value of 3.5 units or more;
 - (g) a mark of a Distinction grade in a course of 0.5 unit value and marks of a Merit grade (or higher) in courses to the value of 2.5 units.
- 3.3.4. Either a Merit (if no failed course) or a Pass according to the 'local rules' of the Sub-Board¹
- (h) marks of a Distinction or Merit grade in courses to the value of 3.0 units;
 - (i) marks of a Distinction grade in courses to the value of 1.0 unit and marks of a Merit grade in courses to the value of 1.5 units
- 3.3.5. For a Pass
- (j) marks of at least a Pass grade in courses to the value of 4.5 units;
 - (k) marks of at least a Pass grade in courses to the value of 4.0 units with compensation for the failed unit(s) as described under section 3.2.

4. Failure to Achieve an Award

- 4.1 If a student has not been awarded a degree, they shall normally be entitled to repeat the failed courses only (on one occasion) and at the next normal opportunity, in accordance with the General Academic Regulations.
- 4.2 If a student has met the requirements for the award of a degree having repeated failed courses, they can only be recommended for the award of a Pass degree unless, in the judgement of the examiners, the initial failure(s) was at least in part a direct result of medical and / or exceptional circumstances, subject to the provisions of section 5.

5. General Proviso

It is also open to a Sub-Board of Examiners to recommend to the Graduate School Board of Examiners any departure from this Scheme and / or from its 'local rules' if, in their judgement, this would be equitable for any individual student as a direct result of a [formal exceptional circumstances submission](#) to the Student Services Centre. Such circumstances would need appropriate supporting evidence and must be extraneous to the normal assessment process and would apply to that student only. The following conditions apply also:

- 5.1 That the student is very close to the next higher classification boundary (within 3 marks in a single paper or 5 marks on aggregate)²;
- 5.2 that the student has marks in that higher classification range;
- 5.3 that the student has demonstrated that the assessment or set of assessments in question were significantly affected by exceptional circumstances that were sudden, unforeseen, out of the student's own control and proximate to the assessment(s) in question;
- 5.4 that the student has demonstrated that their performance in the affected assessment(s) was significantly out of line with their performance in other, unaffected assessments.

Footnotes

¹ Each Sub-Board of Examiners shall establish clear 'local rules' about: (i) what special consideration will be given to any course designated as 'critical to assessment' and (ii) when and how the overall classification of an award will be determined where two



options are available. Each Sub-Board will also ensure its 'local rules' are published in the relevant departmental student handbook(s). The Academic Registrar's Division will also maintain an authoritative central website about 'local rules'.

² The aggregate will be calculated by taking the sum of all relevant courses weighted according to their relative value in terms of half or full units. A half unit mark is halved for aggregate purposes, e.g. a half unit mark of 60 adds 30 to the aggregate and a half unit mark of 55 adds 27.5. Once all marks have been added, the final aggregate total is rounded up if necessary. A compensation aggregate will only be calculated using the marks in passed courses.

See the [Calendar](#) for further information about Programme Regulations, Course Guides, School and academic Regulations.