

**EDUCATION ACT  
(CAP. 327)**

**General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, 2008**

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred upon him by articles 74 (5) and 75 (6) of the Education Act (Cap. 327), the Chancellor of the University of Malta has promulgated the following regulations made by the Senate of the University of Malta by virtue of the powers conferred upon it by articles 75 and 79 of the said Act:

**I. GENERAL**

**Citation and Interpretation**

1. (1) These regulations may be cited as the General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, 2008.

(2) In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires, the terms used shall be taken to mean as indicated in the Glossary of Terms listed hereunder:

<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	
<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Academic Year for Postgraduate Awards</b>	An academic year consisting of two semesters, each incorporating fourteen weeks of teaching, two weeks of recess, and examination periods of two weeks and of four weeks at the end of the first and the second semester respectively. 60 credits are assigned to the study-units that students are expected to complete over one full-time academic year. An academic year may be extended by a summer semester to which 30 credits are assigned.
<b>Area/s of Study</b>	A subject or a group of related subjects taken together in an approved Programme of Study.
<b>Award Classification Board</b>	The Award Classification Board appointed for each Postgraduate Course.
<b>Board</b>	The Board of the University faculty or institute or centre responsible for a particular Postgraduate Course.
<b>Board of Studies</b>	The Board appointed to administer a Programme of Study in terms of these Regulations.
<b>Bye-Laws</b>	The Bye-Laws approved by Senate for each Postgraduate Course.
<b>Department</b>	The department of a faculty or division of an institute or centre responsible for the Postgraduate Course.
<b>Dissertation</b>	A written treatment of a subject, normally based on a research activity that is carried out under supervision in full or partial fulfilment of a degree programme. A dissertation may be

<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	
<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
	replaced by a documented activity (portfolio) related to professional practice, or a project report, or a combination of such related activities, which students will need to undertake as required by the nature of the study.
<b>ECTS Credit/s</b>	The number of credits awarded for successful completion of each study-unit. The allocation of credit to study-units forming part of a Postgraduate Course follows closely the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) proposed by the European Commission, a relevant extract from which is attached as Schedule 2 – ECTS Credits – to the General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards, 2004, published as Legal Notice 127 of 2004.
<b>Faculty</b>	The University faculty/ies or institute/s or centre/s under whose auspices the Postgraduate Course is being offered.
<b>Method of Assessment</b>	Assessment of taught study-units may be through coursework, assignments, written or oral examinations, or combinations of these, to each of which a percentage of the final marks shall be assigned. The method of assessment shall be indicated in the description of each study-unit.
<b>Portfolio</b>	A student portfolio is a compilation of academic work and other forms of educational evidence assembled for the purpose of (1) evaluating coursework quality, learning progress, and academic achievement; (2) determining whether students have met learning standards or other academic requirements for courses; (3) helping students reflect on their academic goals and progress as learners; and (4) creating a lasting archive of academic work products, accomplishments, and other documentation.
<b>Postgraduate Course</b>	A course of studies leading to a Postgraduate Award, which may be a Postgraduate Certificate or a Postgraduate Diploma or a Master's degree.
<b>Professional Degree</b>	A degree awarded after successful completion of a course of studies that imparts specific professional competencies and leads to an award that gives access to a regulated profession.
<b>Programme of Study</b>	A Programme of Study shall list all the study-units offered in each year of a Postgraduate Course. It shall indicate which study-units are compulsory or elective. Programmes of Study shall be published by the Board prior to the commencement of each Postgraduate Course, following the approval of Senate.
<b>Study-Unit/ Unit</b>	A part of a Programme of Study carried out upon a syllabus approved by Senate, on the recommendation of the Board, to which a specified number of credits at an indicated level is assigned, and which is capable of separate assessment. Its description shall also include the methods of teaching and assessment and the lecturer/s giving the unit.

<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	
<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Compulsory study-unit</b>	A taught study-unit may take the form of a series of lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical or clinical sessions, field placements, projects, private study or a combination of such work, or any other method of teaching. A research study-unit involves the writing of a dissertation under supervision.  A study-unit which must be followed and passed for the purpose of progression or successful completion of the Postgraduate Course.
<b>Elective study-unit</b>	A study-unit which must be chosen from a designated list of study-units indicated in the Programme of Study.
<b>University Postgraduate Award/s</b>	A Postgraduate Certificate, a Postgraduate Diploma, or a Master's degree awarded in terms of these regulations.

### **Applicability**

2. These regulations shall be applicable as from October 2008 for all courses leading to University Postgraduate Awards as indicated in regulation 3 and brought into force as bye-laws of these regulations.

### **Postgraduate Awards**

3. The second cycle Postgraduate Awards governed by these regulations are the following:

- (a) the Postgraduate Certificate;
- (b) the Postgraduate Diploma; and
- (c) the Master's degree.

### **Eligibility to offer Postgraduate Courses**

4. (1) Postgraduate Courses shall be proposed by the Board duly authorised to offer Postgraduate Courses in that particular area of study and approved by Senate through bye-laws for the purpose.

(2) Postgraduate Courses may be offered jointly by more than one Board, in which case the Board of Studies appointed by Senate shall include representation from each Faculty.

5. Students shall be accepted to register for Masters' degrees by research after it is ascertained that the Faculty concerned can make available suitable facilities for the proposed research as well as supervisors who can provide regular supervision taking account of their (a) area of academic expertise as evident from the peer-reviewed record of publications, and (b) other commitments.

**Eligibility for Postgraduate Awards**

6. (1) To qualify for any Postgraduate Award, students must:

(a) be registered as regular students in a Postgraduate Course;

(b) complete the Postgraduate Course and satisfy any other requirements prescribed in these regulations and in the bye-laws for the Postgraduate Course;

(c) satisfy any other requirements prescribed in any other relevant statutes, regulations and bye-laws of the University, including applicable ethical, and health and safety procedures; and

(d) obtain not less than the number of credits at not below the level as indicated hereunder, including all credits for compulsory and elective study-units as specified in the Programme of Study and/or in the course bye-laws:

<b>Postgraduate Award</b>	<b>Requirements</b>
Postgraduate Certificate	30 credits, of which not less than 25 credits at Level 5
Postgraduate Diploma	60 credits, of which not less than 50 credits at Level 5
Master's degree	90 or 120 credits, of which not less than 80 credits at Level 5, and including a dissertation to which not less than 30 credits are assigned

(2) Exceptionally, Senate may also approve Master's programmes to which 60 credits are assigned if such programmes are offered in partnership with prestigious higher education institutions and/or in the framework of international collaborative ventures.

(3) In accordance with the provisions of Statute 3, where the University, with the approval of Senate, enters into an agreement with other universities for the granting of a joint or double Postgraduate Award, then the Postgraduate Award may be given:

(a) in the case of a joint Postgraduate Award, jointly on one certificate by all the partner universities and shall be conferred at one of the partner universities as agreed among them; or

(b) in the case of a double Postgraduate Award, separately by each partner university.

(4) Senate may also approve interfaculty awards which may be offered by two or more entities of the University.

### **Types of Master's Courses**

7. (1) A Master's course may lead to three types of comparable awards as follows:

(a) a Master's degree obtained on successful completion of a Programme of Study that builds upon a first cycle degree in the same or related area of study, normally designated as Master of Arts or Master of Science or, where appropriate, Master of Philosophy;

(b) a Professional Master's degree, usually designated as Master of (subject), obtained on successful completion of a Programme of Study that either:

(i) builds upon a first cycle degree in the same area of study and intended to develop further profession-related skills and knowledge, normally in an area of specialisation; or

(ii) only partially builds on knowledge obtained in a first cycle degree but imparts specific professional competencies and leads to an award that gives access to a regulated profession; and

(c) a Conversion Master's degree obtained on successful completion of a Programme of Study that, whilst necessitating the broad academic preparation of a suitable first cycle degree, does not build upon a specific body of knowledge obtained in any particular first cycle degree course, designated as Master of (subject).

(2) A Master's course may be either mainly taught or mainly by research.

(3) All taught Masters' courses shall provide that students be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma on successful completion of taught study-units to which 60 credits are assigned if the students either opt not to proceed with the Postgraduate Course, or having proceeded, do not successfully complete the Master's course.

### **Requirements for Admission to Postgraduate Courses**

8. (1) To be considered for admission to Postgraduate Courses in terms of these regulations, applicants must be in possession of a first cycle degree obtained from this University, or from any other university approved by Senate for this

purpose, as indicated in these regulations and must satisfy any special course requirements indicated in the bye-laws for the Postgraduate Course.

(2) Admission to Master's courses is through possession of a first cycle Honours degree classified at least at Second Class in an area of study relevant to the studies to be pursued in the Master's course. Bye-laws may provide for the admission of applicants with a Third Class Honours degree if they are also in possession of other qualifications, including relevant experience, obtained following the first cycle degree.

(3) (i) Admission to Professional Master's courses is through possession of a first cycle Honours degree classified at least at Second Class in an area of study relevant to the studies to be pursued in the Professional Master's course. Bye-laws may provide for the admission of applicants with a Third Class Honours degree if they present a portfolio or other documentary evidence recording the applicant's relevant experience.

(ii) In the case of Professional Master's courses offered in terms of regulation 7 (1)(b)(ii), applicants must be in possession of a first cycle degree obtained with at least Second Class Honours or Category II.

(4) Admission to Conversion Master's courses is through possession of a first cycle degree classified at least at Second Class Honours or Category II.

(5) Applicants shall be accepted to register on courses with a major research component if their dissertation proposal falls within the research interests of the department and the department has the necessary resources to provide adequate supervision.

9. (1) Bye-laws for Master's and Professional Master's courses may provide that applicants in possession of an Ordinary Degree classified with at least Category II be admitted into a Preparatory Programme and they shall become eligible to join the appropriate Master's course on completion of the Preparatory Programme at the standard of at least Second Class Honours.

(2) Bye-Laws for Conversion Master's courses may provide that applicants in possession of an Honours degree classified at least at Third Class or of an Ordinary Degree with at least Category III be admitted if they have obtained other qualifications, including relevant experience, following their first cycle degree.

10. (1) Admission to a Postgraduate Diploma course, when the course does not give automatic access to a Master's course, may be through possession of a first cycle degree obtained at least at either Third Class Honours or with Category III.

(2) Admission to a Postgraduate Certificate course, when the course does not give automatic access to a Master's course, may be through possession of any first cycle degree.

11. Bye-laws may provide that the Board may grant students full or partial exemption from the requirement of the Preparatory Programme if it is satisfied that the students possess post-first cycle qualification work experience that is relevant to the area of study of the Master's course.

12. Senate may approve bye-laws in terms of these regulations to provide for the admission of experienced professionals not in possession of formal academic qualifications into professional courses, consisting of not less than 60 credits for taught study-units.

13. All applicants shall be required to demonstrate that their standard of English is satisfactory, unless teaching, research and assessment are done in another language. The Admissions Board may, from time to time, publish the qualifications that are acceptable for each level of University awards, including the level and grades required in the English proficiency qualification. The offer of a place on a Postgraduate Course may be made subject to the applicants obtaining such proficiency qualifications prior to the commencement of their studies.

### **Applications for Postgraduate Courses**

14. Applications for taught Postgraduate Courses shall be made on the prescribed form and within the time specified by the Office of the Registrar.

15. For the Master's degree mainly by research, applications may be submitted at any time of the year but enrolment shall be with effect from one of the following dates: 1 October, 1 December, 1 February, 1 April and 1 June.

16. Applications for the Master's degree mainly by research shall be approved by the Board and shall include the following details:

(a) a provisional title for the dissertation;

(b) a research proposal of at least 300 words to be submitted at the time of application or by a deadline established by the Board of Studies for the course; and

(c) a statement on whether the studies will be undertaken on a full-time or a part-time basis, and, in the latter case, the number of hours that shall be dedicated to this research work.

17. In the case of applicants from outside Malta, funding and visa requirements shall be taken into consideration when the application and research proposal are being considered.

## **Supplementary and Preparatory Programmes**

18. In cases where applicants lack essential knowledge in particular areas not covered in their first degree, bye-laws may require students to follow and pass supplementary study-units at level 4 or lower to which not more than 12 ECTS credits are assigned.

19. (1) Preparatory Programmes, when prescribed, shall be approved by Senate, on the recommendation of the Board, and must include study-units to which not less than 30 credits are assigned for higher level undergraduate work in areas which are directly relevant to the area of study of the Master's course.

(2) Students who fail in the first sit of study-units in a preparatory programme shall be allowed a supplementary assessment in terms of the General Regulations for University Undergraduate Award, 2004. Students who fail the supplementary assessment of these study-units shall be allowed to refer the failed study-units to an additional year or to repeat the preparatory programme in its entirety, if eligible in terms of the General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards, 2004.

(3) Students who successfully complete a preparatory programme but do not obtain the required overall average mark as specified in the course bye-laws shall be granted an additional year of studies, during which, after academic counselling, they shall follow any study-units in order to seek to improve their overall average mark. Attendance for lectures is not compulsory if following study-units already passed.

## **Duration of Postgraduate Courses**

20. (1) The duration of Postgraduate Courses shall be specified in the bye-laws for each course but shall extend over the following periods of full-time study:

- (a) one semester for courses leading to a Postgraduate Certificate;
- (b) two semesters for courses leading to a Postgraduate Diploma; and
- (c) between three and four semesters for courses leading to a Master's degree.

(2) Applicants engaged in full-time employment shall not normally be permitted to register as full-time students, except in circumstances where applicants provide evidence to show that their employer is willing to grant sufficient time off from work to allow them to engage in full-time study. Students engaged in part-time employment must inform the University about the extent of their employment commitment and require permission from the Faculty Admissions Committee to register as full-time students.



21. (1) The Board may grant students registered on Postgraduate Courses an extension of up to six months in order to enable them to complete their studies, irrespective of whether they are registered on a full-time or a part-time basis.

(2) In special circumstances and on the recommendation of the Board, Senate may grant students a further extension of up to two years in order to enable them to complete their studies, irrespective of whether they are registered on a full-time or a part-time basis.

### **Suspension of Studies**

22. (1) The Board may allow students, for a good and sufficient reason, to suspend their studies for a maximum period of twelve months, irrespective of whether they are registered on a full-time or a part-time basis. In such cases, the period of suspension of studies shall not be taken into consideration for calculating the period of registration in the Postgraduate Course in terms of the duration requirement.

(2) A student who is on suspension of studies shall not follow any study-unit, sit for any assessment, or work on the dissertation.

### **Academic Calendar for Postgraduate Courses**

23. (1) The academic calendar for Postgraduate Courses is given in the Glossary of Terms. The summer recess may however be shortened to two weeks in August in order to allow students to participate in a summer semester.

(2) Supplementary examinations shall be held either in September or, in exceptional circumstances, at the next scheduled session of examinations.

### **Attendance**

24. (1) Unless otherwise specified in the bye-laws of a Postgraduate Course, or expressly stated in the description of a study-unit as published in the catalogue of study-units, attendance for lectures, tutorials, seminars, practical or clinical sessions or work placements, fieldwork and any other teaching session in whatever mode is obligatory. On the basis of documented evidence, a lecturer may bar a student whose attendance in a study-unit is not satisfactory from being assessed in that study-unit. In such cases, a 0 mark and an F grade shall be assigned and recorded.

(2) The University will not excuse students from missing lectures or other teaching activities, and neither will it tolerate late submission of assignments or any defaults in coursework due to work or unauthorised commitments. No rescheduling of lecturing-related activities, examinations or vivas will be approved to accommodate such commitments.

## **Dissertations**

25. (1) All Master's programmes shall include the writing of a dissertation, to which not less than 30 credits shall be assigned.

(2) The supervision of students for the dissertation shall be regulated by the provisions of regulation 51.

(3) In the case of dissertations assigned more than 30 credits, the provisions of regulations 51 and 52 shall apply.

(4) Dissertations shall be assessed according to the provisions of regulations 53 and 54.

(5) Before graduating, and where applicable, students shall present two hard bound copies of the dissertation to the department, and one electronic version for the University Library, which shall include a signed declaration of authenticity. The electronic version must conform to the standards set up by the University of Malta Library.

## **Ethical Approval of Research Programmes**

26. Any research undertaken by students which involves direct contact with patients or healthy participants, whether clinical, biomedical or social research, or the secondary use of existing human materials or specimens, or involving animals must be subject to ethical review. Such review must be undertaken by the Research Ethics Committee appointed by Senate for the purpose. These research proposals shall first be considered by the Board who shall submit the proposal to the Research Ethics Committee. The Board shall only accept such applications if the Research Ethics Committee has given its approval.

## **Language of Dissertations**

27. (1) Dissertations for all Postgraduate Awards shall be written in English, except that dissertations in areas of study involving a language may be written in that language.

(2) However, following approval by Senate, a Board may allow particular students, for just and sufficient reasons, to write their dissertation in any other language, provided that the Board has ascertained, to the satisfaction of Senate, that the University has the necessary expertise to supervise and examine the work. In such cases, students shall be required to include an Executive Summary of the work in English.

## Assessment of Study-Units - Marking and Grading

28. Examiners shall express the students' performance in the assessment of all study-units, including the dissertation, as a percentage mark and grade as indicated in the table below. Both the percentage mark and the letter grade shall be recorded in the students' academic record. The percentage mark only is used for the purpose of calculating the students' progress and for the award classification.

<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Mark Range</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Work of excellent quality Superior performance showing a comprehensive understanding and application of the subject matter. Evidence of considerable additional reading/research/work.	80% - 100%	A
Work of very good quality Performance is typified by a very good working knowledge of the subject matter. Evidence of a considerable amount of reading/ research/work.	70% - 79%	B
Work of good quality Above average performance, with a good working knowledge of the subject matter. Evidence of sufficient reading/research/work.	55%**-69%	C
Work of fair but below average quality Considerable but incomplete understanding of the subject matter. Evidence of a fair amount of reading/research/work.	50% *- 54%	D
Work of marginal quality Minimal understanding of the subject matter, with no evidence of additional reading/research/work, which must be compensated by higher marks in other units in order to be eligible for the Postgraduate Award.	45% - 49%	E
Pass – when assessment is based on a pass/fail basis.	Not applicable	P
Unsatisfactory, failing work in any study-unit.	0% - 44%	F
Unsatisfactory, failing work in the dissertation study-unit.	0% - 49%*	F
Unsatisfactory, failing work in a practicum study-unit, where such is indicated in the course bye-laws.	0% - 54%**	F
Unjustified absence for an assessment, or failure to hand in assigned work in time, or ineligibility to take assessment due to unapproved absence from lectures. Shall be considered as F with 0 marks in the calculation of the average mark.	0%	F
Temporary grade for Incomplete work due to justifiable reasons (illness, approved absence, etc.) for which the assessment date has been postponed or the deadline for submission of work has been extended.		I
Approved withdrawal of the registration for a study-unit		W

Descriptor	Mark Range	Grade
after the official add/drop period has elapsed, given in consideration of exceptional circumstances, such as absence from lectures due to prolonged illness during the semester. The unit shall not be taken into consideration in the calculation of the average mark.		

\* The minimum pass mark for dissertations is 50%.

\*\* The minimum pass mark for practicums, where such is indicated in the course bye-laws, is 55%.

### Re-assessment of Study-Units

29. (1) A failed taught study-unit may be re-assessed once only, under those conditions as provided for in the bye-laws for the Postgraduate Course. If successful, the maximum mark/grade that can be awarded shall be 45% / Grade E.

(2) In the case of taught elective study-units failed after re-assessment only, the Board, after consultation with the head of department and/or the Board of Studies, may allow students to register for alternative elective study-units from the list of elective units in the students' Programme of Study, to which a total of up to 12 ECTS credits are assigned. If successful in such units, the maximum mark/grade that may be awarded is 45%/grade E.

(3) Students who fail the assessment of a study-unit involving a work placement, clinical practice or any other unit that requires assessment over a period of time, when it is not practicable or possible to be re-assessed during the current year, shall not have the right to a supplementary assessment but shall be required to re-do the unit during an additional year of study. Such an additional year may, at the discretion of the Board, not be counted for the purpose of Course duration.

(4) If a student fails in a dissertation, the maximum grade/mark that can be awarded after reassessment shall be 50%/Grade D.

(5) If a student fails in a practicum whose minimum pass mark is indicated in the course bye-laws as 55%, the maximum grade/mark that can be awarded after reassessment, shall be 55%/Grade C.

(6) Students shall not be allowed to be re-assessed for a study-unit if they have already been awarded credit for it.

(7) Students who, after reassessment, fail to obtain credit for any study-unit shall be required to withdraw from the Postgraduate Course.

### **Re-admission to a Postgraduate Course**

30. Students may only be allowed to re-join a Course as stipulated in the Admissions Regulations, 2016. On re-joining the Course, students shall be required to follow the Programme of Study that is applicable for that year and they shall be required to follow all study-units, including those they may have successfully completed during the failed Course.

### **Progression and Annual Enrolment for Postgraduate Courses**

31. (1) Students registered on taught programmes shall be allowed to enrol for the following year if they obtain all the credits for the year, provided that progression to the research component shall require successful completion of the taught component with a minimum average mark of at least 50%. Students registered on programmes mainly by research shall be allowed to enrol for the following year subject to a satisfactory progress report from their Principal Supervisor.

(2) If a student is prevented for a reason considered valid by Senate from being assessed in a study-unit, the student shall be required to complete the previous year's requirements in an additional year of study. Under no circumstances shall a student be allowed to progress from the current year to a subsequent year if the requirements of the year previous to the current have not been satisfied.

(3) Students are required to enrol at the commencement of the Postgraduate Course and at the beginning of each academic year throughout their period of study, whether they are following a mainly taught programme or a mainly research programme.

32. Bye-laws for a Postgraduate Course may provide that progression from one year to the next or progression from the taught component to the research component be subject to a minimum average mark to be indicated in the bye-laws if it is higher than the average indicated in regulation 31 (1).

### **Classification of Postgraduate Awards**

33. There shall be an Award Classification Board for each Postgraduate Course.

34. (1) For mainly taught programmes, the Award Classification Board shall be composed of at least three members, including the Dean/Director, or delegate, as chairman, the course co-ordinator, and at least one other member appointed by the Board.

(2) In the case of programmes mainly by research, the Board of Examiners appointed as in regulation 55 shall act as the Award Classification Board.

35. (1) Postgraduate Certificates shall be awarded unclassified.

(2) Postgraduate Diplomas and Master's degrees may be awarded in any of the following classifications:

Pass with Distinction (*Summa Cum Laude*)  
Pass with Merit (*Magna Cum Laude*)  
Pass (*Bene Probatus*).

36. The classification of Postgraduate Awards shall be determined by the Award Classification Board on the basis of a Final Weighted Average Mark obtained by taking into account the individual marks obtained in each study-unit as well as the credit value of the study-units, provided that bye-laws may allow for the credits assigned to the dissertation to be weighted by a factor of not more than 1.5.

37. (1) The Award Classification Board shall consult the following guidelines when deciding upon the final classification of Postgraduate Diplomas and Masters' degrees:

<b>Final Weighted Average Mark</b>	<b>Classification</b>
80 - 100%	Pass with Distinction
70 - 79%	Pass with Merit
50 - 69%	Pass.

(2) Students whose Final Average Weighted Mark is between 0 and 49% shall be considered to have failed to qualify for a Postgraduate Award.

(3) The Award Classification Board, at its own discretion, may award the Postgraduate Award with a higher classification than that indicated in paragraph (1) of this regulation to students whose Final Weighted Average Mark is up to five marks less than the minimum for the classification, provided that all students who obtain the same or a higher Final Weighted Average Mark within that category/class shall be awarded the higher classification. In such cases, the Award Classification Board is required to minute the decision and the justification for it.

(4) The Award Classification Board, at its own discretion, may also award a Postgraduate Award with a lower classification than that indicated in paragraph (1) of this regulation, provided that all students who obtain the same or a lower Final Weighted Average Mark within that category/class shall be awarded the lower classification. In such cases, the Award Classification Board is required to obtain the authorisation of the Board that shall minute the decision and the justification for it. The students concerned may appeal to Senate against the decision within 15 days of the publication of the classification.

## **II. TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE AWARDS**

### **Programmes of Study for Mainly Taught Postgraduate Awards**

38. (1) Programmes of Study shall be proposed by one or more than one Department jointly, and shall be approved by Senate, on the recommendation of the Board.

(2) Programmes of Study shall be co-ordinated by the head of department or another member of staff appointed for the purpose by the Board.

39. Programmes of Study shall be published before the commencement of each Postgraduate Course, normally not less than 3 months before its commencement. Programmes of Study shall include all the study-units, indicating which study-units are compulsory or elective, and the order in which the units shall be followed.

### **Study-units**

40. Study-units shall be proposed by the Department or a number of departments responsible for the teaching of the area/areas of study in the Postgraduate Course and approved by Senate, on the recommendation of the Board.

41. Study-units shall be assigned a code by the Office of the Registrar in accordance with the principles listed in Schedule 1 - System of Assigning Codes for Study-Units – attached to the General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards, 2004, published as Legal Notice 127 of 2004.

42. Study-units in all Postgraduate Courses shall normally be offered at level five. Each taught study-unit shall normally be assigned not less than five credits and not more than 30 credits, preferably in multiples of five credits.

43. All study-units shall be assigned a credit value in terms of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and credits shall be awarded to students who pass the assessment for the unit.

44. The method of assessment for each study-unit shall be indicated in the study-unit description and published in the catalogue of study-units. If the method of assessment comprises more than one assessment component, the % weighting of each component shall be given. Students shall be awarded the credits for a unit if they obtain an overall pass mark for the unit as a whole, provided that Senate may, in the case of study-units comprising a practical component, approve that a particular mark must be obtained in that component for students to be awarded a pass mark in the study-unit.

45. The same study-units cannot be counted towards two separate Postgraduate Awards unless one qualification is considered by Senate to be an

interim qualification in the normal progression to the other, higher level, qualification, provided that a Board of Studies may exempt a student from the attendance requirement of a compulsory study-unit credit for which was obtained towards another award, although such a student shall still be required to be assessed in the unit.

46. Credits awarded for study-units may not normally be used towards an award after seven years have elapsed from the successful completion of the unit.

### **Registration for Study-Units**

47. Students shall register for the study-units prescribed in their Programme of Study within the time specified by the Office of the Registrar. They shall not be considered as students on a study-unit unless they have so registered.

### **Boards of Examiners for Taught Study-Units**

48. Taught study-units shall be examined by a Board of Examiners composed of not less than 3 persons, including a chairman who shall not be teaching the unit, and the lecturer/s teaching the unit.

## **III. POSTGRADUATE AWARDS BY RESEARCH**

### **Programmes of Study for Master's Degree mainly by Research**

49. The Master's degree obtained mainly by research shall require students to register for at least two study-units, one of which a study-unit consisting of supervised research work leading to the writing of a dissertation, to which not less than 60 credits are assigned.

50. Students registered for Masters' degrees mainly by research may be allowed to participate in joint research projects where data generated jointly by a group of researchers is used for the writing of a dissertation, provided that each student writes a separate dissertation.

### **Supervision of Masters' Dissertations**

51. (1) In Masters' degrees mainly by research, the Board shall appoint a Principal Supervisor for each student.

(2) If the nature/topic of research requires the input of another specialist, the Board may appoint a co-supervisor, in which case the two supervisors shall meet the student together to decide how they will divide their responsibility for advice and how future meetings are to be arranged.



(3) When a co-supervisor is appointed, the Principal Supervisor shall retain the ultimate responsibility of leadership in supervision.

(4) A Principal Supervisor or co-supervisor shall not be related to a student by consanguinity or by affinity to the third degree inclusive or have a dual relationship with the student.

(5) Principal Supervisors shall be responsible for providing guidance to students under their care in the following areas:

(a) assisting students to select and elaborate a research problem and to formulate a written proposal for their dissertation;

(b) offering ideas and providing guidance and encouragement on the planning and progress of research, submission of the dissertation, and publication of results;

(c) providing or arranging instruction in research methodology, including use of information technology;

(d) guiding students in acquiring and improving appropriate generic skills, including written and oral communication, numeracy, decision-taking and organisational and management skills;

(e) the students are aware of the manner in which research results are reported and that they understand the implications of plagiarism and other unbecoming academic practices; and

(f) any other matters which require the attention of the Board or Senate.

(6) Principal Supervisors shall meet students regularly to review progress. Meetings may be substituted by other means of communication.

(7) Principal Supervisors and co-supervisors are not responsible for proof-reading dissertations. Neither is it their responsibility to ensure that dissertations do not contain plagiarised parts.

(8) If plagiarism is detected by a supervisor in drafts or in the final version of a dissertation prior to formal submission, the Principal Supervisor shall use discretion as to whether to reprimand the student and demand corrective action or to report the matter to the Assessment Disciplinary Board, depending on the gravity of the offence.

52. Bye-laws shall establish methods and stipulate procedures for the effective monitoring of students' progress throughout their studies. These shall include measures to ensure that:

(a) written progress reports are submitted regularly by Principal Supervisors to an appropriate faculty/departmental committee or panels of supervision for individual students or groups of students; such reports may include a recommendation either to (a) grant an extension of the study period in order to enable the students to complete the dissertation; or (b) to terminate the studies prematurely if the relevant faculty/departmental committee deems this to be proper in the circumstances; provided that for (a), the period of extension of studies shall be according to regulation 21 (1); and for (b), the student may appeal his case before Senate within 15 days from the notice of termination;

(b) substantial modification of title or content of dissertation, requests for extension of studies or suspension of studies are considered and decided upon expeditiously;

(c) students' research is not hindered in unforeseeable circumstances, such as when a supervisor is absent for a long period; and

(d) requests by students about matters relating to their studies (including a request to change their Principal Supervisor if there are serious reasons) are adequately considered.

### **Assessment of Dissertations for Master's Degree**

53. (1) Dissertations presented for a Master's Degree shall:

(a) be work of an advanced or original nature in the area of study;

(b) satisfy the Board of Examiners as regards content and presentation; and

(c) fulfil the requirements as provided by relevant bye-laws and guidelines as regards format and length.

(2) (a) For dissertations assigned 60 ECTS credits or more, an oral examination shall be held, except when the Board of Examiners agrees that the dissertation is of low quality, in which case a failing mark and grade shall be published. A second oral examination may be held at the discretion of the Board of Examiners in cases of resubmission of dissertations following major corrections or resubmission of failed dissertations. In cases of low quality dissertations where a failing mark and grade have been published, a Board of Examiners shall hold an oral examination in the re-assessment;

(b) For dissertations assigned less than 60 ECTS credits:

(i) an oral examination shall be held if it is indicated in the method of assessment of the dissertation study-unit. A second oral examination may be held at the discretion of the Board of Examiners in cases of resubmission of dissertations following major corrections or resubmission of failed dissertations;

(ii) if an oral examination is not indicated in the method of assessment of the dissertation study-unit it may be held in cases of borderline dissertations verging on a fail, in cases of resubmission of failed dissertations, or in cases where there is lack of consensus among the Board of Examiners.

(3) For any other work submitted or carried out, other than the writing of a dissertation, students shall be guided by the guidelines issued by the Board or as detailed in the course bye-laws.

(4) Principal Supervisors shall signify in writing, on the appropriate form, that they are aware that the student is submitting his/her dissertation for examination by the Board of Examiners.

(5) The supervisory role of Principal Supervisors and co-supervisors shall cease when the dissertation is submitted for examination. The role may be re-assumed, on the advice of the Board of Examiners, in order to provide guidance to students whose dissertation is referred back for significant correction pending final acceptance.

(6) No dissertation shall be accepted which is identical in substance to a document already submitted for a degree in this or any other university or to any other published material. Students shall not, however, be precluded from incorporating such previous work as may be necessary to the presentation and fuller understanding of their exposition, provided that the nature and extent of such incorporation are clearly indicated in the dissertation itself.

54. (1) For dissertations assigned 60 credits or more, where an oral examination shall be held in terms of regulation 53 (2) (a), after reading and marking the dissertation, the Board of Examiners shall call the student for the oral examination and shall either:

(a) award an overall pass to the dissertation unconditionally or subject to minor corrections which shall be submitted within a time established by the Board of Examiners and to the satisfaction of the chairman of the Board of Examiners in consultation with the supervisor. If the changes are not effected properly, the Board of Examiners shall award a mark and grade for the original version; or

(b) approve the oral performance and advise major corrections to the dissertation, which although not of a failing standard nevertheless needs significant improvement. The resubmitted dissertation, which shall be presented within a time established by the Board of Examiners, shall be reviewed by the chairman in consultation with the supervisor to ensure that the changes were effected as directed. If the chairman and the supervisor are satisfied that the changes have been performed properly, the Board of Examiners shall agree a final mark that shall not be greater than 10 percentage points of the preliminary mark for the original submission; or

(c) in the case of a borderline quality dissertation verging on a fail, advise major corrections to the dissertation in order to qualify for the minimum pass mark and grade (i.e. 50%/Grade D), which shall be submitted within a time established by the Board of Examiners, and subject to a positive confirmation by the chairman in consultation with the supervisor that the changes have been effected properly, failing which the dissertation shall be declared as failed with the possibility of a reassessment if eligible in terms of these regulations; or

(d) in cases of low quality dissertations, declare the student to have failed with the possibility of a re-assessment if eligible in terms of these regulations.

(2) For dissertations assigned less than 60 credits, when an oral examination is indicated in the method of assessment in terms of regulation 53 (2) (b) (i), after reading and marking the dissertation, the Board of Examiners shall call the student for the oral examination and shall either:

(a) award an overall pass to the dissertation unconditionally or subject to minor corrections which shall be submitted within a time established by the Board of Examiners and to the satisfaction of the chairman of the Board of Examiners in consultation with the supervisor. If the changes are not effected properly the Board of Examiners shall award a mark and grade for the original version; or

(b) in the case of borderline dissertations verging on a fail, advise major corrections to the dissertation which shall be submitted within a time established by the Board of Examiners and to the satisfaction of the chairman of the Board of Examiners in consultation with the supervisor, in order to qualify for the minimum pass mark and grade (ie 50%, grade D). If the changes are not effected properly, the dissertation shall be declared as failed with the possibility of a re-assessment if eligible in terms of these regulations; or

(c) in cases of low quality dissertations, declare the student to have failed with the possibility of a re-assessment if eligible in terms of these regulations.

(3) For dissertations assigned less than 60 credits, when an oral examination is not indicated in the method of assessment in terms of regulation 53 (2) (b) (ii), after reading and marking the dissertation, the Board of Examiners shall either:

(a) award a pass to the dissertation unconditionally or subject to minor corrections which shall be submitted within a time established by the Board of Examiners and to the satisfaction of the chairman of the Board of Examiners in consultation with the supervisor. If the changes are not effected properly, the Board of Examiners shall award a mark and grade for the original version; or

(b) in the case of borderline dissertations verging on a fail, the Board of Examiners may:

*either* (i) refer the dissertation back to the student for major corrections which shall be submitted within a time established by the Board of Examiners and to the satisfaction of the chairman of the Board of Examiners in consultation with the supervisor, in order to qualify for a minimum pass mark and grade (ie 50%, grade D). If the changes are not effected properly, the dissertation shall be declared as failed with the possibility of a re-assessment if eligible in terms of these regulations;

*or* (ii) call the student for an oral examination before deciding if the dissertation should be referred back to the student for major corrections or if the dissertation shall be declared as fail with the possibility of a re-assessment if eligible in terms of these regulations; or

(c) in cases of low quality dissertations, declare the student to have failed with the possibility of a re-assessment if eligible in terms of these regulations.

(4) When a Board of Examiners fails to reach consensus about the final mark/grade they shall proceed according to regulation 24 of University Assessment Regulations, 2009.

(5) A Board of Examiners shall not allow a period longer than three months for major corrections, in cases of borderline dissertations verging on a fail, and not longer than six months for resubmission of failed dissertations, unless there are valid reasons which shall be recorded in the report of the Board of Examiners.

(6) Major corrections to borderline dissertations verging on a fail, as required by the Board of Examiners, may be submitted once only.

(7) In case of a Fail, students may submit a dissertation for re-assessment once only.

### **Boards of Examiners for Dissertations**

55. (1) Dissertations submitted for the award of a Master's Degree shall be assessed by a Board of Examiners appointed by Senate for the purpose, on the recommendation of the Board.

(2) (i) For dissertations assigned 30 credits, the Board of Examiners shall be composed of at least three members one of whom may be an external examiner from an overseas institution normally appointed on a non-visiting basis;

(ii) For dissertations assigned more than 30 credits, the Board of Examiners shall be composed of at least three members and shall normally include an external examiner from an overseas institution;

provided that, where *viva voce* examinations shall be held and external examiners are appointed on a non-visiting basis, the Board of Examiners shall be composed of

at least four members. External Examiners shall be appointed as stipulated in regulation 21 of the University Assessment Regulations, 2009.

(3) For dissertations assigned 60 credits or more the Board of Examiners shall require students to defend their dissertation orally before it. For dissertations assigned less than 60 credits, the Board of Examiners may require students to defend their dissertation orally before it. For dissertations of 30 credits or more, not less than three members of the Board of Examiners shall conduct the oral examination.

(4) Principal Supervisors and co-supervisors shall not be members of the Board of Examiners but the Principal Supervisor shall be invited to attend as an observer during the oral examination. The Principal Supervisor may contribute if invited to do so by the members of the Board of Examiners but must withdraw prior to the final deliberations of the Board of Examiners. However, a Board may request special permission from Senate to allow a Principal Supervisor to form part of the Board of Examiners for justified reasons.

(5) The Board of Examiners shall follow the procedures for the assessment of dissertations for Masters' degrees, as approved by Senate.

### **Teaching Duties**

56. (1) Students registered for a Master's degree mainly by research may be required to assist lecturing staff in the Faculty's teaching activities for up to a maximum of 100 hours a year, provided that these duties do not conflict with their research work and that students may be exempted from this requirement for a good and valid reason.

(2) The criteria used in assigning such duties to students shall be equitable and transparent.

(3) Students involved in teaching shall be assigned an academic mentor to whom they may turn for advice. They shall also be provided with advice and facilities to ensure that they may teach effectively. Students involved in such teaching activities shall be provided with instruction and guidance, including relevant health and safety training.

(4) For such work, students shall be remunerated at standard rates as approved by the University.

### **Copyright and Intellectual Property**

57. Students must abide by the University of Malta Intellectual Property Policy.

### **Open Access**

58. In line with the University of Malta's Institutional Repository Policy, the University Library shall provide in open access the electronic copies of Master's dissertations which are awarded a grade A and shall make them publicly available on the University of Malta's Institutional Repository.

### **Confidentiality Agreements**

59. (1) Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, training know-how, information, methodologies and manuals; workbooks; statements of operating practice; specifications; drawings; designs; formulae; discoveries; inventions; technical information; know-how generally; lab notebooks; manuscript papers; software; information about the methods, concepts and techniques on which software is based; samples; finances; financial models; pricing and other commercial information; business plans; marketing plans; and any information considered to be sensitive by the University Research Ethics Committee.

(2) Students are bound not to disclose any confidential information which may come into their possession and/or which they are exposed to and/or which they have access to. Furthermore, students may be asked by the University to sign specific confidentiality agreements should it be deemed necessary.

(3) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (1) of this regulation, information shall not be considered as confidential information if:

(a) it was already known to the student and it was not subject to any obligation of confidentiality by the student to the University;

(b) it is or becomes publicly known without an act or omission of the student;

(c) it is obtained by the student from a third party with a valid right to disclose such confidential information, provided that said third party is not under a confidentiality obligation to the University;

(d) it is approved for release in writing by an authorised representative of the University; or

(e) the student is specifically required to disclose pursuant to a law or order of any Court of competent jurisdiction.

### **Confidentiality of Assessable Student Work**

60. (1) Where the student considers that assessable student work should remain confidential during or after completion of the programme of study or research, a request for it to be embargoed must be made to the Library Committee. The Library Committee shall consult with the Faculty concerned before taking a decision. The period of confidentiality approved shall not normally exceed two

years from final submission of such work to the University. However, in cases where publication of the assessable student work would prove detrimental to the student or the University or the sponsor or the funding body or the persons referred to in such work, a further period may be approved.

(2) In any case and without prejudice to paragraph (1) of this regulation, the University retains the right to request the embargo of assessable student work. In the event that assessable student work is embargoed, the student shall be bound to treat the contents of such work as confidential. Prior to any publication, the provisions about publication and exploitation, as detailed in the University of Malta Intellectual Property Policy shall apply in every case.

### **Professional Misconduct and/or Unsuitability**

61. (1) In the case of students following courses which involve work with vulnerable persons, the University may at any time suspend or preclude from further studies any student who, following appropriate investigatory procedures that Senate may establish for such cases, is deemed to have acted or be acting in a manner which jeopardises the welfare of the subject (whether patient, pupil, or client) or which contravenes the relevant professional codes of conduct (i.e. professional misconduct), or whose behaviour is deemed to be incompatible with that required by the profession (i.e. professional unsuitability).

(2) The University may request a Police Good Conduct Certificate of its students. Students shall inform the University if the declaration on their certificate changes during their registration on a University course, in which case this declaration shall be considered by a sub-committee of the Admissions Board appointed by Senate for the purpose.

### **Special Provisions for Part-Time Courses**

62. (1) A Board may, from time to time, offer students the opportunity to follow a Postgraduate Course on a part-time basis in areas of study which shall be indicated before the commencement of each Course.

(2) The provisions of the foregoing regulations shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to courses followed on a part-time basis, and subject to such changes as may reasonably be deemed by the relevant Board as necessary due to the part-time nature of the Course.

(3) Students may be allowed to follow a course on a part-time basis, in which case the time spent in part-time study shall, unless otherwise stated in the by-laws for the course or unless in special circumstances specific arrangements are agreed in writing by the Board with the student, count as half that required in the case of full-time study.



(4) Full-time or part-time students who successfully complete the taught component of a programme, may be given the opportunity to change their mode of attendance before continuing with the research component.

### **Board of Studies**

63. Boards of Studies for all Courses shall be appointed by Senate by June for a period of two years except in the case of students appointed on Boards of Studies whose appointment shall be of one year's duration.

<b>Applicable as from 1 March 2019 onwards:</b>
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63. Boards of Studies for all Courses shall be appointed by Senate by September for a period of <b>one</b> academic year.
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64. Each Faculty shall recommend to Senate the appointment of Boards of Studies for Courses run under the auspices of that Faculty. In doing so, the Board shall aim to achieve an optimal arrangement for the appointment of a Board of Studies for one or more Courses run under its auspices.

65. Senate may approve the appointment of any of the following:

- (a) a Board of Studies for one Area of Study for a Course, where such a Course consists only of one Area of Study;
- (b) a Board of Studies for a Course consisting of more than one Area of Study offered together in that Course;
- (c) a single Board of Studies for such number of Courses offered under the auspices of a Faculty, where such an arrangement is the most appropriate;
- (d) the designation of a Board to carry out the functions of a Board of Studies; and
- (e) any combination of the above which Senate may approve from time to time for Courses offered under the auspices of a Faculty.

66. (1) Boards of Studies shall be composed as follows:

(a) in the case of regulation 65 (a), the Board of Studies shall be composed of: (i) the head of the department responsible for the Area of Study or his delegate as chairman; (ii) at least two other academic members; and (iii) two students elected from amongst the students registered on the Course;

(b) in the case of regulation 65 (b), the Board of Studies shall be composed of: (i) the heads of the departments responsible for the Areas of Study concerned, or their delegates, one of whom shall be appointed chairman; (ii) at least one other academic member from each of the departments concerned; and (iii) two students elected from amongst the students registered on the Course;

(c) in the case of regulation 65 (c), the Board of Studies shall be composed of: (i) the Course coordinators for a number of Courses offered under the auspices of a Faculty, or their delegates; one Course coordinator shall be appointed chairman; (ii) at least one other academic member teaching on each of the Courses concerned; and (iii) two students elected from amongst the students registered on the Courses; and

(d) in the case of regulation 65 (d), the Board shall be designated by Senate to perform the functions of a Board of Studies.

(2) In the case of a Course offered by two or more Faculties, Senate may appoint, on the joint recommendation of the Faculties concerned, an inter-Faculty Board of Studies. Such a Board of Studies shall consist of: (i) the Dean or his delegate of each Faculty concerned; (ii) at least two other academic members from each Faculty; and (iii) two students elected from amongst the students registered on the Course. One of the Deans shall be appointed chairman. The terms of reference of such a Board of Studies is to ensure better coordination of programmes of study where study-units are offered by different Faculties.

**Applicable as from 1 March 2019 onwards:**

(3) Faculties may include as members on all Boards of Studies up to two stakeholders in the areas of expertise covered by the relevant programme.

(4) Administrators from all Faculties concerned shall attend meetings of the Board of Studies.

67. The functions of Boards of Studies shall include the following:

(a) implementing the regulations and bye-laws governing the Programme of Study, subject to the general directions given by the Board concerned;

(b) monitoring and evaluating the Programme/s of Study;

(c) making proposals to the Board for the revision of the Programme/s of Study; and

(d) monitoring the assessments and the procedures used in the assessment of the performance of the students.

**These regulations were published as:**

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**and amended by:**

Legal Notice 276 of 2009 - Malta Government Gazette No.18,497 – 20 October 2009

Legal Notice 277 of 2009 - Malta Government Gazette No.18,497 – 20 October 2009

Legal Notice 398 of 2010 – Malta Government Gazette No. 18,637 – 27 August 2010

Legal Notice 517 of 2010 – Malta Government Gazette No. 18,682 – 3 December 2010

Legal Notice 180 of 2011 - Malta Government Gazette No. 18,748 – 10 May 2011

Legal Notice 368 of 2011 – Malta Government Gazette No. 18,804 – 9 September 2011

Legal Notice 33 of 2012 – Malta Government Gazette No. 18,859 – 24 January 2012

Legal Notice 238 of 2012 - Malta Government Gazette No. 18,945 – 24 July 2012

Legal Notice 53 of 2013 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,027 – 5 February 2013

Legal Notice 136 of 2013 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,082 – 30 April 2013

Legal Notice 332 of 2013 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,154 – 18 October 2013

Legal Notice 417 of 2013 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,172 – 26 November 2013

Legal Notice 43 of 2014 – Malta Government Gazette No.19,204 – 31 January 2014

Legal Notice 128 of 2014 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,235 – 11 April 2014

Legal Notice 237 of 2014 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,274 – 4 July 2014

Legal Notice 317 of 2014 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,305 – 4 September 2014

Legal Notice 345 of 2014 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,316 – 26 September 2014

Legal Notice 460 of 2014 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,356 – 12 December 2014

Legal Notice 163 of 2015 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,427 – 19 May 2015

Legal Notice 254 of 2015 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,461 – 7 August 2015

Legal Notice 273 of 2015 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,466 – 21 August 2015

Legal Notice 353 of 2015 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,489 – 27 October 2015

Legal Notice 39 of 2016 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,528 – 26 January 2016

Legal Notice 396 of 2016 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,686 – 25 November 2016

Legal Notice 13 of 2017 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,711 – 11 January 2017

Legal Notice 88 of 2017 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,740 – 14 March 2017

Legal Notice 257 of 2017 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,871 – 29 September 2017

Legal Notice 64 of 2018 – Malta Government Gazette No. 19,954 – 27 February 2018

Legal Notice 57 of 2019 – Malta Government Gazette No. 20,158 – 2 April 2019

