

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

UNDERGRADUATE RULES OF ASSESSMENT

Applicable to Students Starting in
Academic Year 2024-25

1. Principles and Framework

1.1. This document sets out the high-level principles that underpin the Rules of Assessment (the 'Rules') and explains some of the key concepts. It should help you understand how these affect decisions about your progress and the award of your degree or other qualification. You should read this alongside the specific Rules for the award for which you are studying. The University also publishes a Glossary to help you understand the meaning of any unfamiliar terms.

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What are the Rules of Assessment?

1.2. The Rules of Assessment describe what you have to do to progress through your course of study; what you have to do to pass each year; what happens if you don't pass; and the criteria for achieving the final award.

What are They for?

1.3. The Rules of Assessment are used to calculate your results. The Rules cover:

- a) Whether you have passed the modules you have studied and can be awarded credit;
- b) Whether you have met the requirements to progress to the next Year of your course;
- c) Whether you have met the requirements to pass your course and what Classification you will receive;
- d) If you have not passed, what reassessment you could be offered;
- e) If you have not passed, whether you must withdraw from your course, with or without an Exit Award.

How do They Apply to me?

1.4. They apply to every Undergraduate student. Each type of qualification eg Three-Year Degree, Four-Year Degree, Foundation Degree etc has its own set of Rules. The standard Undergraduate Rules of Assessment apply to modular students, unless a specific variation has been approved.

What do I Need to Know?

1.5. You should read the Rules that apply to the award for which you are studying. You will also need to look up the status of the modules you are taking (to check whether or not they are core) and see whether there are any additional course requirements by checking any variations for your course.

1.6. If you are thinking of undertaking a Work Placement or Year Abroad, you should check the requirements for Four-Year Degrees.

What is a Core Module?

- 1.7.** To understand the requirements to pass your course, you need to know the status of the modules that you are taking. You can find details of the status of your modules in Section C of your programme specification via [My Essex](#). There are three types of module which are set out in Table 1.1 below.
- 1.8.** Most modules in each year must be passed, with only a small number of credits, if any, being allowed to be failed (for example, for a Three-Year Degree, you must attempt 360 credits and pass a minimum of 330 credits). If you are allowed to continue on a course having failed a non-core module, this is called condonement. Core modules must be passed; failure cannot be condoned.

Table 1.1: Types of module at the University of Essex

Module status	Role in the course structure	Implications for the Rules of Assessment
Core	You must take this module	You must pass this module. Failure is not permitted.
Compulsory	You must take this module	There may be limited opportunities to continue on the course/be eligible for the award if you fail it.
Optional	You can choose which module to study from a list	There may be limited opportunities to continue on the course/be eligible for the award if you fail it.

What is a Variation?

- 1.9.** A variation is a change to the standard Rules which must also be achieved in order for you to be awarded the credit. They are an exception and apply only to some courses. They are outlined in the Variations to the Rules of Assessment. These variations could take the form of a higher pass mark or have additional requirements to pass individual parts of assessment such as an exam to meet the needs of professional, statutory or regulatory bodies. It is important that you know whether any variations apply to your course.

What do I Need to do to Pass?

- 1.10.** The framework of higher education qualifications to which the principles apply is based upon years of study for which you earn credit (see Table 1.2 below). Each Undergraduate Year of study (equivalent to a full-time year) normally consists of 120 credits made up of 15 and/or 30 credit modules.
- 1.11.** To pass a module you must achieve a Module Aggregate Mark of 40 or more based upon your coursework and/or exams. If you pass the module you will be awarded the credit (unless otherwise specified in the award's programme specification).
- 1.12.** Each module has a final Module Mark derived from coursework and/or exam marks, rounded to the nearest whole number, with half marks (ie .5) being rounded up. The mark for the coursework and/or the exam element will be displayed to one decimal place. In cases where there is a published variation to the Rules which states that you must pass particular units of assessment, the relevant mark for each element will be treated as if it is rounded to the nearest whole number for the purposes of determining whether or not the element has been passed.
- 1.13.** To pass the Year you must achieve a minimum number of credits. For example, for a Three-Year Degree you must achieve 120 credits to pass the Year. For each year a Year Mark is calculated using your Module Marks, weighted in line with the credit value of each module and rounded to the nearest whole number. You must achieve a Year Mark of 20 or above to remain on the course and be eligible for reassessment. Importantly it is the number of credits that you achieve that will determine whether or not you can progress to the next Year. There may be limited opportunities for condonement of failed credits (see 1.8).
- 1.14.** In Year Two and subsequent Years of study for an Honours Degree, each module is allocated a Class (e.g. Upper Second) on the basis of the Module Mark rounded to the nearest whole number.

What if I Don't Pass?

- 1.15.** If you don't pass a module you may be allowed further opportunities for reassessment before you can progress to the next Year of study. The Board of Examiners will decide what reassessment it will offer based on the volume of credit in which you need to be reassessed. If you are studying on a part-time

award the threshold volumes of credit affecting reassessment will normally be 50% of the total number of credits studied during the Year, increased to the nearest viable number of studied credits where necessary (eg 15 credits for 30 credits studied, 30 credits for 45 credits studied, 30 credits for 60 credits studied). To be eligible for reassessment, you must achieve a Year Mark of 20 or above.

- 1.16.** The Board of Examiners can offer you a maximum of three attempts at a module.
- 1.17.** You should read the section on reassessment in the Rules for your award.
- 1.18.** Following reassessment, you may be allowed to progress carrying up to 30 failed non-core credits. This is called condonement. You may also be offered the chance to repeat the Year full-time or part-time or to take reassessment the following Year without attending the University. The Board of Examiners will decide what reassessment options are appropriate and will offer you all the reassessment opportunities that are available to you.

So How Does All This Work?

- 1.19.** The key concepts which the University uses to measure academic achievement and determine outcomes are:
- a) **Credit** which is awarded in recognition of learning achieved at the level of the module. The number of credits is based on the volume of study or size/length of the module. If you gain at least a pass mark in your learning assessments you will be awarded the credit. A credit rating is attached to each module. These accumulate to allow awards (which are evidence of both volume and level of study) to be made. Credits are transportable and can be transferred between institutions, according to their Rules of Assessment.
 - b) **Learning outcomes** which identify what you are expected to know and understand, together with the skills that you should be able to demonstrate on successful completion of the module and award. Learning outcomes can be attached to both modules and awards. It is the achievement of the learning outcomes that is important for the award of credit, not how or where the learning took place, how it was assessed, or how long it actually took.
 - c) **Levels of study** (as defined in The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies) which are an expression of the

intellectual demand placed on you in different Years of study, or the difficulty of the concepts to be engaged with and skills required in each Year. Levels are guides that help to identify the relative demand, complexity and depth of learning and learner autonomy expected at each level. They also indicate the differences between the levels. In general terms Level 3 equates to the University of Essex Foundation Year, Level 4 equates to Year One, Level 5 equates to Year Two, and Level 6 equates to the Final Year.

- d) **Exit Awards** which may be awarded if you have to withdraw from the University for any reason. The Board of Examiners will consider you for a lesser award based on the credits you have achieved.
- e) **Boards of Examiners** which make the final decision on the results for modules, progression, awards and Degree Classification for all taught students of the University. A Board of Examiners may also exercise discretion if you have valid Extenuating Circumstances in accordance with the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#). An Interim Board of Examiners may also be held for some courses, normally those which have variations based on professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements. Interim Boards of Examiners will consider whether you are meeting the rules for progression on the programme and if not, whether it is possible to offer any reassessment opportunities or whether you must withdraw.
- f) **Maximum period of study** which is set from the date when you were first admitted to an Undergraduate programme. This is the longest period of time you can take to complete the award. It is based on the normal length of the course plus one or more additional years. A Board of Examiners can offer a repeat period of study only if this would not cause you to exceed your maximum period of study. Table 1.2 below shows details of the maximum period for each award. You should note the following:
 - (i) Transfers of programme are included in the original maximum period, so you will not gain extra time by changing courses. Unless there are exceptional reasons, periods of intermission (see 1.22 below) will count towards your original maximum period with the exception of transfers between programmes of different lengths. In these cases the maximum period will be increased by one year if you transfer to a longer

programme and reduced by one year if you transfer to a shorter programme.

- (ii) If you are enrolled on a modular programme of study, the maximum period of study shown in Table 1.2 below will apply unless a variation has been approved for the programme.
- (iii) If you are enrolled on a part-time programme of study, the maximum period of study will be the normal length of study plus half the normal length of the part-time course. Where the length of the course is not fixed, the maximum period of study would be agreed when the course is approved.
- (iv) If you are directly entering Year Two of a programme of study, the maximum period will be an additional two years.
- (v) For students entering the Final Year of a University of Essex Honours Degree the maximum period will be an additional two years.

The University of Essex Awards Framework

1.20. The framework is set out in Table 1.2 below.

How long Can I Take Over my Course?

1.21. Please refer to the column 'Maximum period permitted (years of full-time study)' in Table 1.2 below.

Can I Take a Break From my Course Because I am Sick, Bereaved, Can't Afford it etc?

1.22. Yes you can; it is called 'Intermission'. It is usually granted for situations outside of your control, such as illness or personal circumstances. Intermission requests must be approved by the University and are subject to deadlines. For further information see the [intermission webpages](#).

Can I Change to Another Course if I Don't Like the One I'm on?

1.23. You may be able to transfer although it is not always possible to do so. Please see the information on changing course on our [website](#).

What Happens if Something Stops me From Completing my Work or Taking an Exam and it's Not my Fault?

1.24. The University has an [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#). Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances beyond your control which have an impact on your assessed work. They may cause you to perform less well in an assessment, or prevent you from taking an assessment or submitting work. You should submit an Extenuating Circumstances claim by the published deadline. If your claim is accepted as valid, the Board of Examiners will consider what, if any, action to take in line with the Policy.

If I Have to Leave can I Have Some Kind of Award for the Work I Have Done?

1.25. You may be eligible for an Exit Award depending on the number of credits you have achieved (see 1.19(d) above).

Table 1.2: University of Essex awards framework¹

Qualification	Level	Minimum overall credits to be studied	Range of credits required	Normal length of programme (years of full-time study unless stated)	Maximum period permitted (years of full-time study)
Five-Year Integrated Masters Degrees	7	600	480 at Undergraduate level and 120 at Level 7 (with limited condonement of 30 failed credits only available at Level 7)	5	7
Four-Year Integrated Masters Degrees	7	480	360 at Undergraduate level and 120 at Level 7 (with limited condonement of 30 failed credits only available at Level 7)	4	6

¹ Variations to the courses within the framework can be found in the Variations to the Rules of Assessment.

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Five-Year Honours Degree	6	600	A minimum of 570 credits, including a minimum of 90 credits at Level 6. A maximum of 120 credits at Level 4 are included.	5	7
Four-Year Honours Degree	6	480	A minimum of 450 Credits, including a minimum of 90 credits at Level 6. A maximum of 120 credits at Level 4 are included.	4	6
Three-Year Honours Degree	6	360	A minimum of 330 Credits, including a minimum of 90 credits at Level 6. A maximum of 120 credits at Level 4 are included.	3	5

Ordinary Degree ²	6	300	A minimum of 300 Credits, including a minimum of 60 credits at Level 6. Includes credits achieved during a Term Abroad; excludes credits from a Foundation Year, Year Abroad or Placement Year.	3	5
Senior Status LLB ³	6	240	A minimum of 210 credits at Level 5 or above, including a minimum of 90 credits at Level 6.	2	4
Foundation Degree	5	240	225 Credits at Level 4 or above, including a minimum of 105 credits at Level 5 or above (may include a maximum of 30 credits at Level 6)	2	4

² Can be considered as an exit award only. Students cannot be admitted onto or transferred to an Ordinary Degree for progression purposes.

³ Admission to this course requires the award of a previous Undergraduate Honours Degree, fulfilling the normal requirement for Year One.

Diploma of Higher Education ³	5	240	225 Credits at Level 4 or above, including a minimum of 105 credits at Level 5 or above (may include a maximum of 30 credits at Level 6)	2	4
Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language	5	60	30 credits at Level 4 30 credits at Level 5	2 As part of the course structure	Within the standard maximum period of study of the degree course
Certificate of Higher Education ⁴	4	120	120 credits at Level 4 or above	1	2
Certificate of Continuing Education	4	60	60 credits at Level 4	1	2

⁴ If you are being considered for an exit award please see the rules for obtaining an exit award for the programme on which you are registered.

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Graduate Diploma	6	120	A minimum of 90 credits at Level 6 with the remaining credits at Level 5 or above	9 months	2
Graduate Certificate	6	60	A minimum of 45 credits at Level 6 with the remaining credits at Level 5 or above	9 months	2

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