



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

New Academic Regulations 2023/24

A BRIEF GUIDE FOR STUDENTS



July 2023

INTRODUCTION

The University's Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Academic Regulations are the rules that govern assessment, progression between stages of a course, and how final awards are calculated.

This guide explains how those rules will be applied to you during your studies at BCU. You can access the Academic Regulations in full [here](#).



WHY HAVE WE INTRODUCED NEW REGULATIONS?

We have recently changed the Academic Regulations to make them simpler and more accessible for students. We have achieved this by removing many of the more complex aspects of the previous version of the Regulations. This means they will be applied more consistently and fairly to all students.

DO THE NEW REGULATIONS APPLY TO ME?

Yes, if you are in one of the following groups of students:

- New students starting in September 2023 to study a Foundation Year (Level 3)
- New students starting in September 2023 to study an Honours Degree (Level 4)
- New students starting in September 2023 to study a Top-up Degree (Level 6)
- New students starting in September 2023 to study a Master's Degree
- Students returning in September 2023 to repeat the first year of an Honours Degree (Level 4)
- Students returning in September 2023 to resume study of the first year of an Honours degree (Level 4), following a Break in Study
- Part-time students returning in September 2023 to complete the first year of an Honours degree (Level 4)
- Students starting in September 2023 to study a Higher National Certificate (HNC)
- Students starting in September 2023 to study a Foundation Degree (FdSc, FdA, FdEng)

ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

We expect you to participate fully in your course by attending regularly, engaging actively with learning opportunities, and by taking responsibility for your learning and independent study. The University monitors student attendance and engagement and we will contact you if we notice a dip in your attendance. The University's [Student Attendance and Engagement Policy](#) sets out our approach to monitoring attendance, and the ways in which we can support you if you are experiencing difficulties.

ASSESSMENT – ‘FIRST TIME, ON TIME’

The University’s expectations around attendance and engagement also apply to engagement with assessment. We expect you to aim to complete all assessments first time, on time. Students who successfully complete assessments at the first attempt and who submit assessments on time are likely to achieve better marks, complete their course on time and achieve a better overall degree outcome.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE REGULATIONS

Is there a cut-off date by which I need to have started my course?

For most students, the final point that they can start their course and be engaged with the teaching and learning is Friday of week 4 from the semester. Late arrivals or course transfers after Friday of week four will not normally be allowed. Apprentices, however, are required to fully engage with all scheduled learning sessions from the beginning of their course.

What if I have a change in my circumstances?

If something unexpected happens in your life which means you need to take a temporary pause from your studies, you can request a Break in Study. We hope you will never need to take a Break in Study, but if you do the University’s [Change of Circumstances Policy](#) sets out how you can make a request to do so.

What if I decide I want to transfer to a different course within the University?

You can make a request to transfer to another course at BCU up until Friday of week 4 from your course start date. The request must be made through the change of circumstances process, which is set out in the Change of Circumstances Policy.

Apprentices can transfer at any point within the academic year, provided this is in line with any course requirements.



ASSESSMENT

When will I be assessed?

The University's assessment periods are set out below:

- A1** – December/January (end of Semester 1 assessment period)
- A2** – May/June (end of Semester 2 assessment period)
- A3** – July/August (resit assessment period)

Resit opportunities are scheduled in the A3 assessment period. The exception to this is the first sit of a PGT dissertation/project, which will normally be scheduled in the A2 assessment period.

How do I pass a module?

The pass mark for an undergraduate module (levels 3 - 6) is 40%. For taught postgraduate modules (level 7) it is 50%. Where the pass mark is achieved, credit is awarded for the module. Modules are based on a 20-credit structure, so you may study a combination of 20 credit modules, 40 credit modules and 60 credit modules (most 40 or 60 credit modules are major project or dissertation modules).

In modules where there is more than one element of assessment, an overall average of 40% (undergraduate) or 50% (postgraduate) must be achieved to pass the module. Where an overall pass mark has been achieved, students are not required to pass all assessment elements. Exceptions to this are where there is a professional or regulatory body requirement that all assessments within a module are passed; this will be outlined in your Course Specification under the heading Derogations/Variations.

Module marks are expressed as whole number percentages. Where weighted marks for elements of assessment are combined and the result is not a whole number, it is rounded to the nearest whole number as you can see in the example below.

EXAMPLE

Chantelle has completed two elements of assessment for the Introduction to Accounting module on her undergraduate Accounting and Finance degree course. Her marks are:

Written assignment (weighted 50%) – 67%
Exam – (weighted 50%) – 38%

The calculation of the overall mark for the module is as follows:

$$(67+38) \div 2 = 52.5\%$$

52.5 rounded up to the nearest whole number is 53, so even though Chantelle had not achieved a pass mark in one of the elements of assessment, she has passed the module overall with a mark of 53%.

What happens if I fail a module?

If you fail the assessment for a module at the first attempt, you will be given a further opportunity to pass the module. This is referred to as a resit or reassessment attempt. You will only be re-assessed in the failed element(s) of assessment. You will not be reassessed in elements that you have already been passed.

Resits

Resit marks are capped at 40% for undergraduate courses and 50% for postgraduate taught courses. For example, on an undergraduate course, if you fail your first attempt at the module assessment and then pass the resit attempt with a mark of 46%, although you will now have passed the module, a mark of 40% will be recorded in your student record.

Is a resit the only way I can try and pass a failed module?

There are some other ways in which you can retrieve failed assessment to enable you to progress from one year to the next, or to achieve your final degree award. They are described below.

Compensation

If you fail a module by a narrow margin, you may be eligible to receive a 'compensated pass'. For a failed module to be eligible for a compensated pass, you must have achieved:

- an overall module mark of 35-39% (undergraduate) or 45-49% (postgraduate) in the module you have failed;
- an average mark of 40% or above for the level of study/stage (undergraduate) or 50% or above for the course (postgraduate).

If these criteria have been met, the failed module is automatically compensated. The original module mark is retained, and the module is classified as a 'compensated pass'. Credit is awarded for the module in the same way as a module where the pass mark has been achieved.

EXAMPLE

Surjit is a first-year undergraduate in Media Studies. She has narrowly failed a 20-credit module at the first attempt. Each module is worth 20 credits and her marks for each module are as follows:

Module 1 = 53%	Module 2 = 45%	Module 3 = 50%
Module 4 = 37%	Module 5 = 42%	Module 6 = 40%

Surjit has successfully passed five modules totalling 100 credits. Her stage mean (ie average mark for the level of study) is 44.5% (45% when rounded up to a whole number). Her course is not accredited, and compensation is allowed for all modules. Her mark for the failed module is between 35% and 39%.

In this case, compensation will be automatically applied to the module that Surjit has marginally failed as it meets the criteria (overall average of at least 40% across the level and the failed module mark is between 35% and 39%). She will be allowed to progress to the second year without needing to resit the assessments for those modules.

For an undergraduate degree, a total of 60 credits can be compensated across all levels of the course. Although no more than 20 credits can be compensated in the final year of study (Level 6).

For a Master's degree, up to 40 credits can be compensated.

Final year dissertations and/or major projects at undergraduate level and Master's level research projects, dissertations and/or major projects cannot be compensated.

Some courses do not permit compensation due to professional or regulatory body requirements. Check your Course Specification for details of any variations to the Academic Regulations.

Trailed credit

A trailed resit is a third, and final, attempt to pass the assessment for one failed 20 credit module without the need to re-attend teaching sessions (in certain exceptional circumstances, a student may be permitted to trail a 40-credit module). Trailed resits only apply to undergraduate degree courses.

You can trail a failed 20 credit module into the next year (level of study) provided you have achieved an overall average for the current year (level of study) of at least 40%.

If you fail the assessment again, the only remaining option that will allow you to continue on the course is to retake (restudy) the failed module with attendance, which will incur a further module fee and will delay completion.

Retaking a failed module

If you fail a module after re-sit opportunities are exhausted, you will be given the option to retake (restudy) the same module(s). You will be required to pay a module fee for all retaken/restudied modules. We will expect you to fully engage with the module again in its entirety, attending all scheduled learning and teaching sessions.

If the failed module is an optional module, it may be possible to replace it with a different optional module if available.

If you retake a module, you will be entitled to a first attempt at all assessment elements and, if unsuccessful, one further re-assessment attempt.

How will my final degree award be calculated?

The table below outlines how undergraduate and postgraduate taught degrees are calculated. For a three-year undergraduate degree you can see that all Level 5 and all Level 6 modules count towards the calculation of the award. For a Master's degree all modules (including the major project or dissertation) count towards the calculation of the award.



Course	Calculation
3-year undergraduate degree with honours	Overall average of: 120 credits (Level 5) 120 credits (Level 6) Calculated using a ratio of 40:60 (Level 5: Level 6)
4-year Integrated Master's degree with honours	Overall average of: 120 credits (Level 5) 120 credits (Level 6) 120 credits (Level 7) Calculated using a ratio of 20:30:50 (Level 5: Level 6: Level 7)
4-year Bachelor of Music degree with honours	Overall average of: 60 credits (Level 5) 180 credits (Level 6) Calculated using a ratio of 25:75 (Level 5: Level 6)
Master's degree	Overall average of: All credits for the award (normally 180 credits)

EXAMPLE

All of Ben's module marks for second and third-year modules would be used in the calculation of his degree award as follows:

Second Year: Modules 1-6 $[(42\% + 60\% + 54\% + 71\% + 68\% + 57\%) \div 6 = 58.67\% \text{ average}]$

Third Year: Modules 1-6 $[(66\% + 57\% + 40\% + 70\% + 63\% + 65\%) \div 6 = 60.16\% \text{ average}]$

The second-year average is rounded up to 59%.

The third-year average rounded down to 60%.

The second year is worth 40% and the third year is worth 60%. Weighted average marks are calculated by multiplying the second and third year average marks by 0.4 and 0.6 respectively.

$$59\% \times 0.4 = 23.6$$

$$60\% \times 0.6 = 36$$

Ben's final degree result is calculated by adding together the weighted average marks for each year, giving him an overall average of:
59.6% (this is automatically rounded up to 60%)

Ben will therefore achieve a 2:1.

Classification of Awards

The table below sets out the classification bands for undergraduate and postgraduate awards. As you can see, in order to gain a first class honours degree, the overall average mark (calculated as described above) would need to be 70% or over. To gain a distinction for a Master’s degree, the overall average mark would also need to be 70% or over.

Classification band	Postgraduate awards ¹	Honours degree or Integrated master’s degree	Foundation degree HNC/HND DipHE
70% and above	Distinction	First class honours	Distinction
60-69%	Merit	Upper second (2:1)	Merit
50-59%	Pass	Lower second (2:2)	Pass
40-49%	Fail	Third class honours	Pass
Below 40%	Fail	Fail	Fail

¹ Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) and Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) exit awards are not classified. PGCE, PGCE (PCET) and PGDE awards are also not classified. Please refer to the UAF for full details.

Where can I find the Regulations?

The Academic Regulations are available on the [Student Contract](#) page on the BCU website.

What other sources of advice are there?

You can speak to your Personal Tutor or other staff in your College, such as your Module Leader.

If you want to know more about the assessment process, you can read the [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#), which is also available on the Student Contract page.



www.bcu.ac.uk
+44 (0)121 331 5595

 [birminghamcityuniversity](https://www.facebook.com/birminghamcityuniversity)
 [birminghamcityuni](https://www.youtube.com/birminghamcityuni)
 [@myBCU](https://twitter.com/myBCU)
 [myBCU](https://www.snapchat.com/add/myBCU)
 [myBCU](https://www.instagram.com/myBCU)
 [birminghamcityuni](https://www.tiktok.com/birminghamcityuni)