



Pontifical University Marks and Standards

The benchmark for quality assurance in Europe, *The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG), requires students ‘be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently’ (Standard 1.3). The following describes the Marks and Standards for programmes of the Pontifical University, St Patrick’s College, Maynooth. The Pontifical University uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). These Marks and Standards should be read in conjunction with the Programme Specification, Module Information, other requirements outlined in the Kalendarium / Calendar, and where applicable, the Marks and Standards of Maynooth University.

Definitions

Module

A module is a unit of study. The typical workload required to complete a module is indicated by the credit value of the module. While students may vary in pace of work, the general calculation is that one credit represents 25 hours of student work. A normal academic year of full time study over two semesters is 60 credits. Programmes which involve full time study for the full year (12 months) are normally 90 credits.

Programme

A programme is a course of study leading to an award of the University. The programme description outlined in the Kalendarium / Calendar will include the subjects to be studied in each period of study or year, the modules which comprise the programme and the number of credits required in each subject and period of study.

Subject

A subject is a subset of a programme of study, normally focussed on a specific discipline. Some programmes are single subject programmes. A subject may have defined requirements which must be met in order to progress in that subject, or graduate with an award in that subject.

Period of Study

A programme of study, and a subject, may be divided into periods of study, which are normally academic years. Students are normally required to reach a certain standard in each period of study before progressing to the next.

Terminology

	Possible Outcomes
Module	Passed Passed by compensation Incomplete / Not passed
Programme	Completed Incomplete
Period of Study	Progress Passed by compensation Passed with deficit Not Progress
Subject (in a period of study)	Passed Passed by compensation Incomplete / Not passed

Registration

Students must register for their overall programme of study or qualification, each subject therein and all modules that they are taking during the year at the registration period at the beginning of each academic year. Restrictions may apply for enrolment in optional/elective modules that have restricted entry.

Where allowed by the programme specification

- first-year undergraduate students of the BATH programme may change subjects and modules up to the end of the fourth week of the first semester.
- other students may change their module choices, where choices are available, in the first three weeks of Semester 1, or the first two weeks of semester 2.

Changes after these dates are only possible with the agreement of the Registrar, the Head of Department, and the relevant Module deliverer.

Full-time undergraduate students must register for 60 credits per year and no more than 35 in any one semester. Full-time students may withdraw from an Elective Module up to 6 weeks after the start of the first semester, and register for a replacement module in the second semester (with the permission of the Registrar and Head of Department) provided that their credits remain at least 25 and that there are extra appropriate credits available in the second semester. After this date withdrawal is not allowed.

In all cases, students are entered for the examination in the modules for which they are registered. Failure to attend for an examination constitutes an attempt at the examination.

Status of modules within a subject or programme

Compulsory or optional: Within a subject or programme a module may be either compulsory or optional. A compulsory module is one which must be taken by all students taking the subject, because the content of the module is considered essential. A student may not complete the programme of study and receive the award in that subject without passing all the compulsory modules.

Pre-requisite: A module may have defined pre-requisites, that is a module or modules which must have been passed in a previous period of study in order to register for the module.

Co-requisite: A module may have defined co-requisites, which are modules which a student must take, or have taken, in order to register for the module.

Disallowed combination: Where modules have very similar learning outcomes they may be classified as disallowed combinations. In this case a student cannot be awarded credit for more than one module of the disallowed combination.

Discretion of the Board of Examination

The Examination Board of the relevant Faculty has the right to adjust the marks of any student, taking into account the advice of the relevant module deliverer, the advice of the relevant external examiners and the overall performance of the student. This is particularly relevant in borderline cases.

In addition, the Head of Department, in consultation with the external examiner, may authorise adjustments to marks of a student, based on medical or other personal circumstances that in their professional opinion have resulted in the examination marks not being a fair result for the student.

Prizes and Awards

It is not intended that the provision for supplemental examinations should create a pressure to re-sit unnecessarily. Therefore, prizes and awards are typically based on performance excluding results from resits/supplemental examinations.

Passing A Module

Examinations will only be set on courses that have been given in the current or preceding year. Students may be debarred from passing an examination on the grounds of extreme weakness in one or other part of the course. A module is passed when a mark or grade in the passing range is achieved.

Where a student achieves a result in the compensation range, this may be classified as a pass by compensation if the performance in the other modules taken in the same period of study merits compensation.

Where a required component is not submitted, the module is graded "incomplete". The grade is evaluated on completion within an allocated time, allotted by the Module Deliverer and Registrar.

Where the module is not passed, no credits are earned.

A module outcome is expressed either as a

- As a mark, which is a whole number in the range 0 to 100.
- As a letter grade. Where modules use letter grades, A, B, C, D and E are passing grades, F is a grade which can allow pass by compensation, and E is a non-passing grade. See *Assessments: Grades and Distinctions*
- As a result, indicated as either Passed or Incomplete/Not Passed.

Note: It is the practice of the Pontifical University that because first semester results are provisional, an indicative 'letter' grade shall be given at that point rather than an official 'whole number' result.

Module components: A module may have components which are assessed separately and combined to give the overall module result.

Module conditions: A module may have conditions which prescribe that some components must be passed in order to pass the module. Where a student does not meet these conditions the mark in the module is capped at 35 (where marks are used) or as an E (where grades are used).

Module Assessment: The pass mark in a year of study is 40%. For criteria for compensation, see below. In order to pass a module, a student must obtain at least 40% in the module, and in addition fulfil all the requirements of the module. These requirements are outlined in the module description in the Kalendarium / Calendar. Such requirements may demand that a student achieve a minimum standard:

- in continuous assessment
- in an oral/practical examination
- in the assigned essays
- in the written examination
- in such conditions that are otherwise appropriate.

Every 5 credit module requires an essay of (1,000 – 1,500 words) or equivalent. The dates for the submission of essays and other written work in each semester will be posted during the first week of each semester.

Late submission of essays:

- No penalties apply if an extension has been granted
- The following penalties apply if an essay extension was not sought or granted or if the extension date was not honoured: up to 1 week late 10% deducted from the mark awarded; up to 2 weeks late 20% deducted from the mark awarded.
- The lecturer responsible for a particular module has, in exceptional circumstances, discretion in applying the penalties outlined above.

Module Attendance: Students are expected to attend all modules satisfactorily. A student, whose attendance is unsatisfactory, in the judgement of the relevant Faculty, may be debarred from presenting for the relevant examination.

Supplementary Modules: Students may choose to undertake an additional module from the suite of Elective and Special Modules, above the required credits. In such cases, the lowest mark of an equivalent credit weighted module from within the suite will be discarded from the calculation of the overall mark.

Ungraded modules: Some modules may be included on an ungraded basis. In this case, the student is awarded the credits associated with the module once the module is passed, but no mark or grade is included in the calculation of annual or subject marks. This is typically done for:

1. Work placements and other experiential learning.
2. Modules taken in other institutions where there is not an agreement to accept the marks/grades awarded elsewhere.
3. Modules within a structured PhD/research master's programme.

Possible module outcomes

Passed	Meets the required standard and all module conditions.
Passed by compensation	A result in the compensation range, and performance in other modules in the same sitting justifies compensation, as defined in the compensation regulations. A module passed by compensation is treated as passed for purposes of credit accumulation, and completion of award.

Incomplete / Not Passed	<p>A student is considered not to have successfully completed a module in ANY of the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mark is less than the compensation threshold. • The student did not meet the minimum attendance requirement (where there are stated mandatory attendance thresholds). • Do not complete the required elements of assessment
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Pass standards

Pass standard	40% or higher	Grades A,B,C, D, E
Compensation range	Marks of at least 35%, but less than 40%	Grade F
Incomplete / Not Passed	Marks below 35 %	Grade G

For further detailed information, see *Assessments: Grades and Distinctions*

A module once passed is normally passed in perpetuity. However, if a module has been passed more than two years previously, a Head of Department may require supplementary work or require the student to take the module again in order to progress.

Completing A Programme

In order to complete a programme and be eligible for the award a student must:

1. Complete and pass modules to the required credit value for the programme, for example 180 credits for three-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 modules.

Composition of the award mark

The award mark is the annual mark of the final year of study.

Undergraduate Degree Programmes

For the three-year undergraduate degree programmes, the award mark is the annual mark for each year after first year, weighted towards the final year. The normal weighting for undergraduate programmes is that the final year contributes 70% to the final mark, and the other years after first year contribute the other 30%, as shown below. Where students take a period of study abroad, or are on a placement, this is normally assessed on an ungraded basis (unless explicitly stated) and excluded from the calculation of the award mark.

Weighting of the award mark

Three-year degree		Three-year degree with study abroad	
Second year	30%	Second year	30%
Final year	70%	Study Abroad	Excluded
		Final year	70%

Important: For students completing three-year undergraduate degree programmes in 2019, and registered in 2016, the final award mark is calculated by combining the individual module marks (using passed modules only and taking the latest attempt) obtained in all modules taken after first year. Students registered before 2016 will be operate under the old Marks and Standards, whereby the final award mark will be annual mark of the final year of study only.

Postgraduate Programmes

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

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

Transfer Students and Exemptions

Students transferring from other recognised universities or higher education institutions may receive credit for work done in the other institution, in accordance with the credit value of the work done and its relevance to the programme they wish to pursue at the Pontifical University.

Modules taken in other institutions will normally be treated as ungraded modules, and therefore add to the credits earned by the student but make no contribution to the annual, subject or award mark. Similarly, where students are granted exemptions, this will contribute to the credit value but the marks/grades earned elsewhere will not contribute to the annual, subject or award mark/grade.

Progression within a programme

- A student who passes the modules taken in a period of study is allowed to progress to the next period of study.
- Where a student does not meet this standard, but is sufficiently close to allow compensation or progression with a deficit, may progress in subjects in which the progression standards have been met.
- Where the overall result is not within the compensation/deficit range, a student may not progress to the next period of study, regardless of the performance in individual subjects.
- In an undergraduate programme of more than a year in duration, a student is normally expected to reach a required standard in one period of study before progressing to the next.
- The annual mark is calculated as the credit weighted average of module marks taken in the period of study, excluding modules assessed on an ungraded basis.

The possible outcomes for a period of study are:

Progress	A student who passes all modules in a period of study will be allowed to progress to the next period of study.
Progress by compensation	A student will be allowed to progress if they are within the compensation parameters, namely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One module is in the compensation range above 35% • No module has a mark below 35%; • The overall weighted average mark across all modules is 40% or above.
Progress with a deficit	A student may be allowed to progress on the judgement of the relevant Faculty, where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The modules with marks below 35% amount to no more than 5 credits; • The weighted average mark in the remaining modules, excluding the deficit modules, is over 40%; • With sufficient reason and permitted by the Examination Board.
Not progress	A student who does not meet any of the above criteria is not allowed to progress.

Progression Carrying a Credit Deficit

Progression carrying a deficit is allowed only where this does not conflict with the subject progression requirements.

Where a student progresses carrying a deficit, the student will need to take additional modules to make up the deficit before becoming eligible for the award. This can be done by taking additional modules allowable in the programme of study or by repeating the incomplete modules (subject to timetable constraints).

A student may normally progress to study abroad or a placement carrying a deficit of up to 10 credits.

A student who reaches the end of the normal duration of the programme with a deficit will not be eligible for the award of the degree, but may re-register for an additional period to make up the deficit.

Subject progression/passing

The subject mark is calculated as the credit weighted average of the most recent marks in the modules taken by the student that constitute the programme of study for that subject in the year in question, excluding ungraded modules.

The possible outcomes for a subject in a period of study are:

Passed	A student who passes all modules in a period of study will be allowed to pass the subject and progress to the next period of study.
Passed by Compensation	A student may pass by compensation in a subject where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall weighted average mark across all modules taken in the subject is 40% or above;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No module has a mark below 35%; • At least half of the credits taken in the subject have marks of 40% or above; • The student has passed all required modules without compensation.
Incomplete / Not passed	A student who does not meet any of the criteria is not allowed to progress in the subject. In exceptional circumstances an Examination's Board may, after a review, recommend allowing a student to progress in the subject with an allowable deficit. The allowable deficit is as defined in the section on progression in the period of study.

In exceptional circumstances a Faculty may approve progression in a subject carrying a deficit of up to 10 credits in that subject. Where this is done, the student must make up the deficit before becoming eligible for the award.

Repetition

Where a student fails a 'period of study,' through failure to complete all requirements of that 'period of study,' these requirements must be subsequently fulfilled before progression can take place. Students who fail to pass a required module must repeat that module (or a suitable approved substitute module) in the subject they have failed.

- A supplemental assessment allows a student to re-sit part or all of the assessment of a module which has not been passed during the same period of study.
- Repeating a module involves re-registering for a module and retaking all of the assessment associated with the module in a subsequent academic year.

Supplemental assessments

Where the assessment of a module includes a university scheduled examination, the University will normally provide an opportunity to re-sit the examination in a supplemental examination within the same period of study.

a) Supplemental examinations are normally provided for undergraduate modules assessed by examination.

Results in supplemental examinations are not capped. Resitting supplemental examinations of the first and second semester shall be held in the Autumn.

b) Where a student resits the examination component of a module, the results from other components are carried forward. Where a student repeats in the Autumn, the continuous assessment component shall be carried forward from the Spring/Summer to the Autumn repeat session.

In some modules, a student is allowed to re-sit other components of assessment of a module, or to submit an alternative assignment in its place. In exceptional cases a Department may allow the result in an examination to be carried forward, while allowing a resit of other components.

In exceptional cases, the Board of Examination may allow

- a student to submit an alternative assignment in place of the re-sit assessment
- a result in an examination to be carried forward, while allowing a resit of other components.

Resitting students will be examined on the content of the module of the current academic year. Under no circumstances will examination papers be prepared based on content more than one year out of date. Relevant Faculties will also endeavour to accommodate 'external repeat' students by provision of alternative questions where the content of the module may have altered significantly.

Although there is no continuous assessment for external repeating students, a mandatory essay may be prescribed on agreement between the module deliverer and the head of department.

Repeating a module

A student who does not pass a module may repeat the module or a suitable substitute module in a subsequent academic year. As modules may be changed from time to time, a student may not always be able to repeat exactly the same module in a subsequent year.

Students who fail a module, and subsequently fail the Autumn Supplementary Resit Examination, shall normally be permitted to repeat the module only once internally and / or externally.

Where a student repeats a module, the student must normally register for the full module, and complete all of the assessment components. In exceptional circumstances a Department may allow a student to repeat components of the assessment and carry forward the results from other components.

Repeating for betterment / Repeating in lieu

A student may not normally repeat a module which has been passed. Exceptions to this regulation include:

- Final year students of the three-year undergraduate degree programmes may apply to repeat/resit up to 15 credits of modules which have been passed in the Autumn examinations or in the subsequent year. The fee for repeating for betterment is the same as the fee fixed for the autumn examinations.
- Repetition of passed modules may be allowed where the University has convincing evidence to suggest that a student significantly underperformed as a result of extenuating circumstances.

Having passed all modules, final year students of the three-year undergraduate programmes may reject their degree result and elect to repeat their entire degree examination (once only) in a subsequent year. The fee for repeating for betterment in this case is the same as the fee for internal or external repeating.

- Final year Bachelor of Arts and Theology students may retain their result in Theology and repeat for betterment in their Arts subject (once only) in its entirety (subject to the Marks and Standards of Maynooth University) in a subsequent year.

A student who chooses to repeat a passed module (40% or over) or to take a new module in lieu of a passed module in order to try and improve a result must relinquish the mark first obtained and accept either 40% on the original module or the mark obtained at the second sitting. Obtaining a lower result on such a module may result in lower overall grade being awarded in both the subject and / or the overall qualification than originally offered.

The provision for repeating for betterment is a provision for students who due to certified illness or uncertified illness, trauma, stress, bereavement, unique personal circumstances or other factors may have been absent from or underperformed in some components of their examinations. For this reason, repeating for betterment is subject to the approval of the Registrar or his/her deputy.

Time Limit on Repetition

A student may normally repeat a period of study only once. In exceptional circumstances the University may decide to allow additional repetition opportunities.

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