

14A TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE REGULATIONS

Introduction

- 14a.1 The university has adopted the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) as the basis for the development and design of its taught postgraduate programmes, which relate explicitly to SCQF Level 11. These regulations apply to taught postgraduate qualifications of Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert), Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) and Masters programmes, including MA, MAcc, MLitt, MSc, MSci, MMus, MBA, MOptom, MTh, MSW and MEng.

Taught postgraduate awards and credit framework

- 14a.2 The generic learning outcomes that will apply to taught postgraduate awards relate to those set out in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.
- 14a.3 Taught postgraduate modules will be assessed against specific module learning outcomes consistent with the relevant SCQF level generic learning outcomes.
- 14a.4 Normally, the amount and level of academic credit in a taught postgraduate programme will be as follows:

University qualifications and their SCQF credit requirements	
Masters	min 180 with min of 160 at SCQF Level 11
Postgraduate Diploma	min 120 with min of 100 at SCQF Level 11
Postgraduate Certificate	min 60 with min 40 at SCQF Level 11

Table 1: PGT qualifications and their SCQF requirements

- 14a.5 Within a taught Masters degree, no more than 90 credit points may be achieved through research component(s).
- 14a.6 Within any taught postgraduate programme it may be possible to include a limited amount of credit drawn from other levels of academic study, specifically from SCQF Level 10, or SCQF Level 12, within the limits of the minimum credit requirements set out above.

Intermediate awards

- 14a.7 Students registered on a programme of study leading to a taught Masters degree will normally have the opportunity to exit the programme with an intermediate award. Intermediate awards will be specified at approval and will normally include:
- within a Masters degree, the intermediate awards of PgDip and PgCert
 - within a PgDip, the intermediate award of PgCert.

There are no intermediate awards in a PgCert.

Programme structure and design

- 14a.8 Each SCQF credit point represents the outcomes of learning achieved through 10 notional hours of learning activity, making 1,800 hours for a Masters degree. A standard module has been adopted of 20 SCQF credit points, i.e. 200 hours of student activity. Owing to the shift to greater self-directed learning at postgraduate level, the ratio of tutor-directed to self-directed learning time will be lower than that found in undergraduate programmes, and will be defined in module descriptors at programme approval.
- 14a.9 All taught Masters degrees will have a mandatory element which will be a dissertation or major project component. A dissertation will normally be 60 credits. For professionally-oriented programmes, such as an MBA, a major project may be approved at a minimum of 40 credits.
- 14a.10 Programme design and specification will ensure that an appropriate range of specific module learning outcomes, referring to relevant subject benchmark statements, have been integrated into a coherent structure with progression leading to the characteristic generic outcomes of the award.

Programme duration

[Note: programme duration regulations only apply to taught postgraduate students formally registered for an academic award of PgCert, PgDip or Masters degree. They do not directly apply to those undertaking individual postgraduate modules for the purposes of continuing professional development (CPD).]

- 14a.11 Masters degrees studied full-time represent one calendar year of full-time study. While the postgraduate academic year is not prescribed, normally it will include learning activity grouped into three semesters or equivalent. The minimum period of study is therefore:

	Minimum period of study	
Programme	Full-time	Part-time
Masters	45 weeks	6 semesters
Postgraduate Diploma	30 weeks	4 semesters
Postgraduate Certificate	15 weeks	2 semesters

Table 2: PGT minimum period of study

- 14a.12 The maximum period of registration for a postgraduate programme, whether full-time or part-time, will not normally exceed six years.

Attendance and withdrawal

[Note: programme attendance and withdrawal regulations only apply to taught postgraduate students formally registered for an academic award of PgCert, PgDip or Masters degree. They do not directly apply to those undertaking individual postgraduate modules for the purposes of CPD.]

- 14a.13 The standard regulations for attendance and withdrawal, as set out in the admissions regulations, apply to postgraduate students.

Admission to programmes leading to Masters and intermediate awards

- 14a.14 **Standard entry:** the standard requirement for entry will normally be an Honours degree at the classification of 2.1, and not less than the classification of 2.2. The subject range and level of acceptable entry qualifications will be specified in the programme specification.
- 14a.15 **Non-standard entry:** candidates seeking admission to a postgraduate programme through non-standard entry will need to demonstrate equivalence of prior learning and achievement to that of standard entry. Specific requirements may be defined within the programme specification and admission will be at the discretion of the programme leader.
- 14a.16 The programme leader will establish an appropriate methodology for assessing the suitability of all candidates for entry to the programmes for which they have responsibility. Appropriate evaluation tools may include for example: portfolio material; interview; evidence of investigative research; references and published articles. The programme leader will review the learning requirements of all entrants on an individual basis.

Students whose first language is not English

- 14a.17 Students whose first language is not English applying for programmes taught through the medium of English must reach satisfactory IELTS scores, or the equivalent scores in other recognized Secure English Language Tests. For entry at SCQF levels 11-12, the requirement is an overall IELTS score of 6.5 with no element below 6.0.
- 14a.18 Alternatively, students must otherwise demonstrate that they have an adequate command of both written and spoken English to follow their programme before an offer of admission will be made.

Arrangements for recognition of prior learning (RPL)

- 14a.19 The standard regulations and processes for recognition of prior learning, as set out in the admissions regulations, apply to taught postgraduate students.

Limit of credit that can be claimed

- 14a.20 The maximum credit that can be awarded for RPL will be limited to a proportion of the 'taught' component of a Masters level award as follows:
- For students exiting with PgCert – 20 credits
 - For students exiting with PgDip – 60 credits
 - For students exiting with Masters – 60 credits.

Management of assessment

- 14a.21 The general provisions of the regulations relating to assessment and external examiners will also apply to taught postgraduate programmes except where variations are specified below. All teaching staff must use the postgraduate assessment coversheet.

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2026-27
Postgraduate regulations

% age	Assessment marking system	
80+ Distinction: <i>outstanding</i>	An answer close to all that is expected of a student. The answer will combine structure, organisation, a high level of critical thinking and argument, convincingly and in a co-ordinated way. It will demonstrate exemplary grasp of the topic. Full and critical use of relevant literature will be demonstrated. Presentation will match the substantive quality. All the criteria for 70-79 fulfilled to a high degree, plus...	
	○ Exceptionally well presented, laid out and illustrated ○ Self-critical awareness ○ Many examples of original and imaginative thinking ○ Excellent use of references and command of the literature ○ In-depth critical and independent thinking	○ Displays mastery of concepts and theories ○ Precisely focused discussion ○ Extremely rigorous handling of data and evidence ○ Comprehensive, concisely balanced argument ○ Own ideas are very well linked to concepts, theories and literature
70-79% Distinction: <i>excellent</i>	This work displays excellent and comprehensive understanding of the topic; critical awareness of issues and source material and use of appropriate empirical and / or theoretical material. It provides a well-structured argument, and the mark recognises learning at a high level. There is originality in the answer, and an effective grasp of literature.	
	○ An attractive presented piece of work ○ Rigorous handling of evidence ○ Examples of creativity, originality, imagination, insight ○ Own ideas developed and justified from theoretical frameworks which have been thoroughly analysed, applied and tested	○ Offers analytical comment, critical evaluation and independent discussion ○ Comprehensive coverage of content / theory ○ Realistic evaluation of own work, with appropriate rationale
60-69% Pass: <i>merit</i>	A very good answer that is well presented, coherent and demonstrates critical judgement. It displays good coverage of the material and issues, and it is well laid out and argued. It may lack originality, or draw upon limited sources; however, referencing will be good.	
	○ Well presented ○ Referencing relevant and accurate ○ Logical, coherent and lucid, and with good style ○ Clear evidence of understanding ○ Grammar and spelling accurate ○ Conclusions well-argued and substantiated ○ Appropriate selection of content / theory / style in key areas ○ Good focus on module's aims and themes	○ Clear identification of the issues ○ Demonstration of reading of relevant literature from a variety of sources ○ Evidence of wide reading ○ Appropriate application of theory ○ Ability to be critical and appraise the literature retrospectively to further knowledge and thinking ○ Evidence of evaluation / justification / critical thought

Table 3: PGT assessment marking system

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2026-27
Postgraduate regulations

% age	Assessment marking system	
50-59% Pass: adequate	A satisfactory answer indicating a grasp of the question and a reasonably structured answer. It offers fair coverage, picking most of the key issues, but lacks any real development. Some evidence of reading or wider appreciation of subject.	
	- Logical, coherent and reasonably presented - Evidence of evaluation / justification / critical thought - Grammar and spelling largely accurate - Mostly accurate referencing - Thought given to selection of content / theory in key areas - Good level of understanding of topic area	- Identification of the main issues to the subject - Conclusions largely well-argued and substantiated - Evidence of reading relevant literature round the subject - Focus on module's aims and themes - Some application of theory
40-49% Marginal Failure: incomplete	This indicates a very basic understanding of the issues. Failure to highlight some of the key points, and the overall structure of the answer is weak and lacking in critical thinking. An understanding of the issues can be identified but there is a failure to elaborate or communicate them beyond description. Presentation is also likely to be poor quality and referencing poor and limited in scope.	
	- Meaning apparent, but language not fluent, grammar and spelling poor - Superficial / limited evaluation - Limited evidence of reflection - Shows an attempt to be logical and organised - Referencing present but mostly inaccurate - Some key aspects of theory may be missed and application limited	- Critical thought and rationale for work presented is inadequately demonstrated - Evidence of general understanding of concepts, but inaccuracy / confusion - Conclusions weak or unclear - Some of the writing is focused on module aims and themes - Evidence of some reading
30-39% Fail: deficient	A weak attempt not adequate for a pass because of basic errors and misconceptions. The argument is confused and the material thin, though there may be some limited evidence of understanding, but evidence is inadequate and / or highly descriptive. Presentation is probably poor with many inaccuracies in style, spelling etc.	
	- Failure to address the question asked / task set - Lack of critical thought / analysis / theory - Confused / illogical thinking - No evidence of reflection - Inaccurate or inappropriate content / theory - Unsupported value judgements / generalisations - Disorganised content / style - Insubstantial / invalid conclusions	- Unclear meaning - Little or no evidence of reading round the subject - Significantly under / over required specified length - No attempt to address modules' focus, aims or themes - Referencing absent - Possible evidence of plagiarism

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2026-27
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% age	Assessment marking system
0-29% Fail: very deficient	A failure to grasp the question and / or provide any evidence of learning / understanding of the issues. Disorganised ideas / comments. Very poor structure and rambling answer which is extremely descriptive and grossly lacking in content. Presentation is very inadequate.

Table 4: PGT assessment marking system cont.

Assessment marking system

- 14a.21 Assessment and feedback are crucial in the learning cycle. The university places great importance on the assessment of, and feedback on, student work. The following guidelines and actual feedback on assessed work will assist students in understanding what grades and marks mean so they can enhance their performance. These guidelines cannot cover all types of assignments, nor can all the points be apposite to all assignments. However, where grading of outcomes is employed, the criterion-based approach will be adopted.

Module assessment

- 14a.22 The minimum overall pass mark on each module is 50% (weighted average). Students must attempt all components of summative assessment; non-submission of any component of assessment will result in a fail mark for the module overall. Students must normally achieve a minimum mark of 40% on each component of assessment in order to pass the module.
- 14a.23 A programme team may, at its discretion, specify a minimum overall pass mark of 50% in some or all of the components of assessment in a module.

Reassessment

- 14a.24 Students failing to achieve the minimum requirements for passing a module may be offered one reassessment opportunity. The maximum module mark that can be obtained at reassessment shall be 50%. In deciding whether a student should be offered this opportunity, the board of examiners will take into account the number and extent of the module failures that a student has had during the session in question and decide, on all of the evidence available, whether the student has a reasonable chance of redeeming the position. Boards of examiners shall not withhold permission for students to be reassessed for a module(s) without good cause.
- 14a.25 If a student fails to pass a module at the reassessment, the board of examiners may permit the student to repeat the module for a second and final time, and the maximum module mark that can be obtained at the repeat shall be 50%. An opportunity to repeat will not be offered where doing so contravenes practice required by professional or accreditation bodies.
- 14a.26 The board will exercise its discretion to determine the nature, conditions and time of the reassessment: normally, where a module is assessed by more than one component of assessment then the components(s) that have been passed will not be used. The board of examiners may, at its discretion, require a student to repeat a module before reassessment takes place.

Progression

- 14a.27 A student on a taught postgraduate programme will normally be permitted to continue with their studies while carrying one failed 20-credit module, subject to meeting any module pre-requisite requirements. Where a student has failed more than one module, they will not normally be permitted to enrol on new modules within that programme until the failures have been redeemed.
- 14a.28 A student may progress to the dissertation stage of a Masters programme while carrying one failed 20-credit module, subject to meeting any module pre-requisite requirements.

14a.29 A programme may, subject to approval, specify additional criteria for progression from PgCert to PgDip, or from PgDip to Masters.

Distinction in the awards of PgCert, PgDip and Masters

14a.30 Boards of examiners will be guided by the following regulations which set out the normal minimum requirements that are expected of a student in order to gain Distinction in their award. However, in arriving at a decision, the board of examiners can look beyond these regulations if this is deemed to be appropriate to the circumstances. This can only be done if it is not to the detriment of the student or to the integrity of the award:

- a student may achieve the award of PgCert with Distinction if a minimum of 40 credits at SCQF Level 11 have been achieved at Distinction grade
- a student may achieve the award of PgDip with Distinction if a minimum of 60 credits at SCQF Level 11 have been achieved at Distinction grade
- a student may achieve the award of Masters with Distinction if a minimum of 100 credits at SCQF Level 11 have been achieved at Distinction grade, including the dissertation module.

Merit in the awards of PgCert, PgDip and Masters

14a.31 Boards of examiners will be guided by the following regulations which set out the normal minimum requirements that are expected of a student in order to gain Merit in their award. However, in arriving at a decision, the board of examiners can look beyond these regulations if this is deemed to be appropriate to the circumstances. This can only be done if it is not to the detriment of the student or to the integrity of the award:

- a student may achieve the award of PgCert with Merit if a minimum of 40 credits at SCQF Level 11 have been achieved at Merit grade
- a student may achieve the award of PgDip with Merit if a minimum of 60 credits at SCQF Level 11 have been achieved at Merit grade
- a student may achieve the award of Masters with Merit if a minimum of 100 credits at SCQF Level 11 have been achieved at Merit grade, including the dissertation module.