

Royal Agricultural University Academic Regulations

(Updated March 2017)

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2. Regulations for assessment, progression and awards

2.1. Introduction

The regulations detailed below are applicable to all undergraduate (including Foundation Degree) and postgraduate degree programmes commencing in 2015-16.

The assessment of students is based on their academic achievements in individual modules as prescribed in the Programme Specification. Rules for progression are also set out in the Programme Specification.

2.2. Assessment

2.2.1. Module assessment may include marks from coursework or projects and/or from examinations. Examinations will normally be sat at the end of the academic year or at the end of the period of teaching. Results will be considered by School Examination Boards, but will not be confirmed until ratified by the University Examinations Committee. Final results will be published electronically via a password-protected website as soon as possible after ratification, and will also be posted to individual students within ten working days of ratification by the Examinations Committee.

2.2.2. The module scores for all candidates will be presented to the School Examination Boards as the nearest whole number. The pass score for a module at any level, whether undergraduate or taught postgraduate, will normally be a final module score of 40%. Where assessment is based on more than one element (e.g. formal examination and coursework or projects) the final score is calculated as an average of the scores achieved in each element after applying such weighting as may be specified in the relevant module reference sheet.

2.2.3. Coursework and project briefing material should indicate how the assessors will award marks. This may take the form of a breakdown of marks for individual sections or for 'hallmarks of quality' such as presentation, standard of report writing, originality, etc. Students are entitled to an explanation of the assessment process. Briefing materials should also state that at least 10% of all assessments, including all borderline grade submissions, will be moderated internally to confirm the appropriateness of marking standards. The date of return of marked assignments should also be indicated on the briefing materials. External Examiners are entitled to scrutinise any or all of the assessed coursework and projects of the candidates for whom they have responsibility.

2.2.4. Coursework deadlines

All coursework must be handed in to the relevant School secretary, or submitted electronically via Gateway, by the time stated in the coursework brief and a receipt obtained. It is the students'

responsibility to ensure that the correct version of their coursework is submitted for assessment. Should a student inadvertently submit an initial draft of their assignment, this will be treated as a final submission and marked accordingly.

Unless an extension has been granted as a result of a successful claim for mitigation for late submission, and the new date met, late submissions will incur a mark penalty as detailed in the Academic Regulations, Section 1: General Rules for Academic Assessment, paragraph 5.

2.3. Progression

Progression from one level of study to either the next higher level or to the award of a certificate, diploma or degree will depend on compliance with the regulations specified in the Programme Specification.

For undergraduate degree programmes which do not include a 30 credit sandwich placement at level 5, progression will normally require the satisfactory completion of all modules studied, resulting in the achievement of 120 credit points at each academic level.

For undergraduate degree programmes which include a 30 credit sandwich placement at level 5, progression from level 4 to level 5 studies will require the satisfactory completion of modules totalling 120 credits (as above), but progression from level 5 to level 6 will require the satisfactory completion of all taught modules, amounting to 90 credits at level 5, where such credits do not include those from the 30 credit placement module.

For Foundation Degrees incorporating a work-based learning (WBL) module, progression from level 4 to level 5 studies will require the satisfactory completion of **all** taught modules, amounting to a minimum of 90 credits at level 4, where such credits do not include those from the WBL module.

2.3.1. Trailed modules

In exceptional circumstances, as detailed below, but not where the module is specified as a pre-requisite for a module to be studied at the next academic level, the School Dean and the Programme Manager may recommend that the University Examinations Committee allow a student to trail a module failure into the next level of progression. In such circumstances students may be required to restudy the module, and submit themselves for re-assessment in all elements of the trailed module at the next assessment opportunity. If a trailed module is subsequently failed, the student will be required to withdraw, and may not continue study at the higher level until the full complement of credits at the lower level is achieved.

2.3.1.1. Trailing from level 4 to level 5

A student may be permitted to trail a maximum of one module or 15 credits, whichever is the greater, from level 4 to level 5 if their average score for the complete diet of level 4 modules is 40% or greater. Such a trail opportunity will be over and above a student's performance in the WBL module of a Foundation Degree, which may be referred until the end

of level 5, and which must then be satisfactorily completed prior to the confirmation of any award.

2.3.1.2. Trailing from level 5 to level 6

A student may be permitted to trail a maximum of one module or 15 credits, whichever is the greater, from level 5 to level 6 if their average score for the complete diet of level 5 modules is 40% or greater. In such a situation, a student will be registered on an Ordinary BSc pathway only, with registration for the dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project, and therefore Honours, deferred until the subsequent year. Such a trail opportunity will be over and above a student's performance in any sandwich placement module, which may be referred until the end of level 6 and which must then be completed prior to the confirmation of any award.

Part time students may be able to gain exception to the regulations for progression and trailing detailed above. A part time student may negotiate with their programme manager, ratified by the Dean of School, to study the programme in an order suitable to their circumstances, with the exception of prerequisites.

2.3.2. Compensation (applicable to undergraduate programmes only)

An undergraduate Examination Board will have the power to award a pass in one module only at either level 4 or level 5 where the student has failed to achieve the pass score identified in paragraph 2.2.2 above, providing that no element within the module score is below 35% and the student's overall average mark for the year is 50% or greater.

In such cases, a compensated pass will be recorded; the student will be awarded the credits for the module and will be allowed to progress to the next level as if a pass score had originally been achieved in the module concerned.

2.4. Referral in module assessment

Students who do not achieve the pass score of 40% for any module may be offered the opportunity for referral in all failed elements of the module assessment, providing the criteria in paragraph 2.4.1 below are met.

2.4.1. The extent to which referral is permitted will be specified in the Programme Specification.

For undergraduate programmes*, including Foundation Degrees, referral will be limited to 50% of the student's total registered module credits in any academic year, which will be over and above any referred credits relating to a WBL or placement module.

For postgraduate programmes*, the maximum referral will be 50% of the student's total registered module credits of the taught programme in any academic year, with the Master's dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project being considered independently of the taught module requirements.

**NB: For students studying on a part-time basis, the maximum referral will be restricted to 50% of registered module credits or a maximum of 30 module credits, whichever is the greater.*

Referred examinations or coursework must normally be completed before the commencement of the next academic year except in the case of one year postgraduate or Master's programmes where the referred assessment must be completed before the end of the following academic year. Where agreement is given exceptionally for students to trail modules they must successfully complete them within the next academic year.

Referred coursework assessments are normally required to be submitted by the end of August and referred examinations are normally held in individual subjects during the first week of September for March examinations or May for January examinations. Candidates must ensure that they are available to attend the University on those days should they be notified of the requirement to re-sit one or more subjects when the first examination results are published. The detailed programme for re-sit examinations is posted online as soon as possible after results have been ratified.

2.4.1.1. Referral examinations for the January examination period are subject to the maximum referral limit outlined in 2.4.1. Therefore any referral examinations taken in May will not stand if the maximum referral limit is exceeded within the same academic year

2.4.2. The maximum module score which can be awarded following referral of any element of module assessment will be the pass score as identified in paragraph 2.2.2. The Examination Board will be presented with the actual marks achieved in any referred element, together with the revised module score determined by applying the appropriate weighting as specified in the module reference sheet. Once the Board is satisfied that all elements and the overall module score satisfies the requirements set out in paragraph 2.2.2, then a maximum of a pass mark will be awarded. The Examination Board will exercise its discretion whether to allow candidates to be referred without prejudice where circumstances warrant it. Under these circumstances, the referred module score will not be limited to the minimum pass mark.

2.4.2.1. Resubmission of dissertations or agreed equivalent research-based projects may be permitted without applying the maximum mark stipulation detailed in 2.4.2 above where there are deficiencies of presentation alone. This will normally take the form of a mark being awarded on a provisional basis, conditional on specific requirements to rectify the presentation of the dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based projects having been met. Work that has failed to satisfy the examiners on content as well as presentation will only be eligible for a maximum of the module pass mark as detailed in 2.2.2 above.

2.4.2.2. Resubmitted undergraduate dissertations or agreed equivalent research-based projects will normally be required by the end of August following confirmation of the initial failure. Resubmitted postgraduate dissertations or agreed equivalent research-based projects will normally be required within a period of 70 days from confirmation of the initial failure. However, an Examination Board may recommend a different time period, up to a maximum of six months, providing reasonable justification is provided by the student's supervisor to the Examination Board. In all cases, the relevant referral fee will be charged.

2.4.2.3. In situations where the Examination Board is satisfied that more fundamental deficiencies exist within a failed dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project, such that it could not be completed within the timescales detailed in 2.4.2.2 above, it may require the student to re-register for a different topic, to be completed within a period not exceeding 12 months. In all cases, the relevant re-registration fee will be charged.

2.5. Failure

Students who fail to progress after completing such referred assessment as the Examinations Committee has allowed will be permitted to reapply to the University and either:

- (a) seek formal re-registration, once in the two years following failure, on all failed modules of the original programme, or
- (b) seek formal registration on a new programme of study for which the student has the necessary entry qualifications.

In all cases, any offer of a place will be subject to the admissions procedures and requirements of the University in force at the time of re-application.

2.6. Awards

In order to be eligible for the award of a certificate, diploma or degree from the Royal Agricultural University, a candidate must have satisfied the requirements specified in the Programme Specification and achieved the necessary credits within the maximum period of registration as detailed below.

Academic Award	Minimum Credits Required	Maximum time limits	
		Full-time Students	Part-time Students
Certificate of Higher Education	120 at level 4 or above	2 years	4 years
Diploma of Higher Education	240 to include a minimum of 120 at level 5 or above	4 years	6 years
Foundation Degree	240 to include a minimum of 120 at level 5 and a maximum of 120 at level 4	4 years	6 years
BSc	300 to include a minimum	5 years	7 years

	of 60 at level 6 and a maximum of 120 at level 4		
BSc Honours	360 to include a minimum of 120 at level 6 and a maximum of 120 at level 4	6 years	8 years
BSc Honours (Intercalating Programmes)	360 to include a minimum of 90 at level 6 and a maximum of 120 at level 4	6 years	8 years
Graduate Certificate	60 to include a minimum of 37.5 at level 6	1 year	2 years
Graduate Diploma	120 to include a minimum of 75 at level 6	2 years	4 years
Professional Adaptation Award	45 at level 7	1 year	2 years
Postgraduate Certificate	60 at level 7	1 year	2 years
Postgraduate Diploma	120 to include a minimum of 90 at level 7 and a maximum of 30 at level 6	2 years	4 years
Taught Masters [MBA/MSc]	180 to include a minimum of 150 at level 7 (of which 60 must be achieved from a Masters dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project) and a maximum of 30 at level 6	4 years	6 years

2.6.1. Foundation Degrees

Candidates for the award of a Foundation Degree who have achieved the required credits as specified in 2.6 above and whose average score in the final assessment is 40% or greater will be awarded a Foundation Degree.

The final assessment will normally comprise the results of level 4 weighted at 30% plus the results of level 5 weighted at 70%.

The normal basis for awards will be the overall average score in the final assessment, graded as follows:

Distinction	70% or above
Merit	60 - 69%
Pass	40 - 59%
Fail	Below 40%

Dominant quality

In exercising its powers to award a Foundation Degree an Examination Board may raise the classification of the award based

on the average marks, as set out in paragraph 2.6.1. where the dominant quality of the full array of module marks is in a higher class. Dominance in this case is defined as a minimum of 75 credits of the final year assessment.

Dominance will automatically be considered where the final weighted average mark is no more than 1% below the higher grade. For marks between 1% and 2% below the higher grade, dominance will be considered at the discretion of the Examination Board. Average marks of more than 2% below will not be considered for a dominant quality award.

Dominant quality will only prevail in deciding the award classification if no score for a full module, or no two scores for half modules, is more than two classes lower than the dominant class.

2.6.2. Ordinary degrees

Candidates for the award of an ordinary degree who have achieved the required credits as specified in 2.6 above and whose average score in the final assessment is 40% or above will be awarded a degree.

The final assessment will normally comprise the results of level 5 studies weighted at 30% plus level 6 studies weighted at 70%.

Candidates with an average score in the final assessment of 65% or above on an ordinary degree programme may be awarded a degree with commendation.

2.6.3. Honours degrees

Candidates for the award of a BSc Honours degree who have achieved the required credits as specified in 2.6 above and whose average score in the final assessment is 40% or above will be awarded an honours degree.

The final assessment will normally comprise the results of level 5 and level 6 studies weighted at 30% for level 5 and 70% for level 6.

Where level 5 results are not available, for example on a one-year BSc Honours Top-up programme, then the award will be based only on the performance at level 6.

The normal basis for awards will be the overall average score in the final assessment, graded as follows:

First Class Honours:	70% or above
Second Class Honours upper division:	60% to 69%
Second Class Honours lower division:	50% to 59%
Third Class Honours:	40% to 49%
Fail	0% to 39%

Dominant quality

In exercising its powers to award a degree with Honours an Examination Board may raise the classification of the degree based on the average marks, as set out in paragraph 2.6.3. where the dominant quality of the full array of module marks is in a higher class. Dominance is defined as a minimum of 75 credits of the final year assessment.

Dominance will automatically be considered where the final weighted average mark is no more than 1% below the higher grade. For marks between 1% and 2% below the higher grade, dominance will be considered at the discretion of the Examination Board. Average marks of more than 2% below will not be considered for a dominant quality award.

Dominant quality will only prevail in deciding the degree classification if no score for a full module, or no two scores for half modules, is more than two classes lower than the dominant class.

2.6.4. Postgraduate awards

2.6.4.1. Postgraduate diplomas

Candidates for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma who have achieved the required credits as specified in 2.6 above and whose average score in the final assessment is 40% or above will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma.

The awards are based on overall average scores in the final assessment, as follows:

Distinction	70% or above
Pass	40 - 69%
Fail	0 - 39%

2.6.4.2. Postgraduate degrees

Candidates for the award of a MA, MBA and MSc who have achieved the required credits as specified in 2.6 above and whose average score in the final assessment is 40% or above will be awarded a Masters Degree.

The awards of MA, MBA and MSc will be based on a weighted average of the results of all modules contributing to both the taught and research phases of the Master's award. Such weighting for final classification will be directly related to module credits using the following criteria:

For Master's programmes not professionally accredited, the research element will be double-weighted prior to calculating the overall final average based on the relative credit value of each module.

For Master's programmes receiving professional accreditation from the RICS, the final award will be determined by a straight average based on relative credit value of all elements without applying any additional weighting.

All Master's awards will be classified as Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction according to the following criteria:

Distinction	Weighted average of 70%
Merit	Weighted average of 60 - 69%
Pass	Weighted average of 40 - 59%
Fail	Weighted average mark of 0 - 39%

Dominant quality

In exercising its powers to award a Master's degree with merit or distinction, an Examination Board may raise the classification of the degree based on the average marks, as set out in paragraph 2.6.4.2 above where the dominant quality of the full array of module marks is in a higher class. Dominance in this instance is defined as a minimum of 100 credits, to include the 60 credit research element, of a 180 credit Master's programme.

Dominance will automatically be considered where the final weighted average mark is no more than 1% below the higher grade. For marks between 1% and 2% below the higher grade, dominance will be considered at the discretion of the Examination Board. Average marks of more than 2% below will not be considered for a dominant quality award.

Dominant quality will only prevail in deciding the degree classification if no score for a full module, or no two scores for half modules, is more than two classes lower than the dominant class.

2.6.5. One Year Farming Course

Candidates for the One Year Farming Course who have successfully completed 120 credits and whose average score in the final assessment is 40% or greater will be awarded a Royal Agricultural University Certificate.

The normal basis for award classifications for the One Year Farming Course will be:

Distinction	70% or above
Merit	60 - 69%
Pass	40 - 59%
Fail	Below 40%

Dominant quality

In exercising its powers to award a RAU Certificate to students successfully completing the One Year Farming Course, an Examination Board may raise the classification of the award based on the average marks, as set out in paragraph 2.6.5. where the dominant quality of the full array of module marks from the summatively assessed modules (i.e. excluding the Pass/Fail assessed skills module) is in a higher class. Dominance in this instance is defined as a minimum of 60 credits of the final assessment.

Dominance will automatically be considered where the final weighted average mark is no more than 1% below the higher grade. For marks between 1% and 2% below the higher grade, dominance will be considered at the discretion of the Examination Board. Average marks of more than 2% below will not be considered for a dominant quality award.

Dominant quality will only prevail in deciding the award classification if no score for a full module, or no two scores for half modules, is more than two classes lower than the dominant class.

2.7. Mitigating Circumstances

- 2.7.1.** Where it can be established, to the satisfaction of the Examination Board that a student's absence, failure to submit work or poor performance in respect of the whole or part of the final assessment for an award was due to proven illness or other cause found valid on production of acceptable evidence, sub-sections 2.7.2. to 2.7.5. shall apply. Acceptable evidence will normally be in writing or vouched for personally by a member of the Examination Board who is present at the meeting at which the student's performance is assessed. No account will be taken of hearsay or anecdotal information.
- 2.7.2.** A student whose case falls under 2.7.1. shall normally be granted the right to take the whole or part of the final assessment, as the Examination Board deems appropriate, at the next available opportunity, without prejudice (i.e. students will be deemed to be undertaking such assessments again, as if for the first time, and with no restrictions on final results awarded). Such assessment shall be within two years of the original assessment. If the failed assessment was itself a second attempt (i.e. a referral), the student will be deemed to be sitting again as if for the second time.
- 2.7.3.** Where the Examination Board is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of the student's achievement, or such evidence is subsequently obtained, a student whose case falls under 2.7.1. may be given the award for which he or she is a candidate with or

without Honours classification, commendation or distinction, as appropriate.

- 2.7.4.** Where there is insufficient evidence for an award to be made under 2.7.3. but the Examination Board is nevertheless satisfied that the student would have qualified for the award for which he or she was a candidate had it not been for illness or other medical incapacity, an *Aegrotat* Degree may be awarded.
- 2.7.5.** Before an award is made under 2.7.3. or 2.7.4., the student must have signified in writing that he or she is willing to accept such an award and that he or she understands that the right under 2.7.1. would thus be waived.