Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

# Marks and Standards

***Version 2025.1 (2025-2026)***

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## Principles

The principles underlying Marks and Standards were approved by Academic Council on 10 December 2008:

(i) Marks and Standards shall be consistent with the National Framework of Qualifications www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx

(ii) The Registrar of the University has ultimate responsibility for the integrity and implementation of Marks and Standards.

(iii) The responsibility for the updating, maintenance and publication of the Marks and Standards document rests with the Office of the Vice President Academic Affairs.

(iv) All amendments and/or additions to Marks and Standards are subject to Academic Council approval regarding both underlying principles and the detailed wording.

(v) Following approval of the revised (2009) Marks and Standards by Academic Council, any future amendments shall be dated, creating a new edition(s). Previous editions of Marks and Standards shall be archived and accessible via the DCU website. A version control document detailing amendments from 2012/13 shall be maintained and accessible via the DCU website.

The following are the approved Marks and Standards which must be always applied consistently and to all taught programmes and modules, including taught modules on research programmes; only derogations required by professional bodies will be considered for approval.

This Marks and Standards document is subject to change. In any given academic session, a student is subject to the Marks and Standards that are approved by Academic Council for that academic session.

## Programme-Specific Regulations

Programme-specific regulations, which must be compliant with Marks and Standards, are approved by Faculties each spring and made available on the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs website. Derogations required by professional bodies will be considered for approval by the University Standards Committee and if approved be included in the programme-specific regulations.

## Provision for a Force Majeure Event

In the case of a force majeure event, for a defined period of time, the Vice President for Academic Affairs/ Registrar may replace aspects of Marks and Standards and associated programme regulations with alternative arrangements. The Vice President for Academic Affairs/Registrar will then inform Academic Council at the earliest opportunity.

## Section 1: Dublin City University (DCU) Awards

### 1.1 Awards

**AWARD:** An award is that which is conferred or granted by DCU and which records that a student has acquired a specified standard of knowledge, skill, and competence. The award is made when the required number of credits has successfully been accumulated, at appropriate levels, from approved modules, and over an appropriate period of time.

**MAJOR AWARD:** A major award is the principal class of award made at a level.

**MINOR AWARD:** A minor award recognises attainment of some of the learning outcomes of a (corresponding) major award.

**SPECIAL PURPOSE AWARD:** A special purpose award is designed to meet specific, relatively narrow focused legislative, regulatory, economic, social, or personal learning requirements.

**SUPPLEMENTAL AWARD:** Supplemental awards are for learning which is additional to a previous award. It is designed for education and training with respect to an occupation or profession and may be for updating of education and/or professional development.

**1.1.1** All DCU awards are placed on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

**1.1.2** DCU primarily confers or grants Major Awards at Level 8, Level 9, and Level 10.

**1.1.3** DCU may also confer Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards at Level 7, Level 8, Level 9 and Level 10.

'Non-major awards' is the collective term for an award in the Framework with a smaller volume and more narrow outcomes than major awards. There are three classes of non-major award: minor, special purpose and supplemental.

**Table 1: Awards offered by DCU on the NFQ and Award Credit Accumulation Structure**

| DCU Award | NFQ Level | NFQ Award Types | Award Credit Accumulation Structure |
|---|---|---|---|
| Certificate | 7 | Minor Award<br>Special Purpose Award<br>Supplemental Award | Minimum of 30 ECTS credits<br>Minimum of 30 ECTS credits<br>Minimum of 30 ECTS credits |
| Diploma | 7 | Minor Award | Minimum of 60 ECTS credits |
| Certificate | 8 | Minor Award<br>Special Purpose Award<br>Supplemental Award | Minimum of 30 ECTS credits<br>Minimum of 30 ECTS credits<br>Minimum of 15 ECTS credits |
| Diploma | 8 | Minor Award<br>Special Purpose Award<br>Supplemental Award | Minimum of 60 ECTS credits<br>Minimum of 60 ECTS credits<br>Minimum of 60 ECTS credits |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Higher Diploma | 8 | Major Award | Minimum of 60 ECTS credits |
| Honours Bachelor Degree | 8 | Major Award | 180 to 240 ECTS credits |
| Professional Diploma | 8 | Major Award | Minimum of 60 ECTS credits |
| Professional Certificate | 9 | Special Purpose Award<br>Supplemental Award | Minimum of 10 ECTS credits<br>Minimum of 10 ECTS credits |
| Professional Diploma | ~~9~~ | Special Purpose Award<br>Supplemental Award | Minimum of 30 ECTS credits<br>Minimum of 30 ECTS credits |
| Graduate Certificate | 9 | Minor Award<br>Special Purpose Award<br>Supplemental Award | Minimum of 30 ECTS credits<br>Minimum of 30 ECTS credits<br>Minimum of 30 ECTS credits |
| Graduate Diploma | 9 | Major Award | Minimum of 60 ECTS credits |
| Professional Master's Degree | 9 | Major Award | Minimum of 90 credits |
| Master's Degree (taught) | 9 | Major Award | 90 to 120 ECTS credits |
| Master's Degree (research) | 9 | Major Award | 120 to 180 ECTS credits |
| Doctoral Degree | 10 | Major Award | 240 to 360 ECTS credits |

**1.1.4** For professional recognition, some awards may require completion of credits in excess of the credit requirements listed in Table 1.

## 1.2 Award Titles

The following is the list of agreed award titles for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes:

### 1.2.1 Undergraduate Programmes

- BA: Bachelor of Arts
- BSc: Bachelor of Science
- BBS: Bachelor of Business Studies
- BEng: Bachelor of Engineering
- BCL: Bachelor of Civil Law
- BEd: Bachelor of Education

- Certificate in…
- Diploma in….
- Higher Diploma in….
- Professional Diploma in…

### 1.2.2 Taught Postgraduate Programmes

- LLM
- MA: Master of Arts
- MBA: Master of Business Administration
- MEd: Master of Education
- MEng: Master of Engineering
- MSc: Master of Science
- PME: Professional Master of Education

- Graduate Certificate in..
- Graduate Diploma in..
- Professional Diploma in (e.g. Professional Diploma in Accounting)
- Professional Certificate in..

### 1.2.3 Erasmus Mundus Joint Taught programmes

- IM: International Master
- EM: European Master
- Erasmus Mundus Master

# Section 2: European Credit Transfer Accumulation System (ECTS) and ECTS Credits

## 2.1 ECTS definition and workload

**ECTS:** ECTS is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer based on the transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes.

**ECTS CREDITS:** ECTS credits are based on the workload a typical student needs to complete in order to achieve expected learning outcomes.

**ECTS GRADES:** The ECTS grading system translates a grade from one institution to another across Europe.

**WORKLOAD:** Workload indicates the time students typically need to complete all learning activities (such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, self-study, and examinations) required to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, and competencies that a typical student is expected to demonstrate upon successful completion of a process of learning.

### 2.1.1 Regulations pertaining to ECTS and ECTS credits

60 ECTS credits are typically attached to the workload of two full-time semester periods of formal learning and the associated learning outcomes. One ECTS credit corresponds to 25 hours of work; therefore, a student workload equals 1,500 hours per 60 ECTS credits.

## 2.2 Regulations pertaining to academic session and ECTS credits

**2.2.1** **ACADEMIC SESSION:** An academic session is the enrolment period covered by the enrolment fee; the maximum duration of an academic session is 12 months.

**2.2.2** A 12-month academic session is normally divided into two semesters during which the teaching and assessment take place. The taught programmes of the university will normally be based within the two teaching semesters (Semester 1 and Semester 2) per academic session. The teaching, learning and assessment activities associated with a module will normally be completed during one formal semester, or if a year-long module, two formal semesters. Field work and other learning activities that take place outside of the formal semesters are subject to approval by the Registrar. However, it is recognised that clinical, teaching, professional placement or work experience may take place outside, or be spread across, the formal semesters.

**2.2.3** For programmes operating within the semester-based system, the formal teaching semesters (Semester 1 and Semester 2) will comprise a minimum of 15 weeks of student activity: normally 12 weeks of teaching and learning, 1 study week and 2 weeks of assessment.

**2.2.4** Postgraduate student research activity and dissertation work need not be constrained by the dates of the formal teaching semesters; this applies to activities for awards by research and to the research elements for taught postgraduate awards.

**2.2.5** For undergraduate students, the maximum allowable number of ECTS credits in an academic session is 75, and the minimum allowable is 5.

**2.2.6** To permit flexibility and facilitate student choice, students may pursue a greater or lesser number of credits in a single academic session, subject to both feasibility and the approval of the Programme Board.

**2.2.7** The normal workload for a full-time undergraduate student will be 60 ECTS credits in a standard 2-semester academic session. The workload may be greater than this where learning activities continue outside the standard academic semesters, for example, in international programmes and programmes involving placement.

**2.2.8** For taught postgraduate students, the normal workload for full-time students is 30 ECTS credits per semester. The workload may be greater than this where learning activities continue outside the standard academic semesters, for example, in dissertation or practicum activities.

**2.2.9** For taught postgraduate students, the maximum allowable number of ECTS credits in any academic session is 90, and the minimum allowable is 5.

**2.2.10** ECTS credits achieved are normally held in perpetuity.

## 2.3 Credits for joint or multiple Awards

**2.3.1** For **JOINT or MULTIPLE** awards approved under a duly constituted and processed agreement with one or more approved partner institutions, credit transfer recognition and regulatory matters will be in accordance with Memoranda of Understanding agreed between the institutions.

## 2.4 Credits for DCU major, minor, special purposes, supplemental awards

**2.4.1** For DCU **MAJOR** awards generally (provided the award is worth a minimum of 60 credits), prior learning in the form of ECTS credits achieved, where such learning supports the desired learning outcomes of the award concerned, and where a major award at the same level has not been conferred on the applicant by another institution on foot of those credits, will be recognised subject to a **MINIMUM of 60 ECTS CREDITS AT THE LEVEL OF THE AWARD, excluding exempted modules,** being taken at DCU. (Such DCU credits may be taken at DCU, at its linked colleges, or at an approved partner institution).

**2.4.2** For **MINOR, SPECIAL PURPOSE OR SUPPLEMENTAL** DCU awards, prior learning in the form of ECTS credits achieved, where such learning supports the desired learning outcomes of the DCU award concerned, and where an award at the same level has not been conferred on the applicant by another institution on foot of those credits, will be recognised subject to a **MINIMUM OF 50% of the CREDITS, excluding exempted modules,** being taken at DCU. (Such DCU credits may be taken at DCU, at its linked colleges, or at an approved partner institution).

**2.4.3** For any major award, a minimum of 60 ECTS credits must be at the NFQ level of the award. If an award has 60 credits or fewer, all ECTS credits must be at the NFQ level of the award.

**2.4.4** A student may not present the same ECTS credits as qualification for more than one DCU award. Similarly, a student may not claim exemption in respect of ECTS credits towards one award that have already been presented as qualification for another award.

## 2.5 Module exemptions and evaluation of prior learning

**2.5.1** Module **EXEMPTIONS** may be awarded for prior learning; applications for exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with approved university procedures and subject to the minimums indicated at 2.4 above.

**2.5.2** The evaluation of prior learning, whether in the form of experiential learning or of ECTS credits awarded, will be carried out in accordance with approved university entry mechanisms for the awards concerned.

# Section 3: Modules

## 3.1 Module definition, module level, module strength

**MODULE:** A module is defined as a self-contained unit of teaching, learning and assessment activities, the outcomes of which are assessed during the academic session and which carry a specified number of ECTS credits, at a specific NFQ level, i.e. 7, 8, 9 or 10.

**MODULE LEVELS:** The following level indicators describe typical modules offered in DCU:

**3.1.1** Table 2: DCU Awards and Module Level Indicators

| Awards | NFQ Level | Module Level(s) |
|---|---|---|
| Certificate | 7, 8 | 7, 8 |
| Diploma | 7, 8 | 7, 8 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Honours Bachelor Degree | 8 | 8 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Higher Diploma | 8 | 8 |
| Professional Certificate | 9 | 9 |
| Professional Diploma | 8, 9 | 8, 9 |
| Graduate Certificate | 9 | 9 |
| Graduate Diploma | 9 | 9 |
| Professional Master's Degree | 9 | 8,9 |
| Master's Degree | 9 | 8, 9 |
| Doctoral Degree | 10 | 9, 10 |

**MODULE STRENGTH:** module strength indicates the contribution of a module to a specific award. The following strength indicators describe a module's strength contribution to an award: light contribution (LC), moderate contribution (MC), or full contribution (FC). A module may make contributions of different strengths to different awards.

### 3.1.2 Table 3: Awards and Module Strength Indicators

| Awards | Module Level | Module Strengths |
|---|---|---|
| Certificate | 7, 8 | LC, MC, FC |
| Diploma | 7, 8 | LC, MC, FC |
| Honours Bachelor Degree | 8 | LC, MC, FC |
| Higher Diploma | 8 | LC, MC, FC |
| Professional Certificate | 9 | LC, MC, FC |
| Professional Diploma | 8, 9 | LC, MC, FC |
| Graduate Certificate | 9 | LC, MC, FC |
| Graduate Diploma | 9 | LC, MC, FC |
| Professional Master's Degree | 8,9 | LC, MC, FC |
| Master's Degree | 8, 9 | LC, MC, FC |
| Doctoral Degree | 9, 10 | LC, MC, FC |

## 3.2 Regulations pertaining to modules

**3.2.1** **MODULE SIZE**: A module will carry a minimum of 5 ECTS credits. Modules can carry 5 ECTS credits, 7.5 ECTS credits and integer multiples of 5 ECTS credits.

Where dissertations or research projects form part of an undergraduate programme, these modules can carry 5 ECTS credits, 7.5 ECTS credits and integer multiples of 5 ECTS credits, up to a maximum of 30 ECTS.

**3.2.2** **WEIGHTED AVERAGE MODULE**: Where a number of modules in a single cognate discipline are combined to produce an overall weighted average result across those modules, the averaging module should carry no less than 10 ECTS credits and each component module should carry no less than 5 ECTS credits.

**3.2.3** Students should participate in all activities associated with all of the modules they register for, including attendance at lectures, laboratories and other teaching and learning activities, in accordance with any approved programme requirements. Any programme-specific attendance requirements are indicated to students in the programme-specific regulations.[1]

## 3.3 Regulations pertaining to Micro-credential Modules (MCM)

**3.3.1** **MICRO-CREDENTIAL MODULE (MCM):** A micro-credential is the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined standards. Courses leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be standalone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity[2].

DCU micro-credential module offerings must comply with the DCU micro-credential characteristics as approved by Education Committee (October 2021).

**3.3.2** A micro-credential module (MCM) is a module that can be registered for without reference to any award.

**3.3.3** A MCM will carry a minimum of 1 ECTS credits and a maximum of 30 ECTS[3].

**3.3.4** Micro-credential modules hold industry, societal and professional stakeholder relevance. MCM credits and learning outcomes may entitle the holder to a non-major award or be recognised and counted towards a major award[4].

**3.3.5** An MCM approval board will consider and approve individual module results.

**3.3.6** The ECTS credits for micro-credential modules contributing to a final award retain currency for no longer than 8 years.

**3.3.7** A repeat opportunity is not provided where a student has failed or deferred an MCM. If the MCM is provided at a future date, the student may re-register for that MCM as a repeat registration.

**3.3.8** Micro-credential module activities may take place outside of, or be spread across the University formal semesters.

**3.3.9**. With the exception of the paragraphs above, micro-credential modules, and awards, which comprise micro-credential modules, are subject to Marks and Standards.

[1] https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/policies-and-regulations
[2] From A EUROPEAN APPROACH TO MICRO-CREDENTIALS, European Commission, December 2021
[3] As per adopted DCU definition and characteristics (Micro-credentialing in DCU, endorsed by Education Committee, 13 October 2021)
[4] Should a learner accumulate sufficient and appropriate credits for a major or non-major award, the award will be approved by the relevant Progression and Award Board (see paragraph 4.3.2)

## 3.4 Regulations pertaining to Stand-Alone Modules (SAM)

**3.4.1** **STAND-ALONE MODULE:** A Stand-Alone Module (SAM) is a module that can be registered for without reference to any award. They may be articulated as Continuous Professional Development (CPD) modules, which support individuals in employment in their profession.

**3.4.2** An accumulation of SAM credits does not automatically entitle the holder to an award. SAM credits may be recognised and counted towards an existing award.

**3.4.3** A stand-alone module approval board will consider and approve individual module results, as required.

**3.4.4** Compensation is not permitted between SAMs.

**3.4.5** With the exception of the paragraphs above, stand-alone modules and awards, which comprise stand-alone modules, are subject to Marks and Standards.

# Section 4: Programmes of Study / Pathways

## 4.1 Programmes of study definition

**PROGRAMMES OF STUDY:** programmes of study are approved, academically coherent sets of modules leading to awards of the University and such professional body recognition as may be established from time to time.

**UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES:** programmes of study leading to awards at Level 8 or below are defined as undergraduate.

**POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**: programmes of study leading to awards at Level 9 or above are defined as postgraduate.

Programme academic structures and programme-specific regulations specify module dependencies, for example pre-requisites and co-requisites, if applicable.

A programme of study may lead to different awards.

## 4.2 Pathway definition

**PATHWAYS:** An award may be achieved by following different pathways through a programme of study and are supported by temporal, modal and curricular flexibility.

## 4.3 Regulations pertaining to programmes of study

**4.3.1** Normally, undergraduate and taught postgraduate students may not be registered on more than one programme of study within DCU. Exceptions to this regulation must be approved by the University Standards Committee.

**4.3.2** Each programme of study will have a **PROGRESSION and AWARD BOARD (PAB)** to determine the progression or award outcomes of the students registered for that programme. The Progression and Award Board will meet after the appropriate assessment process for the

programme has taken place. The membership of the Progression and Award Board can be found at https://www.dcu.ie/registry/examinations-office-registry (*Review and approval of Results for Taught Programmes*).

**4.3.3** The Progression and Award Board will recommend, for the approval of Academic Council, an overall result in respect of each student's performance.

**4.3.4** A programme of study may have alternative exit routes, named exit awards, whereby a student may receive an award for a lesser number of credits than the programme on which he/she is registered. Exit awards must be approved either at the time of accreditation or subsequently by Education Committee. Exit awards are outlined in programme regulations along with any specific core module requirements.

# Section 5: Registration Period

## 5.1 Registration period definition

**REGISTRATION PERIOD:** A registration period is the total time that a student is enrolled on a programme of study; this includes any transfers from a related programme taken at the same level in DCU. All academic sessions from the date of first registration contribute to the overall registration period irrespective of whether the student is registered for such sessions (excluding approved leave of absence).

A student undertaking a taught award of 180 credits or more is subject to a maximum registration period of 8 years.

A student undertaking a taught award of less than 180 credits is subject to a maximum registration period of 4 years.

Maximum and minimum registration periods for research degrees are as provided for in the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis.[5]

## 5.2 Regulations pertaining to registration period and legacy re-admission

**5.2.1** The currency of ECTS credits towards a final award will be evaluated by the Progression and Award Board when considering the possibility of an extension to the maximum registration period and/or alternative exit awards.

**5.2.2** Where a student without a current registration has not received an award for credits completed and is beyond the maximum registration period of a programme he/she may apply for **legacy readmission**[6] to the programme if the period of time since the last year of registration does not exceed eight years. The application is made to the Programme Board which makes a recommendation to the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. If recommended by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, the application is then submitted to University Standards Committee for approval. Students may have completed all programme requirements or may have requirements outstanding. Where requirements are outstanding, these must be completed in order to receive the award.

[5] https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Policies-and-Regulations.shtml
[6] https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/ovpaa/legacy_readmission_decisions_regs.pdf

Either of the following circumstances may additionally apply:

(i) Where the required number of credits has been completed but where the time elapsed between the last registration and the application for the award is eight years or less the student may be required to undertake additional credits as directed by the Programme Board to ensure currency of the award.

(ii) Where the required number of credits has **not** been completed and the time elapsed between the last registration and the application for readmission is eight years or less, the student must complete all outstanding requirements which may include additional credits as directed by the Programme Board to ensure currency of the award.

**5.2.3** Former students, where the period since their prior registration exceeds eight years and who have not been permanently excluded from the University are required to apply for entry to the programme *ab initio,* irrespective of clause 2.2.10.

**5.2.4** In exceptional circumstances, former students who have exhausted all permitted attempts at some or all of the modules on a programme without successful completion and have been withdrawn from registration on the programme by the Progression and Award Board may be considered for re-admission. In order to be considered for re-admission, a period of **at least three years** must have elapsed since the last year of registration on the programme.

**5.2.5** Where a suspension of one's study has been granted, it will extend the maximum registration period by one year.

**5.2.6** Where a deferral of an academic session or examinations/assessment has been granted, it will not extend the maximum registration period.

## Section 6: Assessment and Module Marks

### 6.1 Module assessment definition

**6.1.1** MODULE ASSESSMENT: Module assessment may comprise both coursework and final examination components.

### 6.2 Regulations pertaining to assessment

**6.2.1** The weighting of each assessment component for the overall module assessment can range from 0% to 100% as specified in the module descriptor.

**6.2.2** The coursework component may contain multiple elements.

**6.2.3** For specific modules approved by the University Standards Committee, the coursework may include a sequence of core elements with a defined and required pass threshold and may involve sequential progression between elements. Such core elements will be marked on a pass/fail basis only.

**6.2.4** For all assessment components and component elements, the assessment methodology, set of assessment criteria and weightings are provided in advance to students.

**6.2.5** The workload associated with the assessment components of a module will reflect the number of ECTS credits carried by the module.

**6.2.6** The maximum duration of a final examination component for a module of 5 ECTS credits is 2 hours. The maximum duration of a final examination component for a module of more than 5 ECTS credits is 3 hours.

**6.2.7** Students are expected to attempt all elements of a module assessment within the academic session and in accordance with the assessment schedule as outlined in the module descriptor. Failure to attempt an element or component of assessment will result in a value of zero for that element or component.

**6.2.8** **MODULE MARKS:** Student performance in a module may be marked on a scale 0 - 100 or allocated a Pass / Fail grade as described in the approved module descriptor.

## 6.3 Regulations pertaining to module marks

**6.3.1** In a marked module, the final mark will be calculated in accordance with the assessment breakdown outlined in the approved module descriptor. The required pass mark in such a module is 40% of the maximum marks available.

**6.3.2** In modules which meet the following conditions:

(i) where all the learning outcomes can be assessed by a terminal examination,
(ii) the coursework elements of the module address a subset of the module learning outcomes assessed in the terminal examination,
(iii) the coursework element has a weighting of 20% or less and is formative in nature,
(iv) the module has been designated and approved by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee and listed in the programme regulations

then

No resit of the coursework is made available, and the module mark will be calculated as the greater of (a) the weighted average of the coursework percentage mark and the terminal examination percentage mark or (b) the terminal examination mark.

**6.3.3** Where different components of assessment within a module (coursework and final examination assessment) contribute to the final mark, there will be no requirement that a minimum mark be obtained in any one component.

**6.3.4** Within the maximum registration period, a module, once passed, cannot be retaken, irrespective of whether or not all elements have been attempted or passed.

**6.3.5** In the case of students re-admitted to a programme on an *ab initio* basis because their prior registration exceeds eight years, if modules on that programme taken previously are no longer deemed current by the Programme Board, there may be a requirement to complete those modules *ab initio,* irrespective of clause 2.2.10.

**6.3.6** Deferral of an overall module mark will be considered where extenuating circumstances are presented. A module is then deferred to the next available opportunity; this is determined by the academic structure of the programme.

# Section 7: Progression Definitions and Regulations

## 7.1 Progression and related definitions

**7.1.1** **Progression:** Progression is defined as the permission granted to a student to register in the subsequent academic session for the next diet of modules within his/her programme of study.

Progression from Semester 1 to Semester 2 is automatic for students in good standing with the University.

**7.1.2** **Compensation:** Compensation is defined as the process by which a student, who fails to satisfy some of the regulations for credit in a specific module, is nevertheless recommended for credit award on the grounds that the failure is offset by his/her performance in other modules of his/her programme of study.

**7.1.3** **Previous Element Contribution:** A previous element contribution is defined as an element which contributes towards the final award. This is usually a previous study period weighted average mark but may in some cases be a module mark. Where the first attempt at a previous element contribution (precision or module mark), is less than 40 then the value used in the calculation of the overall precision mark is 40.

Where a student transfers to another programme of study or progresses from a foundation programme to a new programme of study any previous failed attempts at modules that are offered on the new programme of study are not used in the calculation of the precision mark for the new programme of study. Previous year contributions are not applicable to programmes with continuous mode of study.

**7.1.4** **Precision Mark:** the precision mark is defined as the overall weighted average for the first full presentation of marks for an academic session. Modules are weighted proportionately according to their credit value. For continuous programmes, the precision mark is defined as the overall average weighted mark for the first full presentation of marks for an award.

Where all modules for an academic session are marked as Pass/Fail only (e.g. year- long INTRA), then no precision mark will be calculated. The overall classification for the academic session in such cases will be recorded as 'Pass with Honours' or 'Fail'.

Where an individual module is marked as Pass/Fail only, it will have no impact on the precision mark.

Where an alternative module has been taken by a student it is excluded from the precision mark calculation.

Where a student requests to exit a programme with a lesser award the following precision rules apply. Core modules, must be included in the calculation of the precision mark. When a student has completed more ECTS credits than needed for the award, any remaining credits required for the calculation of the precision mark will be selected from the remaining modules taken, using the best marks obtained. All marks used in the calculation of the precision mark will be the marks

obtained at first attempt.

**7.1.5** **Preponderance Rule:** When calculating the precision mark for the purposes of determining the final award classification, the following rules apply:

A precision mark with a decimal place value of 0.5 or more will automatically be rounded up to next integer value. Where a precision mark is no more than 1% below an award classification threshold and the unrounded precision mark has a decimal place value of less than 0.5, this precision mark will automatically be rounded up to the threshold value if one half or more credits are made up of modules with marks, at first attempt, at or above the threshold value. Where preponderance applies, previous year contributions are excluded when rounding the precision mark for award classification purposes.

**7.1.6** **Resit:** A resit assessment offers students another opportunity within an academic session to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes associated with a module. A resit is normally triggered by a deferral or a module mark of less than 40% (any exceptions are noted in approved programme-specific regulations) https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Policies-and-Regulations.shtml

It does not require that a student resits all the assessment components of the module; the overall resit module mark is determined according to the approved programme- specific regulations. The maximum number of resit opportunities in any one academic session is one.

The resit assessment does not have to be identical to the original assessment.

**7.1.7** **Repeat:** An opportunity to repeat a failed or a deferred module requires that a student register for that module (or its equivalent) in the next or subsequent academic session.

## 7.2 Regulations pertaining to progression, compensation, resits and repeats for taught programmes

### 7.2.1 Progression regulations

**7.2.1.1** Progression is determined according to the approved academic requirements of the programme of study.[7]

**7.2.1.2** In certain limited circumstances, progression may be defined as provisional in programme regulations. Where provisional progression is applied, this may be reversed when final results are confirmed by a Progression and Award Board.

**7.2.1.3** A Progression and Award Board may in exceptional circumstances, which are explicitly recorded, recommend that a decision on a student's progression be postponed to enable the student to complete specific outstanding credit requirements of the programme.

**7.2.1.4** Students registered for a Qualifier Programme to a Master's Programme who have successfully obtained the Qualifier Programme credits with a minimum mark of 50% in every level 8 module and/or a minimum pass mark in every level 9 module will be allowed to transfer to the associated Master's award.

[7] https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/Policies-and-Regulations.shtml

**7.2.1.5** Marks for all attempts by a student at a module, including resit assessments and repeat attempts, in the course of a programme of study must be recorded in the transcript.

**7.2.1.6** Where programme regulations for a programme permit, failed or deferred module(s) may be carried forward to the following year, subject to the criteria detailed in the programme regulations, and aligned with regulations pertaining to academic session and ECTS credits (M&S: paragraph 2.2.5).

**7.2.1.7** Where a Progression and Award Board has permitted a student to progress into the next academic session carrying a failed module(s) (as detailed in the Programme Regulations), the failed module(s) can only be carried for one academic year.

### 7.2.2 Compensation regulations

**7.2.2.1** A programme of study may contain specified, approved modules to which compensation cannot be applied. Details of non-compensatable modules are outlined in the programme-specific regulations.

**7.2.2.2** A programme of study may contain specified, approved modules, the credits for which may not be counted for the application of compensation; in such cases, compensation is applied on a *pro-rata* basis

**7.2.2.3** Compensation is **not** permitted for taught **postgraduate** programmes.

**7.2.2.4** Compensation **is** permitted for taught **undergraduate** programmes

Compensation is applied only when all of the following conditions are met:

(i) the modules are being attempted for the first time, i.e., a full set of module marks is presented for the first time; compensation is not applied in relation to modules being attempted at a second or subsequent sitting

(ii) a minimum precision mark of 45% has been obtained

(iii) a maximum of 1/6 of the available ECTS credits have been failed in the academic session (regardless of the semester in which the failure(s) occur or of how these ECTS credits are made up in terms of modules e.g., exempted and pass/fail modules

(iv) the marks obtained in the individual failed module(s) is/are 35% or greater.

### 7.2.3 Regulations for resits and resit categories

**7.2.3.1** Where a student has failed or deferred a module, he/she must, in order to acquire the credits for the module, resit the assessment for that module in the current academic session (if a resit is offered) or repeat the module (or its equivalent) in the next academic session. The following conditions apply:

(i) only one repeat academic session is allowed and only one repeat opportunity per module is allowed

(ii) a student may be required to register for an alternative module to a failed or deferred

module in the next or subsequent academic session if the original module is not available provided the alternative can meet the required award learning outcomes.

(iii) if the original module is not available to repeat in subsequent academic sessions and the required learning outcomes cannot be achieved by taking an alternative module the student will be required to wait until an appropriate module is next available.

An **alternative** module **cannot** be taken as a resit.

**7.2.3.2** Any resit must take place within the academic session, and the results are recorded as an additional opportunity.

**7.2.3.3** Where a fail is recorded against the original overall module mark, a mark of less than 40% in a component requires that that component be taken as a resit, where a resit is available.

**7.2.3.4** Where a module has a final examination assessment component, a resit of the examination assessment component must be offered within the academic session (Category 1 modules).

**7.2.3.5** Where a module has a coursework component, a resit of the coursework may not be feasible within the academic session in all cases (Category 2 and Category 3 modules).

**7.2.3.6** Resit arrangements are defined according to the **Resit Category** of the module which is published in the module descriptor. Resit Categories are as follows:

**Category 1:** A resit is available for both[8] components of the module
**Category 2:** No resit is available for a 100% coursework module
**Category 3:** No resit is available for the coursework component where there is a coursework and examination element

Where a module is classified as a category 1 module, as outlined above and the student has failed both the coursework and examination elements then both elements must be retaken. The resit module mark is calculated using the original module weighting. Marks for any components graded at 40% or more at the original sitting are carried forward and used in the calculation of the overall resit module mark. Where components are originally graded at less than 40% at the original sitting, it is the resit marks that are used in the calculation of the overall resit module mark even if they are lower than the marks obtained at the original sitting. Where there is an absence from a resit opportunity, a mark of zero will apply.

Where a module is classified as a category 3 module, as outlined above, the resit module mark is calculated used the original module weighting. The original coursework mark is carried forward and used in the overall resit module mark calculation. The student is given the opportunity to resit the examination component in order to compensate for a failed coursework component, regardless of the original examination mark.

Where a module is classified as category 3, then the percentage of marks overall assigned to the coursework element can be no more than 25%.

[8] Both' is used in the context of the module having a Coursework/Examination split; where the module is 100% coursework, there will also be a resit of the assessment

### 7.2.4 Repeat regulations

**7.2.4.1** Only one repeat opportunity per module is allowed.

**7.2.4.2** A repeat attempt requires that a student retakes all the assessment components of the module; component marks from previous attempts are not carried forward.

**7.2.4.3** Where exceptional circumstances are made known to a Progression and Award Board, the Board has discretion to approve one further repeat academic session.

**7.2.4.4** An alternative module taken in the repeat year is considered a repeat attempt at the module.

# Section 8: Award Classification

## 8.1 Consideration of award

Progression and Award Boards may consider candidates eligible for an award when they have met all the requirements of the programme of study leading to that award.

An award will not be granted to any student who is disqualified in any way by the University.

## 8.2 Regulations pertaining to the classification of a Level 8 Bachelor degree award by the University

**8.2.1** **Level 8 Bachelor Degree:** To be eligible for consideration for the award of a Level 8 Bachelor Degree, a student must accumulate the requisite credits as specified in the Award Descriptor. The mark to be used to determine the grade of classification is the precision mark based on the first attempt at the relevant, approved modules. Where the original precision mark is less than 40%, and the student subsequently successfully completes the requisite credits, the student will be awarded a Third Class Honours degree irrespective of the final marks achieved.

The overall precision marks achieved across some or all years of the programme of study may contribute to the classification of the award.

Where a precision mark is calculated, the student's results will be classified in accordance with the standards set out below.

**8.2.2** **Table 4: Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree Award Classification**

| **Precision Mark** | **Award** |
|---|---|
| Greater than or equal to 70% | First Class Honours |
| Between 60% and 69% inclusive | Second Class Honours, Grade I |
| Between 50% and 59% inclusive | Second Class Honours, Grade II |
| Between 40% and 49% inclusive | Third Class Honours |

## 8.3 Regulations pertaining to the classification of a Level 7 and 8 Certificate, Diploma or Higher Diploma Award by the University

**8.3.1** **Level 7 and level 8 Certificate, Diploma or Higher Diploma:** To be eligible for consideration for the award of Level 7 or level 8 Certificate, Diploma or Higher Diploma, a student must accumulate the requisite credits as specified in the Award Descriptor. The mark to be used to determine the grade of classification is the precision mark based on the first attempt at the relevant approved modules. Where the original precision mark is less than 40%, and the student subsequently successfully completes the requisite credits, the student will be awarded a Third Class Honours classification, irrespective of the final mark achieved.

Where a precision mark is calculated, the students' results will be classified in accordance with the standards set out below.

**8.3.2** **Table 5: Level 7 and 8 Certificate and Diploma or Higher Diploma Award Classification**[9]

| Precision Mark | Award |
|---|---|
| Greater than or equal to 70% | First Class Honours |
| Between 60% and 69% inclusive | Second Class Honours, Grade I |
| Between 50% and 59% inclusive | Second Class Honours, Grade II |
| Between 40% and 49% inclusive | Third Class Honours |

## 8.4 Regulations pertaining to the classification of a Level 9 Master's Award by the University

**8.4.1** **Level 9 Taught Master's Degree:** To be eligible for consideration for the award of a Level 9 Master's Degree, a student must accumulate the requisite credits as specified in the Award Descriptor. A taught Master's award consists of a minimum of 60 ECTS credits of taught modules and a maximum of 30 ECTS credits for the dissertation/practicum. The mark to be used to determine the grade of classification is the precision mark based on the first attempt at the relevant, approved modules. Where the original precision mark is less than 40%, and the student subsequently successfully completes the requisite credits, the student will be awarded a Third Class Honours classification, irrespective of the final marks achieved.

**8.4.2** **Table 6: Level 9 Taught Master's Degree Classification**[10]

| Precision Mark | Award |
|---|---|
| Greater than or equal to 70% | First Class Honours |
| Between 60% and 69% inclusive | Second Class Honours, Grade I |
| Between 50% and 59% inclusive | Second Class Honours, Grade II |
| Between 40% and 49% inclusive | Third Class Honours |

**8.4.3** **Level 9 Master's Degree (Research):** The degree of Master's (Research) is a Major Level 9 award and is awarded without classification.[11]

[9] The change in classification of level 7 and 8 certificate, diplomas and higher diplomas will apply from 2021-2022. No retrospection can apply.

[10] The change in classification of taught Master's programmes will apply from 2017-2018. No retrospection can apply

[11] Further details on Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis are available at https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/policies-and-regulations

## 8.5 Regulations pertaining to the classification of a Level 9 Certificate or Diploma Award by the University

**8.5.1** **Level 9 Certificate or Diploma:** To be eligible for consideration for the award of Level 9 Certificate or Diploma, a student must accumulate the requisite credits as specified in the Award Descriptor. The mark to be used to determine the grade of classification is the precision mark based on the first attempt at the relevant, approved modules. Where the original precision mark is less than 40%, and the student subsequently successfully completes the requisite credits, the student will be awarded a Third Class Honours classification, irrespective of the final marks achieved.

**8.5.2** **Table 7: Level 9 Certificate and Diploma Classification**[12]

| Precision Mark | Award |
|---|---|
| Greater than or equal to 70% | First Class Honours |
| Between 60% and 69% inclusive | Second Class Honours, Grade I |
| Between 50% and 59% inclusive | Second Class Honours, Grade II |
| Between 40% and 49% inclusive | Third Class Honours |

## 8.6 Regulations pertaining to the classification of a level 10 Award by the University

**8.6.1** To be eligible for consideration for the award of a Level 10 (Doctoral) degree, a student must accumulate the requisite credits as specified in the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis.

**8.6.2** A level 10 (Doctoral) degree is awarded without classification.

# Section 9: Appeal

**9.1** **APPEAL**: Students have the right to appeal the decisions of a Progression and Award Board. Such appeals will be processed in accordance with the procedures detailed by Academic Council.[13]

# Section 10: Revocation of Awards or Credits

**10.1** In the event that, after an award being made or credits being approved, plagiarism or academic fraud related to the award or credits, is proven, Academic Council may revoke the approval of the award or credits.

[12] The change in classification of level 9 certificate and diplomas will apply from 2021-2022. No retrospection can apply.
[13] https://www.dcu.ie/ovpaa/appeals

## Glossary

1. **ACADEMIC SESSION:** An academic session is the enrolment period covered by the fee; the maximum duration of an academic session is 12 months.

2. **AWARD:** An award is that which is conferred or granted by Dublin City University and which records that a student has acquired a specified standard of knowledge, skill and competence. The award is made when the required number of credits has been successfully accumulated, at appropriate levels, from approved modules, and over an appropriate period of time

3. **COMPENSATION:** Compensation is defined as the process by which a student, who fails to satisfy some of the regulations for credit in a specific module, is nevertheless recommended for credit award on the grounds that the failure is offset by his/her performance in other modules of his/her programme of study.

4. **DEFERRAL OF ACADEMIC SESSION**: A student can defer their return to a programme of study for a full academic session (i.e. October to September). An approved deferral of an academic session counts as part of the overall registration period. Where an academic session has been deferred, a student is not registered as a repeat student on return (except where the deferred academic session is already a repeat academic session). Forms can be found at the following address: http://www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml#Examinations

5. **ECTS**: ECTS is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer based on the transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes.

6. **ECTS CREDITS:** ECTS credits are based on the workload a typical student needs to complete in order to achieve expected learning outcomes.

7. **ECTS GRADES:** The ECTS grading system translates a grade from one institution to another across Europe.

8. **EXIT AWARD:** An exit award is an award for a lesser number of credits than the original registered award.

9. **FACULTY TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE**: A Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee or equivalent has responsibility for the management of the Faculty's taught programmes and related issues of quality and for overseeing teaching and learning policy developments in the Faculty.

10. **LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and competencies that a typical student is expected to demonstrate upon successful completion of a process of learning.

11. **MAJOR AWARD:** A major award is the principal class of award made at a level. www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx

12. **MICRO-CREDENTIAL**: A micro-credential is the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined standards. Courses leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be

standalone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity[14].

13. **MINOR AWARD:** A minor award is for the partial completion of the outcomes of a major award. www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx

14. **MODULE**: A module is defined as a self-contained unit of teaching, learning and assessment, activities the outcomes of which are assessed during the academic session, and which carry a specified number of ECTS credits, at a specific NFQ level, i.e. 7, 8, 9 or 10.

15. **MODULE ASSESSMENT**: Module assessment may comprise both coursework and final examination components.

16. **MODULE SIZE:** Modules can carry 5 ECTS credits, 7.5 ECTS credits and integer multiples of 5 ECTS credits (please see section 3.3 for Micro-credential Module exception).

17. **SUSPENSION OF STUDY** (LEAVE OF ABSENCE): A Suspension of Study (Leave of Absence) is applicable only to students who have ongoing serious or medium-term circumstances and have documentation to support their request. An approved suspension of study (leave of absence) does not count as part of the overall registration period and will extend the maximum registration period by one year.

18. **WEIGHTED AVERAGE MODULE**: This a module which is designated as a calculated weighted average of several component modules in a single cognate discipline. A weighted average module cannot carry less than 10 ECTS credits and a component module can carry no less than 5 ECTS credits.

19. **PATHWAYS:** An award may be achieved by following different pathways through a programme of study and are supported by temporal, modal and curricular flexibility.

20. **POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**: programmes of study leading to awards at level 9 or above are defined as postgraduate.

21. **POSTPONEMENT OF ASSESSMENT/EXAMINATION:** Where valid circumstances exist to prevent a registered student from completing examinations or assessments, the student can submit an application to defer the examinations and/or assessments associated with a module(s) to the next available opportunity. An approved postponement (deferral) of an examination or assessment counts as part of the overall registration period. Where examinations or assessments are postponed to the next academic session, a students is registered as a repeat student in the next academic session www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml#Examinations

22. **PRECISION MARK:** the precision mark is defined as the overall weighted **average** for the first full presentation of marks for an academic session. Modules are weighted proportionately according to their credit value. For continuous programmes, the precision mark is defined as the overall average weighted mark for the first full presentation of marks for an award.

[14] From A EUROPEAN APPROACH TO MICRO-CREDENTIALS, European Commission, December 2021

23. **PREVIOUS YEAR CONTRIBUTION**: A previous year contribution is defined as an element which contributes towards the final award. This is usually a previous study period weighted average mark but may in some cases be a module mark. Previous year contributions are not applicable to programmes with continuous mode of study.

24. **PROGRAMMES OF STUDY:** Programmes of study are approved, academically coherent sets of modules leading to awards of the University and such professional body recognition as may be established from time to time.

25. **PROGRESSION:** Progression is defined as the permission granted by a Progression and Award Board to a student to register in the subsequent academic session for the next diet of modules within his/her programme of study.

26. **REGISTRATION PERIOD:** A registration period is the total time that a student is enrolled on a programme of study; this includes any transfers from a related programme taken at the same level in DCU.

27. **REPEAT:** An opportunity to repeat a failed or deferred module requires a student register for that module (or its equivalent) in the next academic session. It also requires that a student retake all the assessment components of the module; component marks from previous attempts are not carried forward. Only one repeat opportunity per module is allowed.

28. **RESIT:** A resit assessment offers students another opportunity within an academic session to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes associated with a module. A resit is normally triggered by a deferral or a module mark of less than 40% (any exceptions are noted in approved programme- specific regulations. It does not require that a student resit all the assessment components of the module; passed assessment component marks are carried forward. The resit assessment does not have to be identical to the original assessment.

29. **SPECIAL PURPOSE AWARD:** A Special Purpose award is made for specific, relatively narrow purposes. www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx

30. **STAND-ALONE MODULE:** A Stand-Alone Module (SAM) is a module that can be registered for without reference to any award. They may be articulated as Continuous Professional Development (CPD) modules which support individuals in employment in their profession.

31. **SUPPLEMENTAL AWARD:** Supplemental awards are for learning which is additional to a previous award. www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx

32. **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES:** programmes of study leading to awards at Level 8 or below are defined as undergraduate.

33. **WORKLOAD:** Workload indicates the time students typically need to complete all learning activities (such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, self-study, and examinations) required to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

All forms referred to are available on the Registry website at:
www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml

# Version

**Marks and Standards: Version 2025.1 (fifteenth edition)**

## Previous Versions and Academic Council approval dates

| |
|---|
| First approved, 10 June 2009 |
| Second edition, 30 June 2014 |
| Third edition, 22 June 2015 |
| Fourth edition, 12 October 2016 |
| Fifth edition, 7 June 2017 |
| Sixth edition, 18 June 2018 |
| Seventh edition, 17 June 2019 |
| Eight edition, 8 April 2020 |
| Ninth edition, 3 June 2020 |
| Tenth edition, 2 June 2021 |
| Eleventh edition, 23 May 2022 |
| Twelfth edition, 5 October 2022 |
| Thirteenth edition, 6 June 2023 |
| Fourteenth edition, 4 June 2024 |
| Fifteenth edition, 9 June 2025 |