

# SECTION 16: AWARDS: GENERAL

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## 16.1 INTRODUCTION

Programmes of study for awards are prescribed in the relevant programme specification.

Awards are determined by the Examiners exercising their judgement as to whether the candidate has fulfilled the descriptors for the award based on the criteria specified in the award rules. If the award is classified, the Examiners exercise their judgement to determine the classification which best represents the candidate's achievement based on the criteria specified in the classification rules for each award, which variously include: overall level of performance (the weighted average of the marks across the programme or the relevant Parts), the profile of marks overall, the profile of marks for each Part which contributes to the final examination, and any specific restriction which may apply (for accreditation or other proper purposes), with due account taken of any relevant special circumstances.

## 16.2 ANONYMITY

The Senate has decided that, in the awarding process, the anonymity of candidates should be preserved until recommendations of results have been agreed at Programme Examiners' Meetings.. It is recognised that the Assessment Lead, for administrative reasons, will have access to the decoding list of Anonymous Candidate Numbers and may be aware of the identity of candidates.

## 16.3 CALCULATING AVERAGES FOR CLASSIFICATION

Modules are weighted for classification purposes in accordance with their number of credits and, for undergraduate programmes, the provisions contained in section 17.3 and 17.5(b) below.

The average mark of a Part and the overall weighted average of the full set of marks used for classification should be calculated to one decimal place, with the second decimal place being rounded up if it is 5 or greater and rounded down if it is less than 5. The overall weighted average should be calculated from the full set of marks (with the relevant weightings by credit and Part) and not from a combination of the rounded averages of Parts.

## 16.4 EXAMINERS' DISCRETION WITHIN AWARDING RULES

The University's awarding rules for Foundation Degree, undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes lay down guidelines for the award of the degrees and the various classifications within them. The examiners are asked to use their professional judgement in setting, marking and moderating students' work to ensure that the marks awarded for the various components conform to descriptors specified for the relevant awards. These give verbal descriptions of the sort of performance required for the award of a mark in the various classes.

In awarding Merits and Distinctions for Foundation Degrees, the various degree classes for first degrees and Merits and Distinctions for taught postgraduate degrees there is inevitably a need to balance the components where a student's performance is not completely uniform. The University's classification rules are in place to ensure, as far as possible, that students are treated equally across the University. This does not remove the Examiners' need for judgement but the requirement for equity inevitably reduces their freedom of action.

The Examiners need to be content that the modules have been appropriately marked, and these marks form the basis of subsequent calculations. Even where this is the case, there will occasionally be cases where the proposed overall result of a candidate does not match with the Examiners' judgement. In such cases the Examiners may wish to look at the marks for those components which have the greatest influence on the overall outcome, and satisfy themselves that the individual performances correspond to the marks awarded. Having done this, the Examiners may still judge that a candidate's overall result does not correspond to the qualitative description of the proposed award. Where this is the case, the Examiners have the discretion to recommend that the class be raised, provided that their reasons are clearly stated in the minutes of the Programme Examiners' Meeting and the criteria justifying this decision are applied to all candidates. In order to ensure transparency and support consistency, all such recommendations must be approved by the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean before being reported to the relevant University Awarding Board. The Examiners may not recommend the award of a class lower than that calculated by the awarding procedures. The reasons for varying an award should be academically justified and may be based on accepted practice in the sector. They may not be based on the Examiners' preference for a different set of awarding procedures.

## 16.5 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Exceptional circumstances are governed by the following policies.

- University's [Policy on and procedures relating to exceptional circumstances](#)
- [Where relevant, Policy on and procedures relating to exceptional circumstances for post-experience programmes in Henley Business School.](#)

See Assessment Handbook, section 8.

## 16.6 AEGROTAT

In accordance with Ordinance C4 (III), a qualification with an Aegrotat Pass may be awarded to a candidate who, having taken the modules for the qualification, is prevented by reason of death, illness or other incapacity from completing the assessment for the qualification, provided that the Internal and External Examiners for the programme and the University Awarding Board are satisfied that there is **sufficient evidence of the candidate's performance at the level of the award to establish that the student has achieved the learning outcomes of the qualification**. Due to professional requirements, some qualifications accredited by external bodies may be excluded from the Aegrotat provisions; in such cases, it may be possible to award an Aegrotat for an alternative, non-accredited award. An Aegrotat cannot be awarded for a Higher Degree by Research.

A qualification with an Aegrotat Pass shall not be placed in a class.

The University awards all degrees and other qualifications in accordance with the credit requirements specified in the Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Advice on Academic Credit Arrangements, second edition (May 2021). In order to be considered for an Aegrotat, a student will have taken the modules in their programme (i.e. 180 credits for a Masters, 120 credits for a CertHE, 240 credits for a DipHE, etc), with the exception of students registered for a Bachelor's degree. In the case of a Bachelor's degree, the Aegrotat is aligned with the national credit requirement for a non-Honours Bachelor's degree, which is set at 300 credits (including 60 credits at Level 6); in consequence, a Bachelor's Aegrotat (which is not placed in an Honours class) can be awarded to a student who has engaged with a minimum of 60 credits at Level 6.

The University awards all degrees and other qualifications on the basis of evidence of a student's performance. In determining eligibility for an Aegrotat award, the University considers the summative assessments which a student has completed and draws on other evidence, which typically will be formative assessments and, in the case of dissertations, drafts. In evaluating the evidence, Examiners refer to the same standards as normally apply to the (non-Aegrotat) award.

In the case of accredited programmes, the School is responsible for establishing and documenting whether or not an Aegrotat in any individual case is consistent with the accreditation requirements. In the event that an Aegrotat for the accredited degree is not possible, the School should consider whether the candidate would be eligible for an Aegrotat in an alternative award.

Where there is insufficient evidence to fulfil the requirements for an Aegrotat, a student may be eligible for an exit award on the basis of the marks they have achieved in already completed modules. In many cases, this will be a more realistic option than assembling a case for an Aegrotat.

### Process

- a. A potential case for an Aegrotat should be discussed in the first instance by the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean, School Director of Academic Tutoring, and School/Department Assessment Lead to ensure the feasibility of the case. The process is normally managed by the SDAT in association with the School/Department Assessment Lead.
- b. The School should then discuss the possibility with the student (or, in the case of a student who has died, their family) with the caveat that the proposal is still subject to approval.
- c. The case should then be referred to the External Examiners, and, following their endorsement, to the University Standing Committee on Special Cases, followed by the Programme Examiners and University Awarding Board, before finally being approved by Senate.

## 16.7 TUITION FEE DEBT AND RESULTS

No recommendation shall be submitted to the Senate in respect of a student who is in debt to the University in respect of tuition fees for a sum of £50 and more. When the debt has been settled, a recommendation will be considered and the result published prior to the next Graduation. If the candidate is eligible for an award, they will graduate at the degree congregations following the approval of the result. If the candidate has failed at the first attempt, they have the right to be re-examined in relevant modules at the next opportunity, provided that the debt has been settled and the result released within eighteen months of the decision that there be no recommendation.

## 16.8 OTHER OUTCOMES

In addition to the results available at undergraduate and postgraduate level, as specified in Sections 17 to 24 of the Assessment Handbook, the following outcomes are also available:

**Deemed Not To Have Sat:** A candidate may at the discretion of the Examiners be deemed not to have sat in the examination if the candidate has been prevented from sitting the examination by illness or other good cause or if the candidate's performance in the examination has been significantly affected by illness or other serious personal circumstance;

**Result Not Yet Available:** Where a result is not yet available for a candidate, this shall be stated on the results list;

**No recommendation submitted to the Senate:** As stated above, no recommendation shall be submitted to the Senate in respect of a candidate who has an outstanding tuition debt to the University.

## 16.9 PROVISIONS IN THE EVENT THAT ASSESSMENT MARKS ARE NOT AVAILABLE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF MAJOR DISRUPTION

16.9.1 In circumstances in which the University's academic provision has been significantly disrupted by matters outwith the University's control, the Senate (or the Chair acting on behalf of the Senate) may activate the following special provisions for the calculation of marks and the award and classification of degrees and other qualifications. Matters outwith the University's control include but are not limited to strikes and industrial action, staff illness, severe weather, natural disaster, epidemic or pandemic, fire, war, civil disorder or unrest, riot, terrorist attack or the threat of it, and restrictions imposed by the government or public authorities.

16.9.2 Under the special provisions, the Senate (or the Chair acting on its behalf), having due regard to all the circumstances, will determine:

- (a) an appropriate method or methods for calculating module marks
- (b) an appropriate method or methods for the award and classification of degrees and other qualifications
- (c) appropriate arrangements for re-assessment for classification
- (d) the scope of the special provisions, including whether all students are subject to special provisions and which method applies to which categories of students.

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16.9.3 In the case of programmes accredited by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB), the application of the methods and scope identified under 16.9.2 above are subject to confirmation from the relevant PSRB that it is satisfied that the methods and scope are adequate to its requirements for an accredited degree. In the event that the PSRB is not satisfied, the Senate (or the Chair acting on its behalf) may agree that:

- (a) specific provisions apply to the programme;
- (b) an alternative non-accredited degree may be awarded, as appropriate; or
- (c) students may be Deemed Not to have Sat and have a further opportunity to sit the assessment (if the full complement of assessments has not been taken) or wait for completed assessments to be marked.

16.9.4 In the event that, following classification under these provisions, further marks contributing to a student's classification become available, the relevant Programme Examiners and University Awarding Board shall reconsider the candidate at their subsequent meetings. The Programme Examiners shall reconsider the candidate's marks to determine whether the candidate should be awarded a higher result or classification. Reconsideration of a Finalist's marks shall not lead to a lower classification than the classification originally agreed.

**Document control**

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