

## **2021/22 Academic Framework Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes (excluding programmes where delivery commenced prior to September 2016)**

<b>Responsibility for Policy:</b>	Registrar and Chief Operating Officer
<b>Relevant to:</b>	LJMU Staff, Students and Academic Partners
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### **RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**

QAA UK Quality Code  
Competition Markets Authority Guidance

### **RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS**

Student Handbooks  
Programme Specifications  
Programme Guides

**2020/21 Academic Framework Regulations for  
Postgraduate Taught Programmes**  
*(excluding programmes where delivery commenced  
prior to September 2016)*

The regulations apply to all taught postgraduate LJMU programmes that lead to a validated award, wherever delivered. Any exceptions to the regulations must comply with sections PG.A1.5-PG.A1.8 or PG.A1.10.

Where 'Director' appears in the text this means the Director of School or an equivalent post holder who will be responsible for ensuring the School, Department, Centre or Institute's compliance with the regulations.

The Academic Framework regulations should be read in conjunction with the relevant academic policies:

<https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/academic-registry/staff/policies>

For further information please contact your Assistant Academic Registrar.

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## Section A Structural Regulations

### PG.A1 Introduction

PG.A1.1 The purpose of the Academic Framework is to ensure equity of treatment for students. This is achieved by ensuring that academic judgement operates within clearly defined parameters and that student-facing processes are transparent.

PG.A1.2 The University operates a credit-based Academic Framework applicable to all taught LJMU programmes that lead to a validated award, wherever delivered, subject to the proviso outlined in PG.A1.10. The Academic Board, or its delegated authority, approves all programmes of study and modules, including any subsequent amendments.

PG.A1.3 The University may make changes to a programme of study or module where such changes are deemed to be beneficial to students, or are minor in nature and unlikely to impact negatively upon students or become necessary due to circumstances beyond the control of the University. Such events are rare, but where this does happen the University operates a policy of consultation, advice and support to all enrolled students affected by a proposed change to their programme or module. Where changes are proposed which will affect existing students, programme teams must ensure that those students will not be disadvantaged by the change. Examples of essential change include: changes enabling new research to be brought into the curriculum, or changes that are subsequently agreed in response to concerns expressed by students, external examiners or professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs). Oversight and approval of changes through review and minor change processes provide an additional safeguard to the student experience of continuing students.

PG.A1.4 Award programmes establish a clear link between student input, in terms of learning activity, and student achievement, in terms of learning outcomes. Thus, learning activity is defined as the amount

of time needed for a student to achieve the defined learning outcomes for a module. To be eligible for a named award students must satisfy the credit requirements for that award (see PG.B2-PG.B3).

PG.A1.5 Subject to PG.A1.6 and A1.10 all programmes leading to LJMU awards are expected to operate within the Academic Framework.

PG.A1.6 A programme operating within the Framework may be unable to comply with all the requirements of the Framework. In these circumstances the programme team may apply to the Education Committee for a programme variance. Applications for variance will be considered against agreed criteria that the variance is a nationally published condition of a statutory body, agency or accrediting / professional body, without which the programme could not be accredited. Applications for variance from the regulations governing module size and/or delivery may also cite specific academic conditions, such as subject or disciplinary sector practice. All applications for variance require full details on the alternative arrangements, a clear rationale for the variance and full supporting evidence.

PG.A1.7 Applications for variance must be submitted before validation and resubmitted prior to subsequent validations

PG.A1.8 Modification to the Academic Framework regulations requires the approval of the Academic Board. Programme rules are an additional requirement of the University's Academic Framework regulations. Programme rules are detailed in the programme specification and include requirements for admission, progression and award. When changes are introduced, the timing of their introduction should be made clear in the documentation. All such changes must be communicated to the students, well in advance of implementation.

PG.A1.9 Dual Awards: where the University, together with one or more degree-awarding bodies, provides a programme leading to separate

awards and certificates being granted by all the awarding bodies. Each partner is responsible for their own assessment and quality assurance.

PG.A1.10 Joint Awards: where the University, together with one or more degree-awarding bodies, provides a jointly developed and delivered programme, leading to a single award made jointly by all the awarding bodies. A single certificate is produced. Responsibility for assessment and quality assurance is in accordance with the agreement between partners. The Academic Board may agree that joint awards are allowed to operate regulations that differ from the Academic Framework.

PG.A1.11 All programmes must be taught and assessed in English.

**PG.A2 Credit**

PG.A2.1 One credit equates to ten notional hours of learning. The standard academic year for a full-time student studying a postgraduate programme equates to 180 credits and 1800 notional hours of learning.

PG.A2.2 The regulations for the amount of credit from prior learning / credit transfer that may count toward the various postgraduate awards distinguish between the type of prior learning and the size of the award.

PG.A2.2.1 Postgraduate Diploma and smaller awards: up to 50% of the credit may be contributed by credit transfer/certificated prior learning. Where the learning is uncertificated, no more than 50% of the amount allowed for certificated learning may contribute toward these awards.

PG.A2.2.2 Master's Awards: up to 67% of the credit may be contributed by credit transfer/certificated prior learning. Where the learning is uncertificated, no more than 50% of the amount allowed for certificated learning may contribute toward these awards. Credit for either type of prior learning may not contribute toward the Master's

stage of the award.

PG.A2.2.3 Professional Doctorates: The maximum amount of credit from prior learning and /or credit transfer that may be contributed towards a professional doctorate award is 33%; that is, 180 Level 7 credits only.

PG.A2.2.4 The maximum amount of postgraduate credit that may be incorporated in a programme of study from prior learning is:

Target Award	Certificated Prior Learning	Uncertificated (Experiential) Prior Learning
Masters	120 c	60 c
PG Diploma	60 c	30 c
PG Certificate	30 c	10 c
Prof Docs	180 c	90 c

Credit totals are not cumulative and the totals for certificated learning are the maximum prior learning credit totals available, e.g. Master's students may claim up to 120 credits, not 120 credits plus 60 credits. Credit from prior learning may not be used to replace the credit gained from successfully completing the 60 credit final stage of a Master's programme nor toward stage 3 of the Doctoral phase of the Professional Doctorate. Regardless of prior learning achieved elsewhere, all students undertaking postgraduate award programmes at LJMU must undertake new learning within the Master's stage of the target award.

PG.A2.3 Any alternative limitation on the amount of credit which may be derived from prior learning and /or credit transfer, must be explicitly stated, and approved, in the documentation for validation. Any alternatives are likely to be exceptional and must be supported by clear evidence of the requirement for alternative credit amounts.

PG.A2.4 Faculty Recognition Groups will determine whether credit is to be recognised or awarded in respect of prior learning and whether that credit will be mark-bearing.

**PG.A3 Modules**

PG.A3.1 The module pro-forma is the validated source of information about the module. It includes the level, credit rating, aims, learning outcomes, the assessment components and weightings, learning activities and outline syllabus.

**PG.A4 Programmes**

PG.A4.1 The programme title must be clear, unambiguous and accurately represent the nature and field(s) of study undertaken. Every validated University award must have a programme specification. A programme specification is a concise description of the intended learning outcomes of a programme and how these outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated. Programme and module rules must align with these University Academic Framework regulations, except and unless Academic Board, or its delegated authority, has agreed to a variance (see PG.A1.6 and PG.A1.10).

PG.A4.2 In postgraduate taught programmes of more than 120 credits modules comprise 10, 20, or 30 credits except for the research project/dissertation module which must be 60 credits. The research project/dissertation module is a core module in a Master's programme and enables the student to carry out an in-depth advanced study, largely independent of tutor support. All details of assessment requirements and procedures must be specified in the programme documentation.

PGA4.3 In Masters awards the research project/dissertation module must be supported by at least 10 credits of research skills in a module which must be passed prior to the submission of the research project/dissertation module.

PGA4.4 For all postgraduate taught programmes of more than 120 credits academic delivery is semesterised. A semester is defined as a period of study of up to 15 weeks. The distribution of credit will be balanced between semesters.

PGA4.5 The level 7 research project/dissertation module is an exception to semester delivery and may be delivered via a year-long module. Any other level 7 work-related and work-based learning module is exempt from the requirement for semester-based delivery. Any other year-long delivery is permitted only via an approved variance request (see PG.A1.6).

## Section B Award Regulations

### PG.B1 Introduction

PG.B1.1 All awards offered by LJMU should be consistent and comparable in standards with awards granted and conferred throughout Higher Education in the UK. The University's awards adhere to the criteria and qualification descriptors of *The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies* (2014).

PG.B1.2 The Framework for Higher Education qualifications is designed to meet the expectations of the Bologna Declaration and thus aligns with *The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area* (FQ-EHEA).

PG.B1.3 The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is based on the principle that 60 ECTS credits are equivalent to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a typical full-time academic year of formal learning. Two LJMU credits are equivalent to one ECTS credit.

PG.B1.4 Proposals for new awards, within the Academic Framework, e.g., MSoc (Master of Sociology) or MMid (Master of Midwifery), are considered by the Academic Planning Panel on behalf of the Academic Board.

PG.B1.5 Proposals for new programmes are proposed by each Faculty Management Team and considered by the Academic Planning Panel on behalf of the Academic Board. New proposals will be considered in the context of the University's strategic plan, the number of students to be recruited, the range of the University's existing programmes, their relationship to each other and to the awards of other bodies. It is only possible to award a qualification as an alternative exit award when the award has been validated.

### PG.B2 Taught Postgraduate Awards

PG.B2.1 Incorporation of undergraduate modules into postgraduate programmes: New undergraduate learning at levels 4, 5 and 6 may be incorporated into postgraduate programmes as modified undergraduate modules where the learning outcomes, assessment and delivery of the module are enhanced to bring them to postgraduate level. Successful learning on such modified modules will earn level 7 credits. The amended modules would require the approval of the relevant Faculty Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

PG.B2.2 **Professional Doctorates**  
540 credits, 180 credits at Level 7 and 360 credits at Level 8. The award is ungraded.

PG.B2.3 **Awards Associated with Professional Doctorates**  
Doctor of Applied Sport and Exercise Science (DSportExSci)  
Doctor of Architecture (DArch)  
Doctor of Art and Design (DArtDes)  
Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)  
Doctor of Business Administration Engineering and Technology (DBAEngTech)  
Doctor of Criminal Justice (DCJ) – Subject to APP approval  
Doctor of Education (EdD)  
Doctor of Engineering (EngD)  
Doctor of Health Psychology (DHealthPsy)  
Doctor of Nursing (DNurs)  
Doctor of Policing (DPol) – Subject to APP approval  
Doctor of Policing, Security and Criminal Justice (DPSCJ)  
Doctor of Sport and Exercise Psychology (DSportExPsy)

PG.B2.4.1 **Master of Architecture (MArch)**  
240 credits at Level 7. The MArch is graded.

PG.B2.4.2 **Erasmus Mundus Masters (MSc)**  
240 credits of which a minimum of 180 credits must be at Level 7. The award includes mandatory study with an Erasmus partner institution.

**PG.B2.5 Taught Master's Degrees, excluding the Master of Architecture and the Erasmus Mundus Masters**

180 credits at Level 7, 240 credits at Level 7 or 240 credits at Level 7 where students complete a 60 credit placement module. Taught Master's awards are graded.

**PG.B2.6 Awards Associated with Taught Master's Programmes**

Master of Arts (MA)

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Master of Business Studies (MBS)

Master of Education (MEd)

Master of Fine Art (MFA)

Master of Laws (LLM)

Master of Public Administration (MPA)

Master of Research (MRes)

Master of Science (MSc)

**PG.B2.7 Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)**

120 credits at Level 7. Postgraduate diplomas are graded.

**Postgraduate Diploma of Research PGDip (Res)**

120 credits at Level 7.

**PG.B2.8 Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)**

60 credits at Level 7. Postgraduate certificates are graded.

**Postgraduate Certificate of Research PGCert (Res)**

60 credits at Level 7.

**PG.B3 Other Awards**

These awards are graded (See PG.C8.2).

**PG.B3.1 Certificate of Professional Development (CPD)**

10 to 60 credits, at Level(s) 7 only.

CPDs must comprise modules that are in multiples of 10 credits. The award is a titled award, reserved for validated programmes of study related to professional areas.

## Section C Assessment Regulations

### PG.C1 Introduction

PG.C1.1 These regulations apply only to summative assessments conducted for the purposes of awarding credit or of the right to progress, or of determining a final award. The purpose of summative assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes of the modules.

PG.C1.2 These regulations apply to assessment on all programmes within the University's Academic Framework, wherever delivered. All rules for programmes leading to an award must be consistent with the Academic Framework except where a programme has been granted a variance by the Education Committee (see PG.A1.6 and PG.A10). Assessment information must be described in the definitive programme specification and in the module specification(s).

PG.C1.3 The summative assessment tasks for an individual module must be:  
(i) aligned with the module learning outcomes;  
(ii) specified on the module proforma.

PG.C1.4 Every learning outcome must be assessed summatively. Normally there is one summative assessment task per 10 credit module and a maximum of two summative assessment tasks per 20 credit module. Guidance on the typical assessment loading per module is available in the Curriculum Design Guide:  
<https://policies.ljmu.ac.uk/UserHome/Policies/PolicyDisplay.aspx?&id=130&l=1>

### PG.C2 Marking and Moderation

C2.1 There must be marking and moderation procedures at all levels, consistent with the University's moderation policy. All members of the teaching staff of the University are examiners of the University. The Director has responsibility for ensuring that the processes of marking and moderation operate in accordance with the University regulations. Coursework and written examinations must be

anonymised prior to marking, in accordance to the University's policy: <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations/academic-policy>

PG.C2.2 Staff who have a personal interest in, or relationship with a student being assessed, must declare an interest to the Director and s/he must ensure that, where the marking of anonymised coursework and written examinations policy does not apply other members of the wider team mark and moderate the relevant work.

PG.C2.3 Coursework, which is submitted late (except where there is an agreed extension) will be recorded as a non-submission.

PG.C2.4.1 Credit is awarded for those modules in which a pass mark or grade has been achieved except where:  
(i) the student has not attempted all the summative assessment items associated with the module  
(ii) 'competency thresholds' are included and the student is not yet competent (see PG.C2.5)  
(iii) a student has been granted a deferral as a result of a valid special mitigation application (PG.C4.7.3)

PG.C2.4.2 The pass mark for level 7 modules is 50% or a 'pass' grade. All summative assessment items must be attempted before credit is released.

PG.C2.4.3 Credits may be also awarded by the Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning (see PG.A2.2).

PG.C2.4.4 An attempt is defined as a submission whether of an assessment item or of an examination script. If a student achieves a pass mark or grade without an attempt of an assessment item or examination credit will not be released and the student is deemed to have failed the module.

PG.C2.5 'Fitness to practise' thresholds in modules require the demonstration of competency in professional practice to be satisfied before credit may be released. Such modules are only permitted where the demonstration of competency in these modules is required as a



condition of professional accreditation of the award. This requirement will be evidenced by a written statement from the professional institute or equivalent body.

### **PG.C3 External Examiners**

- C3.1 An External Examiner appointment is required for all or part of each programme of study which leads to a University award. Faculty Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committees will nominate and recommend External Examiner(s) for appointment by the Academic Board and seek the prior approval of the appointment by the appropriate external professional body where this is required.
- PG.C3.2 External Examiners must be associated with all summative assessments and module results. External Examiners must have full input into the moderation process and will be expected to confirm their involvement in the moderation process. They are entitled to attend the Board of Examiners (PG.C6.5) and have the right to declare any matter a matter of principle.
- PG.C3.3 External Examiners will in addition:
- (i) ensure consistency and fairness in the consideration of all students and that the standard of the award is maintained;
  - (ii) ensure that the assessments are conducted within the approved regulations;
  - (iii) approve the form and content of all summative assessments in order to ensure that all students will be assessed fairly;
  - (iv) judge whether the students have fulfilled the objectives of the programme, the learning outcomes of the modules and reached the required standard;
  - (v) have access to all assessed work and judge students impartially on the basis of the work submitted for assessment and moderate the marks of internal examiners accordingly;
  - (vi) be able to compare the performance of students with that of their peers on comparable programmes elsewhere;
  - (vii) participate in the work of the Board of Examiners;
  - (viii) report annually to the University on the effectiveness of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them.

PG.C3.4 The purpose of the External Examiner's report is to enable the Academic Board to judge whether the programme is meeting its stated objectives and to make any necessary improvements, either immediately or at the next review as appropriate. External Examiners have authority to report concerns about standards of assessment and performance, particularly where they consider that assessments are being conducted in a way that jeopardises either the fair treatment of individual students or the standard of the University's awards.

### **PG.C4 Illness, Absence and Personal Circumstances**

*Procedure notes on the operation of Personal Circumstances and Special Mitigation are available <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/student-regulations/guidance-policy-and-process>*

- PG.C4.1 Students with long-term illness or disability who require ongoing support should contact Student Advice and Wellbeing. Disabled students and any other students with agreed assessment requirements formally documented in an Individual Student Learning Plan will have provisions put in place dependent on individual need (which will be determined via a Needs Assessment and in discussion with the student and relevant staff within the University).
- PG.C4.2 Where illness or other verifiable cause will prevent a student from completing an assessment, s/he should contact the Module Leader as soon as possible. The Module Leader may, on receipt of appropriate evidence, agree one or both of the actions listed below.
- (i) extend an assessment;
  - (ii) set an alternative assessment, provided the alternative task meets the learning outcomes of the original assessment task. The decision to set an alternative assessment task must be agreed no later than one week in advance of the original assessment item deadline; recorded and reported by the Module Leader to the Board of Examiners.
- Any extension deadline / alternative assessment must allow all processes, such as moderation and mark verification, to be

completed prior to the Board Reporting Deadline (BRD). It is also recommended that the student is directed to Student Advice and Wellbeing who may be able to provide other appropriate support for the student.

**PG.C.4.3 Personal Circumstances**

PG.C4.3.1 A student may make an application for personal circumstances where serious and exceptional factors outside a student's control, which adversely affected their performance during their study and not already taken into account by an Individual Student Learning Plan (ISLP) prevent them from attempting a summative assessment task and where the possibility of alternative actions as described in PG.C4.2 are not possible or are inappropriate.

PG.C4.3.2 Personal Circumstances requests may normally only be made no later than five working days after the affected assessment event. This is to enable appropriate consideration by the Faculty Approval Panel in a timely manner and to ensure that the criteria for progression are applied consistently and fairly to all students.

**PG.C4.3.3 Fit to Attempt**

Students who attempt a summative assessment task declare themselves 'fit to attempt' that assessment task and claims for personal circumstances are not permitted for that assessment task.

PG.C4.4 The Personal Circumstances Panel (see also PG.C6.9) will consider the personal circumstances application presented by the student. The decision will be reported to the Board of Examiners.

PG.C4.5 In the case of a valid personal circumstance application, the assessment is deferred to the next appropriate opportunity.

If the claim is deemed to be not the student will fail the module, irrespective of the module mark, as a result of non-submission of a summative assessment item (PG.C2.4.1).

PG.C4.6.1 A student who declares themselves 'fit to attempt' at the start of a time-limited summative assessment item but whose performance was adversely and seriously affected by circumstances that occurred during the assessment to such an extent that the assessment item could not be completed may submit a claim for 'special mitigation'.

PG.C4.6.2 The Personal Circumstances Panel (see also PG.C6.9) will consider the special mitigation application presented by the student. The decision will be reported to the Board of Examiners.

PG.C4.6.3 In the case of a valid special mitigation application, the assessment item is either:

- declared null and void, deferred to the next appropriate opportunity and reported to the Board of Examiners **or**
- the module leader will assign a mark for the assessment item where there is sufficient evidence to do so and where this is approved by the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

PG.C4.6.4 A student who has declared themselves 'fit to attempt' a summative assessment item may request that a Personal Circumstances Panel withdraws their declaration if there is clear evidence that the student was not in a fit state to decide whether they were fit to submit/sit the assessment concerned.

PG.C4.7.1 Where the Personal Circumstances Panel does not accept that the student has experienced serious and exceptional factors outside of their control that adversely affected their performance during their study and which are not already taken into account by an Individual Student Learning Plan (ISLP) this ends consideration of the personal circumstances application.

PG.C4.7.2 Where the Personal Circumstances Panel does not accept that the student's performance was adversely and seriously affected by circumstances that occurred during the assessment to such an extent that the assessment item could not be completed this ends consideration of 'special mitigation'.

- PG.C4.8 A student may be unable to make a personal circumstances or special mitigation application within the five working days' time frame. All applications made after this deadline are deemed to be late.
- PG.C4.9 The Personal Circumstances Panel will determine whether the justification for late submission is valid or not. If the reason for late submission is accepted as valid, then the standard personal circumstances or special mitigation process will apply. Where the Personal Circumstances Panel does not accept the justification for late submission this ends consideration of the application.
- PG.C4.10 Late applications will not be considered after the Board Reporting Deadline (BRD) relevant to the module affected by the claim.
- PG.C4.11.1 In exceptional circumstances, where a student can demonstrate with the support of independent documentary evidence, that they could not have reasonably been expected to have complied with the University's regulations owing to the specific nature of the issues involved, an application submitted beyond this timeframe may be considered. Where appropriate, if the late application is upheld after the relevant Board of Examiners has met, the Chair of the Board will be notified and the student's academic profile will be reconsidered.
- PG.C4.11.2 In extreme circumstances, the University reserves the right to apply Special Mitigation following a students' attempt at any assessment item.
- PG.C4.11.3 Students have the right to appeal against the decision of the Personal Circumstances Panel in accordance with the procedures outlined in PG.C9.

**PG.C5 Academic Misconduct**  
*Procedure notes on the operation of Academic Misconduct Panels are available at <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/student-regulations/academic-misconduct>*

- PG.C5.1 Academic Misconduct is deemed to cover all deliberate attempt(s) to gain an unfair advantage in assessments. This includes cheating, plagiarism, unauthorised collusion or any other deliberate attempt to gain an unfair advantage in summatively assessed work. Summative assessment includes all forms of written work (including in-class tests), e-assessments, presentations, demonstrations, viva voces, recognition of prior learning portfolios and all forms of examination.
- PG.C5.2 It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to provide students with clear guidance and instruction early in the programme, on the appropriate preparation for and presentation of work, including writing and citation requirements. This guidance must clearly indicate that all types of academic misconduct are considered to be serious. The guidance must also indicate the consequence of, and penalties associated with, academic misconduct (see PG.C5.5.7).
- PG.C5.3 It is the responsibility of the student to take reasonable precautions to guard against unauthorised access by others to his/her work, however stored in whatever format, both before and after assessment.
- PG.C5.4.1 Cheating includes:
- (i) any form of communication with, or copying from, any other source during an examination;
  - (ii) communicating during an examination with any person other than an authorised member of staff;
  - (iii) introducing any written, printed or other material into an examination (including electronically stored information) other than that specified in the rubric of the examination paper;
  - (iv) gaining access to unauthorised material in any way during or before an assessment;
  - (v) the unauthorised use of mobile phones or any other communication device during an assessment or examination;
  - (vi) the submission of false claims of previously gained qualifications, research or experience in order to gain credit for prior learning;
  - (vii) the falsification of research data, the presentation of another's data as one's own, and any other forms of misrepresentation in order to gain advantage;

- (viii) the submission of work for assessment that has already been submitted as all or part of the assessment for another module without the prior knowledge and consent of the Module Leader for the subsequent assessments;
- (ix) the submission of material purchased or commissioned from a third party, such as an essay-writing service, as one's own.

PG.C5.4.2 Plagiarism is defined as the representation of the work, artefacts or designs, written or otherwise, of any other person, from any source whatsoever, as the student's own. Examples of plagiarism may be as follows:

- (i) the verbatim copying of another's work without clear identification and acknowledgement including the downloading of materials from the Internet without proper referencing of materials;
- (ii) the paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without clear identification and acknowledgement;
- (iii) the unidentified and unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another's work;
- (iv) the deliberate and detailed presentation of another's concept as one's own.

PG.C5.4.3 Collusion Includes:

- (i) the conscious collaboration, without official approval, between two or more students in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her individual efforts;
- (ii) where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.

PG.C5.5.1 All cases of suspected Academic Misconduct as defined above must be referred to the Assistant Academic Registrar or nominee. If there is sufficient evidence to support the finding of a prima facie case of Academic Misconduct, the Assistant Academic Registrar or nominee will initiate an Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP). The type of

assessment and the alleged academic misconduct may prohibit the marking of the assessment and any subsequent feedback to the student, pending the outcome of the investigation. Where the decision of the AMP is that the allegation is not proven, then the work should be assessed and feedback provided to the student within 15 working days from the date of the AMP.

PG.C5.5.2 Terms of reference and operation of Academic Misconduct Panels:

- (i) to consider allegations of academic misconduct;
- (ii) to determine whether an allegation of academic misconduct is proven or not proven based on the evidence presented;
- (iii) where a case is proven, to apply the penalty in accordance with the University penalty tariff;
- (iv) to notify the student(s) of the outcome in writing;
- (v) to report all proven decisions and the penalties applied to the relevant Board of Examiners;
- (vi) the proceedings of the AMP will be formally minuted.

PG.C5.5.3 Membership of the AMP or a process for determining the membership of an AMP will be approved by the Director of School (or nominee) prior to the AMP. The Panel will comprise three members of academic staff, two of whom, including the Chair, must not be significantly associated with the student. The Assistant Academic Registrar should not be a member of the AMP. At least one member will be independent of the programme team.

PG.C5.5.4 It is the responsibility of the AMP to consider the allegation and the evidence presented. Where any academic misconduct (as defined in PG.C5.1) is proven, the AMP will apply the penalty in accordance with the University's agreed penalty scheme (see PG.C5.5.7). Where evidence of academic misconduct becomes available subsequent to a meeting of a Board of Examiners, the University has the right to investigate/reopen the matter and to determine the outcome(s) according to the circumstances.

PG.C5.5.5 In the event of a student being suspected of cheating in more than one examination during the same examination period all suspected cases

will be considered at the same AMP. If the cheating is proven the penalty points for prior offences will be applied.

PG.C5.5.6 In cases of alleged collusion all suspected students will be called to an AMP. In the event that one or more students is deemed to have given their work to one or more other students the former students will be subject to disciplinary procedures and the latter students will be subject to the AMP penalty tariff, if the misconduct is proven.

PG.C5.5.7 Academic Misconduct penalty scheme. These penalties are calculated on a points-based tariff as follows:

Banding	Points	Penalty
AMP1	Up to 39	Zero for assessment component
AMP2	40 - 69	Zero for assessment component and module mark capped
AMP3	70 - 89	Zero for all module assessment components
AMP4	90 - 99	Zero for all module assessment components and no referral allowed
AMP5	100+	Recommend expulsion

PG.C5.5.8 The Board of Examiners will apply the penalty and consider its recommendations thereafter. Where the penalty tariff permits, the Board may include offering a referral or an exceptional second referral in a module failed after the application of a penalty.

Where the penalty tariff permits re-submission of work, the Board of Examiners must ensure that the student is made aware of the assignment or re-examination requirements and the relevant submission date(s).

PG.C5.5.9 If the AMP finds the breach of assessment regulations may involve a breach of the University's disciplinary code, it will refer the matter to the Student Governance Office for consideration under the Disciplinary Procedure.

PG.C5.5.10 Students have the right to appeal against the decision of an AMP in accordance with the procedures outlined in PG.C9.

PG.C5.6 Further details about AMP procedures and the penalty tariff can be found here <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/student-regulations/academic-misconduct>

## PG.C6 Boards of Examiners

PG.C6.1.1 For each programme leading to a validated award of the University, the Academic Board establishes Boards of Examiners according to the approved assessment regulations. Boards of Examiners receive reports listing the awards to which students are entitled and the class / grade. Additionally, a board will consider recommending exit awards to students unable to progress to their target award. The board will formally agree the awards to be recommended and the Chair and External Examiner will sign the Awards Recommendation List. Students will be advised of the awards recommended by the Board of Examiners in line with the published deadline.

PG.C6.1.2 Where a student has been recommended for expulsion as a consequence of disciplinary procedures or academic misconduct the Board of Examiners will receive and consider a recommendation as to whether an award should be withheld. In exceptional circumstances and subject to verifiable evidence, a Board may consider recommending that an award of the University is not conferred upon a student where the student's behaviour represents a serious breach of the University's Code of Behaviour.

PG.C6.1.3 All recommended awards are subject to the conferral of the Academic Board, on a monthly basis. Awards completed on the student record system in any month will be formally conferred on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month and will carry a conferral date of the month in which the award was completed.

PG.C6.1.4 The Academic Board of the University confers awards upon students as they complete their programmes of study, not retrospectively for credit gained by former students in previous years.

PG.C6.2 Prior to a Board of Examiners, the Director is responsible for ensuring:

- (i) that procedures are followed with regard to the consideration and approval of the form and content of all summative assessments that count towards the assessment of the programme and its module(s);
  - (ii) the completion of the moderation process;
  - (iii) that marks achieved by students for each summative assessment task are finalised by the deadline;
  - (iv) the involvement of the External Examiners in the moderation process.
- PG.C6.3.1 In relation to summative assessment, moderation is a process to ensure that marking is consistent, fair and upholds academic standards. In ensuring consistency, fairness and maintenance of academic standards module and programme teams must follow the University moderation procedures as described in University policy.
- PG.C6.3.2 The module leader must complete the module mark verification interface to:
- (i) confirm accuracy of marks;
  - (ii) confirm that moderation has taken place in line with the moderation policy, including the involvement of the External Examiner;
  - (iii) record of the number of extensions, reasons for the extensions and a record of the days of each extension. Reasons for, and any patterns in, the granting of extensions should be evaluated and comments recorded;
  - (iv) record the number of agreed alternative assessments. Reasons for, and any patterns in, the granting of alternative assessments should be evaluated and comments recorded;
  - (v) identify any changes made as a result of moderation.
- PG.C6.4.1 The functions and terms of reference of a Board of Examiners are to:
- (i) confirm that moderation has taken place in line with the moderation policy;
  - (ii) ensure that students are assessed in accordance with the approved regulations and procedures;
  - (iii) formally confirm the marks of all students;
  - (iv) ensure the maintenance of appropriate standards of assessment;
  - (v) note the decisions of the Personal Circumstances Panel regarding personal circumstances / special mitigation claims and confirm any requirements for deferred assessment(s);
  - (vi) determine any referral requirements for all students failing (a) module(s);
  - (vii) agree exceptional second referrals, final module attempts and alternative exit awards where students are eligible (making decisions about students who have exhausted their entitlement to re-assessment);
  - (viii) review and comment on any variation in student work;
  - (ix) review and comment on any variation in marks between assessment items within the module;
  - (x) review the effectiveness of the module assessment criteria and marking scheme;
  - (xi) make any recommendations for the improvement of modules and programmes in terms of supporting student engagement with the academic discipline that they are studying;
  - (xii) analyse module performance on a longitudinal basis, where such data are available;
  - (xiii) compare module outcomes against programmes on a module by level basis, against statistics (e.g. mean mark and range) of similar modules and programmes in the School and across the University.
- PG.C6.4.2 In particular Boards of Examiners:
- (i) agree and implement the decisions of the Faculty Approval Panel regarding personal circumstances / special mitigation claims;
  - (ii) implement the decisions from Academic Misconduct Panels;
  - (iii) reconsider an earlier decision if required by an Academic Appeals Panel;
  - (iv) make decisions on level completion and progression;
  - (v) make recommendations to Academic Board on the award, and category of award, to be conferred upon individual students.

#### **PG.C6.5 Membership of Boards of Examiners**

Boards of Examiners will comprise:

- (i) Chair, School Director responsible for the programme(s) or nominee (with approval from the PVC (Education));
- (ii) Secretary;
- (iii) the Programme Leader/ Subject Leader(s) of those programmes under discussion;
- (iv) all leaders of modules which contribute to the programme(s) which are to be considered at the Board. Alternates in attendance must be approved by the Chair prior to the Board;
- (v) Assistant Academic Registrar or alternative representative from the approved pool of Academic Registry staff;
- (vi) An External Examiner(s) for each of the programmes under consideration;
- (vii) Administration Support Manager or nominated alternate;
- (viii) Staff, including the link tutor where relevant, from the wider teaching and administrative team associated with the programmes under discussion.

PG.C6.6 Members of Boards of Examiners who have a relationship with a student being assessed, must declare an interest to the Chair and withdraw from the Board for the duration of the discussion regarding said student.

PG.C6.7 The Vice Chancellor or his/her nominee will have the right to attend all meetings of Boards of Examiners, but will not be members. At the discretion of the Chair a non-member of the Board may be permitted to attend a meeting of the Board but will not be member of the Board.

PG.C6.8 The following are required for a Board of Examiners to be quorate:

- (i) Chair; the School Director responsible for the programme(s) under consideration or nominee (with approval from the PVC (Education));
- (ii) Secretary;
- (iii) the Programme Leader/Subject Leader(s) for the programme(s) under discussion. Alternates in attendance must be approved by the Chair prior to the Board;

- (iv) all leaders of modules which are to be considered at the Board. Alternates in attendance must be agreed by the Chair prior to the Board;
- (v) Assistant Academic Registrar or alternative representative from the approved pool of Academic Registry staff;
- (vi) an External Examiner (s) for each of the programmes under consideration. Where Boards are considering re-assessments only or where the majority of the cohort has been considered by a previous Board, the presence of one External Examiner will suffice.

If the Board is inquorate the Vice Chancellor may agree to a waiver to the requirement for a member's attendance at a Board provided that formal arrangements are made to ensure that the decision-making process can proceed to completion.

PG.C6.9 Each Board of Examiners is advised by a Personal Circumstances Panel, whose role is to review applications for personal circumstances/special mitigation and to make appropriate decisions that it reports to the Board of Examiners (see PG.C4.5). The Personal Circumstances Panel is quorate when the Chair and at least two other members of academic staff are present.

PG.C6.10 The discussions of a Board of Examiners are confidential. Claims of personal circumstances and special mitigation must be treated with due sensitivity and confidentiality.

PG.C6.11 The Board of Examiners must be minuted formally and minutes must be available within one week of the meeting. The minutes must contain:

- (i) a formal record of the completion of moderation of all modules attempted by students that were considered by the Board;
- (ii) the progression status of each student;
- (iii) a record of the names of students for whom personal circumstances or special mitigation were considered by the Personal Circumstances Panel and the decisions taken as a result;
- (iv) a record of the decisions taken by the Academic Misconduct Panels;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(v) a record of any academic appeals that have been referred back to the Board;</li> <li>(vi) a record of extensions; any patterns should be evaluated and comments recorded;</li> <li>(vii) a record of any alternative assessments that have been provided; any patterns should be evaluated and comments recorded;</li> <li>(viii) a record of any deferral or referral requirements and when the next opportunity for assessment will occur;</li> <li>(ix) confirmation of awards recommended to the Academic Board for conferral;</li> <li>(x) a record of any prizes awarded;</li> <li>(xi) any recommendations for the improvement of modules and programmes;</li> <li>(xii) analysis of module performance;</li> <li>(xiii) any issue of principle requiring further consideration by the Faculty Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.</li> </ul>	<p>a referral period at the end of the academic year. Boards may be held at the end of Semester One and must be held after all other semesters.</p>
<p>PG.C6.12 All decisions/recommendations of Boards of Examiners on individual students within its terms of reference are final, except in the case of appeals (see PG.C9). The Board may be reconvened if required to by the Academic Board.</p>	<p>PG.C7.4 Level completion is achieved when a student has gained the number of credits required at that level. Credit must be achieved in modules required at all levels for the registered award programme. Students cannot retake successfully attained modules.</p>
<p><b>PG.C7 Managing Student Progression</b></p>	<p>PG.C7.5 A Level Mark will be calculated once a student attempts level completion (i.e. consideration is given to assessment performance in all modules required at that level). For Masters' students eligibility for Exceptional Second Referral (PG.C7.14) will be determined once the taught element of the programme has been attempted (PG.A3.3).</p>
<p>PG.C7.1 Students are required to attempt all items of summative assessment at the appointed time as a condition of the award of credit. Failure to do so will be deemed by the Board of Examiners to constitute failure in the module unless there is some cause found valid on production of acceptable evidence in accordance with PG.C4.</p>	<p>PG.C7.6 All students have the right to one referral opportunity in any failed module(s). In certain circumstances (see PG.C7.13 &amp; PG.C7.14), a third attempt (either a Final Module Attempt or Exceptional Second Referral) may be permitted. No further attempts are permitted.</p>
<p>PG.C7.2 The marks of the assessment items within each module are aggregated and a module mark produced for notification to the Board of Examiners. The progress of each student will be considered by a Board at least once per academic year.</p>	<p>PG.C7.7 Performance at a level is indicated by the Level Mark. The Level Mark is calculated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Marks from the core modules, and</li> <li>(ii) Marks from the best of the option modules not exceeding the total option credits required.</li> </ul> <p>The designation of the module is that defined by the programme specification. Each module mark is weighted by the credit rating of the module.</p>
<p>PG.C7.3 Assessment periods are scheduled at the end of each semester with referred and deferred assessment from both semesters taking place in</p>	<p>PG.7.8 Students retrieve their failure by resitting or resubmitting the required element of the assessment (referral or deferral). The content and form of the referral/deferral are determined by the Module Leader, approved by the External Examiner and reported to the relevant Board of Examiners. The form of assessment for referral may be different from the original assessment task and any previously successful elements (marks or submitted materials) of a module will be carried forward to count toward a referral attempt.</p>



- PG.C7.9 A referral opportunity is normally scheduled within the academic year of the first sitting of the assessment. Exceptionally, the Board of Examiners may require students to undertake certain modules again, with attendance, as part of a deferral opportunity.
- PG.C7.10 The pass mark for the referral attempt is the same as the pass mark for the initial attempt, except where the pass mark for the subsequent attempt is different as a consequence of referral in a new module or module version. The maximum module mark achievable from referrals is 50% or the minimum pass mark for the module, whichever is the higher; the maximum module grade achievable is pass.
- PG.C7.11 The actual mark achieved is reported to the Board of Examiners. The maximum mark used in calculation for the Level Mark is 50% or the minimum pass mark for the module, whichever is the higher. If the mark/grade achieved at referral is below that achieved previously then the earlier mark/grade is considered by the Board of Examiners.
- PG.C7.12 Wherever possible, the University will provide referral opportunities in modules which are no longer current, but under exceptional circumstances may be unable to guarantee this as a right. The Programme Leader must make such special arrangements, in consultation with the External Examiner, as appropriate in cases where it is not practicable for students to be referred in the same module or module component.
- PG.C7.13 Any student who has exhausted the referral opportunities offered by the regulations may be withdrawn from that programme of study. For Masters' students eligibility for Exceptional Second Referral (PG.C&.14) or a Final Module Attempt will be determined once all assessment opportunities (first attempts and referral attempts) from the taught element of the programme have been exhausted.  
(i) If a student attains between 60 and 99 credits (excluding the 60 credit research project / dissertation) within a level, they will be offered the opportunity to re-register for a Final Module Attempt (FMA) upon the failed module(s) provided that they have not completed a previous level via this mechanism.
- (ii) If a student attains fewer than 60 credits within a level, they may be offered the opportunity to re-register for a Final Module Attempt upon the failed modules provided that they have not completed a previous level via this mechanism, that the Board of Examiners has reason to be confident in the student's engagement and that there is evidence of this.  
(iii) A Final Module Attempt (FMA) for the research project/dissertation module (PG.A4.2) may be offered at the discretion of the Board of Examiners.  
An FMA will be a single attempt (therefore there can be no subsequent referral). The FMA will be a new attempt with attendance and no marks will be carried forward from previous attempts. The maximum mark obtainable from an FMA is the module pass mark.
- PG.C7.14 Students who have failed the single referral opportunity will be allowed an Exceptional Second Referral (PG.C7.5) on the same module(s), up to 20 credits at any Level, provided that 100 credits at that level have been achieved.
- PG.C7.15 The maximum mark that may be gained from an Exceptional Second Referral is 50% or the minimum pass mark for the module(s), whichever is the higher. Any previous successful elements (marks or submitted materials) of a module(s) will be carried forward upon an Exceptional Second Referral.
- PG.C7.16 It is the responsibility of the Director to ensure results are disclosed confidentially to individual students following a Board of Examiners meeting. The written notification shall be issued in accordance with the published results release date. Results must not be disclosed to students or any representative of them by any member of staff outside of this formal process. Directors must ensure that all students who have been referred or have failed are informed, in writing, of their rights of referral and the consequences for progression. All students must have the opportunity to seek appropriate and timely guidance from teaching staff.
- PG.C8 Grading of Awards**

PG.C8.1 The grading of a taught postgraduate award includes marks from all credits achieved within the programme. Only modules carrying a numerical mark (i.e. not a pass/fail grade) may contribute towards the grading and the divisor is amended to accommodate non mark-bearing credit.

PG.C8.2 For all such awards the grade is based upon the Award Mark, as follows:

- (i) a Distinction grade is awarded when a student achieves an Award Mark of at least 70%;
- (ii) a Merit grade is awarded when a student achieves an Award Mark of between 60 and 69%.

PG.C8.3 Students failing to achieve the credits required for a target award may be awarded an alternative award requiring fewer credits, providing all necessary conditions for such awards have been fulfilled.

PG.C8.4 Where there is insufficient evidence to determine the recommendation of an award but the Board of Examiners is nevertheless satisfied that the student would have qualified for the award had it not been for death, permanent incapacity, illness or other valid cause, an aegrotat award may be recommended. Aegrotat awards do not carry any classification, distinction or merit. The aegrotat degree is an unclassified degree. The award of an aegrotat removes the right of any further assessment opportunity for the registered final award. Other than in cases of death or permanent incapacity, the student must have signified that s/he is willing to accept the award under this condition.

PG.C8.5 Where the normal conditions of any award of the University have been satisfied, that award may be accepted posthumously on the student's behalf by a parent, partner or other appropriate individual.

**PG.C9 Academic Appeals and Academic Misconduct Appeals**  
*Appeal forms and further guidance on the Appeals procedure can be found at: <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/student-regulations/student-appeals>*

PG.C9.1 Grounds for Appeal: Students may appeal the decision of a Board of Examiners\*, Academic Misconduct Panel or Personal Circumstances Panel, where it can be demonstrated:

- (i) that there has been a material administrative error or
- (ii) that the assessment, in whatever format, was not conducted in accordance with these regulations or
- (iii) that some other material irregularity has occurred or
- (iv) that the decision of a Personal Circumstances Panel in considering a personal circumstances claim was unreasonable.

\*Exceptionally, students may also appeal the decision of a Module Leader where marks / grades have been formally finalised but have not yet been approved by a Board of Examiners.

PG.C9.2 Disagreement with the academic judgement of a Board of Examiners in assessing an individual piece of work or in reaching a decision on a student's progression or on the final level of award, based on the marks, grades and other information relating to a student's performance, cannot in itself constitute grounds for an Academic Appeal. Students must be aware that appeals will only be accepted under the circumstances outlined above. Appeals that do not meet the criteria will be deemed ineligible.

PG.C9.3 Submission Deadlines: There are strict deadlines for the submission of an Academic Appeal, Academic Misconduct Appeal or Personal Circumstances Appeal. Students must lodge the appeal with the Student Governance Office, using the current form, within 10 working days of the formal release of the relevant results or notification of the outcome of the Academic Misconduct Panel / Personal Circumstances Panel. The University reserves the right to reject appeals if they are submitted outside the specified deadline.

PG.C9.4 Process Summary: The University operates a three stage appeal procedure. Students will be formally notified of the outcome of each stage of the appeal process, the reason for the decision and any action to be taken, as appropriate. Where an appeal is upheld, then the matter will be:

- Referred back to the Director of School for modules where marks have been finalised but not yet been considered by the Board of Examiners or
- Referred back to the relevant Board of Examiners for re-consideration in light of the findings or
- Referred to a new Academic Misconduct Panel or
- Referred back to the Personal Circumstances Panel.

Where the appeal is not upheld, students will be advised of the procedure to progress to the next stage.

PG.C9.5 Stage 1: Consideration of Appeal by Director of School (or nominee). The Director of School (or nominee) is responsible for ensuring that consideration of Stage 1 Academic Appeals, Academic Misconduct Appeals and Personal Circumstances Appeal is conducted fairly and within the appropriate timescales, normally within 15 working days of the receipt of the appeal. Where an appeal is being made in respect of modules from more than one School the Director (or nominee) of the appellant's Home School will consider the appeal, taking into account evidence from any other School(s) involved.

PG.C9.6 The response to the Stage 1 Appeal must include an explanation in support of the decision. Respondents to appeals are expected to be aware of and to avert potential conflict of interest and perception of bias. Therefore no member, including the Chair, of a Board of Examiners, Academic Misconduct Panel or Personal Circumstances Panel against the decision of which an appeal is lodged, may respond to the Stage 1 appeal.

PG.C9.7 The Director (or nominee) will respond to the appeal with the outcome reported to the Student Governance Office within the timescales outlined in PG.C9.5.

PG.C9.8 Stage 2: Consideration by the University Appeals Panel. Where an appeal is not upheld at Stage 1 and the student believes that the decision is incorrect (in accordance with PG.C9.1 and PG.C9.2), they may submit their appeal to Stage 2 for consideration by the University Appeals Panel. Students must submit a statement detailing why they believe the Stage 1 decision is incorrect with their request to

progress to Stage 2. The Stage 2 request and supporting statement will be forwarded to the School (by the Student Governance Office). The School will be given the opportunity to comment in writing on the Stage 2 statement. All documentation is then considered by the Appeals Panel.

PG.C9.9 Stage 3: Final Review Stage. Where an appeal about either a Board of Examiners' decision, an Academic Misconduct Panel or a Personal Circumstances Panel decision is not upheld at Stages 1 and 2 and the student believes that the appeals procedures have not been conducted properly then s/he has the right to proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure. Stage 3 is not a re-opening of the appeal and the student must provide evidence of procedural irregularity and/or a supporting statement detailing why they believe the decision is incorrect.

PG.C9.10 A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued to the student when all internal procedures are exhausted. All internal procedures will normally be completed within 90 calendar days of the start of the formal stage (stage 1 appeal).

PG.C9.11 Students who are dissatisfied with the final outcome of their appeal and believe that the University has failed to follow this procedure correctly, may take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Further information about the OIA can be found at: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

PG.C.9.12 The Appeals Panel: An Appeals Panel is established by the Academic Board as a sub-committee of the Board. The membership of the Panel (a pool of staff from which panel members are drawn for each meeting of an appeals panel) is:

- a Chair, normally drawn from the senior management of the University;
- at least five members of the academic staff of each Faculty;
- at least five members of the Faculty management team from each Faculty (who may be non-teaching staff);
- at least five members of staff drawn from other areas of the University;

(v) two students appointed by the Students' Union.

No member shall take part in an Appeals Panel meeting if s/he is substantially connected with the School or programme which is the subject of the appeal, or with the appellant. The quorum for a meeting of the Appeals Panel is the Chair, at least one member of the academic representation and any two other members of the Appeals Panel. All meetings of the Appeals Panel will be formally minuted and serviced by the Student Governance office. The acceptance of an award does not limit the student's right to pursue an appeal within the provisions of these regulations. Full details of the Academic Appeals procedures can be found on <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/student-regulations/student-appeals>

PG.C9.13 Appeals against Expulsion: Where a student has been notified of the decision to expel them from the University, the student has a right of appeal to the Board of Governors. The request for such an appeal must be made in writing, giving full supporting evidence, to the University Secretary within 10 working days of receipt of the decision and giving grounds for appeal - <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/student-regulations/guidance-policy-and-process>