

Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations

Contents

Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations.....	1
Version	2
Scope and content	2
Limitations	3
Core rules for decision-making	3
Meeting the requirements of the core rules	3
Failure to meet requirements for the intended award	6
Award rules	6
Academic Appeals	9
Appendix 1: Terms used in these assessment regulations	10
Appendix 2: Academic decision making.....	13
Appendix 3: Illustrative flowchart.....	14
Appendix 4: Order of precedence for exit award eligibility consideration.....	16

Version

1. This is **version 22-23.2** of the Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations. These regulations were approved by Senate via Chair's Action on 14 December 2023.

Scope and content

2. This document sets out the postgraduate taught rules for assessment including outcomes, progression, and award eligibility and classification. Courses making awards under these assessment regulations will state this in their course specifications along with detail of any agreed exemptions from the normal rules. The applicability of these regulations will be clear in student information about the course.
3. Where courses have agreed exemptions from provisions set out in these regulations, these have been agreed by the Education Quality and Standards Committee (EQSC) under decision-making powers delegated by Senate.
4. Appendices within this document provide further information and references related to academic decision-making:
 - a. **Appendix 1:** Definitions of terms used in these assessment regulations.
 - b. **Appendix 2:** Signposting to related rules and procedures for academic decision making, including the University's Regulations for Students and Quality Assurance Code of Practice.
 - c. **Appendix 3:** An illustrative flowchart of Board of Examiners for Courses considerations.
 - d. **Appendix 4:** The order of precedence for exit award eligibility consideration, along with a summary of the award and classification criteria for each award.
5. Within these assessment regulations, core rules are underpinned by further rules that define how academic outcomes are achieved and assessment opportunities are determined. These assessment regulations also describe rules for deciding award eligibility and, for some awards, classification.
6. Within these assessment regulations, when a rule contains "normally", this indicates that the rule as written is the default action or expectation that will almost always be used. Boards of Examiners for Courses and Boards of Studies may exercise limited flexibility for individual students in exceptional instances where this is (a) robust for the specific course and its academic requirements and (b) appropriate for the student's individual circumstances.
7. Within these assessment regulations, where a rule is preceded by "IMCs", this indicates that agreed Individual Mitigating Circumstances (IMCs) for a unit may allow additional recommendations to be made by the Board of Examiners for Courses.

Limitations

8. Penalties imposed as a result of disciplinary or academic misconduct processes may affect normal outcomes or limit opportunities under these assessment regulations. Students will be advised if this is the case in their individual circumstances.
9. UK government visa requirements for international students may on occasion limit what is possible for individual students irrespective of what is permitted within these assessment regulations. Students will be advised if this is the case in their individual circumstances.

Core rules for decision-making

10. The following core rules apply to all awards made under these regulations:

Rule A: The maximum period of study is the course duration plus two academic years within which to complete outstanding supplementary assessments.

Rule B: All units required for an intended award must be passed or condoned (where condonement is permitted by Rules D and E).

Rule C: One reassessment attempt for failed assessment(s) is allowed in a failed unit.

Rule D: Some unit credit can be condoned after reassessment, within specified limits and restrictions for award eligibility.

Rule E: Units designated Must Pass Units (MPUs) must be passed and cannot be condoned.

Rule F: Students must pass the University's mandatory academic integrity test to be eligible for any award.

Meeting the requirements of the core rules

Rule A: The maximum period of study is the course duration plus two academic years within which to complete outstanding supplementary assessments.

11. There are normally no barriers to progression on a postgraduate taught course.
12. The course requirements for the intended award will normally be met before the maximum period of study is reached.
13. Course specifications for part-time and/or longer-duration courses may describe different requirements for the maximum period of study and supplementary assessment through agreed exemptions.
14. Course study must normally be completed within the course duration. A period of suspension of registration may be permitted, as described in Regulation 16.
15. Assessment, including supplementary assessment (reassessment or deferred assessment), may be taken within the course duration and up to the end of the maximum period of study.

16. Any outstanding supplementary assessment must be completed within two academic years of the original decision to require it and within the maximum period of study. If the maximum period of study will be exceeded a student will not normally be permitted to undertake any further assessment, even if they are otherwise eligible to do so. Periods of suspension of registration, as described in Regulation 16, will not be possible once course study is completed.
17. **IMCs:** In extraordinary cases the Board of Studies may extend the maximum period of study for a student. It is also possible for the Board of Studies to agree individual special patterns of assessment and/or study. Academic judgement exercised in the specific context of the course and the circumstances of the student will determine what, if any, exceptional arrangements are appropriate.

Rule B: All units required for an intended award must be passed or condoned (where condonement is permitted by Rules D and E).

18. A unit is passed, and credit is awarded, when the weighted average of all summative assessments within the unit meets or exceeds the pass mark of 50%. Any additional, agreed pass requirements or thresholds for the unit must also be met and will be described in the unit specification.
19. Course specifications may also describe agreed requirements, such as unit prerequisites or specific levels of OCA achievement, for undertaking specific units.
20. A unit mark is the mean of all summative assessments for the unit, calculated using the approved summative assessment weightings in the agreed unit description and rounded to the nearest integer (zero decimal places).
21. Unit credit is not divisible. Partial credit for partial completion of a unit's summative assessment requirements is not permitted.
22. Failed units may reassessed but study will not be repeated.
23. Additional units beyond those specified for the course may not be taken or substituted to meet course requirements.

Rule C: One reassessment attempt for failed assessment(s) is allowed in a failed unit.

24. Students are normally permitted two attempts to meet the requirements to pass a unit:
 - a. a first attempt at assessment(s), and
 - b. a reassessment (second) attempt at assessment(s).
25. The need to take supplementary assessment (reassessment or deferred assessment) is established through a failed unit outcome agreed by a Board of Studies.
26. There is no opportunity or requirement to undertake any supplementary assessment when a unit has been passed or condoned, irrespective of IMCs.
27. Students will only take reassessment in failed assessment(s) within a failed unit.

28. When a unit is passed following reassessment, a capped mark of 50% will be awarded for the unit and will be used in the calculation of the Overall Course Average (OCA).
29. If a unit is failed following reassessment, the highest of the two failed unit marks will be used in the calculation of the OCA.
30. **IMCs:** Supplementary assessment for a failed, IMC-flagged unit will be deferred assessment. Deferred assessment will be in failed assessment items(s) only.
31. **IMCs:** When deferred assessment is taken, a new unit mark will be calculated. When the deferred assessment(s) is for the first attempt to pass the unit, the new unit mark will be an uncapped mark calculated using deferred assessment mark(s). Deferred assessment after a unit has been failed at reassessment (second attempt) will result in a new unit mark (capped to 50% if the unit is passed). The assessment mark(s) achieved through deferred assessment will replace the original assessment mark(s) and a new unit mark will be calculated and used in the OCA.
32. Supplementary opportunities for formal examinations take place during the University's formal assessment periods: either at the normal next opportunity for the unit (semester 1 or semester 2 examination period), or during the summer supplementary examination period. Students will be advised of the timing for assessments that are not formal examinations.
33. All supplementary assessment attempts must take place before the maximum period of study is exceeded. If the maximum period of study will be exceeded a student will not normally be permitted to undertake any further reassessment or deferred assessment, regardless of whether they are otherwise eligible to do so.

Rule D: Some unit credit can be condoned after reassessment, within specified limits and restrictions for award eligibility.

34. Credit may be awarded for a limited amount of unit failure (condonement).
35. When unit failure is condoned credit will be awarded and unit requirements will be considered met. The actual achieved unit mark (which must be in the condonement range of 45%-49%) will be awarded and will be used in the OCA calculation.
36. The maximum amount of unit failure that can be condoned within award requirements is:
 - a. For a course leading to a Master award, up to a maximum of 20 ECTS.
 - b. For a named Postgraduate Diploma, as either an intended award or a classified exit award, up to a maximum of 10 ECTS.
 - c. For a named Postgraduate Certificate, as either an intended award or a classified exit award, no condoned credit is allowed.
 - d. For a generic Postgraduate Certificate or a generic Postgraduate Diploma, no condoned credit is allowed.

37. When a unit remains failed following reassessment, it may be condoned with credit awarded if the following criteria are met:
- a. The unit mark is between 45%–49%.
 - b. The unit is not designated as a Must-Pass Unit.
 - c. The unit would not exceed the maximum amount of condonement allowed for the award requirements.
38. **IMCs:** IMCs do not permit additional condonement beyond the maximum for each award. However, where eligible, the Board of Examiners may exceptionally condone failure before a reassessment attempt where this would be appropriate to both the student’s circumstances and the requirements of the course.

Rule E: Units designated Must Pass Units (MPUs) must be passed and cannot be condoned.

39. MPUs will not be condoned.

40. **IMCs:** A failed IMC-affected MPU will not be condoned. A failed IMC-affected MPU will be permitted deferred assessment.

Rule F: Students must pass the University’s mandatory academic integrity test to be eligible for any award.

41. All students must pass the University’s mandatory academic integrity test to be eligible for any award. Requirements will be made clear to students.

Failure to meet requirements for the intended award

42. A student may continue to study during the course duration even if they are no longer eligible to meet the requirements for the intended award. A student is permitted to attempt supplementary assessment up to the maximum period of study, subject to eligibility under the core rules of these assessment regulations.

Award rules

Overall Course Average (OCA)

43. The Overall Course Average (OCA) is the credit-weighted average of the marks from all units required to contribute to the award. The OCA is calculated and presented to two decimal places.

Award eligibility consideration and award classification criteria

44. Where the intended award is a Master degree, consideration for award eligibility will normally be made in the following order of precedence (see also Appendix 4):

- i. Master degree (classified)
- ii. Named Postgraduate Diploma (classified; where specified as an exit award)
- iii. Generic Postgraduate Diploma (not classified)

- iv. Named Postgraduate Certificate (classified; where specified as an exit award)
- v. Generic Postgraduate Certificate (not classified)

Where there are professional body, accreditation, or other discipline rationales, course specifications may describe a different order for award consideration.

- 45. A student will exit without award if they have not met the specified criteria for an award and are no longer eligible for opportunities to meet their course requirements. No award will be made where less than 30 ECTS of units have been passed.
- 46. Aegrotat awards may be awarded in extraordinary circumstances, as outlined in University Ordinances 14.8 and 14.9. In the case of postgraduate taught study, the candidate will normally have completed a substantial proportion of the award requirements for a classified aegrotat award to be considered.

Award of a Master degree

- 47. A student will be eligible to be considered for the award of a Master degree if 90 ECTS at FHEQ level 7 have been passed or condoned, an OCA of 50.00% has been achieved, and all specified course and award requirements have been met.
- 48. If eligible to be considered for the award of Master the following award classification criteria will be used in sequence:
 - a. The degree of Master with distinction will be awarded to a student who has achieved an OCA of at least 70.00%.
 - b. The degree of Master with merit will be awarded to a student who has achieved an OCA of at least 60.00%.
 - c. The degree of Master will be awarded to a student who has achieved an OCA of at least 50.00%.
- 49. **IMCs:** Where a student has IMC-flagged units, the Board of Examiners for Courses (BEC) should consider the extraordinary uplift of the OCA-calculated classification to the next higher classification (no more than 10.00% equivalent uplift). This academic judgement will be made based on evidence from the student's relevant non-IMC affected academic achievement. There is no requirement for the BEC to recommend such an uplift, only that it should be considered where IMCs are present.

Award of Named Postgraduate Diploma

- 50. A student will be eligible to be considered for an award of a named Postgraduate Diploma, either as an intended award or as a specified exit award, if 60 ECTS of relevant units at FHEQ level 7 have been passed or condoned, and all specified course and award requirements have been met. Course specifications will identify which units are relevant to the award requirements in this context.
- 51. If eligible to be considered for the award of Postgraduate Diploma the following award classification criteria will be used in sequence:

- a. The Postgraduate Diploma with distinction will be awarded to a student who has achieved an OCA of at least 70.00% across the relevant units.
 - b. The Postgraduate Diploma with merit will be awarded to a student who has achieved an OCA of at least 60.00% across the relevant units.
 - c. The Postgraduate Diploma will be awarded to a student who has achieved an OCA of at least 50.00% across the relevant units.
52. **IMCs:** Where a student has IMC-flagged units, the BEC should consider the extraordinary uplift of the OCA-calculated classification to the next higher classification (no more than 10.00% equivalent uplift). This academic judgement will be made based on evidence from the student's relevant non-IMC affected academic achievement. There is no requirement for the BEC to recommend such an uplift, only that it should be considered where IMCs are present.

Award of Named Postgraduate Certificate

53. A student will be eligible to be considered for an award of a named Postgraduate Certificate, either as an intended award or as a specified exit award, if 30 ECTS of relevant units at FHEQ level 7 have been passed and all specified course and award requirements have been met. Course specifications will identify which units are relevant to the award requirements in this context.
54. If eligible to be considered for the award of Postgraduate Certificate the following award classification criteria will be used in sequence:
- a. The Postgraduate Certificate with distinction will be awarded to a student who has achieved an OCA of at least 70.00% across the relevant units.
 - b. The Postgraduate Certificate with merit will be awarded to a student who has achieved an OCA of at least 60.00% across the relevant units.
 - c. The Postgraduate Certificate will be awarded to a student who has achieved an OCA of at least 50.00% across the relevant units.
55. **IMCs:** Where a student has IMC-flagged units, the BEC should consider the extraordinary uplift of the OCA-calculated classification to the next higher classification (no more than 10.00% equivalent uplift). This academic judgement will be made based on evidence from the student's relevant non-IMC affected academic achievement. There is no requirement for the BEC to recommend such an uplift, only that it should be considered where IMCs are present.

Award of Generic Postgraduate Exit Awards

56. A student will be eligible to be considered for a non-classified and unnamed, generic Postgraduate exit award upon withdrawal from their course for any reason in accordance with the normal order of precedence.
57. The following award criteria will be used:
- i. The Postgraduate Diploma will be awarded to a student who has passed at least 60 ECTS at FHEQ level 7.

- ii. The Postgraduate Certificate will be awarded to a student who has passed at least 30 ECTS at FHEQ level 7.

Academic Appeals

58. Students wishing to make an academic appeal against a decision of the Board of Studies should refer to Regulation 17 of the University's *Regulations for Students* and guidance available on the University website.

Appendix 1: Terms used in these assessment regulations

Assessment, deferred: The type of supplementary assessment taken when a unit has been failed and there is an IMC flag for the unit. A student is permitted to take deferred assessment in only the failed assessment items, and the deferred assessment will be equivalent to the attempt that was failed (either a first or second attempt). There is no requirement or opportunity to take deferred assessment if an assessment item(s) has been failed but a unit has been passed overall. Deferred assessment normally takes the same form as the failed assessment(s).

Assessment, reassessment: The default type of supplementary assessment taken when a unit has been failed and there is no IMC flag for the unit. A student will only take reassessment in the specific assessment(s) failed within a failed unit, and the reassessment will be a second and final attempt. There is no requirement or opportunity to be reassessed if an assessment item has been passed in a failed unit. There is no requirement or opportunity to be reassessed if an assessment item has been failed but a unit has been passed overall. Reassessment may be a different form from the original assessment that was failed provided the reassessment allows the student an equivalent opportunity to meet the unit's intended learning outcomes.

Assessment, summative: Summative assessments are the assessments defined within approved unit descriptions to test the achievement of learning outcomes. The agreed marks from summative assessments are used to calculate the unit mark.

Assessment, supplementary: The umbrella term for the two possible types of assessment attempt (deferred assessment or reassessment) when a unit is failed.

Award, *aegrotat*: An award that may be considered in extraordinary circumstances, for example, when significant ill health or death prevent completion of study. Ordinances 14.8 and 14.9 contain detail of requirements.

Award, exit: An alternative award (for example, a named or generic Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate) that a student may be eligible to be awarded if they are unable to meet the requirements of the intended award for the course. Exit awards have specific requirements for eligibility.

Award, intended: The intended award is the primary award associated with a student's course (for example, a Master award).

Boards of Examiners for Courses (BEC): These Boards of Examiners are also known in University regulations and quality assurance documentation as the Boards of Examiners for Programmes (BEP). The meaning is the same. The term BEP will be replaced by BEC over time.

Condonement: Condonement allows a student to be awarded credit for a unit that has been failed with a unit mark in the narrow range of 45%–49%. Under these regulations, condonement is normally considered when a unit has not been passed following the

reassessment attempt. There are limits to the amount of credit that can be condoned, under intended award and exit award requirements.

Core rules: The set of rules that apply to all courses using these assessment regulations. The core rules are set out in this document and are underpinned by further rules that define how academic outcomes are achieved and assessment opportunities are determined. These assessment regulations also describe additional rules for deciding award eligibility and, for some awards, classification.

Course duration: This is the normal length of the course during which all study and assessments should be taken. It is intended that the award can be achieved within this time if all study and assessment are taken and passed at the first opportunity.

Course-required units: There may occasionally be an opportunity to undertake study which is not specified for the course or its intended award eligibility. Course-required units references the units which are specified as part of the course and are used to determine award eligibility.

Course requirements: The units that must be passed or condoned, and any conditions that must be met to be eligible for the intended award or named exit awards, as detailed in the course specification.

Course specification: Document that details course content, duration, intended award and possible exit awards. The course specification also describes any agreed exemptions from these assessment regulations and any additional course requirements to be eligible for an intended award or named exit award.

Course study: All course-required unit study must normally be taken by the end of the course duration. Course study cannot be taken during the additional two academic years allowed for the completion of outstanding assessments.

Designated Essential Unit (DEU): This is a term that is used in the New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations (NFA:AR) and is commonly used across the University. This term is being phased out to be replaced with Must Pass Unit (MPU). The meaning is the same.

ECTS: European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. Unit credit is described as ECTS (for example, a unit of 10 ECTS).

Individual Mitigating Circumstances (IMCs): Individual mitigating circumstances (IMCs) are the University's descriptions of conditions which temporarily prevent a student from undertaking assessment or significantly impair the student's performance in assessment. Further information for students about IMCs is available in guidance on the University website.

IMC Flag / IMC Flagged unit: If a student makes an IMC claim against an assessment item within in a unit and the claim is accepted then the unit is flagged with an IMC. The presence of IMC-flagged unit(s) then forms part of the considerations for academic decision-making

by Boards of Examiners for Courses in determining supplementary assessment, continuation, and award.

Maximum period of study: The maximum period a student is permitted to complete the requirements for their intended award. Under these assessment regulations the maximum period is course duration/length plus two academic years.

Must Pass Unit (MPU): Must Pass Units are also known as Designated Essential Units (DEUs) in *New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations* documentation. Must Pass Units must be passed and cannot be condoned. Units may be flagged as MPUs for pedagogic or professional body reasons. Often a unit is an MPU because the learning outcomes of the unit must be met at pass standard as they are critical to course and award requirements.

Overall Course Average (OCA): The credit-weighted average of the marks from all units required to contribute to the award. The OCA is calculated and presented to two decimal places.

Pass mark / pass standard: The pass mark for FHEQ level 7 units within a postgraduate taught course is a unit mark of 50%. Credit for the unit will be awarded and the unit will be considered to have been passed if a minimum unit mark of 50% is achieved. Individual units may also have additional requirements before they can be passed; these will be specified if this is the case.

Appendix 2: Academic decision making

1. Decision-making using these assessment regulations is conducted by Boards of Examiners and Boards of Studies, according to procedures set out in the University's Quality Assurance framework and under the delegated authority of Senate.
2. Further information relevant to decision-making under these assessment regulations can be found in:
 - a. The University's quality assurance Code of Practice, which includes information about academic decision-making through Boards of Examiners and Boards of Studies; external examining; the marking of assessment; accreditation of prior learning; and academic misconduct and its penalties.
 - b. The University's Academic Framework for course design, which includes overall ECTS credit requirements for levels of award and FHEQ level requirements.
 - c. The University's *Regulations for Students*, particularly Regulations 15–17.
 - d. Course specifications and named award specifications for individual courses, which contain detail of requirements for study and award, as well as any agreed assessment regulations exemptions for the course.
 - e. The document *Individual Mitigating Circumstances & Assessment*, for the descriptive principles, context, and process by which valid Individual Mitigating Circumstances are agreed. Guidance on IMCs is available on the University website. IMC decision making rules are incorporated into these assessment regulations.
 - f. University Ordinances.

Appendix 3: Illustrative flowchart

The information in this appendix is illustrative of Board of Examiners for Courses considerations and does not supersede the wording in the main regulations.

Core rules

Rule A: The maximum period of study is the course duration plus two academic years within which to complete outstanding supplementary assessments.

Rule B: All units required for an intended award must be passed or condoned (where condonement is permitted by Rules D and E).

Rule C: One reassessment attempt for failed assessment(s) is allowed in a failed unit.

Rule D: Some unit credit can be condoned after reassessment, within specified limits and restrictions for award eligibility.

Rule E: Units designated Must Pass Units (MPUs) must be passed and cannot be condoned.

Rule F: Students must pass the University's mandatory academic integrity skills test to be eligible for any award.

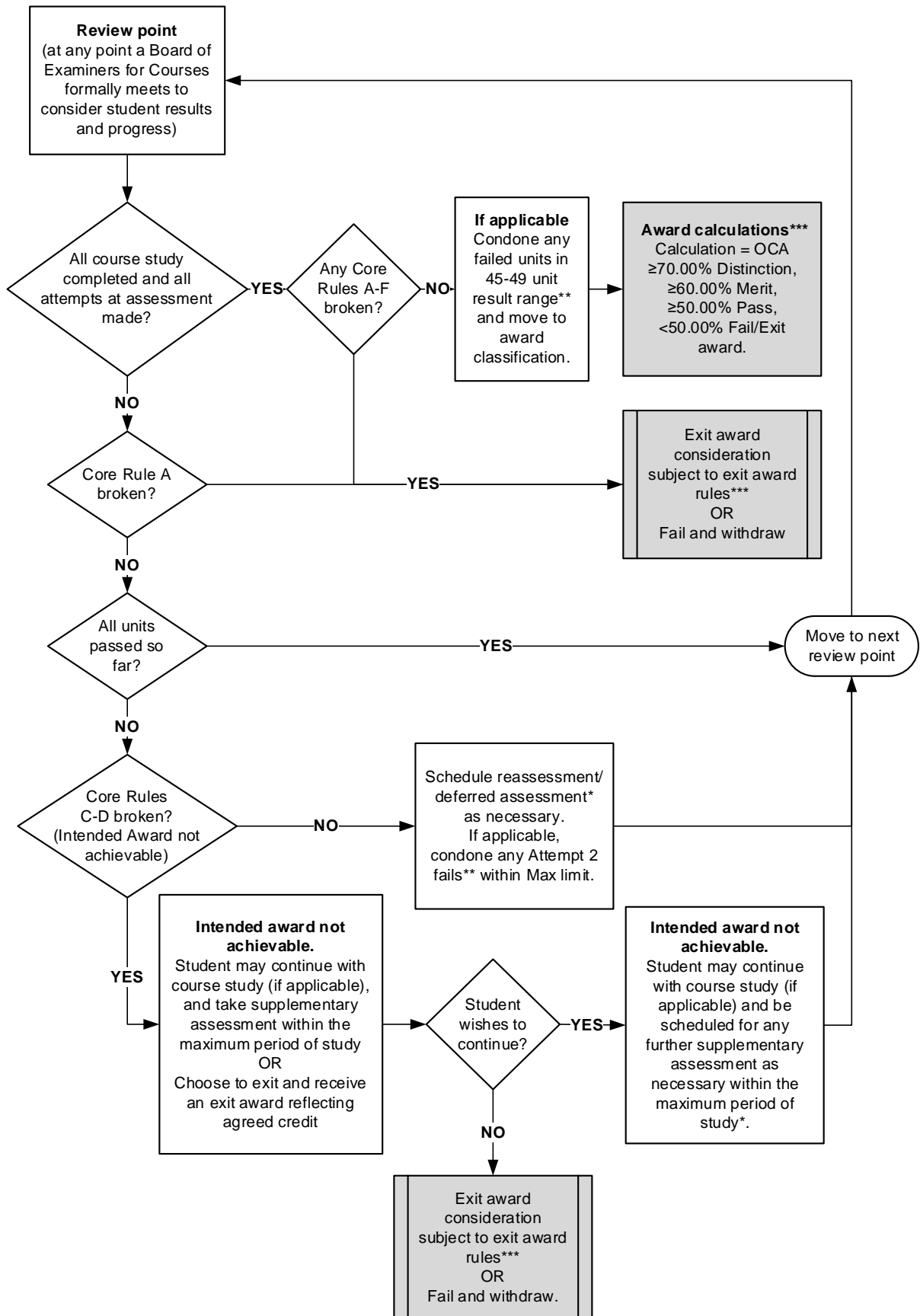
Individual Mitigating Circumstances

*Failed IMC affected units should be offered deferred assessment for failed items at the same attempt.

**BEC *may* condone IMC affected unit failure before reassessment. This can be at first or second attempt assessment points. Note: total condoned credit cannot exceed the maximum permitted for intended award.

***BEC *may* adjust classifications by maximum of one classification uplift / 10.00% of OCA.

Refer to IMCA regulations and Board guidance for process and consideration guidance.



Appendix 4: Order of precedence for exit award eligibility consideration

1. The table below shows the normal order of precedence for exit award eligibility consideration, along with a summary of the award and classification criteria for each exit award.
2. This table is not a substitute for, nor does the information in this appendix supersede, the award and classification regulations set out in paragraphs 43 to 57.
3. Course specifications will specify whether the exit award hierarchy for a particular course differs from that shown in the table below, along with any specific unit requirements or exclusions for a named Postgraduate Diploma or named Postgraduate Certificate.
4. A student must have passed the university's mandatory academic integrity test to be eligible for an exit award.

Award level	Award eligibility criteria		
	Credit requirement	Classification criteria (where specified as an exit award)	
Named Postgraduate Diploma	60 ECTS of relevant FHEQ level 7 units passed or condoned (including a maximum of 10 ECTS condoned credit)	Distinction	OCA ≥ 70.00%
		Merit	OCA ≥ 60.00%
		Pass	OCA ≥ 50.00%
Generic Postgraduate Diploma	60 ECTS of FHEQ level 7 units passed	No classification	
Named Postgraduate Certificate	30 ECTS of relevant FHEQ level 7 units passed	Distinction	OCA ≥ 70.00%
		Merit	OCA ≥ 60.00%
		Pass	OCA ≥ 50.00%
Generic Postgraduate Certificate	30 ECTS of FHEQ level 7 units passed	No classification	