



Union
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Study Regulations for PTFI Postgraduate Taught Programmes

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Study Regulations for PTFI Postgraduate Taught Programmes

1. Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme

1.1 The College operates a Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) under which each module is assigned a level and a number of credit points reflecting the value of the module or unit.

1.2 The scale, which is based on 120 credit points for each academic year of full-time study is widely accepted in universities throughout the United Kingdom and is intended to facilitate transfer between institutions. It is also compatible with the European Credit Transfer Accumulation System (ECTS) which uses a scale of 60 credit points for each academic year of study. CATS points are converted to ECTS points by dividing the College's points by two. ECTS points are converted to CAT's points by multiplying the ECTS points by two.

1.3 Credit is awarded on successful completion of a module.

1.4 There is no gradation of credit points for different levels of performance.

1.5 Subject to the agreement of the Principal (or nominee), students may transfer credit gained at this or another Higher Education Institution, provided that the credit has not contributed to another degree or other qualification (see UTC RPL Procedures). Credit awarded for courses undertaken elsewhere will be so designated on transcripts issued by the College.

1.6 The general limit for the validity of credit is 10 years.

2. Postgraduate Taught Programmes

2.1 To qualify for a Postgraduate Certificate, the credits gained must amount to at least 60 and meet the requirements of the relevant programme specification.

2.2 A person who has been awarded a Postgraduate Certificate from the College shall be admitted on request to a related programme in which the College offers a Postgraduate Diploma or Master's Degree. This is conditional on:

- i. The continuing validity of credit (see 1.6).
- ii. A pre-existing relationship between the Postgraduate Certificate and the Postgraduate Diploma or Master's Degree, outlined in the relevant programme specifications.
- iii. Any applicable visa and immigration requirements being met.
- iv. The person agreeing to surrender the Postgraduate Certificate to the College on successful completion of the Postgraduate Diploma or Master's Degree.
- v. Confirmation that the person has not previously been required to withdraw from the specific Postgraduate Diploma or Master's Degree programme.



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2.3 To qualify for a Postgraduate Diploma, the credits gained must amount to at least 120 and meet the requirements of the relevant programme specification.

2.4 A person who has been awarded a Postgraduate Diploma from the College shall be admitted on request to a related programme in which the College offers a Master's Degree. This is conditional on:

- i. The continuing validity of credit (see 1.6).
- ii. A pre-existing relationship between the Postgraduate Diploma and the Master's Degree, outlined in the relevant programme specifications.
- iii. Any applicable visa and immigration requirements being met.
- iv. The person agreeing to surrender the Postgraduate Diploma to the College on successful completion of the Master's Degree, except in cases where continuing possession of the Postgraduate Diploma is a professional requirement.
- v. Confirmation that the person has not previously been required to withdraw from the specific Master's Degree programme.

2.5 To qualify for a Master's Degree, the credits gained must amount to at least 180 and meet the requirements of the relevant programme specification.

3. Module Enrolment and Requirements

3.1 The Head of Academic Administration shall be responsible for putting in place the mechanisms for ensuring that all students are properly enrolled on the correct modules.

3.2. Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that students are informed of the requirements for passing a module not later than the first lecture of the module. No change may be made to either the contents or assessment after this without the written permission of the Principal and a revised statement must then be issued to students.

3.3 A prime role of Personal Tutors is to help students having difficulties with their courses to overcome these, if necessary by selecting different options or different programmes. Students experiencing any academic difficulty should consult their Adviser of Studies or Personal Tutor at an early stage.

3.4 Choice of modules may be subject to the constraints of timetabling and module availability.

3.5 Students may not change the modules for which they are enrolled without the formal written approval of their Personal Tutor. No such changes will be permitted after the second week of the relevant module, except where there are exceptional circumstances, in which case students may be permitted to take a replacement module in a subsequent semester if this is permitted in the relevant programme specification.

3.6 All modules and programmes shall be subject to review in accordance with procedures laid down by the Faculty.



4. Examinations and Assessment

4.1 Procedures

4.1.1 Forms of assessment may take place at any point in the academic year.

4.1.2 The decision on whether to attempt an assessment and the consequences of that decision shall remain the sole responsibility of each student.

4.2 Late Submission of Assessed Work

4.2.1 Assessed work, including dissertations, submitted after the deadline will be penalised at the rate of 5% of the total marks available for each working day late up to a maximum of five working days, after which a mark of zero shall be awarded, i.e., day one is 100% - 5%; day two is 100% - 10%; day three is 100% - 15%, etc. Where the assessed work component accounts for a certain proportion of the module mark, the 5% penalty will apply to the assessed component mark only and not to the overall module mark.

4.2.2 Exemptions shall be granted to 4.2.1 only if there are exceptional circumstances, and where the student has made a case in writing to the programme coordinator within three working days of the deadline for submission or where a concession has been agreed on the grounds of a student's disability. Extensions to deadlines shall be proportionate to the impact of the exceptional circumstances.

4.2.3 If students require special arrangements to be made, e.g. on the grounds of disability, it is their responsibility to bring this to the attention of the College as early as possible.

5. Request for Concessions Based on Exceptional Circumstances

5.1 Exceptional circumstances for the purposes of assessment decisions are defined as unforeseen factors or factors outside the student's control which may adversely affect performance, such as illness during an examination.

5.2 If a student has disclosed a fluctuating condition related to a disability and registered with the Disability Officer, they will have been given provision for flexible deadlines related to that condition and this should be dealt with under the Student Disability Policy and not under exceptional circumstances.

5.3 If a student suffers from a disability or an ongoing medical condition, but has not registered with the Disability Officer, the College will not be aware of their condition, and a request for concession for exceptional circumstances will be required.

5.4 Evidence of exceptional circumstances must be submitted to the College on the appropriate form within three working days of returning to study.

5.5 If a student knows they are going to miss an assignment deadline because of exceptional circumstances, they should inform the Programme Coordinator in advance by telephone or email / letter of their enforced absence, either personally or, if this is not possible, via someone on their behalf.

5.6 The Board of Examiners is not obliged to consider any medical certificate or evidence of exceptional circumstances presented after the published deadline. The exception to this is where a concession has been granted on the grounds of a student's disability.



5.7 Evidence of exceptional circumstances and, where required, their impact on academic performance presented during the Assessment period will be considered by the Board of Examiners.

5.8 Evidence of exceptional circumstances and, where required, their impact on academic performance presented during the Teaching period, in relation to continuous assessment, will be considered by the Programme Coordinator where such consideration will facilitate a timely decision. Where a decision is required before the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Examiners, and to wait until the next meeting would mean a delay in the decision such that it would not be made in a timely manner, in such cases the evidence will be considered by the Head of Department and reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

5.9 Extra marks shall not be awarded to compensate for exceptional circumstances.

6. Boards of Examiners

6.1 Requirements

6.1.1 College examinations and assessments shall be conducted under the supervision and control of Boards of Examiners.

6.1.2 The Principal shall be the Chairperson of the College Board of Examiners.

6.1.3 The Secretary shall be the Head of Academic Administration (or nominee).

6.1.4 **Module Boards:** The Principal shall be responsible for ensuring that a Module Board of Examiners is established for each module taught by the College. The members shall be drawn from the academic staff teaching the subject.

The Module Board shall agree marks for the module. Boards shall include within their membership the external examiner(s) appointed by the Management Committee.

6.1.5 **College Board:** The Principal shall be responsible for ensuring that the College Board deals with every programme offered by the College. The College Board comprises members of the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland (PTFI), the awarding body. The College Board shall include at least one external examiner from each programme. The College Board shall confirm module results and be responsible for dealing with student progress and award.

6.2 Appointment of Examiners

6.2.1 **Internal Examiners:** Internal examiners are drawn from the academic staff teaching the subject.

6.2.2 **External Examiners:** External examiners shall be appointed by the Management Committee on recommendation of the Teaching and Learning Panel. External Examiner nominations must be submitted by the Department to the College Office on the approved nomination form. The Head of Department must sign the approved nomination form before it will be accepted by the Teaching and Learning Panel.

External examiners shall be appointed for a term of four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity. External examiners who retire from employment during their term of office can continue until the end of their period of appointment. Appointment will not extend beyond three years after retirement.

A person who has completed service as an external examiner may not be re-appointed as an external examiner until five years have elapsed since the end of their period of service. Former members of staff may



not be appointed as external examiners until five years have elapsed since the termination of their appointment at the College.

6.2.3 Special Internal Examiners: Where internal examiners leave the College before the examinations for which they were appointed take place, they may be appointed as special internal examiners in addition to the normal internal and external examiners.

6.2.4 Conflicts of Interest: Where an examiner has a link with a student which might influence their judgement, they shall inform the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners, who shall decide whether the examiner shall be involved in the assessment of that student.

6.3 Procedures of Boards of Examiners

6.3.1 The Chairperson of the Board of Examiners shall be responsible for ensuring that the approved procedures and regulations are followed by the Board and that the correct marks are published by the College.

6.3.2 The Secretary of the Board shall be responsible for keeping a record of all decisions and the reasoning behind them.

6.3.3 The minutes of all meetings of the Board of Examiners shall be retained by the College Office.

6.3.4 External examiners must annually attend the Board of Examiners meeting at which award decisions are taken.

6.3.5 In cases where external examiners are not present, they must be fully consulted by post, telephone or video-conferencing. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson of the Board of Examiners to ensure that the views of the other external examiners are presented to the Board.

6.3.6 If the opinion of the Board of Examiners is equally divided, the Chairperson of the Board shall have the final casting vote (in addition to the Chairperson's original vote as a member of the Board of Examiners). In all other cases it will be the majority decision of the members present of the Board of Examiners that will be upheld.

6.3.7 Where, in exceptional cases, issues of timing of student matters affect the decision-making capacity of a Board of Examiners, the Chair will be granted the power to make any subsequent decision.

6.4 Awarding Credit and Resit Requirements

6.4.1 Decisions regarding the award of credit shall be taken by the relevant Board of Examiners by applying these regulations.

6.4.2 Assessed components of modules shall be marked to an integer on a scale of 0-100. For quantitative assessments, this may be any integer on the scale. For qualitative assessments, this must be a discrete point on the conceptual equivalents scale. (see Appendix A) A component is any piece of work which receives a mark.

6.4.3 To be awarded a pass for a module, students must achieve a satisfactory performance in all the module's specified compulsory components as well as achieving an overall pass mark for that module (see 8.1.1).



6.4.4 Where a student has attained an overall pass mark for a module but has not achieved a satisfactory performance in all the specified compulsory components, the result will be recorded as incomplete. If the student completes the specified compulsory components satisfactorily by the end of the next academic year, or at such earlier date as specified by the Board of Examiners, the result will then be recorded as a Pass without altering the original mark, otherwise the result will be recorded as Fail with a mark equal to pass mark less 1. This will be treated as a second attempt.

6.4.5 Where a student has not attained an overall pass mark for a module but has met the required standard in one or more of the compulsory components, the student must repeat those components which have not met the required standard in order to complete and pass the module. The maximum mark will be the pass mark. The actual mark obtained will be recorded in the transcript.

6.4.6 Students may be permitted to retake failed modules, subject to programme regulations and regulation 6.4.14 below.

6.4.7 Where a student has failed to pass a module they may resit, or exceptionally take as a first sitting, an assessment which contributes to the requirements for passing the module, at or before the designated resit period before the end of the academic year.

6.4.8 Where there is more than one component of assessment for a module, regulations 6.4.4-6.4.5 provides the framework for identifying which assessments students should be permitted and required to undertake.

6.4.9 When a failed component of assessment is to be retaken, students may be permitted to undertake an alternative form of assessment in lieu of the failed component, but only if the alternative assessment examines the specific learning outcomes associated with the failed component.

6.4.10 Students will not be permitted to re-sit, or take as a first sit, modules which they have passed.

6.4.11 Students will not be permitted to take additional modules to substitute for modules already passed.

6.4.12 When a module is retaken, the maximum mark for that module will be the pass mark. The actual mark obtained will be recorded on the transcript.

6.4.13 If a module is no longer being offered, students will have to take a substitute module at the same level as the original module. For modules substituted in this way, or where the student chooses to take another module in place of a failed module, the maximum mark will be the pass mark. The actual mark obtained will be recorded on the transcript. The substituted module must be identified as such at enrolment.

6.4.14 Students who have failed a module twice (one first sit and one re-sit in one academic year) must meet with their Personal Tutor and normally will not be permitted to repeat that module again.

6.4.15 Persistent failures may lead to the student being required to withdraw from the College.

Note: A resit is a supplementary examination/ assessment to be taken by students who have not been successful in a previous attempt.



6.5 Release of Module Marks to Students

6.5.1 The only module marks to be released to a student are those which have been agreed by the College Board of Examiners and signed by the Chairperson and Secretary and where applicable the external examiner(s).

6.5.2 The formal mechanism for providing marks to individual students shall be through the College Office.

6.5.3 Marks will be released to third parties only with the permission of the student.

6.6 Decisions on Student Progress and Award

Decisions regarding student progress and award shall be made by the College Board of Examiners.

6.7 The Board of Examiners: Exceptional Circumstances

6.7.1 Where a student is prevented by illness or other sufficient cause from taking or completing any assessed component of a module including any practical, written or oral examination, the Board of Examiners should either:

- a. In cases where the student has attempted the assessed components but failed the module:
 - i. Require the student to resubmit failed coursework within a set time limit as a first attempt.
 - ii. Permit the student to repeat a failed examination as a first attempt.
 - iii. Permit the student to retake the failed module as a first attempt.
- b. In cases where a student is prevented by illness or other sufficient cause from taking or completing any assessed component of a module:
 - i. Require the student to take the assessment at the next available opportunity or to take a special assessment for full marks.
 - ii. Reviews the student's overall academic profile and considers awarding a pass for the module, or, if the Board of Examiners so decides, require the student to undertake a further special assessment for classification purposes.

6.7.2 Where a pass is awarded, under regulation 6.7.1 b.ii the Board may either:

- i. Calculate the overall mark for the award on the basis of the remaining modules; or
- ii. Calculate a mark for that module based on the average of the remaining modules.

The number of modules awarded a pass under regulation 6.7.1 b.ii shall be at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, but in any event shall not be more than one sixth of the marks contributing to the overall mark for the award.

6.7.3 The powers of Boards of Examiners to apply these procedures shall cease when the degree results have been confirmed, except:

- i. Where a student's disability or illness has prevented them being subjected to a further written or practical test by the time the pass list is confirmed the examiners may append to the record list a



statement, 'The result in the case of ... will be determined after further examination'. The student may thereafter be examined and a result confirmed up to and including 30 September following; or

- ii. Where a student has appealed the decision of the Board of Examiners under the Academic Appeal Procedure.

7. Student Support Meetings

7.1 Where a student has not met the requirements to progress, or is required to withdraw, the College will call the student to a Student Support Meeting within 10 working days of the deadline for the publication of results.

7.2 The College may also call students about whom they have a general concern following the publication of results.

7.3 The purpose of the meeting is to explain the academic progress decision to the student and ensure that appropriate support is in place.

7.4 Student Support Meetings must include at least two members of senior College staff who are appropriately qualified to advise students on their progress.

7.5 Where possible, the College should ensure a gender balance in the membership of the meeting.

7.6 Student Support Meetings have no decision-making authority regarding a student's progress and cannot consider evidence of exceptional circumstances which students present at the meeting. Students presenting evidence of exceptional circumstances at this point should only be advised by the Support Meeting to appeal through the College's Academic Appeals Procedures if the evidence is new and could not have been presented to the Board of Examiners.

7.7 All advice given to the student at the meeting should be recorded in the minutes.

8. Mark Scales and Awards

Note: Conceptual Equivalents Scale at Appendix A

8.1.1 The pass mark for taught postgraduate modules is 50%:

8.1.2 The programme mark shall be calculated from the weighted average of the module marks, and shall be rounded to an integer.

8.1.3 The Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma shall be awarded as exit points only. Where the credit accumulated exceeds the requisite amount for the exit award being conferred, only the credits with the highest marks that make up the required amount shall be selected to calculate the overall average.



8.1.4 For Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's Degree results there is a common mark scale as follows:

70+	Pass with distinction*
60+	Pass with merit
50+	Pass
Below 50	Fail

*A student qualifies with distinction in the Master's degree if the overall average of the taught modules is at least 70%, with a mark of at least 70 in the Master's project/dissertation.

9. Publication of Examination Results

9.1 The appropriate forms shall be signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary and, where applicable, by the external examiner(s) and retained by the College Office. Individual result sheets shall be signed by the Chairperson or Secretary.

9.2 The results of the degree examinations shall be confirmed by the College Board of Examiners and published by the College Office.

9.3 Any changes to published marks must be approved by the Principal.

10. Posthumous Awards

Where a student dies before the degree or diploma for which they are studying has been conferred, the following will apply:

- i. Where the student has fulfilled all the course requirements, has completed all the formal examinations and has qualified for the award of the degree or diploma, the College shall confer the degree or diploma subject to the consent of the next-of-kin;
- ii. Where the student dies at an earlier stage in the course than defined in i. the Board of Examiners shall not recommend the award of a degree or diploma, but shall confirm the results of any module or part of the course which the student has completed.

11. Appeal Against a Decision of a Board of Examiners

For appeal against a decision of the College Board of Examiners on progression, assessment and awards, see the Academic Appeals Procedures.

12. Revocation of Awards

In accordance with the Charter the authority to revoke a degree or other award of the College rests with the PTFI, following a recommendation by the Faculty.



Appendix A

Conceptual Equivalents Scale - Postgraduate

Module Descriptor	Mark Band	Criteria
A (Outstanding)	80–100	• Thorough and systematic knowledge and understanding of module content • Clear grasp of issues involved, with evidence of innovative and original use of learning resources • Knowledge beyond module content • Clear evidence of independence of thought and originality • Methodological rigour • High critical judgement and confident grasp of complex issues
A (Clear)	70–79	• Methodological rigour • Originality • Critical judgement • Use of additional learning resources
B	60–69	• Very good knowledge and understanding of module content • Well-argued answer • Some evidence of originality and critical judgement • Sound methodology • Critical judgement and some grasp of complex issues
C	50–59	• Good knowledge and understanding of the module content • Reasonably well argued • Largely descriptive or narrative in focus • Methodological application is not consistent or thorough
Marginal Fail	40–49	• Lacking methodological application • Adequately argued • Basic understanding and knowledge • Gaps or inaccuracies but not damaging
Weak Fail	0–39	• Little relevant material and/or inaccurate answer or incomplete • Disorganised • Largely irrelevant material and misunderstanding • No evidence of methodology • Minimal or no relevant material

Module content should be interpreted as the topic or area of research being undertaken in the study in keeping with the learning outcomes for the module. The above criteria can be applied to both taught modules at M-level and the M-level dissertation (ignoring reference to module content)