

University Assessment

An introduction to Marks and Standards (2016)

Version 28 April 2016

This document is an introduction to the Maynooth University regulations for assessment, known as Marks and Standards. The full details can be found in the Marks and Standards document, which applies to both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and is available on the University website. This document is an abbreviated introduction intended to explain the main principles of University assessment. There are some programmes where different conditions apply – these exceptions are identified in the Marks and Standards, and in course handbooks.

Applicability: These marks and standards apply to students in the first or second year of their programme in academic year 2016-17.

Programme and subjects

When you apply to the University, you apply for a place on a specific programme (BA, BSc, etc). In some programmes you take more than one subject (e.g. Sociology and History), in others you take only one subject.

Modules and credits

Your programme is divided into modules. The size of a module (in terms of the amount of work a student is expected to do to complete the module) is indicated by its credit value. A year of study for a full time undergraduate is normally 60 credits.

Registration

You must be registered for all the modules you are taking in each year. First Year undergraduate students may change subjects and modules up to the end of the fourth week of the first semester. Other students may change their module choices, in the first three weeks of semester 1, or the first two weeks of semester 2. Changes are not normally allowed after these dates. Modules can be included in your programme in different ways:

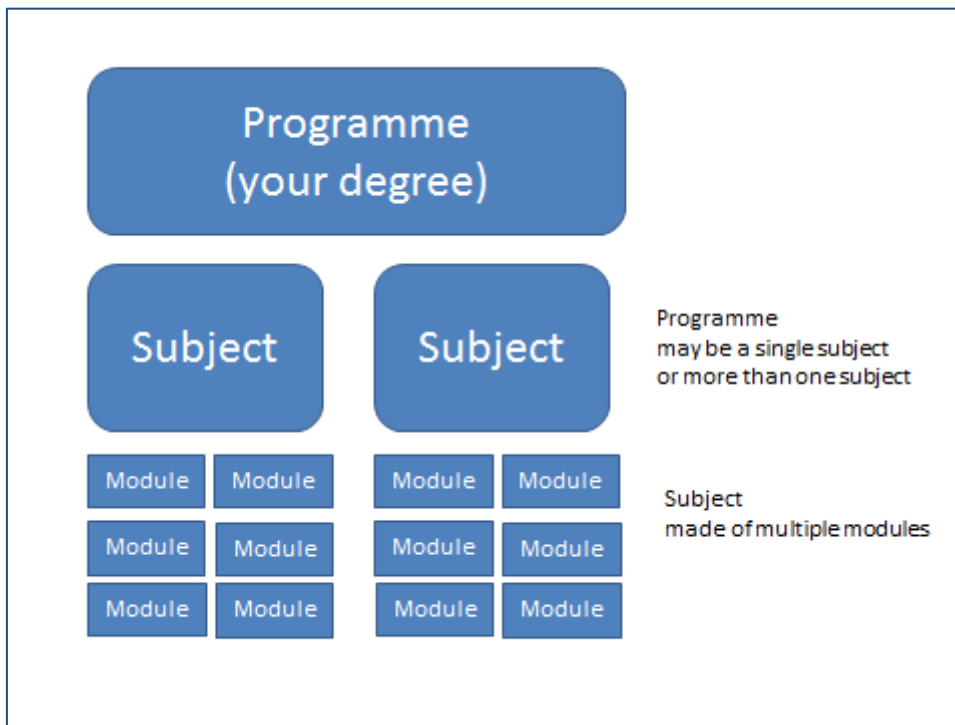
1. An **optional** module is one that you may take as part of the subject.
2. A **compulsory** module is one that you must take as part of the subject.
3. A **required** module is required for progression. This means that you must pass it without compensation in order to be allowed progress in that subject.

You may also find that some modules have extra constraints:

Pre-requisite: A pre-requisite is a module (or modules) that you must have taken and passed before you register for a particular module. This is used to make sure you do the basic material before moving on to more advanced material.

Co-requisite: A co-requisite is a module you must take in the same year as another module. This is used when there are two linked modules in the same year.

Disallowed combination: Sometimes you are not allowed to take one module if you have already taken another. This is called a disallowed combination, and is used mainly when two modules have such similar content that it would not be fair to get credit for both.



Passing a module

If you pass a module, you earn the credits associated with it. A module can be assessed in a number of ways. Many modules include more than one assessment, often a combination of centrally organised examinations, and other assessments.

Normally, to pass a module you must achieve an overall pass mark (normally 40%) in the module.

- In some cases a higher pass mark is required – this is indicated in the module database and in course handbooks.
- In some cases modules are ungraded. This means that you either pass or do not pass, but no mark is awarded. This is typically used for modules such as work placements.

Modules may also have specific conditions. For example, you may have to pass specific parts of the assessment of the module. If you do not meet these conditions, your module mark is capped at 35%. This capping may prevent you from progressing in the subject if the module is a required module.

Progressing to the next year of a programme

You must meet a minimum standard in each year in order to be allowed to progress to the next year of the programme. Your annual mark is calculated by taking the credit weighted average of your module marks, excluding any ungraded modules.

Progress: Ideally, you should pass all the modules you have registered for to progress to the next year.

Restricted: If you do not pass all modules, but your result is within the compensation parameters, you are rated as “restricted”. This means you may be able to progress, but only if you meet the conditions for the subject(s) you wish to take. In some cases you may fall within the compensation range, but not meet the conditions for any of your subjects, in which case you cannot progress.

A “Restricted: compensation” rating will be given where:

- The overall weighted average mark is at or above the progression standard (normally 40%);
- No module has a mark below 35%;
- At least half of the credits taken in the period have been passed without compensation (i.e. 40% or above).

Note that the threshold for compensation is 35%. If a module has a mark less than 35%, it cannot be passed by compensation, and you will not earn credits for the module. In some cases you may be allowed to progress to the next year if you have not passed all your modules. In these cases you progress carrying a deficit of credits, which must be made up by repeating the modules or taking alternatives in their place, before the programme is completed. Progression with a deficit is only allowed with a maximum deficit of 10 credits, and is normally only permitted when the modules failed are in a subject that is not being continued.

A “Restricted: deficit” rating will be given where:

- The modules with marks below 35% amount to no more than 10 credits;
- The weighted average mark in the remaining modules, excluding the deficit modules, reaches the progression threshold (normally 40%);
- At least half of the credits taken in the period have been passed without compensation (normally 40% or above).

Not progress: If your result is lower than the compensation range you will not be allowed to progress to the next year. Your result will show “Not Progress”, and you must then repeat some modules or take suitable alternative modules, before you can proceed. This will happen if:

- Your overall annual mark is lower than the progression mark (normally 40%).
- You have a deficit of more than 10 credits.
- You have not exceeded the pass mark (normally 40%) in at least half of the credits taken.

Progressing in a Subject

A subject mark is calculated each year. This is the credit weighted average mark in the modules you take in that subject, excluding ungraded modules. The possible outcomes are:

Passed: If you pass all the modules you take in a subject, you pass the subject.

Passed by compensation: You may pass the subject by compensation if:

- The overall subject mark is at or over the pass mark (normally 40%).
- No module has a mark below 35%;
- At least half of the credits taken in the subject have marks of 40% or above;
- You have passed all **required** modules without compensation.

Incomplete/Not passed: If you do not meet the requirements to pass, or pass by compensation, you are not allowed to progress in the subject.

Progressing to the next year of study		
Result	Criteria	Implications
Progress	Pass all modules	Automatic progression to the next year
Restricted: compensation	All modules have marks of at least 35%. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual mark at least 40%. At least half of credits passed without compensation. 	Can progress ONLY IF you pass the subjects being continued, which means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject mark of 40% No module below 35%; At least half of the credits taken in the subject have marks of 40%; All required modules passed without compensation.
Restricted: deficit	Deficit of 10 credits or less . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All other modules have marks of at least 35%. Annual mark at least 40%. At least half of credits passed without compensation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject mark of 40% No module below 35%; At least half of the credits taken in the subject have marks of 40%; All required modules passed without compensation.
Not progress	Result below the compensation threshold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average mark below the progression threshold (normally 40%) Deficit of more than 10 credits Less than 50% of credit passed without compensation. 	Not allowed to progress

Options if you do not pass a module: supplemental assessments and repeating

If you do not reach the standard needed to progress, you still have some options.

Supplemental assessments: In many modules there is an opportunity to re-sit some of the assessment in the same year, usually in August. Some modules allow a re-sit of the examination part only, and others allow a re-sit of both examination and other assessment components. When non-exam assessments are taken as supplemental examinations, the results are normally capped at a pass mark (normally 40%).

Repeating: If you do not pass a module, you can repeat the module in the following year, or take an alternative module in its place. If you are repeating in the following year, you are expected to repeat the full module, and retake all assessment components. Repeating a year of study can have implications for fees, grants, and the duration of your degree. You may repeat each year of study only once

Completing a programme and earning your degree

To complete your programme and earn the award you must:

1. Complete and pass modules to the required credit value for the programme, for example 180 credits for three year full time degrees, and 240 credits for four year full time degrees.
2. Complete and pass the minimum number of credits in each subject taken to degree level.
3. Complete and pass the modules specified in the programme specification, including the prescribed modules in each subject, and all compulsory and required modules.

Normal minimum credit requirements for a subject within an undergraduate degree

	Three year degree	Four year degree
Double major	70 credits	90 credits
Major with minor	70 credits	90 credits
Single major	90 credits	120 credits
Minor	50 credits	60 credits

Composition of the award mark: Undergraduate Degree Programmes

The final award you receive is normally based on a combination of your annual marks. These are normally weighted so that final year contributes 70% of the final mark. First year marks are not normally included in the final mark, as shown in the table below.

Three year degrees		Three year degree with study abroad		Four year degrees	
Second year	30%	Second year	30%	Second year	10%
Final year	70%	Study abroad	Excluded	Third year	20%
		Final year	70%	Final year	70%

Composition of the award mark: Postgraduate Programmes

In postgraduate **taught** programmes (except professional/taught doctorates) all modules contribute to the calculation of the award.

In postgraduate **research** programmes, students are required to complete a specified number of credits in approved taught modules, to complete the programme. However, the award of the degree is based on assessment of the research thesis.

In professional/taught doctorates taught modules may or may not contribute to the award, as defined in the programme specification.

Award Classification

Where University awards are classified, the following standards are used.

	Award mark
First Class Honours	70-100%
Second Class Honours Grade I	60-69%
Second Class Honours Grade II	50-59%
Third Class Honours	45-49%
Pass	40-44%