1. Regulations, Rationale and Definitions

To achieve an Honours Degree, a student must pass at least 6 acceptable Honours Level module credits (or 4 Honours Level module credits for students who entered Stage II prior to September 2011). This will normally include 2 module credits of dissertations, project or synoptic study. These studies should demonstrate that an Honours student can successfully collect data and select appropriate knowledge from the range he/she has acquired, can propose solutions for appropriate problems and communicate the results, and that the student can work independently.

A dissertation is an extended study of a topic agreed as appropriate for a Subject. It should demonstrate the student’s ability to argue coherently, to marshal evidence, to synthesise and evaluate critically the disparate sources used to identify and work with appropriate theoretical methods. It does not necessarily involve original research or the study of unpublished or primary material.

A project is also an extended study of a topic, but in addition usually involves data collection through experimental work or primary investigation. As such, it should demonstrate similar abilities to those listed for a dissertation and in addition the ability to plan experiments or data collection and interpret and analyse data.

An interdisciplinary dissertation or project is a project or dissertation in which, provided the topic is relevant to each of the two Subjects, there is no need for a quantitative measure of the proportion contributed by each. As such, criteria for acceptability of a topic are different from those used for a project or dissertation set wholly within one Subject. The topic should be formulated so that the project or dissertation may demonstrate those skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in both Subjects have been appropriately used. An interdisciplinary topic is seen as a desirable option, not a requirement for single Subject students.

2. Registration

When the student first submits a Stage II programme, a project can be registered. The formal registration for the title is carried out at the end of the second year once the actual topic to be investigated has been identified.

Students admitted with credit to a one year programme may need to register their dissertation soon after enrolment in Semester 1. Part-time students would normally register no later than two semesters before their expected completion date.

One year before the final semester, students can expect to be briefed by the Project/Dissertation Module Leaders in their Subject/s on the specific Subject Requirements and the supervision arrangements available. Part-time students should check when these meetings are taking place and make every effort to attend.

At the time specified by the Subject, the student will negotiate with a supervisor to agree a provisional topic and supervision arrangements. The student will then draw up a plan of action
and discuss it with the supervisor who will, when satisfied, sign form M199T which specifies the project/dissertation title. The student must then also obtain the signature(s) of the Module Leader(s) or delegated authority for the project/dissertation module(s) who will assign the appropriate module number. For inter-disciplinary projects/dissertations, one of the subjects will be given administrative responsibility for assessment etc.

The student must then submit the completed form to Student Central as early as possible and preferably by Week 12 of Semester 2 in Year 2. Except in special cases where the student is not in the University in the penultimate year (on time out or in placement), the M199T should be submitted no later than (Friday, Week 0 of the semester before) that in which the project/dissertation is due to be assessed, e.g. Friday, Week 0 of Semester 1 for submission in Week 8 of Semester 2. This timetable for registration allows a semester and a half for the completion of the dissertation/project (to be submitted by Friday, Week 8 of the relevant semester).

A student failing to complete this registration process shall not be allowed to submit a project/dissertation until he/she has properly registered, with the regulation interval between registration and submission. Registration after the Week 0 deadline will be at the Module Leader’s discretion and will not be accepted as grounds for late submission in the following semester.

3. Supervision and Study

Student Responsibilities: It is a student’s responsibility to ensure that he/she meets the Subject rules for the contact with supervisors, and the regulations on submission of the work which are described in Section 5 below, as well as those subject specific requirements set out in the relevant Subject Guide.

Students are encouraged to calculate the time and effort spent on project/dissertation modules on the same basis as for all other modules: i.e. approximately 300 hours for a double module.

Staff Responsibilities: It is the Subject Module Leader’s responsibility to make available to students a Subject Guide, laying out Subject specific regulations on such matters as timetabling, conduct of study, presentation and style formats, and what to do if a student has problems with their supervisor.

A student may expect a minimum of 4 hours supervision per credit of a project/dissertation some of which may be in small group tutorials. The word supervision is used to cover a number of learning and teaching activities including individual tutorials, small group tutorials, or commentary on drafts.

Interdisciplinary problems: If students find that the requirements for style, format or content from the two subjects are incompatible or otherwise appear to inhibit the appropriate investigation of the approved topic, they should consult the Module Leaders immediately, who should resolve the problem as a matter of urgency. In case of difficulty, Student Central should be consulted.

4. Submission

The student must submit two copies of his/her dissertation or project to the location specified be the Subject at the latest by 4.00pm on Friday of Week 8 of the semester in which the module is to be assessed. If it is a interdisciplinary project/dissertation, one copy should be submitted to the Module Leader in each subject. Detailed specifications of the requirements are normally provided in the Subject Guide for projects. Copies are available as document M144C from Student Central.

Computer access/printing facilities: Since the majority of students make use of the computer and printing facilities available on campus to produce their projects or dissertations, demand is
high during the weeks leading up to the final submission deadline. Please ensure that you allow plenty of time to format and print your document correctly as it is likely to be far more time consuming than you may expect! Students are not granted extensions to the submission deadline because of word-processing and/or printing problems.

5. Extension of Deadlines

The University has approved a way in which circumstances that may have affected your performance in an assessment will be considered. These are called “mitigating circumstances”.

Mitigating circumstances are circumstances which were beyond your control and which could not be reasonably accommodated by you and which seriously impaired your performance in assessment. All three parts of this definition must be met for the University to agree you were affected by mitigating circumstances. For example, these circumstances could be medical or personal. In all cases, you will be required to provide satisfactory documentary evidence to support your claim – if you fail to supply satisfactory documentary evidence your request will be turned down. The only exception is for very short extensions to an assessment deadline (up to one week), where you may be allowed to self-certify your difficulties if there is a valid reason why you cannot provide evidence.

In all cases, you should submit your claim and your evidence as soon as possible and in any case always before an assessment deadline or exam. If you miss a deadline, you will not only need to demonstrate that you were affected by mitigating circumstances but you will need to provide evidence that you were unable to submit your claim by the deadline. So don’t delay if you wish to claim mitigating circumstances.

If you miss an assessment deadline or an exam without approval for valid mitigating circumstances, you will receive zero for that assessment. You must not miss deadlines!

If your claim for mitigating circumstances is approved, then you will be granted an extension to your submission deadline of up to four weeks or allowed to re-sit your examination (or, in certain situations only, an entire module). The University does not increase marks on the basis of mitigating circumstances. This is because the University wants you to demonstrate your full potential in assessments – if it is agreed you were affected by mitigating circumstances, then we will give you an extension or a re-sit so you can demonstrate your potential unaffected by such circumstances. Mitigating circumstances forms can be found on your PIP page.

You can view the mitigating circumstances regulations on the University Regulations website.

6. Late Submission

Late coursework will receive no marks. This penalty is imposed so that students who submit work on time even though it is not as good as they would like are not at a disadvantage when compared with students who choose to miss the deadline and spend longer on their work so that they may do better. In fairness then, to all students, Module Leaders are required to impose this penalty for late coursework except where students have negotiated extensions in advance through mitigating circumstances for reasons outside their control.

7. Withdrawal or Change of Registration

Withdrawal: A student who wishes to withdraw from a fully registered project or dissertation module must do so before the end of Week 2 in the semester in which the project or dissertation is to be assessed. Withdrawal from a project or dissertation module and subsequent re-registration implies re-negotiation of the project or dissertation from scratch unless the student has been given a DR grade for their project/dissertation. This procedure means no student can be withdrawn from a module at a late stage and hence achieve a one semester extension. Re-registration requires a student to register the module on PIP and unless the student has been
given a DR grade for their project/dissertation, they will also need to complete a new M199T form.

**Change of registration:** A student or supervisor may consider a dissertation/project has changed direction during work on it and may wish to transfer the Registration from one (set of) module number(s) to another, or from one Subject to another. The Module Leader must approve the change on a form M199 and the form submitted by the end of Week 8 in which the work is assessed.

8. **Assessment Requirements and Assessment Feedback**

The appropriate length or style of a project report or dissertation will vary according to the topic chosen; a written dissertation for a double module should normally be **of the order of 8,000 words with a maximum of 10,000 words.** Subjects will specify **Subject specific lengths** if they are below this length. Reports or dissertations exceeding the maximum length will normally be given fewer marks than work of a similar quality that is below the maximum length.

Students cannot expect feedback or a Grade assessment on their work, before **all** the marks for dissertations/projects have been assessed by the two internal markers, moderated by the relevant Subject External Examiner, and ratified by the Modular Examinations Committee, which meets during the vacation.

However, Module Leaders will have informed students on how they may receive feedback after this process is complete, even if the students have completed their course by that date.

9. **Resubmission: Criteria and Arrangements**

If the project or dissertation is not assessed as a pass grade, a fail grade or a “resit coursework” (= resubmission) RC grade will be given. Resits will be automatic for marks between 30 and 39%.

If a resit grade is awarded, the Module Leader will inform the student and make sure that the Assessors’ commentary and the specification of the additional work is sent to him/her in a formal letter:

- either after assessment in Semester 1, by Week 0 of Semester 2;
- or after assessment in Semester 2 by the end of June.

This is one reason why a student should make sure Student Central has the appropriate address on record.

Resubmitted projects must be handed to the Module Leader at the normal resit deadlines.

If a resubmitted project is passed, the result will be capped at 40% (40P) unless it was a Deferred resit for which full marks are awarded. If it is failed, the grade will be FR and the marks will be as previously recorded or higher.

**Students intending to go on an Exchange in their final year:** Students going on exchange are expected to make arrangements with their supervisor before they leave the UK and it is their responsibility to keep in touch with the supervisor and to keep them appraised of any developments or changes of direction whilst they are away.