

## Appendix 2: Definitions

### Introduction

For the purpose of making the NFAAR clear and unambiguous, terms are defined and used in a way that facilitates the succinct expression and combination of complex ideas.

Some of the definitions only apply to particular areas of the NFAAR:

- NFAAR-FD, which covers Foundation degree programmes and awards;
- NFAAR-HY, which covers Honours Year programmes (that lead on from Foundation degree programmes to Bachelor degree awards);
- NFAAR-UG, which covers all first degree programmes leading to Bachelor awards with honours or to Master of Architecture with honours, and all integrated first degree programmes leading to classified Master awards with honours;
- NFAAR-PGT, which covers postgraduate taught programmes; and
- NFAAR-CPD, which covers all types of awards undertaken exclusively within the University's Continuing Professional Development framework.

All are included here, in order to help make such differences clearer, where appropriate.

### Organisation of definitions

Three summaries of the ways in which particular definitions fit together in the assessment context are provided below, followed by the alphabetic list of the definitions themselves.

### Definitions relating to programmes of study

Starting with general matters, and moving gradually into more detailed matters, the definitions relating to programmes of study in the assessment context are:

- Broad types of programmes
- Coexistent and stand-alone programmes
- Programme of study
- Designated alternative programme (DAP)
- Scheme of study
- Scheme of assessment
- Programme required unit (PRU)
- Learning contract units (LCU)
- Part
- Stage
- Learning contract units at H-level (LCH)
- Taught-stage(s) credits (TSC)
- Dissertation/project credits (DPC)
- Stage required unit (SRU)
- Block
- Level
- Credit
- Unit
- Placement
- Study abroad
- Designated essential unit (DEU)
- Work-based Research Project (WRP)

### Definitions relating to components of assessment

Starting with general matters, and moving gradually into more detailed matters, the definitions relating to the components of assessment are:

- Review
- Board of Studies (BoS)
- Board of Examiners for Programmes (BEP)
- Overall programme average (OPA)
- Programme progression requirement (PPR)
- Overall stage average (OSA)
- No bad-fail
- Dissertation/project average (DPA)
- Taught-stage(s) average (TSA)
- Board of Examiners for Units (BEU)
- Deferred assessment
- Repeat
- Retrieval
- Re-assessment
- Learning contract units awaiting re-assessments (LCR)
- Supplementary assessment
- Final assessment
- Progress assessment
- Summative assessment
- Formative assessment
- Unit
- Designated essential unit (DEU)
- Level
- Credit
- Marks

### Definitions relating to assessment procedure

Assessment procedure can best be described in two timelines: a lower-level timeline that relates to events that may occur several times within a programme of study because they happen within every part or stage, and a higher-level timeline that relates to the programme of study overall.

Routine lower-level assessment events (not all will necessarily occur):

- Formative assessment
- Summative assessment (either Progress assessment or Final assessment)
- Deferred assessment
- Boards of Examiners for Units (BEUs)
- Marks
- Board of Examiners for Programmes (BEP)
- Overall stage average (OSA)
- Overall programme average (OPA)
- Taught-stage(s) average (TSA)
- Programme progression requirement (PPR)
- Dissertation/project average (DPA)
- No bad-fail
- UX (Unit for which assessment opportunities are exhausted)
- Condonement and/or compensation
- Credit
- Board of Studies (BoS)
- Retrieval
- Supplementary assessment (followed by new BEUs, BEP, and BoS)
- Repeat
- Review

Higher-level assessment events (not all will necessarily occur):

- Stage
- Summative assessment (either Progress assessment or Final assessment)
- Deferred assessment
- Part
- Supplementary assessment
- Award calculations by stages
- Overall programme average (OPA)
- Condonement and/or compensation
- Classification

## Alphabetic list of definitions

### Accreditation of prior learning (APL)

The NFAAR determines the circumstances in which a student may not continue on her/his programme because of weaker performance: this is normally at the end of a stage, but some additional performance conditions in PGT programmes could come into play before the end of a stage. At such a point, there may be a designated alternative programme that might be appropriate as an alternative way forward for the student. If the designated alternative programme is commonly used in this way to receive students from a specified other programme, it may have admission requirements for access to stages other than the initial stage written into its scheme of study. All of the judgements about the appropriateness of admitting the student to that designated alternative programme must be made as admission decisions, and unless the student is to start that programme from the beginning (in which case the normal admission requirements may be the best measure for determining the outcome) or the receiving programme has other admission requirements already specified, it is likely that the judgement will be based on the accreditation of prior learning in the programme the student is leaving.

Similarly, in cases of very high performance, a student might be eligible to transfer to a more demanding programme (e.g., from bachelor to integrated master). Here too, the accreditation of prior learning in the student's current programme will be the area of judgement as to whether the student should transfer.

For both types of move, the receiving programme should define the requirements for admission with, or without, advanced standing in the new programme. The principles and procedures for APL are set out in QA45.

### Alternative, or exit, award

For some programmes, there may be an alternative, or exit, award available to those who do not meet the requirements for the specified normal award. In the NFAAR-UG context, this might take the form of a Certificate of Higher Education or Diploma of Higher Education, or it might be a more generally titled programme that does not carry the professional accreditation approved for the specific programme. In the NFAAR-PGT context, a student aiming for a Master award might be able to be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma or a Postgraduate Certificate. In the NFAAR-FD context, a Certificate of Higher Education may be available if a Foundation degree cannot be attained, and in the NFAAR-CPD context the award aim can be agreed as part of the student's learning contract.

In some circumstances, it might be possible for students transferring to less demanding programmes to regain the original programme if subsequent performance is at an appropriate standard.

### Assessment and credit weightings

See *Overall programme average* and *Overall stage average*.

### Award calculations by stages

In the NFAAR-UG context, units are normally weighted in award calculations by their location in parts and stages, rather than by their level; this applies also to Bachelor with honours awards in the NFAAR-CPD context. Similarly, in the single-part regulations of the NFAAR-PGT context, units normally carry their credit-weighted value towards an award calculation, regardless of their individual level. Elsewhere, in the NFAAR-FD, NFAAR-HY, and NFAAR-CPD other than for Bachelor with honours awards, units normally carry their credit-weighted value towards an award calculation.

See also *Level*.

### Block

This is the term used in SAMIS, the University's Student & Applicant Management Information System, to denote a period, within an academic year (often of an academic year), which carries elements of teaching, learning, and assessment.

### Board of Examiners for Programmes (BEP)

Sometimes colloquially referred to as a Programme Board, this is expressly not associated only with individual programmes. The preservation of academic standards may be better achieved by judging results from a range of related programmes, rather than by narrowly focusing on a single programme.

Unit results are forwarded to the appropriate Board(s) of Examiners for Programmes (BEPs). BEPs are responsible for determining award classifications and for considering the progression of students registered on programmes of study under their academic authority, taking account of individual mitigating circumstances as they deem appropriate. External examiners are involved in reaching all decisions relating to the conferment of awards and the determination of final degree classifications.

BEPs assess the performance of each student and make recommendations in accordance with the NFAAR to the appropriate Board(s) of Studies concerning the progress of and/or award conferment for each student.

### Board of Examiners for Units (BEU)

Sometimes colloquially referred to as a Unit Board, these are expressly not associated only with individual units. The preservation of academic standards may be better achieved by judging results from a range of related units, rather than by narrowly focusing on a single unit.

Board of Examiners for Units (BEUs) are responsible for determining the marks achieved by students taking units under their academic authority. External examiners are involved in agreeing the marks for any final assessment.

### Board of Studies (BoS)

It is the Board of Studies which is responsible for all of the detailed implementation of academic study and assessment, and for the determination of awards to successful students for the departments and programmes within its area.

Boards of Studies consider the recommendations of the Board of Examiners for Programmes and make decisions on progression and the conferment of awards by the authority of Senate.

Boards of Studies are responsible for the publication of their decisions.

### *Broad types of programmes*

The University recognizes that three broad types of programmes lead to the awards covered by the NFAAR. Each is the product of long tradition in UK higher education, and as such their assessment patterns are familiar and reliable indicators of the standards expected of graduates.

Many of the University's programmes are closely or completely aligned with the requirements for practice in a professional context. The assessment requirements for programmes in this category are likely to stipulate that almost all, or all, assessments must be passed to qualify for the award of the appropriate degree. Such programmes can be found particularly in the NFAAR-UG and NFAAR-PGT contexts when professional requirements are important, and also in the more credit-accumulating contexts of the NFAAR-FD and NFAAR-CPD contexts.

Many other programmes are associated with those academic disciplines in which specific areas of study are individually less necessary to qualify for the award of the appropriate degree. Assessment requirements for these programmes are therefore concerned to establish that, across a range of study areas, the overall profile of achievement justifies the award of the degree. Examples of such programmes can be found particularly in the NFAAR-UG context, and also in some of the NFAAR-HY programmes.

In between, there are programmes that may be associated with an area of professional practice or may be more general in nature. They have in common that some specific, key learning outcomes must be met in order to qualify for the award of the appropriate degree. Examples of such programmes can be found particularly in the NFAAR-UG and NFAAR-PGT contexts, and also in some of the NFAAR-HY programmes.

The main difference related to assessment arising from these broad types of programmes is found in the requirements for many or some units to be passed. These requirements are transparent and evident in individual schemes of study and assessment through the identification of designated essential units.

### *C1*

This abbreviation is used in the detailed assessment criteria appendices to denote units for which the results are condonable first attempts against a pass mark of 40%, therefore with a mark no lower than 35% and no higher than 39%. C1 cannot be applied to designated essential units since they must be passed. In the NFAAR-PGT context, dissertation/project-type units must also be passed and therefore cannot be C1.

Within the more credit-accumulating contexts of the NFAAR-FD and NFAAR-CPD contexts, all units must ultimately be passed; C1 cannot be applied to units in programmes in these areas.

See also *C2, C2(3), P1, P2, P2(3), P3, P4, UX, Designated essential units, and Dissertation/project credits.*

### *C2*

This abbreviation is used in the detailed assessment criteria appendices to denote units for which the results are condonable at the second attempt against a pass mark and with marks gained as described in Appendix 7: Supplementary assessment of the relevant NFA document (NFAAR-UG, NFAAR-PGT, NFAAR-FD, NFAAR-HY, NFAAR-CPD). C2 cannot

be applied to designated essential units since they must be passed. In the NFAAR-PGT context, dissertation/project-type units must also be passed and therefore cannot be C2.

Within the more credit-accumulating contexts of the NFAAR-FD and NFAAR-CPD contexts, all units must ultimately be passed; C2 cannot be applied to units in programmes in these areas.

See also *C1, C2(3), P1, P2, P2(3), P3, P4, UX, Designated essential units, and Dissertation/project credits.*

### *C2(3)*

This abbreviation is used in the detailed assessment criteria appendices of the NFAAR-UG to denote units for which the results are condonable at the second attempt or at the third (second supplementary) attempt — in the relatively rare circumstance where a third attempt is permitted — against a pass mark and with marks gained as described in Appendix 7: Supplementary assessment of the NFAAR-UG. C2(3) cannot be applied to designated essential units since they must be passed.

See also *C1, C2, P1, P2, P2(3), P3, P4, UX, Designated essential units, and Dissertation/project credits.*

### *Classification*

The honours degrees currently covered by the NFAAR-UG, and by the NFAAR-HY and relevant sections of the NFAAR-CPD provisions, can all lead to classified awards, meaning that an indicator of overall performance is applied. Strict minimum thresholds for each honours class help to ensure the maintenance of standards. Full details of the calculation methods are provided in the NFAAR-UG, the NFAAR-HY, and the relevant sections of the NFAAR-CPD.

In the NFAAR-PGT context, and in relevant sections of the NFAAR-CPD provisions, in addition to passing and qualifying for an award, the awards may be made with merit or with distinction. Here, too, strict minimum thresholds for the merit and distinction classes help to ensure the maintenance of standards. Full details of the calculations methods are provided in the NFAAR-PGT, and the relevant sections of the NFAAR-CPD.

### *Coexistent programmes (see also Stand-alone programmes)*

This concept applies only in the NFAAR-UG, where the Master-level awards are from integrated first-degree Master programmes.

In a number of departments of the University, integrated Master with honours programmes leading to classified awards are offered alongside related Bachelor with honours programmes. In some cases, teaching may be shared in the early years of study, but in all cases the Master with honours programmes carry the student beyond the learning outcomes of Bachelor with honours programmes through a longer overall period of study to higher learning outcomes at Master level.

Where a department offers both sorts of programmes in a way that treats them as related, students might be permitted to move from the Bachelor to the Master programme if performance is very good, or might be required to move from the Master to the Bachelor programme if performance indicates that this would be more fitting. To distinguish these arrangements from other sorts of linked or related programmes, these are described as coexistent programmes.

In some departments, an integrated Master programme might be offered without there being a parallel Bachelor programme running alongside, or in a way that does not treat the two programmes as closely related. Where necessary to distinguish assessment options and outcomes, these programmes are described as stand-alone programmes.

### Condonement and/or compensation

In balancing the use of credit gained for achieving unit learning outcomes and the overall consideration of programme learning outcomes, compensation is the term used to describe a situation where good performance in one area may allow poor performance in another to be disregarded. Thus failing a unit might be condoned if there is compensating higher level performance elsewhere in the student's profile and the failure is not in a designated essential unit. Individual mitigating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners for Programmes may also allow poor performance to be condoned and credit awarded.

Compensation and the condonement of marginal failure in individual units are not allowed in the more credit-accumulating contexts of the NFAAR-FD and the NFAAR-CPD.

### Credit

In relation to a programme of study, credit is mainly a measure of relative workload. For most first degree programmes covered by NFAAR-UG, a full academic year's work will be represented as 60 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits — equivalent to 120 CATS (Credit Accumulation and Transfer System) credits. Individual units within the total required for that period will be specified as being 3, 6, 12, or a multiple of 6 credits, representing an approximate division of the work required to complete them. For most Master programmes covered by NFAAR-PGT, a full twelve months' work will be represented as 90 ECTS credits — equivalent to 180 CATS credits. While some Foundation degree and Honours Year programmes are undertaken full-time, many have part-time equivalents where the same total credit is spread over a longer period. In the NFAAR-CPD context, an individual learning contract may specify the overall units and credits required, and period available, for a particular level of award to be gained.

In relation to assessment, credit is generally a representation of the granting of recognition for the successful completion of a unit. This is most obviously true of degree programmes based on credit accumulation. Other types of programmes are more concerned with credit as a measure of relative workload, will grant recognition for work done as part of a wider assessment of achievement, and may require that the process be completed within a specified period.

### Deferred assessment

This term is used to denote assessment which is the candidate's first attempt at a later date than is normal for that assessment as the result of consideration of special circumstances which either prevented her/his assessment at the normal time, or seriously compromised that attempt. Marks gained in deferred assessment will be used in overall stage average, overall programme average, taught-stage average, and any award calculations.

See also *Supplementary assessment*.

### Designated alternative programme (DAP)

This term is used to denote programmes which are available as alternatives to pursuing the student's present programme. In cases of very high performance, a student might be eligible to transfer to a more demanding programme (e.g., from bachelor to integrated master); in cases of weaker performance in the NFAAR-UG context, an ordinary degree programme, or a less-demanding programme not carrying professional accreditation, might be available. In the NFAAR-PGT context, a student aiming for a Master award might be able to transfer to a Postgraduate Diploma programme. In the NFAAR-FD context, a Certificate of Higher Education may be available if a Foundation degree cannot be attained, and in the NFAAR-CPD context the award aim can be agreed as part of the student's learning contract.

### Designated essential unit (DEU)

Units may be required to be taken within the design of a programme of study, but designated essential units (DEUs) are those which must be passed in order to qualify to proceed with a programme or to receive its normal award at the end. Marginal failure in such units cannot be condoned.

### Director of Studies

In some contexts (in the NFAAR-FD, NFAAR-HY, and NFAAR-CPD), a Programme Leader carries out the same functions as a Director of Studies.

See also *Programme Leader*.

### Dissertation/project average (DPA)

Many Master programmes covered by the NFAAR-PGT have a taught phase followed by a dissertation/project phase. The calculation of eligibility for awards with merit or with distinction depends on performance in each of these phases meeting the relevant threshold. The DPA is the summary term for the contribution from the latter type where it exists as a later event chronologically, and is also used to summarize the assessment contribution from that type of activity when the relevant units run in parallel with taught units contemporaneously. It is calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt, or, where appropriate, according to the rules concerning the maximum mark awardable following supplementary assessment (unless taken as deferred assessment).

See also *Supplementary assessment* and *Taught stage(s) average (TSA)*.

### Dissertation/project credits (DPC)

Many Master programmes covered by the NFAAR-PGT have a taught phase followed by a dissertation/project phase. The unit(s) falling into the latter phase are summarized as dissertation/project credits. In some Master programmes, the two types of units (taught, and dissertation/project) run in parallel, contemporaneously. In this case, the DPC credits come from units that are defined as being of the dissertation/project type.

See also *Taught-stage(s) credits*.

### Exit award

See *Alternative, or exit, award*.

### Factors in award decision-making

In line with the distinctions drawn in describing broad types of programmes, decision-making about awards may not focus on the accumulation of credit alone. In addition to considering credits awarded, other

elements indicating levels of performance may also be used in specified circumstances, including the passing of designated essential units, overall programme averages, and the profile of a student's achievements.

In the NFAAR-UG context, the criteria for award decision-making, apart from the consideration of individual mitigating circumstances, are balanced between features such as overall programme average, the performance in Part 3 units, and the requirement to pass designated essential units. The first two of these features also apply to first degree awards in the NFAAR-CPD context, where all units must be passed and so there is no need for designated essential units to be identified.

In the NFAAR-PGT context, there are different requirements which reflect the more concentrated Master-level study in a shorter full-time period (or its part-time equivalents). For Master awards, for example, the calculation of eligibility for awards with merit or with distinction depends on performance meeting the relevant thresholds for the overall programme, and for the taught phase and the dissertation/project phase.

In the NFAAR-FD and the NFAAR-CPD contexts, all units must be passed, so there is no need for designated essential units to be identified.

In the NFAAR-HY context, features such as the overall programme average and performance in the Work-based Research Project are important in determining awards.

### Final assessment

Final assessments are those assessments the results of which count in determining the award or the level of the final award (Degree, Diploma or Certificate of the University).

### Formative assessment

Formative assessments are those assessments not defined in approved schemes of studies but contributing to the student's learning experience. Such formative assessment is entirely at the discretion of the appropriate academic department/school.

### Head of Department

In some contexts (in the NFAAR-FD, NFAAR-HY, and NFAAR-CPD), the Head of the Learning Partnerships Office carries out the same functions as a Head of Department.

See also *Head of Learning Partnerships Office*.

### Head of Learning Partnerships Office

In some contexts (in the NFAAR-FD, NFAAR-HY, and NFAAR-CPD), the Head of the Learning Partnerships Office carries out the same functions as a Head of Department.

See also *Head of Department*.

### Learning contract units at H-level (LCH)

In the NFAAR-CPD, these are Honours (H-level) units which a student has agreed to take as part of the agreed learning contract.

### Learning contract units awaiting re-assessment (LCR)

In the NFAAR-CPD, these are the units which a student has agreed to take as part of the agreed learning contract which have been failed at the main assessment and are now awaiting supplementary assessment.

### Learning contract units (LCU)

In the NFAAR-CPD, these are the units which a student has agreed to take as part of the agreed learning contract.

### Level

Programmes of study of the types described in this section consist of units with levels in the range Certificate (C), Intermediate (I), Honours (H), and Master (M). The University specifies minimum quantities of credit at appropriate levels for programmes leading to specified awards (see QA3, at <http://www.bath.ac.uk/quality/documents/QA3.pdf>).

In the NFAAR-UG context, it is common, but not compulsory, that units of a given level should fall in a particular stage of a programme. Thus, in a three-year full time programme leading to the degree of Bachelor with honours, there might be some I-level and some H-level units in each of years 2 and 3; this might occur, for example, because the relevant units are offered in alternate years and students will be quite capable of taking them in either their Part 2 or Part 3 periods of study.

All units taken in Stage 3 of the three-year full time programme leading to the degree of Bachelor with honours will normally be equally weighted in the degree calculation, no matter what level of unit is involved. In other words, since such provisions are made in the design stages of programmes, and since the pattern of provision is known to both the programme designers and the students on the programme, there is no adjustment for the level of unit taken in a particular stage of a programme.

In the NFAAR-PGT context, almost all units are required to be at Master-level, but the small proportion of units that may not be at Master-level will normally be weighted equally towards the calculation for an award. Here, too, this is known in the design stages of programmes, as well as being known to students on the programmes.

C- and I-level units are designed into the appropriate stages of full- and/or- part-time programmes in the NFAAR-FD context, as are H-level units in the NFAAR-HY context.

In NFAAR-CPD programmes, the levels and credit-quantities of units required are specified either in programme details or in individual learning contracts.

### Marks

Marks are a tool in using academic judgement to evaluate the performance of a student in a particular area of work. The clarity and transparency of the aggregation of unit results towards the making of an award within the NFAAR encourages the proper concentration of attention on students' performance in the units they have chosen to take. Marks may be used to help to calibrate judgement about the point at which a student has met the normal minimum learning outcomes for a unit, or, below that, a minimum point for the condonement of a marginal fail in a unit that is not a designated essential unit, or the NFAAR-PGT context, a dissertation/project unit.

Using marks in an aggregated way, through averages for stages or a whole programme, allows overall performance to be judged in a suitable variety of ways, tempered by the invariable need to pass designated essential units.

See also *Deferred assessment*, *Supplementary assessment*, and *Qualifying marks*.

### **New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations (NFAAR, NFAAR-UG, NFAAR-PGT, NFAAR-FD, NFAAR-HY, NFAAR-CPD)**

The New Framework for Assessment is about providing assessment regulations in clear and common framework contexts. The first phase of this work came into force from August 2008 for first degree programmes, as described in the NFAAR-UG. The second and third phases of the introduction of such framework regulations apply from August 2010 and August 2011 for groups of PGT programmes as described in the NFAAR-PGT. The fourth and fifth phases applies to Foundation degree programmes, Honours Year programmes, and Continuing Professional Development framework programmes from August 2011 and August 2012 as described in the NFAAR-FD, NFAAR-HY, and NFAAR-CPD respectively. These titles and abbreviations will be used until the end of transitional arrangements during which some students of the University will have their assessment conducted and awards made under other regulations. At such time, a suitable new title will be chosen.

#### **No bad-fail**

This concept is used formally in the NFAAR-PGT context to summarize the idea that, at the programme level, *no* unit may have a result lower than 35% in the overall award calculation.

The term is also used informally within the University in relation to the qualifying marks within unit assessments.

See also *Qualifying marks*.

#### **Overall programme average (OPA)**

In the NFAAR-UG, this is the term used to denote the mean average mark across all summative assessments in all stages of Part 2 and Part 3 of a programme, calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units and parts (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt (*i.e.*, not marks gained in supplementary assessment, unless taken as deferred assessment).

In the NFAAR-PGT, this is the term used to denote the mean average mark across all summative assessments in all stages of Part 4 of a programme, calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt, or, where appropriate, according to the rules concerning the maximum mark awardable following supplementary assessment (unless taken as deferred assessment).

In the NFAAR-HY, this is the term used to denote the mean average mark across all summative assessments in all stages of Part 3 of a programme, calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt, or, where appropriate, according to the rules concerning the maximum mark awardable following supplementary assessment (unless taken as deferred assessment).

In the NFAAR-CPD programmes leading to Bachelor with honours degrees, this is the term used to denote the mean average mark across all summative assessments in all stages of Part 2 and Part 3 of a programme, calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units and parts (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt (*i.e.*, not marks gained in

supplementary assessment, unless taken as deferred assessment).

In the NFAAR-CPD postgraduate programmes (leading to Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma or to Master awards), this is the term used to denote the mean average mark across all summative assessments in all stages of Part 2 (where appropriate) and Part 3 of a programme, calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt, or, where appropriate, according to the rules concerning the maximum mark awardable following supplementary assessment (unless taken as deferred assessment).

In the NFAAR-FD, this is the term used to denote the mean average mark across all summative assessments in all stages of Part 2 and Part 3 of a programme, calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt, or, where appropriate, according to the rules concerning the maximum mark awardable for re-taken units or following supplementary assessment (unless taken as deferred assessment). It is this value that is used in determining eligibility to undertake a related Honours Year programme, where appropriate.

See also *Supplementary assessment*.

#### **Overall stage average (OSA)**

In the NFAAR-UG, this is the term used to denote the mean average mark across all summative assessments in a stage of a programme, in whatever part that stage falls, calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt (*i.e.*, not marks gained in supplementary assessment, unless taken as deferred assessment).

In the NFAAR-PGT, this is the term used to denote the mean average mark across all summative assessments in a stage of a programme, calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt, or, where appropriate, according to the rules concerning the maximum mark awardable following supplementary assessment (unless taken as deferred assessment).

In the NFAAR-FD, this is the term used to denote the mean average mark across all summative assessments in a stage of a programme, calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt, or, where appropriate, according to the rules concerning the maximum mark awardable following supplementary assessment (unless taken as deferred assessment).

See also *Supplementary assessment*.

#### **P1**

This abbreviation is used in the detailed assessment criteria appendices to denote units passed at the first attempt against a pass mark of 40%, therefore with a mark greater than or equal to 40%.

See also *C1, C2, C2(3), P2, P2(3), P3, P4, and UX*.

#### **P2**

This abbreviation is used in the detailed assessment criteria appendices to denote units passed at the second attempt against a pass mark described in Appendix 7: Supplementary assessment of the relevant NFA document (NFAAR-UG, NFAAR-PGT, NFAAR-FD, NFAAR-HY, NFAAR-CPD).

See also *C1, C2, C2(3), P1, P2(3), P3, P4, and UX*.

### **P2(3)**

This abbreviation is used in the detailed assessment criteria appendices of the NFAAR-UG to denote units passed at the second attempt or at the third (second supplementary) attempt — in the relatively rare circumstances where a third attempt is permitted —

against a pass mark described in Appendix 7: Supplementary assessment of the NFAAR-UG).

See also *C1, C2, C2(3), P1, P2, P3, P4, and UX*.

### **P3**

This abbreviation is used in the detailed assessment criteria appendices of the NFAAR-FD to denote re-taken units passed at the first attempt against a pass mark described in Appendix 7: Supplementary assessment of the NFAAR-FD.

See also *C1, C2, C2(3), P1, P2, P2(3), P4, and UX*.

### **P4**

This abbreviation is used in the detailed assessment criteria appendices to denote re-taken units passed at the second attempt against a pass mark described in Appendix 7: Supplementary assessment of the NFAAR-FD.

See also *C1, C2, C2(3), P1, P2, P2(3), P3, and UX*.

### **Part**

This term is used to distinguish periods within programmes of study which are treated in different ways for assessment purposes.

In the NFAAR-UG context, and considering the simple case of a three-year programme leading to a BSc award, the first year is labelled as Part 1, and its assessment will normally be used only to determine the student's fitness to proceed to the rest of the programme. Re-assessment of failed units is common here, within prescribed limits. Some limited condonement of marginally-failed units is allowed where compensated by good performance overall.

The middle year of this programme is labelled as Part 2: its assessment will contribute to the calculation for an award in due course, but will not see the completion of all that is required for the award. Re-assessment of failed units is common here within prescribed limits, but marks gained on re-assessment will not be carried into award calculations. (Only when an entire stage of a programme has to be repeated, including all teaching and assessment, does the student start with a clean slate, and the prospect of achieving a new set of marks that will be carried into award calculations.) Some limited condonement of marginally-failed units is allowed where compensated by good performance overall.

The final year of this programme is labelled as Part 3: its assessment will contribute to, and will be the last to be taken by the student before, the calculation for an award. Re-assessment is less common here, and is permitted only in specified circumstances. However, some condonement of failed units is allowed where overall learning outcomes will have been met.

A four-year programme leading to an integrated master's degree award has two middle years which fall into the Part 2 category.

In the NFAAR-PGT context, the entire programme periods are labelled as Part 4. Throughout these programmes, assessment is used to contribute to decisions about eligibility for the qualification aim, progression, and upon completion of the programme

for the award. Part 4 is distinguished from Part 2 and Part 3 assessments because different rules govern, for example, supplementary assessment, and the aggregation of marks towards an award calculation. Some limited condonement of marginally failed units is allowed where the overall programme learning outcomes will have been met.

In other groups of programmes, the balance of such provisions is applied to reach similar ends by different means.

In the NFAAR-CPD context, the continuing professional development aims of the programmes are met by providing opportunities to manage study contributing to an award that may extend over a longer period. Individual learning contracts define the study to be undertaken. Here, there is no condonement of even marginally-failed units, but there are no limits on the re-taking of individual failed units. This helps to ensure that learning is securely built over longer periods. Otherwise, Part 1 study covers that which is used only to determine the student's fitness to proceed to the rest of the programme; Part 2 study covers that which will contribute to the calculation for an award in due course, but will not see the completion of all that is required for the award; and Part 3 study will be the last to be taken by the student before the calculation for an award. Where a greater award is being sought, the CPD framework also normally provides for lesser awards to be made if the full programme is not completed successfully.

In the NFAAR-FD context, all of the shorter study for a Foundation degree counts towards the award in due course, so Part 2 study covers that which will contribute to the calculation for an award in due course, but will not see the completion of all that is required for the award; and Part 3 study is designed to be the last to be taken by the student before, the calculation for an award. Such programmes can often be taken part-time. Here too, there is no condonement of even marginally-failed units, but individual failed units may be re-taken or retrieved in supplementary assessment within limits. A Certificate of Higher Education award may be made in appropriate circumstances if the full programme is not completed successfully.

In the NFAAR-HY context, the short period of study that allows a Foundation degree graduate to reach a Bachelor with honours award requires a differently balanced provision of assessment. It constitutes Part 3 study that will contribute to, and will be the last to be taken by the student before, the calculation for an award. Re-assessment is less common here, and is permitted only in specified circumstances. Some condonement of failed units is allowed where the overall programme learning outcomes will have been met.

See QA3 Approval of New Programmes of Study for relevant diagrammatic examples.

### **Placement**

In the NFAAR-UG context, two types of placement are distinguished within the University's thick- or thin-sandwich programmes. For the purposes of assessment regulations, the relevant distinguishing feature is that while all placement units must include a mechanism for assessing appropriately the learning outcomes of the placement, the enhanced variety also carries 'assessed work in relation to the placement that contributes directly and non-trivially to the degree classification'.

Any placements in other NFAAR contexts are defined more fully by the relevant programme regulations.

### Programme Leader

In some contexts (in the NFAAR-FD, NFAAR-HY, and NFAAR-CPD), a Programme Leader carries out the same functions as a Director of Studies.

See also *Director of Studies*.

### Programme of study

Programmes of study are those compulsory, optional and elective units defined within approved schemes which lead to named awards of the University.

### Programme progression requirement (PPR)

In the NFAAR-PGT context, some programmes have separate stages for taught, and then for dissertation/project, units. Normally, where two stages occur in sequence like this, there is a requirement for a given average mark (the taught-stage(s) average — TSA) to be achieved to allow progression to the dissertation/project stage. The minimum such requirement for the TSA is 40%, so the programme progression requirement allows this minimum, or any higher requirement set particular programme regulations, to be identified for comparison with the TSA figure.

See also *Taught-stage(s) average*.

### Programme required unit (PRU)

In the NFAAR-PGT context, there may sometimes be the opportunity to undertake study which is not required for progression or award decisions within the programme. The concept of programme required units (PRUs) allows easy reference to those units which are part of the determination of progression or award decisions.

In the NFAAR-FD context, programme required units (PRUs) allow easy reference to those units which are required for eligibility for lesser awards as well as for the normal final award being sought by the student.

### Progress assessment

Progress assessments are those assessments the results of which contribute to the evaluation of a candidate's fitness to proceed from one stage of the programme of study, to the next.

### Qualifying marks

A qualifying mark is an 'additional' pass mark used for individual assessment components as well as the usual overall unit pass mark. They are usually used to ensure that students attempt every component of an assessment, or, for example, to prevent students passing by doing very well in the coursework but failing the examination. They are irrelevant to units that are completely assessed by one method. They are frequently used to enforce a limit (often known as a 'bad fail' rule) on the extent to which performance in one method of assessment can compensate for that in another, and are set lower than the overall unit pass mark. (It should be noted that the term *no bad-fail rule* is also used in the NFAAR-PGT context to summarize the idea that, at the programme level, *no* unit may have a result lower than 35% in the overall award calculation.)

For students covered by the NFAAR-UG, an example would be a unit that comprising 50% coursework and 50% examination, each with qualifying marks of 35%. If a student achieves 80% and 20% respectively (*i.e.* a weighted average of 50%), the overall unit result would be a fail, due to the coursework failing the qualifying mark, and the mark would be capped to 39%. In the NFAAR-UG context, if this result required supplementary assessment to be undertaken, this fail mark would be carried forward into overall stage

average, overall programme average, and any award calculations (unless taken as deferred assessment); in the NFAAR-PGT context, it would be possible to achieve a maximum mark of 40% at supplementary assessment.

### R1

In the NFAAR-FD, this identifies a unit where the degree of failure is modest ( $\geq 30\%$ ) and where the units is not one that is required to be passed before progression to the next stage could be safely allowed. Students demonstrating performance in this range would, subject to meeting other related criteria such as a minimum overall stage average, be deemed to have a reasonable chance of being successful in supplementary assessment before the start of the next academic period. Beyond this range, students would be required to repeat the failed units (or possibly to repeat the entire stage of study).

See also *Overall stage average (OSA)*, and *Stage required unit (SRU)*.

### Re-assessment

This is a label used to cover all of the cases where the assessment for a unit (or part of it) is attempted again, without re-taking the teaching and learning of the unit.

### Repeat

This term is used to denote the undertaking again of the teaching and assessment for a unit or units in the next appropriate academic period, without yet progressing to the next stage of the programme.

Except in circumstances specifically approved (such as some provisions for individual mitigating circumstances, or progression to placements in the NFAAR-UG, or in relation to units that are not stage required units (SRUs) in the NFAAR-PGT), no trailing of failed units to be repeated alongside the requirements of a new stage is permitted.

Repeating individual failed units is not normally permitted within the NFAAR-UG or the NFAAR-HY contexts. Where the repeat of an entire stage is permitted in the NFAAR-UG or in the NFAAR-FD, the marks gained on repeating the entire stage will be reported to the student for feedback purposes and will be used in the overall stage average, in the overall programme average, and in any award calculation.

The repeating of stages is not normally permitted within the NFAAR-PGT.

The repeating of individual failed units is permitted in specific provisions of the NFAAR-FD and NFAAR-CPD — contexts where all units must be passed and no condonement of even marginally-failed units is allowed.

### Retrieval

This is a label used for the general concept of getting back from failure in some units to a path which could lead on to success overall. It is used in more general contexts where the method of retrieval (*e.g.*, supplementary assessment, re-sitting the assessment, re-taking the unit) does not need to be, or is not yet, specified.

### Review

A student may seek a review of a Board of Studies' decision on any of the grounds listed in Regulation 17. Regulation 17 outlines the review procedures to be adopted in such a case.

### *Scheme of assessment*

Schemes of assessment outline the regulations for progression and conferment associated with particular programmes. Schemes of assessment are published by the departments/schools concerned and are available to students.

### *Scheme of study*

Schemes of study are those documents which set down the approved curriculum, rules, requirements and scheme of assessment for a programme of study.

### *Stage*

This term allows for easier comparison of programmes which might be studied on a full-time or a part-time basis, and for some which have a more flexible duration of study. The general principle is that stages should be defined first, and that only then will the periods over which they are studied be specified. The concept is particularly helpful in establishing how assessment arrangements fall within the programme.

In practice, within the NFAAR-UG, for most existing full-time first degree programmes, stages correspond to years of study. Considering the simple case of a three-year programme leading to a BSc award, the first year will be termed as Stage 1, the second year as Stage 2, and the final year as Stage 3: each stage would match the Part designations described above.

The significance of the stage concept is that stages can remain the same for part-time students who study over longer periods. If the same BSc programme were undertaken on a part-time basis over six years, each stage might last for two years. The designation of stages allows students at corresponding points on the full-time and part-time versions of programmes to be treated in the same manner for the same purposes.

Sometimes, however, full- and part-time programmes leading to the same award (e.g., a particular Foundation degree) will be separately designed and the stages will not be precisely equivalent. Such designs will take account of the need to offer equitable assessment opportunities.

The stage concept also facilitates the clearer description of programmes where significantly distinct activities occur within a year of study, or where one component straddles two years. Both such events occur commonly in thin-sandwich programmes in the NFAAR-UG context.

In the NFAAR-PGT context, stages may be used to differentiate important separate phases within a year of full-time study, such as two semesters of taught units being distinct from the summer period when a dissertation/project unit is undertaken. Where such distinctions are not important, perhaps because the two types of study occur simultaneously, in parallel, separate stages would not be defined. In the NFAAR-PGT context, stages are also important for establishing the equivalent moments for assessment decision-making in full-time and part-time programmes.

In contexts where modular delivery and credit-accumulation are important, such as the NFAAR-CPD, stages may be more important in providing clarity and coherence in programme structures, such that the longer periods of study and assessment can be better managed.

See QA3 Approval of New Programmes of Study for relevant diagrammatic examples.

### *Stage required unit (SRU)*

In some NFAAR-PGT and some NFAAR-FD programmes, separate stages may be identified, but only certain units might be defined as needing to halt progression to the next stage, pending supplementary assessment. Such units would be identified as stage required units (SRUs).

A typical full-time two-stage Master-aiming programme would comprise a first stage of two semesters of taught units, followed by a second stage in the summer period containing the dissertation/project unit. It is possible that just one taught unit — a dissertation-preparation unit, perhaps — would need to be passed before progression to stage 2 could be permitted. Any other single-unit failure from stage 1 might be retrievable by supplementary assessment taken alongside the dissertation/project unit during the summer period.

Thus, the definition of SRUs within programme regulations will determine stage completion requirements, and which units requiring supplementary assessment must be retrieved before progression is permitted.

In this NFAAR-PGT context, a SRU is different from a DEU: the former must be passed before progressing to the next stage, while failure in the latter if not also a SRU, might be retrieved in supplementary assessment alongside the study of the next stage.

### *Stand-alone programmes (see also Coexistent programmes)*

In some departments, an integrated Master programme might be offered without there being a parallel Bachelor programme running alongside, or in a way that does not treat the two programmes as closely related. Where necessary to distinguish assessment options and outcomes, these programmes are described as stand-alone programmes.

### *Study abroad*

Periods of study abroad fall into two categories: those which substitute for, and those which are supplementary to, normal academic study.

Periods of study abroad that substitute for normal academic study in the programme are treated as being such normal academic study for the purposes of progress and final assessment.

Periods of study abroad that are supplementary to normal academic study in the programme are treated as placement periods and are classed as standard or enhanced for assessment purposes.

### *Summative assessments*

Summative assessments are those assessments defined within approved schemes of studies to test the achievement of learning outcomes. They are assessments used to determine progression, or eligibility for an award approved by Senate or by any formally-constituted body receiving delegated authority from Senate to undertake such approval. Summative assessments can be either Final assessments or Progress assessments according to the individual scheme of study.

### *Supplementary assessment*

Supplementary assessments are those assessments approved by the appropriate Board of Studies for deferred assessment or retrieval of failure in accordance with the provisions of approved schemes. Supplementary assessments are regarded as Final assessments and/or Progress assessments

in accordance with the provision of the individual scheme of study.

Within the NFAAR-UG, this term is normally used for the opportunity to retrieve failure before the start of the next stage of a programme.

Within the NFAAR-PGT, where study is predominantly or exclusively at a single (Master) level, the term may be more variably used dependent upon the requirements for stage completion, as determined by stage required units (SRUs). The existence of SRUs, as well as the extent of unit failures and their severity, will also influence access to supplementary assessment in the NFAAR-FD context.

Within the NFAAR-CPD, having more than a specified limit of supplementary assessment outstanding will prevent the student starting on study for further units.

In the NFAAR-UG context, and in relation to undergraduate programmes within the NFAAR-CPD (leading to Certificate/Diploma of Higher Education, Foundation degree, or Bachelor with honours), unless specifically granted the opportunity to take assessment as for the first time at a supplementary assessment point, students will have the opportunity to gain credit for units then successfully passed and to have the mark gained reported to them for feedback purposes, but the original failure marks will be used in the overall stage average, in the overall programme average, and in any award calculation. Where the assessment is taken as for the first time, the marks gained will be used in the overall stage average, in the overall programme average, and in any award calculation.

In the NFAAR-UG context, there are some relatively rare circumstances in which students may suspend study for a third (second supplementary) attempt to retrieve failure in order to qualify to proceed on a stand-alone programme of study.

In the NFAAR-PGT and the NFAAR-HY contexts, and in relation to postgraduate programmes within the NFAAR-CPD (leading to Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma, or Master), unless specifically granted the opportunity to take assessment as for the first time at a supplementary assessment point, students will have the opportunity to gain credit for units then successfully passed and to have the mark gained reported to them for feedback purposes, but a maximum mark of 40% will be awarded and used (as appropriate) in the overall stage average, in the overall programme average, the taught-stage(s) average, and in any award calculation. Where the assessment is taken as for the first time, the marks gained will be used (as appropriate) in the overall stage average, in the overall programme average, taught-stage(s) average, and in any award calculation.

In the NFAAR -FD context, unless specifically granted the opportunity to take assessment as for the first time at a supplementary assessment point, or to re-take units as for the first time, students will have the opportunity to gain credit for units then successfully passed and to have the mark gained reported to them for feedback purposes, but a maximum mark of 40% will be awarded and used in the overall stage average, in the overall programme average, and in any award calculation. Where the assessment is taken as for the first time, the marks gained will be used in the overall stage average, in the overall programme average, and in any award calculation.

See also *Deferred assessment* and *Qualifying marks*.

### Taught-stage(s) average (TSA)

Many Master programmes covered by the NFAAR-PGT and within the NFAAR-CPD have a taught phase followed by a dissertation/project phase. The calculation of eligibility for awards with merit or with distinction depends on performance in each of these phases meeting the relevant threshold. The TSA is the summary term for the contribution from the former type where it exists as an earlier event chronologically, and is also used to summarize the assessment contribution from that type of activity when the relevant units run in parallel with dissertation/project units contemporaneously. It is calculated according to the weightings of the constituent units (or any other scheme specifically approved for the purpose), as gained at the first attempt, or, where appropriate, according to the rules concerning the maximum mark awardable following supplementary assessment (unless taken as deferred assessment).

See also *Dissertation/project average (DPA)* and *Supplementary assessment*.

### Taught-stage(s) credits (TSC)

Many Master programmes covered by the NFAAR-PGT and within the NFAAR-CPD have a taught phase followed by a dissertation/project phase. The unit falling into the former phase are summarized as taught-stage credits. In some Master programmes, the two types of units (taught, and dissertation/project) run in parallel, contemporaneously. In this case, the TSC credits come from units that are defined as being of the taught type.

See also *Dissertation/project credits*.

### Unit

Units are discrete components of learning with defined outcomes and discrete assessment. Each unit has a credit weighting which represents its fractional contribution to a student's notional workload in a full-time academic year of study.

Each unit within the University's modularised academic framework has its own assessment requirements which enable a Board of Examiners for Units to determine whether or not a candidate has achieved the intended learning outcomes.

### UX

In the NFAAR-FD, this signifies a failed unit (<40%) for which all retrieval and re-take attempts have been exhausted. In such an event, no further attempt at assessment, nor any repeat of a stage, will be permitted.

In this context, the *maximum* number of attempts would be a first main and supplementary assessment, and a re-take main and supplementary assessment: these four opportunities might be reduced in circumstances where the student's performance precludes an opportunity to undertake supplementary assessment.

All retrieval and re-take attempts will have been exhausted for a unit:

- Not passed (P4) at a re-take supplementary assessment;
- Not passed (P3) at a re-take main assessment where the unit mark is not R1 (i.e., <30%).

The count up to UX is re-started for a student who is required to repeat an entire stage.

See also *P1, P2, P3, P4, and R1*.

### *Whole stage repeat (WSR)*

In the NFAAR-UG, in all stages of Parts 1 and 2, students who fail a unit within set limits at the first attempt are normally given a chance to retrieve that failure through supplementary assessment: this is what is meant by “only TWO attempts”. Failure beyond those limits will result in more serious immediate consequences. In Part 3, supplementary assessment for the retrieval of failure is only available for designated essential units that might have been failed within set limits: thus the “only TWO attempts” is here only available for DEUs.

In some circumstances, students in Part 1 or Part 2 stages of a programme governed by the NFAAR-UG might be required to repeat the whole stage to retrieve a failing performance that falls within set limits. Where stage repeats are possible within the set limits, the repeating of any stage will be permitted once only, with effect from any stage undertaken (whether for the first or a subsequent time) in the academic year 2011/12.

In Part 3 of programmes governed by the NFAAR-UG, whole stage repeats for the retrieval of failure are not permitted (unless as an appropriate outcome after consideration of individual mitigating circumstances).

Whole stage repeats are not permitted in programmes governed by the NFAAR-PGT or the NFAAR-HY (unless as an appropriate outcome after consideration of individual mitigating circumstances).

Whole stage repeats are not relevant in the NFAAR-CPD context, and are therefore not part of the decision-making parameters there.

A wider range of progression decision tools is available in the NFAAR-FD context. Where a whole stage repeat is permitted here, it is also available once only.

### *Work-based Research Project (WRP)*

In the NFAAR-HY, the Work-based Research Project unit has a particular role to play in determining the honours classification. Performance at specified levels in this unit can contribute to a higher classification being awarded in circumstances where such a classification would not be achieved through the overall programme average alone.

See also *Overall programme average (OPA)*.

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