



**Regulatory Framework:
Regulations and Procedures Governing Taught
Programmes of Study Leading to Awards –
General Principles and Guidelines**

March 2021

Version 7.6

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE THE PREVIOUS EDITION

Summary of Revisions and Amendments to Regulatory Framework in edition 7.6 (since edition 7.5).

Section of Regulations	Regulation Reference	Details of change
Periods of Registration	37	Table updated to confirm maximum period of registration of 2 years and 60 credits for Master's Top Up Award
Honorary Awards	41-42	Regulation updated to remove reference to Honorary Master's Degrees
Honorary Awards	44-45	Regulation updated to clarify Honorary Awards approved by Vice Chancellor and Pro Vice Chancellor and to remove the requirement for at least one member of the Honorary Awards Committee to be an external member of Academic Board
Honorary Awards	51	New regulation added to confirm there is no right of appeal against the decision to withdraw an Honorary Award
Assessment Regulations	89	Regulation updated to clarify that for multipart assessment the minimum qualifying mark needs to be achieved in all components
Progression, Level Completion, Failure and Referral	168	Regulation updated to decisions on awards, level progression and withdrawal will be considered at the point a student becomes eligible
Progression, Level Completion, Failure and Referral	181 & 183	Regulation updated to clarify that students may opt to take reassessment instead of compensation. If a student fails the reassessment, compensation is applied using the original mark or the reassessment mark, whichever is the higher. Further clarification given that students will normally be compensated at the point they become eligible.
Progression, Level Completion, Failure and Referral	189	New regulation added to uplift the classification banding where a student's classification falls within two percentage points of a boundary
Validation and Programme Approval	198	Regulation updated to remove the requirement for the Board of Governors to approve each new programme. Approval will be by the University's Executive Management Team, Senior Management Team and Academic Board

INTRODUCTION

1. This Regulatory Framework is to be used for the development and delivery of programmes of study leading to an Arden University award and is a guide for the delivery of all the University's programmes and for the production of validation documents, programme handbooks and programme specifications. It also provides the framework for periodic review and annual monitoring to ensure that programmes are being delivered in accordance with the Regulatory Framework. Once approved, programme handbooks and specifications are the definitive documents to be used for delivery and assessment of the programmes of study. Any programmes that deviate from the Regulatory Framework, e.g. due to the requirements of a professional accrediting body, must have the prior approval of Academic Board and must be clearly outlined in the programme handbook.
2. In the case of programmes delivered on behalf of an external awarding body partner, these regulations should either be approved by the partner for the delivery of specific programmes or superseded by the partner's own regulations pertaining to the named award. Programme handbooks produced for partner programmes must clearly identify where the individual programme regulations deviate from these generic regulations.
3. This framework takes full account of the expectations set out in the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (developed and published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)), which all UK higher education providers are required to meet.
4. The custodian of this document is the Academic Board, which is responsible for its approval and any amendments. The Academic Board has established a sub-committee, the Quality and Standards Committee, which has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the regulations within the

framework and for proposing any amendments to the framework to Academic Board. The Quality and Standards Committee is also responsible for ruling on any issues of interpretation or ambiguity that may arise from time to time between meetings of the Academic Board.

Quality Assurance Documents

5. The Regulatory Framework additionally comprises a series of supplementary Quality Assurance Documents, which are quality assurance policies and procedural documents which have been approved by Academic Board. Reference is made to these documents, where appropriate, throughout this Regulatory Framework.

QUALITY STATEMENT

6. As a private Higher Education Provider with its own UK Taught Degree-Awarding Powers delivering higher education throughout the world, the University aims to provide the best possible learning opportunities to its students, which meet the expectations of the UK higher education sector and are consistent with its vision and its commercial targets and aspirations. To achieve this, we aim to operate efficiently without unnecessary bureaucracy and complexity. Our approach to quality is, therefore, based on monitoring and providing information, which is easily understood, available to all stakeholders, and presented with timeliness such that decisions can be made rapidly to alleviate problems and improve learner experience. Much of our data are collected and communicated online with maximum stakeholder input at all stages within the monitoring and feedback process.
7. All quality-related documents are available on “**iquality**”, the University’s Quality System. It can be remotely accessed by staff and is an online mechanism for accessing quality-related documents. It also facilitates online discussions relating to quality issues and prompts staff to deliver reports and attend meetings scheduled within the quality cycle.
8. Our aim is to:
 - Provide students with the best possible learning opportunities, consistent with the aims and objectives of their programme of study.
 - Maintain the highest academic standards consistent with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
 - To operate an efficient business model which will provide value for money and high-quality learning opportunities to students and return appropriate profit margins for onward development and the maintenance of shareholder investment.
9. We do this by:
 - Providing clear and accurate information to students both pre and post enrolment.
 - Designing courses that are fit for purpose and can meet the requirements of students and external stakeholders.
 - Having systems and processes in place which fully enable us to meet the expectations of the UK higher education sector, including the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
 - Continually monitoring quality through:

- Student performance, retention and progression data.
 - Feedback from students and other stakeholders.
 - Feedback from academic teams and support staff.
 - Feedback from external organisations, partners and, where appropriate, employer groups and corporate customers.
 - Feedback from External Examiners.
 - Employment and other destination data.
- Continually improving our provision in response to the feedback and information received through monitoring.
 - Making sure that the balance of our resources goes towards delivery and the quality of the student learning opportunities.
 - Undertaking annual monitoring of programme provision, learning and teaching strategies and continually developing and enhancing learning provision.
 - Managing risk in order to ensure a consistent and robust study experience.
 - Strategically managing our provision to maintain growth and consistently meet expected academic standards.
 - Developing our staff to ensure maintenance of the highest possible academic standards.

AWARDS

10. The University confers the following awards:

Undergraduate Bachelor's Degree with Honours, using the following designations:

- Bachelor of Arts with Honours (BA (Hons)),
- Bachelor of Science with Honours (BSc (Hons))
- Bachelor of Law (LLB (Hons))

Bachelor's Degree without Honours (Ordinary Degree), using the following designations:

- Bachelor of Arts (BA)
- Bachelor of Science (BSc)
- Bachelor of Law (LLB)

Foundation Degree, using the following designations: FdA, FdSc

- Foundation in the Arts (FdA)
- Foundation in the Sciences (FdSc)
- Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE)
- Higher Education Diploma (HED)
- Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE)
- Higher Education Certificate (HEC)
- Foundation Certificate
- Graduate Diploma
- Professional Certificate

b. Taught Postgraduate

- Master's Degree, using the following designations: MA, MSc, MBA, LLM
- Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip)
- Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert)

11. An award is the qualification conferred on a student who had successfully achieved and accumulated the required amount of credit through a programme of study.
12. A programme of study (programme) consists of modules, which are a discrete body of learning leading to specified learning outcomes. Assessment of learning outcomes normally takes place at the end of the study period in which a module is delivered. Modules normally have a credit value of 20 credits or multiples of 20 credits.
13. Credit is used in the context of the Higher Education Credit Framework for England¹ and awarded to a student in recognition of the verified achievement of the learning outcomes that are specified in the relevant programme handbook and verified through an assessment process.
14. The Professional Certificate is an award between 20-120 credits designed for a specific market need or with a specific vocational, professional or employer focus. It may be awarded at any level and may include modules at different levels provided that the programme specification demonstrates an appropriate fit with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

Programme Structure

15. A programme must contain a prescribed set of credits in order to meet the requirements of a specified award, as set out in the following table. Credit counted towards awards must be achieved at the specified or a higher level.

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/academic-credit>

Award	Minimum credit	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
Bachelor's Degree with Honours with integrated foundation year	480	120	120	120	120	
Bachelor's Degree with Honours	360		120	120	120	
Bachelor's Degree without Honours (Ordinary Degree)	300		120	120	60	
Foundation Degree	240		120	120		
Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE)	240		120	120		
Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE)	120		120			
Foundation Certificate	120	120				
Graduate Diploma	120				120	
Professional Certificate	20-120		20-120			
Master's Degree	180					180
Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip)	120					120
Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert)	60					60

Types of award

16. A **target award** is a named award (e.g. BSc Computing) for which a student has registered to study.
17. An **exit award** is conferred on a student who, having originally registered for a programme leading to a target award, has not completed that course for whatever reason, including:
 - Voluntary withdrawal, e.g. for personal reasons;
 - Academic failure;
 - Preclusion from the award for disciplinary or other reasons.
18. An exit award is conferred only if a student has satisfied all the specific credit requirements specified in the programme handbook for the relevant target award.
19. Students who are granted module exemptions through Recognition of Prior Learning will only be eligible for an exit award if at least 50% of the credits required for that exit award are achieved through Arden University.

AWARD TITLES

Principles

20. Award titles should be used consistently across the University's awards and should accurately reflect the subject content of the programme.

Joint Honours Degrees

21. Joint honours degrees should contain at least 40 credits worth of modules per subject at levels 4 and 5 (credits not necessarily divisible in whole modules where subjects are integrated). Students will normally complete a project or dissertation at Level 6, which may be in either subject area or integrated between the two subjects. Aside from the project, a student should have completed at least 20 credits worth of modules in each subject area at Level 6 in order to receive a joint award title. Award titles should state both subject areas, in the format Subject A "and" Subject B.
22. In order for a Certificate of Higher Education to be awarded with a joint subject title, a student must have completed at least 40 credits worth of modules in each subject area at Level 4 (credits not necessarily divisible in whole modules where subjects are integrated).
23. In order for a Diploma of Higher Education to be awarded with a joint subject title, a student must have completed at least 40 credits worth of modules in each subject area at levels 4 and 5 (credits not necessarily divisible in whole modules where subjects are integrated). Award titles should state both subject areas, in the format Subject A "and" Subject B.

Specialist Routeways

24. Specialist routeways through undergraduate degree programmes should contain at least 20 credits worth of modules in the specialist subject area at level 5 and at least 60 credits worth of modules in the specialist subject area at level 6, normally including a project or dissertation, in order for the specialist routeway title to be awarded. Award titles should state the broad degree subject first, followed by the specialist routeway title in parentheses.
25. In order for a Diploma in Higher Education to be awarded with a specialist routeway title, a student must have completed at least 40 credits worth of modules in the specialist subject area at Level 5. Award titles should state the broad subject studied first, followed by the specialist routeway title in parentheses.
26. Certificates of Higher Education will not be awarded with specialist routeway titles.

Major and Minor Subjects

27. Honours degrees with a named minor subject should contain at least 80 credits and no more than 120 credits worth of modules studied in the minor subject across levels 4, 5 and 6. Award titles should state both subject areas, in the format Major Subject "with" Minor Subject.
28. Top-up degrees may be awarded with a named minor subject where the student has attained the relevant subject credits across level 4 and 5 on their previous programme and/or their level 6 credits achieved.

Postgraduate Specialist Routeways

29. Specialist routeways through postgraduate programmes should contain at least 40 credits worth of modules in the specialist subject area in total across the Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma stages of the programme, plus at least 40 credits in the specialist subject area in the Masters stage, in order for the specialist routeway title to be awarded. Award titles should state the broad subject first, followed by the specialist routeway title in parentheses.
30. In order for a Postgraduate Certificate to be awarded with a specialist routeway title, a student must have completed at least 20 credits worth of modules in the specialist subject area. In order for a Postgraduate Diploma to be awarded with a specialist routeway title, a student must have completed at least 40 credits worth of modules in the specialist subject area. Award titles should state the broad subject first, followed by the specialist routeway title in parentheses.

PROGRAMME DURATIONS, MODE AND PACE OF STUDY

31. Programmes of study are designed in specific modes of study, including part-time online distance learning, full-time online distance learning, degree apprenticeship, full-time blended learning and part-time blended learning.
32. Part-time online distance learning programmes will normally be designed to enable students to progress through the programmes with the flexibility to set a pace of study, within predetermined parameters, as set out in the relevant programme handbook and student handbook. Students studying on part-time online distance learning programmes are normally expected to achieve a minimum of 40 credits per year.
33. In cases where a more prescribed framework and pace of study is determined, this will be set out in the programme specification and reflected in the relevant programme handbook and student handbook.
34. Full-time online distance learning programmes will normally be designed to be studied at a minimum pace of study of 120 credits per year for undergraduate and 180 credits per year for postgraduate programmes.
35. Blended learning programmes will normally be designed for students to attend in accordance with a specific schedule at one of the University's sites or study centres and complete online learning in addition.
36. Blended learning students studying 120 credits per year will be enrolled as full time. Students that study fewer than 120 credits will be required to transfer to part-time enrolment.

Periods of Registration

37. The maximum periods of registration for a programme or level of study leading to an award are detailed in the following table. These have been designed to take into account the requirements of distance learners with a variety of needs and include any periods during which the student is on leave of absence and any additional time required as a result of re-assessment or mitigating circumstances.

Award	Credits	Maximum registration period
Level 3 (Foundation Certificate)	120	3 years
Level 4 (all undergraduate programmes except Higher National Certificates and Diplomas)	120	3 years
Level 5 (all undergraduate programmes except Higher National Certificates and Diplomas)	120	3 years
Level 6 (all undergraduate programmes except Higher National Certificates and Diplomas)	120	3 years
Higher National Certificate	120	4 years*
Higher National Diploma	240	4 years*
Graduate Diploma	120	3 years
Professional Certificate	20-120	3 years
Master's Degree	180	5 years
Master's Top Up	60	2 years
Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip)	120	3 years
Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert)	60	2 years

*Programme must be completed prior to Pearson certification end date

38. Individual programmes may be designed to be completed in shorter periods than the maximum registration period set out above. Such periods will be stated in the programme specification.
39. There are no minimum periods of registration. However, on all programmes of study by distance learning or degree apprenticeship, a student is permitted to study a maximum of 40 credits per quarter (excluding resits), unless one of their active modules is a dissertation or final project, in which case a student is permitted to study a maximum of 60 credits in the relevant quarter (excluding resits).

On all undergraduate programmes of study by blended learning, a student is normally permitted to study a maximum of 120 credits per year (excluding retakes).

On postgraduate programmes of study, a student is permitted to study a maximum of 180 credits per annum (excluding resits)

40. Where a student has been admitted with Recognition of Prior Learning, the minimum and maximum registration periods will be calculated proportionately to the number of credits required to study.

41. The maximum registration period on a level may be extended in exceptional circumstances where serious medium to longer term circumstances mean that a student is unable to study for significant periods of time. Requests will be considered by the Student Affairs Committee and will be subject to evidence regarding the continued currency of knowledge.

HONORARY AWARDS

42. The University may confer the following honorary awards to persons who have achieved distinction in their field or made major contributions to the University:

- Honorary Doctorate, using the following designations: Hon DBA, Hon DLaws, Hon DSc, Hon DUniv
- Honorary Fellow (Hon)

43. The award of Honorary Fellow shall normally be conferred upon persons who have made an outstanding contribution to the University or to society.

44. All nominations for honorary awards will be approved by the Vice Chancellor and Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) before they proceed to the Honorary Awards Committee of the Academic Board for consideration.

45. Nominations for Honorary Degrees and Fellowships will be considered by an Honorary Awards Committee, membership of which will comprise the Chair of Academic Board and two further members of the Academic Board. Recommended recipients will be presented to the Academic Board for final approval.

46. Where the Academic Board resolves to approve the conferment of an honorary degree or honorary fellowship, the Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer will write to the person who is to be awarded the honorary degree or fellowship inviting them to accept the award.

47. The names of nominees who accept the offer of an honorary award will be reported to the Academic Board.

48. Honorary awards will normally be conferred at scheduled University award ceremonies. However, with the agreement of the Academic Board, honorary awards may be conferred at other appropriate events. Honorary awards will not normally be awarded in absentia. An honorary award may be awarded posthumously, subject to the normal criteria for the award being satisfied.

49. The Academic Board reserves the right to withdraw an honorary award if, in its opinion, the recipient would bring the reputation of the University into disrepute by continuing to hold that award.

50. The Board of Governors has the responsibility and authority to make the following appointments: University Chancellor; and Member(s) of the Board of Governors. The Nominations Committee of the Board of Governors will consider nominations and make recommendations to the Board of Governors. These appointments will be reported to Academic Board.

51. There is no right of appeal against such a decision to withdraw such an award and in the event of an emergency an award may be withdrawn on the authority of the Vice Chancellor and confirmed at the next available meeting of the Academic Board.

INFORMATION GIVEN TO STUDENTS

Principles

52. Students will be provided with clear and accurate information to support them in their application to and subsequently their study with Arden University.

Programme Information

53. All publicity and marketing material must be approved prior to publication in accordance with the requirements specified in the following document:

[Quality Assurance Document QA 1 – Publicity and Marketing Material Production Procedures]

54. For each programme of study, students will be provided, as a minimum, with:
55. **Student Handbook** - A definitive guide to studying with Arden University, including the provision of general information for students, staff contact details, details of learning support, staff/student obligations, course information, study and assessment details and links to policies and regulations. Handbooks are produced in accordance with the Procedure for the Production, Publication and Amendment of Student Handbooks.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 2 – Procedure for the Production, Publication and Amendment of Student Handbooks]

56. **Programme Handbook** – Comprising a concise overview of the programme structure, a copy of the relevant **Programme Specification** and **Module Specifications** for each of the modules available as part of the student's chosen programme of study. The Programme Specification sets out the intended learning outcomes from a higher education programme, and how these outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated. Programme Specifications and Module Specifications are developed in accordance with the templates set out in the following Quality Assurance Documents and will be approved as part of the validation or periodic review process.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 3 – Programme Specification Form]

[Quality Assurance Document QA 40 – Module Specification Form]

57. **Module Learning Material** – for each module studied, the student receives access to learning material which allows the student to achieve the learning outcomes for the module. The learning material forms a key element of the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and will be produced in line with *Quality Assurance Document LTC 04 – Procedure for the Production, Approval and Revision of Module Learning Material*. Learning material is designed in a way that enables a part-time student to study in small time increments in order that the student can fit the work into his/her lifestyle.

[Quality Assurance Document LTC 04 – Procedure for the Production, Approval and Revision of Module Learning Material/Guidelines for the Production of Online Interactive Learning Materials]

RECRUITMENT AND ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS

Admissions

58. The University is committed to providing a fair and equitable admissions process to all applicants. We recognise and welcome the fact that our students come from a variety of backgrounds. The overriding principles in determining a candidate's suitability for admission to a programme are that there is a reasonable expectation that he/she:

- Will be able to fulfil the learning outcomes of the programme and achieve the standard required for an award.
- Has the motivation to succeed.
- Will benefit from the programme.

59. The decision to admit a student is undertaken in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy:

[Quality Assurance Document AD 02 – Admission of Students]

60. Specific programme entry criteria are set out in the programme specification and agreed during the validation process for the (re-)approval of a programme. They are also published and openly available on the University's website (www.arden.ac.uk).

61. Entry criteria will normally be consistent with the following minimum standards and with guidance issued from time to time by the Admissions Committee:

a. Undergraduate:

- 2 UK A levels or equivalent, and
- English language competence equivalent to IELTS 6.0 (no less than 5.5 in any element).
- Suitable work experience may be accepted as an alternative on a case-by-case basis.

b. Postgraduate:

- UK degree or equivalent, and
- English language competence equivalent to IELTS 6.5 (no less than 6.0 in any element).
- Overseas qualifications may be accepted subject to evidence of equivalency, which will normally be verified through UK NARIC.
- Suitable work experience may be accepted as an alternative on a case-by-case basis.

Recognition of Prior Learning

62. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process through which a student may receive credit for learning achieved outside of the programme of the programme of study for which they are applying.

63. Applications for RPL will be processed in accordance with the University's RPL policy:

[Quality Assurance Document QA 6 – Procedures for the Accreditation of Prior Learning]

Readmission to a Programme of Study

64. A student who has exited a programme with an interim award because s/he has not fulfilled the requirements of a higher award, or who has been withdrawn on the grounds of academic failure of a programme, may not be readmitted to the same programme, or a programme that includes a previously failed core module within a period of three years.
65. Applications for readmission to a different programme may be considered but will take full account of a student's previous performance at the University. Where readmission with credit is sought, cases will be considered in accordance with the University's normal regulations with regard to the Accreditation of Prior Learning.
66. Students excluded as a result of unfair practice or disciplinary proceedings will not be considered for readmission to a University programme.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 6 – Procedures for the Accreditation of Prior Learning]

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

67. Programmes are delivered in line with the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, which is developed and reviewed annually by the Learning and Teaching Committee.
68. The Student Handbook and the University's Student Charter between them set out the support mechanisms available to students and the responsibilities of the student which form part of a learning contract with students and are required in order for them to complete their programme of study.
69. Learning materials will be developed in accordance with the processes and protocols set out in *Quality Assurance Document LTC 04 Procedure for the Production, Approval and Revision of Module Learning Material/Guidelines for the Production of Online Interactive Learning Materials*.

[Quality Assurance Document LTC 04 – Procedure for the Production, Approval and Revision of Module Learning Material/Guidelines for the Production of Online Interactive Learning Materials]

REGULATIONS FOR PROGRAMME TAUGHT IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

For all programmes taught and assessed in languages other than English, the following requirements will apply:

70. Marketing, Admissions, Teaching, Assessment and Student Support will all be delivered in the Language other than English; University staff supporting such activities will be bilingual in English and the relevant language of delivery.
71. On an annual basis, the updated course documentation should be provided in English and the programme specification and Student Handbook in both English and the language of delivery.
72. All publicity material will be submitted for approval in both English and the language of publication.
73. Annual monitoring reports will be submitted in English
74. The language of instruction will be recorded on the Academic Transcript and Certificate
75. All validated programmes will have in place a native-speaking External Examiner approved by the University.
76. External Examiners will be fluent in the language of delivery and wherever possible, native speaking.
77. Unless agreed otherwise in writing (and only for those programmes where all External Examiners and moderators have a working knowledge of the language concerned) then the following requirements for translation will apply:

- i. All draft examination questions (and model/example answers/assessment guidelines) together with assignment questions etc. (draft assessments in the language of assessment will be approved by the native speaking External examiner for approval)
- ii. An agreed proportion of at least 10% of assessed work contributing to the final award or degree classification. Such work will be drawn from across the students' range of performance and ability (according to the requirements and specifications of the external Examiners and Moderators).
- iii. The above must include all assessed elements including Examination work, assignments, coursework, projects etc.

78. All translations must be undertaken by a suitably qualified person provided such translations are submitted for verification to a qualified translator as specified in (7) above

79. Where special arrangements are made for any particular programme, (e.g. where content is highly specialised or technical) such arrangements must be approved in writing by the Registrar and where necessary approved by the Quality and Standards Committee (QSC).

80. With the prior approval of the External Examiner(s) and moderator, 'real time' oral translations may be acceptable, provided one translator is provided for each External Examiner.

81. The QSC may take appropriate, immediate action where it is not satisfied that the regulations are not being correctly or appropriately applied; this may include suspension or cancellation of a programme in the event that academic standards are not maintained.

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

82. The following Assessment Regulations apply to all programmes of study leading to an award of Arden University and all Pearson awards studied with AU. Exceptionally, degree apprenticeship programmes funded by the European Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and programmes that are subject to accreditation or recognition by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) may be subject to variations to these assessment regulations in PSRB or ESFA requirements. Any such variations will be set out within the programme handbook and subject to agreement during the validation approval process. In all cases these Assessment Regulations will apply as minimum standards.

Assessment Principles

83. Programmes will provide a varied range of assessments, which take account of the learning outcomes of the modules, the development of skills, and the practicalities of managing the programme. Students will be provided with a detailed specification of what is required.

84. The purpose of summative assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the programme of study and achieved the standard required for the award they seek. Individual programmes will relate their learning outcomes to specific assessment requirements.

85. Programmes delivered through different modes of study (e.g. face to face, distance learning, blended learning or degree apprenticeship) may operate different methods of assessment, provided that both methods ensure student attainment of the same learning outcomes. Such variants are considered at validation and/or through major/minor modifications and periodic review.

86. Assessment will be undertaken by competent and impartial examiners able to ensure that achievement is consistent with national standards. The University requires External Examiners to be associated with final assessments which may count towards an Arden University award. All Pearson awards are subject to approval by the relevant External Verifier, as appointed by Pearson.

87. A module of 20 credits or fewer will normally be assessed by one element of assessment. Details of the assessment for each module will be specified in the relevant Module Specification Form and agreed during the validation approval process.

88. For Arden University awards, all items of assessment are marked on a fine graded or pass/fail basis, as defined on the Module Specification Form. The pass mark for undergraduate modules which are fine graded is 40%. The pass mark for postgraduate modules which are fine graded is 50%. For modules graded on a pass/fail basis, students must satisfy the criteria for a pass, as specified in the assessment criteria for that module.

89. In the case that a module is assessed via more than one assessment output (multi-part assessment), the following will apply:

- For undergraduate modules, a pass on the module requires a weighted average of 40% across all components and a minimum qualifying mark of 30% on each component. Students who have not achieved the qualifying mark in each assessment component are deemed to have failed the module and are referred for re-assessment in all component(s) where less than 40% has been achieved, even if the aggregate mark for the module is 40% or higher.
- For postgraduate modules, a pass on the module requires a weighted average of 50% across all components and a minimum qualifying mark of 40% on each component. Students who have not

achieved the qualifying mark in each assessment component are deemed to have failed the module and are referred for re-assessment in all component(s) where less than 50% has been achieved, even if the aggregate mark for the module is 50% or higher.

- Where the overall weighted average is below the pass mark, only the failed component(s) is referred (irrespective of whether the qualifying mark is achieved) and only the failed component is capped.
- If all components are below the pass mark, all are referred and the overall grade for the module is capped.

90. For Pearson awards, all items of assessment are marked on a pass/fail/merit/distinction basis in accordance with the defined criteria. Students must satisfy the criteria for a pass against each learning outcome.

91. Arden University reserve the right to conduct a *viva voce* examination on any assessment.

Assessment Design

92. Assessment will be designed to ensure that the learning outcomes of each module are assessed at the appropriate level consistent with the named award and the framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ) and the relevant QAA benchmark statements or the relevant Pearson assessment criteria.

93. For each academic level, generic grading criteria exist which provide students with clear guidance on what they need to do to achieve a particular grade. Generic grading criteria may be contextualised to a programme as part of the validation approval process.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 62- Generic Grading Criteria]

94. Assessments will be designed and set by a designated member of academic staff with expertise in the module subject area. The member of staff will normally be the Academic Module Leader responsible for the module in question.

95. The assessment will be moderated by another member of academic staff with expertise in the module subject area. This moderation process is documented through an Internal Assessment Approval Form completed by the moderator.

96. Additionally, all assessments relating to modules that count towards an Arden University award will be sent to the appropriate External Examiner for final moderation and approval.

97. Assessment briefs will be prepared well in advance of the assessment deadline, normally at least 6 months in advance of the deadline, and published to students in line with timeframes set out in the student handbook.

98. The following principles will be adhered to when designing assessments:

- Each component of the assessment will be linked to the learning outcomes of the associated module of the programme.
- The assessment will be designed to test learning outcomes at the appropriate level in accordance with the module specification document.

- Assessment criteria will clearly show what the students need to do to achieve the appropriate grade.
- Students will be provided with a detailed specification of what is required.
- Students will be given guidance on where to find information, the time to devote to the assessment, the approximate word count length, and any other assessment requirement(s).

Conduct of Examinations

99. Candidates are responsible for checking examination dates, times and venues. Candidates will not be permitted to sit the examination without suitable identification.
100. Absence from an examination will result in a mark of zero or a fail grade, unless a claim for mitigation is upheld in accordance with the University's normal procedures.
101. Candidates arriving late will be admitted at the discretion of the invigilator and must not disturb other candidates. Lateness must be noted on the Candidate Attendance Register form. Candidates entering late may be permitted the full time for the examination at the discretion of the invigilator.
102. Candidates will not be allowed to leave the examination room during the first and final 15 minutes of the examination. Once candidates have left the examination they may not re-enter. Should a candidate need to temporarily leave the room, for any reason, they must alert an invigilator, who will accompany them.
103. Electronic devices are not permitted on, under or near the desk. The use of electronic calculators is only permitted when specifically stipulated by the examination. Then, only non-programmable ones may be used.
104. Candidates may bring an English language dictionary to the examination. These must be inspected on entry to the examination room by an invigilator.
105. When the end of the examination is announced all candidates must stop writing immediately and remain in silence until all scripts and materials have been collected. Candidates must not remove answer booklets from the examination room under any circumstances.
106. There will be an Examination Officer who will be responsible for:
- Ensuring exam papers are delivered to a secure e-mail account.
 - Ensuring exam papers are kept secure and not accessed until the date of the examination.
 - Running the exam.
 - Ensuring health and safety.
 - Recording any incidents.
- Should the Examination Officer be absent another will be appointed to be in charge.
107. The examination room will be set up and checked by the invigilators in advance of the arrival of candidates. Each examination desk or station must be no less than one metre away from another desk or station. Candidates should be facing the same direction, where possible. Each examination desk should contain a question paper and an answer booklet. It must be ensured that the questions

are displayed face down. There should be a clock(s) at the front of the examination room, visible to all candidates. There should be a board or flipchart where the start and finish times can be clearly displayed for candidates. There must be no display material visible in the examination room. The correct notices must be displayed inside and outside the examination room.

108. Provisions for special examination requirements will be arranged with the Examination Officer in advance.
109. Candidates leaving the examination due to mental or physical disposition must be escorted from the room and the time of withdrawal and the circumstances must be noted on their paper and the invigilator's report.
110. The invigilator in charge must record any irregularity or problems on the invigilator's report.
111. The invigilator may, after having warned the candidate, exclude any candidate whom the invigilator deems to be disturbing other candidates. The candidate's answer book must be marked accordingly, and a record made of the event on the invigilator's report.
112. Candidates not following the examination regulations will be liable to disciplinary procedures.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 60- Student Disciplinary Procedure]

113. Should the examination be disturbed, it is at the invigilator's discretion whether an extension of time should be granted.
114. If an invigilator suspects that a student has unauthorised material in an examination or is cheating in any other way, the accusation should be made clearly to the candidate. Any unauthorised material should be removed from the student. The answer book should be taken from the student and marked with a capital "Q" and the correct time underneath the student's work. The answer book should then be returned to the candidate, who should be allowed to finish the examination within the normal time.
115. If a candidate causes a disturbance during an accusation of suspected cheating, the invigilator should ask the candidate to leave the room and accompany them.
116. If it is suspected that a candidate has unauthorised materials in an examination, the invigilator should ask the candidate to leave the room and accompany them whilst the second invigilator checks the candidate's desk and materials.
117. Candidates refusing to comply with the invigilator's instructions will be liable for disciplinary procedures.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 60- Student Disciplinary Procedure]

118. A full report should be prepared by all present invigilators and submitted to the examination officer within 24 hours, including any supporting evidence
119. The Examination Officer is responsible for collating all information and reports surrounding the allegation and submitting them to the University for consideration by the Committee of Enquiry.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 12 – Examination Regulations]

120. Where it is unreasonable for a student to undertake an examination at the University's own exam centre or at the premises of an approved collaborative partner, alternative examination venues may be arranged. Such examination must be held at an approved examination centre. The approval of external examination centres is governed by:

[Quality Assurance Document QA 18 - Procedure for the Approval of Exam Venues]

Assessment Submission

121. All students of Arden University who by the given dates have satisfied the requirements of the regulations with regard to registration and all formal course requirements shall be eligible for assessment.
122. The University has established processes for the submission and handling of assessments, and these are communicated to students in the relevant student handbook and/or assessment brief(s).
123. At the commencement of study students will be provided with:
- An assessment timetable giving the times at which assessments for a particular module can be submitted.
 - The assessment regulations pertaining to the relevant programme of study.

Late Submission

124. If there is no good reason or exceptional mitigating circumstance for late submission of assessed work, then the work submitted will be allocated a mark of zero.

Submission, Deferral and Extension

125. Students on part-time online distance learning programmes will be automatically registered for assessment at the first sitting. Students may defer this assessment once without penalty. Where assessment includes multiple components, these must remain synchronised and individual components may not be deferred. Students who fail to submit after one deferral will be deemed to have failed the assessment, unless a claim for mitigation is submitted and upheld.
126. Students on blended learning programmes based at study centres, degree apprenticeship programmes, full-time online distance learning or other programmes that follow a prescribed timetable will be automatically registered for assessment at the first sitting and will not be entitled to defer, unless a claim for mitigation is submitted and upheld. Students who fail to submit will be deemed to have failed the assessment, unless a claim for mitigation is submitted and upheld.
127. Only in the event that a student is affected by genuine exceptional mitigating circumstances which come to light on or around the deadline may assessment deadlines be extended for individual students, up to a maximum of one week. In the case of an examination, 24-hour or timed-constrained assessment no extension of deadline will normally be permitted.

Mitigation in Assessment

128. Mitigation is the process by which allowance is made for any matter or circumstance which may have seriously affected a student's performance in an assessment element(s) (including an element submitted for re-assessment).
129. The mitigation process applies where circumstances have arisen that were both unanticipated and beyond the student's control and either have impacted a student's ability to attend an examination or to submit an assessment by the specific deadline; or have had a seriously adverse effect on the student's performance.
130. The criteria for eligibility for mitigation, and the process for making and considering claims for mitigation are governed by QA 41 – Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment.

[QA 41 – Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment]

Deviating from Word Limits

131. Assessment briefs will specify which elements of the assessment text will be included within the maximum word limit.
132. A written assessment must not deviate from the minimum and/or maximum word limit set in the assessment brief. Students are required to enter an accurate word count on their assessment cover sheet.
133. For University awards, when a written assessment is marked, the excessive use of words beyond the stated word limit will result in a lower mark being awarded for the piece of work, in line with guidance published by the Learning and Teaching Committee. The module specification for a module which is graded on a pass/fail basis must specify whether submission of a written assignment exceeding the word limit results in failure in the module.
134. On Pearson programmes, students who do not comply with the required word count may have their assessment submission returned to them by the lecturer and be required to adjust the word count within 24 hours. If the re-submission after this period does not comply with the word count, it will not be accepted.

Re-submission of Assessments

135. Students on programmes of study leading to an Arden University award who fail and have to re-sit an assessment will normally be required to rework the same assessment task, unless:
 - they have had an unfair practice allegation upheld,
 - they have had mitigating circumstances upheld
 - the original assessment was an exam or time constrained assessment.

Students are permitted to re-work the same submission on one occasion only. Students who fail a generic assessment twice will be required to re-take or re-engage with the module and submit a new piece of work with substantially different content.

136. Students who fail any assessment on a Pearson programme are permitted to re-work the same submission on one occasion only. Students who fail an assessment for a Pearson programme twice will be required to re-take or re-engage with the module and submit a new piece of work with

substantially different content.

Unfair Practice in Assessment

137. All assessments submitted by students must be the student's own original work. Unfair practice is defined as any attempt by a student to plagiarise the work of others or to gain an unfair academic advantage in the assessment process for him/herself or another student.
138. An unfair practice offence may be committed in relation to work undertaken for any module and any assessment method.
139. Details relating to unfair practice and the process for handling suspected cases of unfair practice are set out in the Unfair Practice in Assessment protocol. Students will be advised fully on the rules governing assessment conduct and also given training in referencing and how to avoid plagiarism.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 23 – Unfair Practice in Assessment].

Assessment of Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

140. Students with special educational needs may request special arrangements in examinations or assessments by applying to the Academic Director, in writing, including documentary evidence where appropriate. The Student Affairs Committee will consider all such requests on behalf of the Academic Director and may approve such requests on behalf of the Academic Board. The Student Support team's specialist advisors on SEN will consider all applications in advance of the committee meeting and make detailed recommendations to the Student Affairs Committee.
141. Requests for special arrangements without precedent may be referred to the Student Affairs Committee for review or escalated to the Academic Board if they require a policy decision to be made.

Marking

142. All submitted assignments will be marked in accordance with the relevant assessment criteria, and feedback and marks/grades will be returned to students normally within 20 working days of submission. Where marks have not been confirmed by the Subject Assessment Board, the feedback will clearly indicate that marks are provisional or unconfirmed.
143. Assessments will normally be marked anonymously where practicable so that markers will not be aware of a student's identity at the time of marking. Full anonymity may not be possible in all assessment types, for example presentations, practical projects or dissertations. Anonymity may be lifted where there are suspicions about the authenticity of an assessment and further investigation is required.
144. Feedback to students will be provided in prescribed ways in accordance with the principles set out in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. Feedback will give details as to why marks have been awarded and/or why the student has failed to meet the requirements for a particular grade. Feedback should be detailed and formative.

Internal Moderation and Second Marking

145. Internal moderation will be undertaken in accordance with Quality Assurance Document QA 20 – Guidelines for Moderators and QA 21 – Internal Verification Policy for Pearson Awards.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 20 – Guidelines for Moderators and Second Markers].
[Quality Assurance Document QA 21 – Internal Verification Policy for Pearson Awards]

External Examination

146. The duties and responsibilities of External Examiners are set out in Quality Assurance Document QA 37 – External Examiner Handbook and are designed to meet the expectations and associated indicators set out in the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 37 – External Examiner Handbook]

147. Responsibility for the appointment of External Examiners rests with the Quality and Standards Committee.
148. External Examiners will be appointed for any part of a programme of study which contributes directly to the classification of an award.
149. Suitably qualified External Examiners will be nominated by the Programme Leader and appointment will be subject to scrutiny and approval by the Quality and Standards Committee. External Examiner appointments are reported to Academic Board, which will also receive an annual review of External Examiner appointments, engagement and effectiveness. The criteria for appointment and appointment procedures are set out in:

[Quality Assurance Document QA 43 – Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners]

150. External Examiners will be independent of the University and, where applicable, any validating university or partner.
151. The normal period of tenure for an External Examiner will be four years, with the possibility of reappointment for a further year to ensure continuity.
152. All External Examiners will be appropriately briefed, trained and inducted in line with:

[Quality Assurance Document QA 37 – External Examiner Handbook]

153. All External Examiners will be required to submit reports after each assessment period, plus an overarching annual report, in accordance with the approved template.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 44 – External Examiner Report Pro Forma]

154. The University adheres to the QAA UK Quality Code.

Subject Assessment Board

155. Decisions on all module level assessment outcomes are made by a formally constituted Subject Assessment Board established by the Academic Board, attended by one or more External Examiners and reporting to the relevant Progression and Award Board.

156. The constitution and terms of reference of Subject Assessment Boards are approved by the Academic Board.

Progression and Award Boards

157. Decisions on student progression between levels of a programme are made by a formally constituted Progression and Award Board, which will receive ratified module assessment results from one or more Subject Assessment Boards of Examiners. Decisions on the conferment of awards are made by Academic Board on the recommendation of a formally constituted Progression and Award Board established by the Academic Board.
158. The constitution and terms of reference of Progression and Award Boards are set out in the Academic Committee Structure document.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 42 – Academic Committee Structure]

Appeals

159. Students may appeal in cases where they believe that there has been a material fault in the assessment process. Appeals against academic judgment cannot be accepted. The academic appeals process is given in *Quality Assurance Document QA 24 – Academic Appeals Process*.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 24 – Academic Appeals Process]

PROGRESSION, LEVEL COMPLETION, FAILURE AND REFERRAL

Assessment Failure and Referral

160. Students who do not achieve a pass mark in one or more module assessments at their first attempt will be referred in the(se) module(s) and will have the opportunity to re-sit or resubmit the required element of the assessment. Such referrals must normally be completed within 12 months of the original attempt, though the Subject Assessment Board may extend this period at its absolute discretion.
161. The form of assessment for referral may be different from the original form of assessment.
162. The pass mark for the referral attempt is the same as the pass mark for the initial attempt. The maximum module mark achievable from referrals is 40% for undergraduate programmes, 50% for postgraduate programmes or the bare minimum pass mark for the module, whichever is the higher; the maximum module grade achievable is a pass.
163. If the mark/grade achieved at referral is below that achieved previously then the earlier mark/grade will be considered by the Subject Assessment Board.
164. Wherever possible, the University will provide referral opportunities in modules which are no longer current but cannot guarantee this as a right. The Subject Assessment Board must make such special arrangements as it deems appropriate in cases where it is not practicable for students to be referred in the same module or module component.
165. Where a student fails to present him/herself for any piece of formal assessment or to submit a piece of coursework by the required date, then the Subject Assessment Board will apply a 0% (fail) grade to that piece of assessment, subject to the processes described in the Submission Deferral and Extension, and Mitigation in Assessment sections above.
166. Students who fail a referral in a taught module may, at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board, retake the module on one occasion only. A retake allows the student two further attempts, both of which will be capped. Module retakes will require re-engagement with the module and for blended learning students may be either via classroom sessions or online as determined by the programme team. (Note that retakes may require payment of the normal module fee, see terms and conditions for full details).
167. A student who is referred in the dissertation/final project element of a programme may resubmit a referral **on one occasion only** and will not be permitted to retake the module.

Progression, Level Completion and Withdrawal

168. The progress of each student will be considered by the Progression and Award Board at least once per year. Decisions on awards, level completion and withdrawal will be considered at the point the student becomes eligible.
169. To achieve an award a student must progress through each level of study and attain the specified amount of credit at each level. The Progression and Awards Board will decide whether a student may:
 - a. Progress unconditionally to the next level of study

- b. Progress to the next level of study, trailing credit (see 162)
 - c. Not progress and continue to study at the same level
 - d. Not progress and be withdrawn for academic failure
170. Students studying at foundation level must successfully complete 120 credits at level 3 and may not progress to level 4 carrying failed modules.
171. Students studying at level 4 and above may not progress to the next level of study trailing credit in more than 40 credits. Failed modules must be repeated in the next level of study and may not be trailed into subsequent levels. Where the module failure is due to mitigating circumstances and deferrals have been granted by the Student Affairs Committee, a student may be permitted to trail the deferred modules into the next level of study and may not be trailed into subsequent levels.
172. Where a student progresses to the next level of study before having received the confirmed results from the previous module, this progression is deemed to be provisional until confirmed by the Progression and Award Board. If the Progression and Award Board determines that a student's course has been terminated, the student will be required to cease studying with immediate effect. If the Progression and Award Board determines that a student may not progress to the next stage of the course, the stage on which a student is enrolled must be amended with immediate effect.
173. Students on full-time undergraduate blended learning programmes of more than one year's duration, who fail more than 40 credits, at first resit may, at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board, be permitted to re-enrol time part-time and repeat the failed modules with attendance.
174. Students on full-time undergraduate blended learning programmes of more than one year's duration, may in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Progression and Awards Board, be permitted to repeat a full year of study. In such cases, students will repeat all modules within the level and will be capped at the pass mark only for the previously failed modules.
175. Students on undergraduate distance learning programmes may not formally submit their dissertation or final project until they have attempted all taught modules at Level 6.
176. Students on postgraduate distance learning programmes may not formally submit their final research project until they have attempted all taught modules at Level 7.
177. Where a student has not achieved a pass mark following the maximum number of referrals or re-takes available and is not eligible for compensation then he/she cannot proceed on the programme unless it is possible for an alternative module to be studied. Such students will be withdrawn and awarded any exit awards for which they are eligible, for example a pass degree or postgraduate certificate or diploma.
178. The Progression and Award Board may withdraw a student where it agrees in its academic judgement that a student has not demonstrated sufficient achievement or engagement to be offered a retake opportunity.
179. The Progression and Award Board may withdraw a student who has failed to re-register for two consecutive annual re-registration points or whose progress through the programme will not allow completion within the maximum study period for the programme.

Compensation: Undergraduate Programmes

180. Credits are awarded for those modules in which a mark of at least 40%, or a pass grade, has been achieved. Additionally, credits may be awarded by compensation.

181. Failure within a level may be compensated as follows:

- a. Compensation applies to all undergraduate programmes, except those programmes containing fewer than 120 credits.
- b. No more than 20 credits may be compensated per level.
- c. Compensation may not be applied on dissertations and major projects.
- d. Compensation for a failed module is considered only if all the following criteria have been satisfied:
 - The mean grade (including any failed modules) must normally not be less than 45%;
 - The module mark where compensation is requested must normally not be less than 35%;
 - The qualifying mark (a pre-determined minimum grade which will be specified in the module specification and is normally 30%) has been achieved in all components of assessment for the module(s) for which compensation is being considered.
 - The student has attempted all modules in the level or all elements except the dissertation/major project of a postgraduate/Masters programme.
- e. Where compensation is awarded, the mark is not changed.
- f. A student may opt to take reassessment instead of compensation. If a student fails the reassessment, compensation is applied using the original mark or the reassessment mark, whichever is the higher.

Students will normally be compensated at the point they become eligible.

Compensation: Postgraduate Programmes

182. Credits are awarded for those modules in which a mark of at least 50%, or a pass grade, has been achieved. Additionally, credits may be awarded by compensation.

183. Failure may be compensated as follows:

- a. Compensation applies to all postgraduate programmes, except those programmes containing fewer than 120 credits.
- b. No more than 20 credits may be compensated.
- c. Compensation may not be applied on Masters dissertations and major projects.
- d. Compensation for a failed module is considered only if all the following criteria have been satisfied:
 - The mean grade (including any failed modules) must normally not be less than 55%;
 - The module mark where compensation is requested must normally not be less than 45%;

- The qualifying mark (a pre-determined minimum grade which will be specified in the module specification and is normally 40%) has been achieved in all components of assessment for the module(s) for which compensation is being considered.
 - The student has attempted all modules except any dissertation or major project.
- e. Where compensation is awarded, the mark is not changed.
- f. A student may opt to take reassessment instead of compensation. If a student fails the reassessment, compensation is applied using the original mark or the reassessment mark, whichever is the higher. Students will normally be compensated at the point they become eligible.

CONFERMENT OF AWARDS

184. The final award is achieved when a student has gained the number of credits required. An award classification will be calculated as described below. Where a student exceeds the credits required for a level, the highest marks of any option modules will be taken. Where APL is awarded the Award mark will be based only on modules actually completed.

A. Pass Awards

185. All awards comprising fewer than 120 credits and all exit (i.e. not target) awards are pass awards.

B. Classification for Degree with Honours

186. The minimum credit requirements for each programme are specified in the Programme Specification.

187. The base class of degree will be determined in accordance with the Full Honours classification scheme, according to the established percentage band equivalents:

<35%	=	fail
35-39	=	pass
40 - 49%	=	third class
50 - 59%	=	lower second class
60 - 69%	=	upper second class
>70%	=	first class

188. In calculating base class, account will be taken of the credit value of each module mark. The classification will be based on a weighted arithmetic mean of the highest graded 180 credits of which minimum 100 are at Level 6 and the remainder at Level 5. Any grade at Level 5 or Level 6 which attracted an unfair practice penalty in category UPC must be included in the classification calculation as part of the 180 credits total. All major projects must be included in the calculation.

189. Where a student's classification falls within two percentage points of a classification boundary (before rounding is applied), the classification banding will be uplifted if more than 50% of the marks included in the classification calculation fall within the higher classification band.

190. The classification of final year top-up degrees will be calculated based on a weighted arithmetic mean of the highest graded 100 credits achieved at Level 6. Any grade at Level 6 which attracted an unfair practice penalty in category UPC must be included in the classification calculation as part of the 100 credits total. All major projects must be included in the calculation.
191. The weighted arithmetic mean used to calculate the classification will be rounded to the nearest integer.
192. Students who have failed to reach the standard for the final award may be awarded an exit award where this is specified in the Programme Document.
193. Students who are granted module exemptions through Recognition of Prior Learning will only be eligible for an exit award if at least 50% of the credits required for that exit award are achieved through Arden University.

C. Pass, Merit and Distinction awards

194. All target awards not covered by A. Unclassified Awards or B. Award and Classification for Degree with Honours above will be awarded a classification of pass, merit or distinction as follows.

For Postgraduate Awards, the base class for an award will be determined on the following grade boundaries:

- 50-59 = Pass
- 60-69 = Merit
- 70 and above = Distinction

For Pearson, Higher Education Certificates, Higher Education Diplomas and other undergraduate awards, the base class for an award will be determined on the following grade boundaries:

- 40-59 = Pass
- 60-69 = Merit
- 70 and above = Distinction

The classification will be calculated based on the weighted arithmetic mean of all credits excluding the lowest graded 20 credits.

If a student is exempt from more than 1/3 of credits, then they will not be entitled to a merit or distinction.

D. Aegrotat and Posthumous awards

195. Where there is insufficient evidence to determine the recommendation of an award, but the Progression and Award Board is nevertheless satisfied that the student would have qualified for the award for which s/he was a candidate had it not been for illness or other valid cause, an Aegrotat award may be recommended. Aegrotat awards are not classified.
196. Any award may be conferred posthumously and accepted on the student's behalf by a parent, spouse or other appropriate individual. The normal conditions of the award must be satisfied, and such posthumous awards may be classified.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

197. The University is fully committed to providing equal opportunities to all its staff and students. Where it is made aware of any special needs of students or intending students, then the University will endeavour to ensure that such reasonable needs are met in ways which do not compromise the standards of awards. The University's Equality and Diversity Policy is set out in the following document:

[Quality Assurance Document QA 25 – Equality and Diversity Policy]

VALIDATION AND PROGRAMME APPROVAL

198. All proposed new programmes of study and proposed major modifications to existing programmes, whether they lead to an award of the University or of an external awarding body, or to the award of credit in recognition of successful study, are required to undergo an academic approval process termed validation. The validation process is set out in the Validation Handbook. Before they come to academic validation, proposed new programmes and certain types of major modifications to existing programmes must have received permission to proceed from the University's Executive Management Team, Senior Management Team and Academic Board. Only when a programme has been through a successful validation and satisfied all conditions for academic approval will it be allowed to accept applications and subsequently enrol students.

[Validation Handbook]

199. The broad criteria against which academic proposals will be judged comprise the following; they will be applied to all proposed new programmes and as appropriate to proposed modifications to existing programmes, in the context of relevant institutional strategies, plans, policies and procedures:

- validity of the proposal, in terms of its academic rationale and intended learning outcomes, for the purposes which it is intended to serve;
- curriculum content embodying coherence, balance and progression and taking account of relevant subject and qualification benchmark statements, professional and/or accrediting body requirements, the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the University's current strategic aims and policies;
- effective learning and teaching strategies and methods which match the curriculum content, intended learning outcomes and students' intake profile;
- sound assessment strategies and methods which effectively test student achievement of the intended learning outcomes to the appropriate standards, whilst affording opportunities for formative feedback to guide students' learning;
- appropriate criteria for entry, set in the context of an admissions policy reflecting the University's policy on widening access and participation;
- academic and pastoral support strategies and mechanisms which are matched to the likely needs of the intended student profile and to the nature of the programme;

- programme management and organisation arrangements which meet the University's requirements and facilitate student participation;
- human and physical resources of appropriate quality and quantity and which are subject to considered development and renewal over time;
- conformance of the curriculum with relevant statutory requirements and University policies in relation to, for example, accessibility to students with special educational needs and disabilities, health and safety imperatives, equal opportunities issues;
- quality assurance procedures conforming to the University's framework and which are tailored to the programme and its students so as to provide effective means of monitoring, review and enhancement of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

200. Where the proposed programme or modification involves collaboration with a partner organisation and/or uses flexible and/or distributed learning (including e-learning), the panel scrutiny will incorporate further criteria, which should therefore be addressed in the Programme Handbook and accompanying proposal documentation. All proposals should pay heed to any pertinent sections of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE, MONITORING AND REVIEW

201. Under the terms of the Articles of Association, Academic Board is the University's academic authority responsible for safeguarding the standards of awards. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Governors and the Academic Board sets out the relative roles and remits of each body and makes Academic Board sovereign in relation to the award of degrees and other academic decisions.

202. The Academic Board has established a number of sub-committees responsible for specific issues related to academic development and standards, quality assurance and enhancement. The terms of reference and reporting structure of such committees is set out in:

[Quality Assurance Document QA 42 – Academic Committee Structure]

Module Evaluation

203. There are five ways in which module evaluation occurs.

- a. On the completion of each module, students will be asked to complete a Module Feedback Questionnaire. This will measure views on the material provided; academic and other support; management; assessment; and feedback. Where issues are raised these will be discussed with the lecturers concerned. The questionnaire is anonymous so individual responses are not possible.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 33– Module Feedback Questionnaire]

- b. At the Course Committee, students will have the opportunity to submit comments for discussion.
- c. Module Leaders are also required to complete an evaluation of their module. The aim of this is to identify any problems which they might have had and any suggestions for change which they have.
- d. The Examining Board will, as part of its deliberations, consider student progression on the module. In the event of any significant variations the Chair will ask for a report to be prepared.

- e. The external examiner will make a report on each module.

Programme Evaluation/Annual Monitoring

204. The main purpose of annual monitoring is to ensure that programmes have been delivered in accordance with aspirations and guidelines as specified within the course documentation and information and guidance given to students. It is the opportunity to reflect upon the previous year's operation, devise and implement the necessary action to address any identified weaknesses and to further embed and spread more widely any identified good practice.
205. The procedures are designed to facilitate the accumulation of evidence to help demonstrate that the relevant parties have engaged with the process in an appropriate way. The various reports generated through annual monitoring will be made available online to all students and lecturers and will be discussed at the relevant Course Committee and Academic Board. A report is produced annually for each course encompassing information as follows:
- Student progression, failure, withdrawal and award statistics.
 - Module Evaluation based on student, Module Leader and External Examiner feedback.
 - Actions from:
 - Course Committees.
 - Examination Boards.
 - External Examiner Reports.
 - Student group feedback.
 - Module Leader Feedback.
 - Comments from industrial advisors and accreditation bodies as appropriate.
 - Proposed course modifications and academic approval process.
 - Resource planning for next academic year.
 - Summary report from Programme Director.

[Quality Assurance Document QA 34– Module Leader Report]

[Quality Assurance Document QA 36 – Annual Monitoring and Review Proforma]

206. All programmes will be reviewed every 5 years against the original validation requirements as specified in the validation handbook.

