Progression and Award Requirements 2018-19

In 2015-16, UCL conducted an extensive consultation process about changes to the Assessment regulations. This briefing summarises the changes to the Progression and Award Requirements in response to that consultation process.

Removal of Course Unit System

The regulations will be based on credits and modules instead of course units, in line with the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Programmes will still be structured in modules of 15 and 30 credits – this is not intended to change the fundamental structures of programmes.

Removal of ‘Completion’

In order to simplify the regulations, the concept of undergraduate ‘completion’ will no longer exist. There are instead provisions for condonement (see below) and penalties for students who make no or little attempt at assessment (a mark of 0 and forfeiture of that attempt).

Requirements to Pass a Module

These have been clarified to ensure that all module marks are calculated consistently (this will be done automatically by the new Academic Model). Module marks will be determined from a weighted mean of all component marks, rounded to 2 decimal places. Students must achieve a weighted mean of a Pass in order to pass the module. Individual components can no longer be identified as ‘essential’ – the module will need to be identified as ‘non-condonable’ if particular programme elements are deemed essential to achieving a certain qualification.

New Undergraduate Condonement Regulations

The current UG Progression and Award regulations are quite complex and there is a high degree of variation across UCL. The regulations are also quite restrictive in comparison to competitor institutions in the Russell Group, and this contributes to lower rates of progression at UCL.

In the main Harmonised Scheme of Award ‘condonement’ operates by allowing UG students to ‘complete’ but not ‘pass’ a total of one course unit (30 credits) over the programme as a whole (1.5 cu on Integrated Masters programmes). In earlier years, students who fail a module are given one opportunity to resit before condonement is applied; in the final year, resits are not possible.

In the new regulations, the Progression and Award Requirements are very simple: students ‘should’ pass 120 credits in each year of study. Integrated Masters programmes can also set higher year thresholds via the Academic Review cycle 2017-18 - see Briefing 1 for further details of this process.

There is also provision for students to still progress or be awarded a degree if they are carrying a small amount of failure, via new condonement regulations. In each year of study, students can fail up to 30 credits (marks of 0-39%/49%) and still progress or be awarded a degree.

In order to maintain academic standards, and prevent condonement if overall performance is not of a sufficient standard, students will need to satisfy the following conditions in order to be condoned:

- The student must have made an assessable attempt in the module(s) concerned
- A maximum of 60 credits can be condoned across the programme as a whole
- Modules can only be condoned if the student has a year average of at least a Pass (40%/ 50%)
Non-condonable Modules

During the consultation process a number of faculties raised concerns about condoning modules which were essential to student’s learning – in particular, a number of professional bodies require students to pass all modules. The regulations therefore allow programmes to designate some modules as ‘non-condonable’ i.e. they must be passed. UCL has asked us to ensure that this provision is only used where necessary, to ensure that all students have equal access to condonement. In order for a module to be designated as non-condonable it must, therefore, be a Compulsory module and/or a module essential to professional accreditation. Departments will have the opportunity to apply for non-condonable modules as part of the Academic Review cycle 2017-18.

Condonement before Resit

At present, UG students in Years 1 and 2 are permitted a resit before condonement is applied. In Year 3, resits are not permitted and condonement is applied automatically. The new regulations apply to students in all years of study. If a student meets the condonement criteria, the module must be condoned and students will not be permitted to resit. This will help students to avoid unnecessary resits, and will reduce the volume of Late Summer Assessments.

It is recognised that the lower mark will feed into the classification. ARQASC is investigating a range of options for mitigating the impact of condoned marks, such as dropping at least 30 credits in Years 1 and 2 from the classification – see the Classification Discussion Paper for further details.

Taught Postgraduate Progression and Award Requirements

The PGT Progression and Award Requirements will remain largely the same for most UCL programmes. However, there are some important points to note around the rules for resits and condonement which will be introduced for 2017-18 to accompany Late Summer Assessments - see Briefing 2 for further details:

- There will no longer be a cap on the classification for students with a resit or condoned mark – students will now be eligible for a Merit or Distinction if they meet the relevant criteria.
- Resit module marks will be capped at a Pass.
- PGT students who meet the condonement criteria at the first attempt will be condoned and will not be eligible for a resit (separate regulations apply to students with Extenuating Circumstances).

Marking with Letter Grades

Discussions are still ongoing about the possible adoption of a Grade Point Average marking scale across UCL. In the meantime, it is important that IOE programmes are fully integrated with the main UCL regulations. To facilitate this, the 2018-19 regulations will include both percentage and letter grade marking scales. For those using a letter grade scale, progression, award and classification will be based on a Preponderance Method – see Briefing 5 for further details.

At this stage it is not anticipated that other UCL programmes will adopt this particular letter grade scale (which includes grades A, B, C, D. with no +/- gradations). Programmes can apply to use the scale if they wish, but Departments should be aware that there is not yet an agreed conversion from letters to percentages which works for the diverse range of disciplines at UCL, and this can cause significant problems for students taking modules in other faculties. All UCL programmes will therefore be required to adopt one of the two scales – mixed economies mean that progression, award and classification cannot be calculated.

Progression on 2-Year Masters Programmes

The new regulations permit 2-year Masters programmes to include ‘Continuation Requirements’ between years of study (1-year programmes cannot include progression points). Academic Services will work with programmes to determine appropriate local regulations as part of the Academic Review cycle 2017-18.
DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTATION

N.B. The following proposals cover 3 Year Bachelors Degrees, 4 Year Integrated Masters Degrees and Masters Degrees only for ease of reference during the consultation period – cognate regulations will be developed for Study Abroad/ Placement programmes, Top-Ups, iBScs, Cert HEs, Foundation Degrees, Graduate Certificates and Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas etc.

UCL Academic Manual 2018-19

Chapter 4: Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes

9 Progression & Award

The Progression and Award Requirements define what a student must do to progress from one year of study to the next and to be awarded a UCL qualification. Students should read this section in conjunction with the Programme Summary for their specific programme of study.

9.1 Overarching Principles

Principle 17: Qualifications must only be awarded for the successful achievement of defined learning outcomes.

Principle 18: The criteria for Progression and the Award of a degree must be transparent, clearly defined and fair to all students, and aligned with the requirements of the UCL Qualifications and Credit Framework.

Principle 19: Programmes must include regular review points to support and evaluate a student’s progress throughout their programme.

Principle 20: A student may be permitted to progress from one year to the next and/or be awarded a degree where they are carrying a small amount of failure, as long as their overall performance is of a good standard and the requirements of any relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies are met.

9.2 Scope & Definitions

1. A student must meet or exceed UCL’s threshold standards in order to be Awarded a qualification.

2. Where a programme includes more than one year of study, students must meet threshold standards in order to Progress from one year to the next.

3. The specific arrangements on each programme of study must be documented in the Programme Summary.

4. Details of the structures of UCL taught programmes, including information about credit, academic levels and modules, can be found in Chapter 2: Qualifications and Credit Framework.

Professionally-accredited Programmes

5. Subject to approval by UCL Education Committee or its nominee, a programme may include additional requirements for the achievement of professional accreditation. These requirements must be documented in the Programme Summary.
Non-modular Programmes

6. **Subject to approval by UCL Education Committee or its nominee**, a non-modular programme *may* not include formal progression requirements between years of study. Such programmes *must* demonstrate that there are regular review points to evaluate and support students’ progress through the programme. These arrangements *must* be documented in the Programme Summary.

**Failure to meet the Progression & Award Requirements**

7. A student who is unable to meet the Progression and Award Requirements due to illness or other Extenuating Circumstances *may* be eligible for a Deferral or other form of mitigation under the regulations in Section 6: Extenuating Circumstances.

8. A student who does not meet all of the Progression and Award Requirements, and has no Extenuating Circumstances material to that failure, *must* be subject to the regulations in Section 11: Consequences of Failure.

9.3 **Condonement**

**Scope and Definitions**

1. **Condonement** is the award of credit to permit Progression or Award despite failure to achieve the Pass Mark in one or more modules.

2. A student who meets all the Condonement Criteria, and therefore the Progression and Award Requirements, *must not* be reassessed.

3. Where a module is condoned, the condoned mark *must* stand (i.e. the mark *must not* be raised to the Pass Mark) and *must* be included in the student’s classification, where applicable.

**Condonable and Non-Condonable Modules**

4. All modules on a programme *should* be Condona ble.

5. **Subject to approval by UCL Education Committee or its nominee**, a programme *may* designate one or more modules as **Non-condonable** (*must* be passed). In order for a module to be designated as Non-condonable it *must* be:
   a) A Compulsory module, AND/ OR
   b) A module essential to professional accreditation.

6. Non-condonable modules *must* be documented in the Programme Summary.

**Application of Condonement**

7. Condonement *must* only be applied formally by the Programme Board of Examiners at the end of a year of study, or at the end of the taught modules on a Masters programme, when the full extent of any failure is known.

8. On Extended or Flexible taught postgraduate programmes, the formal decision on whether the student meets the Condonement criteria can only be made at the end of the taught modules. A student who achieves a Condonable mark in an earlier year *should therefore* seek academic advice about their Condonement and Resit/ Repeat options:
   a) A student who does not pass a module *should* be entered automatically for a Resit or Repeat, as appropriate.
   b) A student *may* choose not to be reassessed in that module and instead to retain the fail mark on the basis that it *may* be condoned at the end of the programme.
   c) Students *must* notify UCL Assessment & Student Records of their intention not to be reassessed at least four weeks before the date or deadline for reassessment.

**Failure to meet the Condonement Criteria at the First Attempt**

9. A student who does not meet all the Condonement Criteria at the first attempt will not meet the Progression and Award Requirements and must be reassessed in all the failed modules, including those modules with marks falling within the Condonable Range.
9.4 Honours Degree Progression & Award Requirements

Progression and Award

1. In order to progress from one year to the next, or to be awarded a qualification, a student should Pass 120 credits in each year of study.

Condonement

2. Where a student does not Pass 120 credits in a year of study, module marks must be Condoned if the student meets all of the following criteria in that year of study:
   a) Pass at least 90 credits, AND
   b) Pass all Non-condonable modules, AND
   c) Achieve a credit-weighted mean of 40.00% (50.00% in the Masters year) across 120 credits, AND
   d) Achieve module marks of 0-39.99% (0-49.99% on level 7 modules) in no more than 30 credits in any one academic year, AND
   e) Achieve module marks of 0-39.99% (0-49.99% on level 7 modules) in no more than 60 credits across the whole programme.

3. A module is not eligible for Condonement if the student has not made an assessable attempt in every Component of that module.

Modern Foreign Language Requirement

7. In order to be awarded a qualification, a student must also meet UCL’s Modern Foreign Language Requirements (see Section 9.7: Honours Degree Modern Foreign Language Requirements).

Integrated Masters Programmes

8. Subject to approval by UCL Education Committee or its nominee, an Integrated Masters programme may set a higher progression threshold than the UCL minimum to permit progression from Year 3 to Year 4. Higher thresholds must be documented in the Programme Summary.

Extra-Mural Study Abroad Year or Placement Year

9. A student should meet the progression requirements before commencing a Study Abroad Year or Placement Year.

9.5 Masters Award Requirements

Progression

1. Masters programmes of one calendar year’s duration must not include progression requirements.

2. Where a programme runs over more than one calendar year (e.g. a 2-year Extended Masters or a 5-year Flexible Masters), the programme should include an annual review in order to support a student’s progress through the programme.
   a) Subject to approval by UCL Education Committee or its nominee, students may be required to meet defined threshold standards in order to continue into the next year of such
a programme. Failure to meet these standards after all permitted assessment attempts may lead to failure of the programme.

a) Such **Continuation Requirements** must be documented in the Programme Summary.

**Award**

3. In order to be awarded a Masters, a student *should* Pass at least 180 credits.

**Condonement**

4. Where a student does not Pass all credits, module marks *must* be Condoned if the student meets all of the following criteria:

**Numeric Method**

5. On programmes operating a Numeric Marking Scale:
   a) Pass the Dissertation/ Research Project, AND
   b) Pass at least 75% of the credits, AND
   c) Pass all Non-condonable modules, AND
   d) Achieve a credit-weighted mean of 50.00% across all credits, AND
   e) Achieve module marks of 40.00-49.99% (30.00-39.99% on level 6 modules) in no more than 25% of the credits.

**Letter Grade Method**

6. On programmes operating a Letter Grade Marking Scale:
   a) Pass the Dissertation/ Research Project, AND
   b) Pass at least 75% of the credits, AND
   c) Pass all Non-condonable modules, AND
   d) Achieve a module grade of D (E on level 6 modules) in no more than 25% of the credits.

7. A module is not eligible for Condonement if the student has not made an assessable attempt in every Component of that module.