

Academic Operations Registry and Academic Support Directorate

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Assessment Procedures for the 2024/25 Academic Year

The following guidelines are produced to assist School academic staff and the Academic Operations (AO) division of Registry and Academic Support (RAS) in ensuring the effective operation of undergraduate and postgraduate taught student assessment, progression and award processes for the 2024/25 Academic Year.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Ordinance 2 and Regulation A6: Progression (see the links below) and Regulation A7: Awards.

[Ordinances and Regulations | Heriot-Watt University](#)

[Examinations and assessment guidelines | Heriot-Watt University](#)

Step by step guides for Banner sub-processes: [SAS User Support Documents](#)

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1. The Course Assessment Board (CAB)

The following section outlines the responsibilities of the Course Assessment Board.

1.1. The Course Assessment Board

The Course Assessment Board considers the results of the course assessment and returns a decision in the form of a grade in the range of A-F for each student. **Note:** 'P' (passed) is not permitted as an alternative to the HAPS grades (refer to Document 4), either for continuing students or for graduating students. A grade in the range of A-E should be selected if credits are to be awarded.

The Course Assessment Board meets after the appropriate diet of examinations or after the assessment has been completed, prior to, and separately, from the Progression and Award Boards.

The Course Assessment Board prepares a concise report for consideration by the Progression Board, which should include brief statements on:

- The assessment results.
- The profile of grades.
- Unusual course results (see guidance at 1.4 below).
- A commentary on student performance, particularly failure rates.
- Remedial action for current and future students where performance has been less than expected.
- A commentary on content, teaching, and assessment methods.

1.2 Use of Grade E (*undergraduate students*)

This section provides guidance on the use of Grade E.

- 1.2.1 Regulation A6: Progression, (paragraph 2.1 and 2.2) states that Grade E is the minimum requirement for the award of credit points, as determined by the Course Assessment Board, but insufficient to continue study in that subject.
- 1.2.2 Re-assessment decisions for Grade E should be based on whether the course is a pre-requisite or not: a Grade E in continuing courses requires re-assessment, a Grade E in non-continuing courses does not (unless specifically required e.g., for exemptions from professional accreditation body examinations or in the case of subjects that do not continue to the next stage but are nevertheless core to the course in question).
- 1.2.3 The Course Assessment Board has the discretion to determine the mapping of marks onto Grade E. Specific marks should not be pre-determined for the award of Grade E, since it is the function of the Course Assessment Board to decide upon the use of Grade E, based on the context of the assessment in question.

- 1.2.4 Grade E is particularly useful in providing credits for non-continuing courses and, thereby, enabling students to proceed with the requisite credit points and without being required to take a re-assessment in a non-continuing course.
- 1.2.5 Where students are re-assessed in a course that they originally obtained credit for during the current Academic Session, Banner will automatically remove credits from the first assessment opportunity upon recording the result for the second assessment opportunity.
- 1.2.6 Where students are re-assessed in a course that they originally obtained credit for during the previous Academic Session, manual intervention may be required to ensure that the student is not awarded double credits. Colleagues should refer to the Banner step-by-step guides [SAS User Support Documents](#)

1.3 Postgraduate Grades

- 1.3.1. Paragraph 3.6 Higher Degrees of Master (Taught) of Regulation A6: Progression states the following : To progress from the taught stage to the dissertation stage of a Higher Degree of Master, a minimum of Grade C is normally required in all courses.
- 1.3.2. Schools must ensure that a mark and grade has been entered on Banner for each course on which a student is registered.
- 1.3.3. Where students are re-assessed in a course that they originally obtained credit for during the current Academic Session, Banner will automatically remove credits from the first assessment opportunity upon recording the result for the second assessment opportunity.

Where students are re-assessed in a course that they originally obtained credit for during the previous Academic Session, manual intervention may be required to ensure that the student is not awarded double credits. Colleagues should refer to the Banner step-by-step guides [SAS User Support Documents](#)

1.4. Guidance for Course Assessment Boards: Unusual Results

- 1.4.1 Boards should consider all assessment results to ensure that all students are treated fairly and should ensure that consistent standards are being used when making academic judgements. As part of this process Boards should consider in detail unusual results.
- 1.4.2 Following considerable discussion across the University it has been agreed that where the %E+F grades for a course exceeds a given threshold or if the %A+B is less than a given threshold then the results should be considered further.

The threshold for each year of study is:

Year	Maximum %E+F	Minimum %A+B
1	10%	45%
2	10%	40%
3	10%	45%
4	10%	55%
5	10%	55%

1.4.3 Schools may also wish to consider cases where there is a high level of absenteeism, where there is excessive bunching of results (low standard deviation), a high average or other features of the results which cause concern to the Course Assessment Board.

1.4.4 Action by the Course Assessment Board

For each course that is considered by the Board to have unusual results and for all courses where the thresholds for action have been crossed the Board should decide if any adjustment of the grades or marks is appropriate.

The remedial action taken may include:

- (a) Providing remedial teaching or student support prior to reassessment.
- (b) Agree changes to the syllabus or teaching methods for the subsequent years.
- (c) Refer students to [Academic Study Skills](#) support

The decision (for each course) should be recorded in the minutes of the Board.

1.4.5 Action by the Course Leader prior to the Board

- (a) In anticipation of the discussion that will take place at the Board, Course Leaders should consider before the Board meeting whether the course results are unusual.
- (b) If, upon further reflection, the Course Leader decides that there should be an adjustment of the grades (or marks) then this adjustment should be made and should be recorded on the Course Report Form.
- (c) Where the results submitted to the Board are unusual then the Course Leader should suggest the nature of any remedial action in order not to delay the decisions of the Board.

2 The Progression/Award Board

2.1 Consideration of Results at Board Meetings

Assessment results to be considered by the Progression Board should be presented using the form of both marks and grades (i.e., using a broadsheet), in accordance with the requirements of HAPS. Results ratified based on marks only, and when grades are applied after the Board at the point of entering data onto Banner and producing the ARR for Academic Operations, are not valid.

2.2 Modifications to Grades

HAPS does not permit any adjustment of marks, except where a mark is being used to make a judgement such as the degree classification: if the Board accepts that circumstances require a modification to results, the grade boundaries should be adjusted and not the original marks (*raised repeatedly by Deans and their observers at Progression Boards*).

The Progression Board confirms the grades determined by the Course Assessment Board; only in exceptional circumstances can these grades be adjusted and the justification for any modifications must be recorded in the minutes/formal record of the meeting.

Amendments to grades of service courses (i.e., courses that are taught or owned by another School) should be made only in exceptional circumstances by the Progression Board of the parent School and require approval from the School offering the service course in question.

2.3 Discretionary Award of Credits (DC) and Exceptional Award of Credits (EC)

The use of the discretionary award and exceptional award of credits is explained in Document 3: *Guidelines on Discretionary Award of Credits: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Programmes*.

2.4 Decisions on Progress, Re-assessment, and Repeat

The Progression Board returns a decision on progress or award for each student. See Section 3, below and Document 2: *Decisions and Decision Codes – 2025* for details.

2.4.1 Undergraduate students:

- (a) have one re-assessment opportunity, which must be taken at the August diet, in the case of both continuing and non-continuing courses. There are no re-assessment opportunities for final stage courses.
- (b) The Progression Board can allow a student to be re-assessed in a non-final stage qualifying course, *for credit purposes only*. The mark gained at the first attempt shall contribute to the degree (see Regulation A6, section 2.3.5 for details).
- (c) In the case where an undergraduate student has more than 5 re-assessments, the Progression Board (held in the end of the May Semester i.e., June) can decide if the student should be permitted to repeat/reattend in

the following academic year and not retake any courses at the August reassessment period.

- (d) Grades awarded in both first assessment and re-assessment shall be taken into consideration by the Progression Board in making recommendations.
- (e) In the case of mitigating circumstances, the Progression Board may permit a further **two** assessment opportunities; a fifth opportunity requires approval by the University's Studies Committee. Justification for additional opportunities must be recorded in the minutes/formal record of the meeting.

2.4.2 Postgraduate students:

- (a) are automatically entitled to one re-assessment in a maximum of three taught courses (re-assessment opportunities in more than three taught courses and/or in the dissertation/project are at the discretion of the Progression Boards). PGT Students must complete re-assessments within a maximum of 12 months.
- (b) In the case of mitigating circumstances, the Progression Board may permit a further **one** assessment opportunity; a fourth opportunity requires approval by the University's Studies Committee. Justification for additional opportunities must be recorded in the minutes/formal record of the meeting.

After a second, unsuccessful assessment attempt, the Progression Board has the authority to allow a student to repeat a course or to take an alternative course.

Repeat or taking an alternative course requires full attendance and provides:

- **UG** – two further assessment opportunities (including one re-assessment).
- **PGT** – at least one further assessment opportunity (or two, including re-assessment if programme regulations permit). Justification for repeat must be recorded in the minutes/formal record of the meeting. *Full course fees must be paid* unless there are mitigating circumstances.

3 Marks and Grades

Please refer to the SAS/Banner step-by-step sub-processes for guidance on Marks and Grades and Academic History:

[SAS User Support Documentation](#)

4 Decisions and Decision Codes

Please refer to Document 2: Decisions and Decision Codes – 2025

- Two new PGT student progression codes, **4B** and **4E**, were introduced in the 2023/24 academic year. Please refer to the details in 'Document 2: Decisions and Decision Codes – 2025'. The 4E code does not mean a change to progression criteria but it provides a clear administrative distinction to identify student records that need to have reassessment courses added in the same academic year.
- Re-assessments for all courses by **undergraduate students**, including non-continuing courses, should be taken in the August examination diet.

- After the conclusion of the taught components of a **postgraduate** programme, the Progression Board should select either an award decision or a progression/re-assessment decision. After the conclusion of the dissertation/project component, the Award Board should select an award decision.
- Schools must ensure that at least one individual in attendance at the Progression Board is fully conversant with the principles of HAPS and the range of decision codes. In addition, Schools can seek advice from the Academic Operations Teams before or after the Progression Board.
- Please note that completion (74), non-graduating (00) and exit (50, 51) decisions should be entered as an 'award' code in FSS.

4.1 Important Note: Award Decisions not Consistent with Programme of Study

If a code is entered in Faculty Self Service (FSS) or in SHADEGR (Degree and Other Formal Awards) for an award that is different to the learner programme that a student is enrolled on, the programme in SHADEGR (Curricula Tab) must be changed to the programme code relevant to the award e.g.:

- if a student is enrolled on MA in Management with Marketing (C1DM-BMM) but is awarded a BA in Management ordinary degree (code 32), the programme code must be changed to CI2M-ZZZ
- if a student is enrolled on MSc in Quantity Surveying (D3Q7-QSU) but is awarded the PG Diploma (code 45), the programme code must be changed to D3Q5-QSU.

This applies to all instances where normally a lower is award is recommended; MA to BA, MPhys to BSc, MChem to BSc, MEng to BEng, MSc to PG Dip/Cert, BSc to Cert/Dip Higher Education etc.

SAS process: [P0350 Adding Award and Degree Classification - Manual Process](#)

Note: If the action detailed above is not carried out, students will be informed of the incorrect award title when online results are released. Automated detection of this will be included in the error/warnings on the School Error Report (GS065).

5 Assessment Results Report (ARR) and School Error Reports (SER)

- After the meetings of the Progression Boards, a copy of the ARR (GS060 report), signed off by the Chair of the Board (or delegate) and the External Examiner where appropriate, must be returned to Academic Operations Team by the deadline dates shown below (section 5).
- The ARR must contain grades for all courses and a decision on progress/award for all students, including exchange and other non-graduating students.
- For each ARR, the Academic Operations Team must produce a new SER (GS065 report). The SER must use the same parameters as the ARR.
- The SER must not be returned with the ARR if errors have not been resolved unless authorisation has been provided by the Academic Operations Manager (Progression) or the Student Records and Awards Manager (Awards).
- For checking award recommendations prior to graduations, the Academic Operations Team should not return ARR's to the Student Records and Awards Team using the '**All codes**' parameter but should return '**All award codes**' separately to '**All progression codes**'.
- The preference is for all ARR's is to be run by programme and year of study.

6 Deadlines for Graduating and Continuing Students

6.1 Submission of ARR's and SER to the Academic Operations and Student Records and Awards Teams

Please note that Academic Operation and Student Records and Awards Teams release results online by the specified deadlines and not necessarily on the day that ARR's/SER's are submitted. Although ARR's/SER's may be submitted earlier than the deadline dates, the results may not be released until the published deadline date.

Board Date (2025)	Student Group	SER/ARR Deadline	Results Release Deadline	Graduation Ceremony
January/February	PGT student (January 2024 start) progression decisions	Tuesday, 04 February 2025	Friday, 07 February 2025	
January/February	PGT Graduating students	Tuesday, 04 February 2025	Tuesday, 11 February 2025	Summer 2025
January/February	Continuing students (provisional results - September Semester)	n/a	Friday, 07 February 2025	
January/February	Dubai UG Year 2 and 3 Direct Entry students (January 2024 start) progression decisions	Tuesday, 04 February 2025	Friday, 07 February 2025	
April/May	Graduating students	Friday, 30 May 2025	Friday, 06 June 2025	Summer 2025
June	Continuing students	Tuesday, 17 June 2025	Wednesday, 25 June 2025	
June	Graduating students (Ordinary and exit awards)	Tuesday, 17 June 2025	Friday, 27 June 2025	Winter 2025
June	Dubai Global College (January 2025 start)	Tuesday, 01 July 2025	Friday, 04 July 2025	
August	Dubai UG Year 1 students (January 2025 start) progression decisions	Wednesday, 13 August 2025	Friday, 15 August 2025	
August	Malaysia UG Year 1 students (January 2025 start) progression decisions	Thursday, 14 August 2025	Monday, 18 August 2025	
August	Continuing and reassessment students	Friday, 22 August 2025	Friday, 29 August 2025	
August	Graduating students (exit and GA awards)	Friday, 22 August 2025	Friday, 29 August 2025	Winter 2025
September	Malaysia UG Year 1 Entry students (January 2025 start) reassessment students	Wednesday, 03 September 2025	Thursday, 04 September 2025	
August /September	Dubai UG Year 1 Entry students (January 2025 start) reassessment students	Wednesday, 03 September 2025	Friday, 05 September 2025	
September/October	PGT Graduating students	Friday, 10 October 2025	Friday, 17 October 2025	Winter 2025

7 Assessment Results Released Online

The students online records page contains details of courses taken, marks, grades and credits awarded and a decision (with explanation) on progression or award. Please see Section 8.1 for notes on the format of assessment marks and grades.

All results will be released online by the Academic Operations Team and Student Records and Awards Teams (as authorised by School Academics on the ARRr).

The online records page contains links to information on graduation, re-assessments and enrolment.

An example of the student view of their record

Academic year 2021-2022							
Programme: C1G7-FIN Master of Science in International Business Management with Finance							
Year/Stage: Year\Stage 1							
Examiners Decision: Continue to dissertation							
Course	Title	Semester	Opportunity	Mark	Grade	Credit	Status
C11CS	Competitive Strategy	S1	1	70	A	15	Final
C11IB	International Business Context	S1	1	68	B	15	Final
C11MG	Marketing	S1	1	66	B	15	Final
C31FN	Financial Analysis	S1	1	71	A	15	Final
C11BU	Research Philosophy and Practice	S2	1	62	B	15	Final
C11PA	Project Management	S2	1	70	A	15	Final
C21BE	Business Economics	S2	1		IG	0	Final - Resit Required
C31FC	Finance	S2	1	67	B	15	Final
C21BE	Business Economics	S3	2	55	C	15	Final
SCQF Credits: 120							

8 Updating Banner: Producing ARR and SER Reports

8.1 Format of Assessment Marks and Grades on BANNER

Description	Grade
A percentage mark in the range 0 – 100%	A – F
Absent from the entire course assessment	ABS
Typically used for grading placements or year abroad courses.	PASS/FAIL
Approved mitigating circumstances	MC
Synoptic Course in absence of provisional mark and/or grade	NS
Exemption from assessment in the subject	EX
Grade made invalid due to Discipline Committee (Academic Operations to enter)	IG
Grade made where alleged misconduct has been identified pending outcome (Academic Operations to enter)	IP
Ineligible for assessment due to unsatisfactory attendance/performance; further opportunity may be permitted	IA
Discretionary award of credits	DC
Exceptional Credits	EC

8.2 Incorrect Course Registrations

In the case of students whose records display incorrect course registrations, Academic Operation Teams should 'drop delete (DD)' the courses. please refer to SAS process [General Student P0186 Add and change a student's course or section](#)

8.3 Permitted Input to Resit Column

Automatic Updates:

- Grades A-D will automatically populate 'N' in the resit column.
- Grade F will automatically populate 'Y' in the resit column.
- Grade E will automatically populate 'Y' in the resit column.

For Grade E, 'Y' should be overwritten with 'N' in the resit column if re-assessment is not required in SHATCKN.

For Grade D, 'N' should be overwritten with 'Y' in the resit column if a resit is required. This is especially important for PGT programmes when students cannot have more than 2 D grades to progress to the dissertation stage.

For Grades E and F, ABS or MC, 'X' no further assessment opportunities available can be overwritten by 'Y' if the Progression Board has agreed that the student in question should be given additional assessment opportunities.

8.4 Invalid Grade (IG)

If the Discipline Committee has decided that a student's results must be made null and void, SAS process [P0305 Change Final Grades after Rolled to Academic History for Discipline Cases](#) should be followed.

(Academic Operation Teams are responsible for amending grades to IG following decisions of the University's Discipline Committee).

8.5 Investigation Pending (IP)

In cases where an alleged misconduct has been identified and prior to any penalty being imposed Schools should record the mark as zero and the grade as IP. Investigation Pending because of alleged assessment irregularity and work should not be marked until the outcome of investigation/disciplinary action has been agreed.

8.6 Resit Flags

If there is an amendment to a course grade after it has rolled to Academic History (AH), Banner users need to consider the resit flag. The resit flag will not be automatically updated and needs to be manually updated.

8.7 Useful Notes and Reminders

- (a) Prior to return of the signed ARR/SER, Academic Operations and School Academic staff should ensure that the report contains the following information and that errors/warnings have been actioned or corrected:
- Decision code for each student (either progression or award), using the specified codes.
 - Grades for all courses, including those taken in other Schools (no blank spaces should be left).
- (b) The mark of '0' (zero) and Grade F must not be used to denote **absence** from the **entire** course assessment; use 'ABS' in both columns (unless MC is appropriate).
- (c) If a student attends an examination and does not attempt the examination paper, then the student's mark should be recorded as 0 F. ABS is not appropriate in this case.
- (d) 'ABS' should not be used if a student has only partially completed the assessment; Grade F must be used in all cases of partial completion, unless there are medical circumstances, where MC would be used.
- (e) There should be no instances of NS grades for all courses which are synoptically linked, a final grade (A – F) must be entered for both courses (i.e., NOT just the first in the chain).
- (f) Incorrect course registrations should be corrected prior to the ARR being run. NR should not be used as a mark or grade for incorrect course registrations, see 8.2 above.
- (g) Re-assessment decision for Grade D (PGT) and Grade E - the default 'Y' resit flag should be overwritten with 'N' if no resit is required.
- (h) 'P' (passed) should not be used as a grade: a grade in the range of A-E should be selected. If the student is exiting with an award, DC can be used if the Board does not have enough information (e.g., because of mitigating circumstances) to select a grade in the range of A-E but wishes credit points to be awarded.
- (i) All non-numerical results entered in the marks column on Banner will be automatically replicated in the grades column.
- Where Approved Prior Learning (APL) credits are awarded 'EX' should be entered in the Status column in SFAREGS.
- (j) Discretionary credits: the original mark should be retained; DC should be entered manually in SHATCKN on Banner, overwriting the original Grade F. Refer to Document 3: Guidelines on Discretionary Award of Credits.
- (k) If a student with approved mitigating circumstances is eligible for an award, but does not have the requisite credit points, the Board can award the requisite credit points by two means. In such cases, MC should not be entered in the Grade field since MC does not carry any credits, rather a grade (A-E) or 'DC' (see Document 3: Guidelines on Discretionary Award of Credits).

List of Useful Acronyms

Term/Acronym	Description
SRA	Student Records and Awards Team
AO	Academic Operations Team
ARR	Assessment Results Record
SER	School Error Report
FSS	Faculty Self Serve
SAS	Student Administration Systems (used by AO and SRA Teams)
Banner	This is the primary student information system used by the AO and SRA Teams
TSS	Temporary Suspension of Studies
PVW	Permanent Voluntary Withdrawal
CW	Compulsory Withdrawal
Rollover	The process on Banner that creates a new student record
HAPS	Heriot-Watt University Assessment and Progression System Examinations and assessment guidelines Heriot-Watt University

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