FRAMEWORK FOR POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

1. Introduction

a) This Framework is for full-time and part-time modular postgraduate programmes delivered at XJTLU, leading to the following awards:
   (i) Master of Research (MRes)
   (ii) Taught Master's degrees (MSc, MA)
   (iii) Professional Master's degrees (MBA, MDes, MArch, MEng etc.)
   (iv) Postgraduate Diploma
   (v) Postgraduate Certificate

b) Within this framework, all programmes of study should be compatible with the following definitions:

   i. Master of Research – a programme of study focused on the development of advanced knowledge and research skills where a majority of activity comprises independent research supported by structured assessed modules, whose combined challenge reflects the level of further intellectual development appropriate to the equivalent of 1.5 to 2 years' full-time advanced study beyond undergraduate level.

   ii. Taught Master's – a specialised study of master's degree programme, involving both a substantial piece or pieces of independent work and a range of assessed modules, whose combined challenge reflects the level of further intellectual development normally appropriate to the equivalent of 1.5 to 2 years' full-time advanced study beyond undergraduate degree level.

   iii. Professional Master's – a programme that provides advanced knowledge training with an emphasis on the principles and practices of business administration or professional practice. The programme is usually 1.5 to 2 years for full-time studies and 30 to 48 months for part-time studies.

   iv. Postgraduate Diploma – a specialised or professional programme taught and assessed in part at the Master's level, but not involving substantial independent work.

   v. Postgraduate Certificate – a specialised or professional programme taught and assessed in part at the Master's level, but not involving substantial independent work and covering a narrower range of materials.

c) Master of Research, taught Master's, and professional Master's programmes shall involve substantial individual research, which shall enable students to acquire: (a) knowledge at the forefront of their field of study; (b) advanced research techniques; (c) originality in the application of knowledge; and (d) conceptual understandings,

which enable critical analysis, synthesis and genesis of hypotheses of knowledge.

d) A Master's programme may be in partnership with industries. These programmes focus on the development of advanced industry and/or research knowledge, where a proportion of the activity is based in or in collaboration with an industrial partner.

e) Students may only be eligible for an award that is different from that for which they were registered if it is to be an exit award or the student changes their registration.

f) The language of teaching and assessment shall be English.

g) The key principles of postgraduate framework are set out in Appendix A.

2. Module and Credit Requirements

a) All provision should be modularised. Each module should be assessed independently, normally assigned a credit level of 4 (FHEQ[i] Level 7) and a credit value.

b) Credit values should be assigned on the basis that 30 hours of student learning (through a combination of teaching and private study) is equivalent to 1 credit.

c) Each programme of study shall consist of a number of 'taught' modules, which shall normally have a value of 5, 10, 15, or 20 credits, where this refers to the delivery of advanced subject-specific content, research and transferable skills, fieldwork, work-based or placement learning, or other forms of defined learning.

d) A Master's programme of study normally includes a dissertation or project module or two and more modules that involve a high level of self-directed learning and independence in negotiation with, and supervised by, a member of academic staff, which will result in the production of a project report, dissertation, or other independently developed output. Such modules may be assigned values of 10, 20, or 40 credits.

e) A full-time Master's programme should be designed to require three or four semesters of study, with 20 credits in each semester, whilst a part-time programme normally consists of five or eight semesters of study, with a minimum of 10 credits in each semester.

f) Each programme of study should provide a total of 60 or 80 credits of modules for students to take. Credits shall normally be distributed as follows between taught modules and project or dissertation modules:

Award	Credit Distribution	
	Taught Modules	Project/Dissertation Module(s)
Master of Research	20 or 40	40 or 60
Taught Master's degrees	40	20 or 40
Professional Master's degrees	40 or 60	40 or 20
Postgraduate Diploma	≥40 and <60	NA
Postgraduate Certificate	≥20 and <40	NA

g) A programme of study leading to a Master of Research award shall:

    i.   require successful completion of 60 or 80 credits, which include taught modules worth 20 or 40 credits that must contain advanced research-related knowledge and advanced research skills. A minimum of 15 taught credits must be at XJTLU level 4 (FHEQ Level 7), and a maximum of 5 credits may be offered at XJTLU level 3 (FHEQ Level 6) as optional modules, subject to the approval of the University Learning and Teaching Committee through the University Curriculum Review Panel;

    ii.   include dissertation or project modules consisting of a single project module of 40 credits or two or more project modules totalling 40 or 60 credits. The minimum credit value of such modules shall be no lower than 10 credits;

    iii.   include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named Postgraduate Diploma upon successful completion of 40 credits of modules, including all modules designated as required by the programme specifications, or an unnamed Postgraduate Diploma upon completion of 40 credits by any combination of modules;

    iv.   include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named Postgraduate Certificate upon successful completion of 20 credits of modules, including all modules designated as required by the programme specifications, or an unnamed Postgraduate Certificate upon completion of 20 credits by any combination of modules.

h) A programme of study leading to a taught Master's award shall:

    i.   require successful completion of 60 or 80 credits, which include taught modules comprising 40 credits. A maximum of 10 credits of optional modules may be taken at XJTLU level 3 (FHEQ Level 6), subject to the approval of the University Learning and Teaching Committee through the University Curriculum Review Panel;

    ii.   include dissertation or project modules consisting of a single module or two modules totalling 20 or 40 credits;

    iii.   include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named Postgraduate Diploma upon successful completion of 40 credits of modules, including all modules designated as required by the programme specifications, or an unnamed Postgraduate Diploma upon completion of 40 credits by any combination of modules;

    iv.   include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named Postgraduate Certificate upon successful completion of 20 credits of modules, including all modules designated as required by the programme specifications, or an unnamed Postgraduate Certificate upon completion of 20 credits by any combination of modules.

i) A programme of study leading to a professional Master's award shall:

    i.   require successful completion of 60 or 80 credits, which include taught modules worth 40 or 60 credits. A maximum of 10 credits of optional modules may be taken at XJTLU level 3 (FHEQ Level 6), subject to the approval of the University

Learning and Teaching Committee through the University Curriculum Review Panel;

    ii. include dissertation and/or project modules that consist of a single module or two modules worth 20 or 40 credits;

    iii. include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named Postgraduate Diploma upon successful completion of 40 credits of modules, including all modules designated as required by the programme specifications, or an unnamed Postgraduate Diploma upon completion of 40 credits by any combination of modules;

    iv. include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named Postgraduate Certificate upon successful completion of 20 credits of modules, including all modules designated as required by the programme specifications, or an unnamed Postgraduate Certificate upon completion of 20 credits by any combination of modules.

j) A programme of study leading to a named Postgraduate Diploma shall:

    i. require successful completion of at least 40 credits of modules;

    ii. include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate upon successful completion of 20 credits of modules.

k) A programme of study leading to a named Postgraduate Certificate shall require successful completion of at least 20 credits of modules.

l) Where a postgraduate programme includes XJTLU level 3 (FHEQ Level 6) modules (as defined above) that are also available to candidates on undergraduate degrees of the University, graduates of those undergraduate programmes of study will not be permitted to repeat in a postgraduate programme of study a level 3 module they have taken in their undergraduate degree. In such cases, suitable alternative optional modules need to be available in the programme design.

m) Where an undergraduate programme includes XJTLU level 4 (FHEQ Level 7) modules that are also available to candidates on postgraduate degrees of the University, graduates of those undergraduate programmes of study will not be permitted to repeat in a postgraduate programme of study a level 4 module they have taken in their undergraduate degree. In such cases, suitable alternative optional modules need to be available in the programme design.

3. <u>Awards and Programme Titles</u>

a) The awards described in this framework may be named or unnamed. A named award carries the title of an approved programme of study that the candidate has successfully completed; an unnamed award simply states the level of qualification achieved.

b) Named awards will normally be given if:

    i. the candidate was registered for an approved programme of study leading to an award and has successfully completed the required modules as detailed in the programme specification; or

    ii. the candidate was registered for an approved programme of study leading to

an award and exits having successfully completed the required modules for a named exit award. Requirements for a named exit award, including the successful completion of specific modules, will be detailed in the programme specification.

c) Unnamed awards will normally be given if:

  i. the programme of study has been designed to provide only unnamed exit awards, and this is made clear in the programme specification; or

  ii. the programme of study has been designed with named exit awards that are only given upon successful completion of a specific combination of modules; where a candidate has failed to successfully complete the specific modules required for a named award but has met the minimum credit requirements for an exit award, they will be eligible for an unnamed award.

4. Pass Mark and Classification

a) The pass mark for all modules shall be 50%.

b) If the programme of study includes XJTLU level 3 (FHEQ Level 6) modules, students taking these modules must achieve 50% or more for the credits to be recognised for a postgraduate award.

c) Students shall normally be required to achieve a mark of 50% or more in every taught module taken and in any dissertation or project module in order to qualify for the award. Where the average of total marks in all taught modules is 50% or above, a mark of 40–49% shall be deemed compensatable in only one taught module of 5 credits. Compensation shall not be applied where more than 5 credits are failed. The range of compensatable marks for XJTLU level 3 (FHEQ Level 6) modules shall also be 40–49%.

d) Master of Research, Professional and Taught Master's degrees shall be classified as follows, using the weighted average of all module marks:
Under 50%   Fail
50-59%   Pass
60-69%   Merit
70% and over   Distinction

e) A Merit or Distinction grade will be awarded in accordance with the following criteria:

  i. For Master of Research awards:

  To be awarded a Merit grade, candidates must achieve:

  (i) an overall average mark of at least 60% in their research project modules; and
  (ii) an overall average mark of at least 60%.

  To be awarded a Distinction grade, candidates must achieve:

  (i) an overall average mark of at least 70% in their research project modules; and
  (ii) an overall average mark of at least 70%.

  ii. For Taught and Professional Master's Degree awards:

  To be awarded a Merit grade, candidates must achieve:

(i) an overall average mark of at least 60% across the research modules; and

(ii) marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and

(iii) an overall average mark of at least 60%.

To be awarded a Distinction grade, candidates must achieve:

(i) an overall average mark of at least 70% across the research modules; and
(ii) marks of at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
(iii) an overall average mark of at least 70%.

f) For the purposes of calculating the overall average mark and determining classification, marks for modules passed by reassessment will be capped at 50%.

g) Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates shall be awarded as described in item (c) above on a pass/fail basis, with no classification.

5. **Programme Structure**

a) A programme of study may be offered on both full-time and part-time routes. Where this is the case, the programme specification will detail the requirements of the different modes of study.

b) There is normally only a Semester One intake for each programme of study, which will be detailed in the programme specification.

c) The structure for professional and taught Master's programmes shall be as follows:

i. The period of study leading to a professional or taught Master's degree on a full-time basis shall normally be either one and a half years or two years. The period of study leading to a professional or taught Master's degree on a part-time basis shall be fixed by the programme specification, and be between 30 and 48 months (5 to 8 semesters). The maximum registration period for a taught Master's programme is two years beyond the fixed length of the programme. This registration period is to allow for students with exceptional circumstances, approved by the University, who cannot complete the programme during the approved length of the programme.

ii. In full-time programmes, the taught modules shall normally be divided equally between semesters. An imbalance of no more than 5 credits between two semesters in the same academic year may be permissible, subject to the approval of the University Learning and Teaching Committee. In part-time programmes, the taught modules shall normally be divided equally between the first three to four semesters.

iii. The 20- or 40-credit dissertation or project modules shall normally be undertaken in the last one to two semesters for full-time study, or in the last two to four semesters on a part-time basis.

d) The structure for Master of Research programmes shall be as follows:

i. The period of study leading to a Master of Research degree on a full-time basis shall be either one and a half years or two years. The period of study leading to a Master of Research degree on a part-time basis shall be fixed by the

programme specification and be between 30 and 48 months (5 to 8 semesters). The maximum registration period for a Master of Research programme is two years beyond the fixed length of the programme. This registration period is to allow for students with exceptional circumstances, approved by the University, who cannot complete the programme during the approved length of the programme.

ii. In the full-time programme, all taught modules shall normally be offered in the first one to two semesters. In the part-time programme, the taught modules shall normally be divided equally between the first two to foursemesters.

iii. The 40- or 60-credit research project modules shall normally be undertaken in the last two to three semesters for full-time study, or in the case of a part-time basis, in the last two to four semesters.

e) The structure for Postgraduate Diploma programme shall be as follows:

i. The period of study leading to a Postgraduate Diploma shall be one year (two semesters) on a full-time basis. The period of study leading to a Postgraduate Diploma shall be 24 months (four semesters) on a part-time basis. The maximum registration period for Postgraduate Diploma programme is two years beyond the fixed length of the programme. This registration period is to allow participants with exceptional circumstances, approved by the University who cannot complete the programme during the approved length, which cannot exceed one year.

ii. In the full-time programme, the taught modules shall normally be divided equally between the two semesters, with 20 credits per semester. In the part-time programme, the taught modules shall normally be divided equally among semesters. An imbalance of no more than 5 credits between semesters 1 and 2 may be permissible, subject to the approval of the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

f) The structure for Postgraduate Certificate programme shall be as follows:

i. The period of study leading to a Postgraduate Certificate shall be one semester on a full-time basis. The period of study leading to a Postgraduate Certificate shall be one year (two semesters) on a part-time basis. The maximum registration period for Postgraduate Certificate programme is two years, which includes any periods of suspension of studies. This registration period is to allow participants with exceptional circumstances, approved by the University who cannot complete the programme during the approved length, which cannot exceed one year.

ii. In the full-time programme, the taught modules of 20 credits shall normally be offered in one semester. In the part-time programme, they shall normally be divided equally between the two semesters, 10 credits per semester. An imbalance of no more than 5 credits between semesters 1 and 2 may be permissible, subject to the approval of the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

6. **Re-assessment**

a) Students who fail in one or more modules (including the dissertation or project) are normally permitted to present themselves for re-assessment in the failed module(s).

b) Re-assessment should normally take place within the registration period for the programme, and in any case, no later than 12 months after the date of the failed assessment.

c) The resit for taught modules is normally timed in early August after the School/Academy Boards of Examiners in July.

d) Re-submission of the dissertation or project may take place immediately in the following semester after the School/Academy Boards of Examiners determine the provision of the re-assessment opportunity.

e) Students are normally permitted only one re-assessment opportunity following the failure(s) at the first attempt. The School/Academy Boards of Examiners may determine that students have one further re-assessment opportunity, which may take place during the next normal assessment period in the following year.

f) Marks achieved in re-assessment shall be recorded as the actual mark achieved, but shall be flagged in the transcript to indicate that they were achieved at a second or subsequent attempt.

g) In the case of a dissertation or project module, the re-assessment or re-submission must normally be the same dissertation topic as originally assigned.

List of Appendices

A. Key Principles at a Glance *(see below)*

Appendix A: Key Principles at a Glance

Entry Point	Master of Research (MRes)	Taught Master's and Professional Programmes		
Exit Awards			Named/Unnamed PG Diploma	Named/Unnamed PG Cert
Credit required	60 or 80 credits	60 or 80 credits	Minimum of 40 credits but less than 60	Minimum of 20 credits but less than 40
Modules	20 or 40 credits of taught modules plus 40 or 60 credits of project or dissertation module(s)	40 or 60 credits of taught modules plus 20 or 40 credits of project or dissertation module(s)	A named PG Diploma upon completion of 40 credits of modules, including all modules designated as required by the programme specifications, or an unnamed PG Diploma upon completion of 40 credits by any combination of modules	A named PG Cert upon completion of 20 credits of modules, including all modules designated as required by the programme specifications, or an unnamed PG Cert upon completion of 20 credits by any combination of modules
Level of study	Either all at level 4 or up to 5 credits at level 3 on an optional basis	Either all at level 4 or up to 10 credits at level 3 on an optional basis		
Pass mark	50% including any level 3 modules			
Classification criteria	Merit: 1) marks of at least 60% in their research project modules; and 2) an overall average mark of at least 60%. Distinction: 1) marks of at least 70% in their research project modules; and 2) an overall average mark of at least 70%.	Merit: 1) marks of at least 60% in their dissertation or project modules; 2) marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and 3) an overall average mark of at least 60%. Distinction: 1) marks of at least 70% in their dissertation or research modules; 2) marks of at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and 3) an overall average mark of at least 70%.	Pass/Fail basis, with no classification	
Periods of Registration	Minimum: Full time–18 months/Part time–30 months Maximum: two years beyond the fixed length of the programme;	Minimum: Full time–18 months/Part time–30 months Maximum: two years beyond the fixed length of the programme;	Minimum: Full time–one year/Part time–two years; Maximum: two years beyond the fixed length of the programme;	Minimum: Full time–one semester/Part time–one year; Maximum: two years.
Normal periods of Study	Full time: 18 – 24 months (3–4 semesters); Part time: between 30 and 48 months (5 to 8 semesters).	Full time: 18 – 24 months (3–4 semesters); Part time: between 30 and 48 months (5 to 8 semesters);	Full time: one year (2 semesters); Part time: 2 years (4 semesters).	Full time: one semester; Part time: one year (2 semesters)

Re-assessment	(i) Students are normally permitted only one re-assessment opportunity following the failure(s) at the first attempt. The Progression Board may determine that students have one further re-assessment opportunity which may take place during the next normal assessment period in the following year. (ii) Students should be provided with a re-sit opportunity for any failed module (including 40-49%) once in an academic year in August. Resubmission of Continuously Assessed Work (CW) including the dissertation or project may take place immediately after the Progression Board determines the provision of the re-assessment opportunity. (iii) Marks achieved in re-assessments should be recorded as the actual mark achieved on the transcript, but will be capped at 50% for the purpose of calculating the overall average mark and determining classification for an award; (iv) The dissertation topic in the re-assessment should be the same as the one originally assigned.
Compensation	(i) Taught modules totalling up to 5 credits with marks in the range 40-49% shall be deemed compensatable where the overall average mark in all taught module is 50% or above; (ii) Compensation may only be considered when students complete all taught modules.

Revision and Approval Log

Date	Approved by	Description
November 24, 2010	University Learning and Teaching Committee	Approved
December 15, 2010	Academic Board	Approved
September 26, 2011, reported October 19, 2011 to ULTC	University Learning and Teaching Committee	Approved by chair's action, to broaden definition of Additional Credits
December 7, 2011	University Learning and Teaching Committee	Approved with revisions - permit part-time programmes -revise 'Additional Learning Activity'; remove reference to transcript -show achieved mark on resit on transcript
December 14, 2011	Academic Board	Approved
January 27, 2012	XJTLU Planning and Policy Committee at UoL	Approved
May 30, 2012	University Learning and Teaching Committee	Approved with revisions on: PG Certificate programmes; exit routes; compensation; resit
September 19, 2012	University Learning and Teaching Committee	Approved with following additions: - Master of Research programmes - minor revisions
June 11, 2014	University Learning and Teaching Committee and Chair's action	Following revisions approved: - successful completion of all taught modules prior to progression to dissertation (2.e) - one 40-credit dissertation spanning over two semesters for MRes programmes (4.b.iii); - two internal examiners for oral examination for MRes programmes (4.b.v), - Resit timing of taught modules for MRes programmes (6.c)
October 21, 2014	ULTC (June 11, 2014) and UoL Collaborative Provision Subcommittee (October 16, 2014)	Exit point added to MRes programmes (2.g.iii)
December 10, 2014	ULTC (by Chair's action)	- New clause added to 5d) regarding resit of ALAs; - Deleted reference in 5d) to assessment of each ALA component in each semester
June 29, 2015	University Learning and Teaching Committee	- New ALA regulations adopted, as an appendix to the PGT Framework; - Reference to Appendix (ALA Regulations) added to main document.
June 15, 2016	Assessment Sub-Committee (by Chair's action)	- Requirement re. the completion of all taught module prior to progression to dissertation stage was removed; - A table of key principles adopted as an appendix. Revisions are endorsed; subject to LTC's approval.
June 22, 2016	Learning and Teaching Committee	Approved, subject to minor corrections
June 29, 2016	Academic Board	Approved
1st September 2017	Administrative update	Academic Quality and Standards Sub-Committee updated as 'Academic Quality Sub-Committee'.
9th May 2018	Learning and Teaching Committee	New ALA Regulations adopted to take effect from 2018/19.
19th January 2022	ULTC	Revisions made to 1) Add 2 years as the normal length of programme; 2) Decouple ALAs from UoL award and remove ALAs from programme specification. 3) Adjustment to degree classification criteria

26th Jan 2022	Academic Board	Approved
18th Aug 2023	CAA Director	Administrative updates by EQA to reflect the new committee structure
22nd Nov 2023	University Learning and Teaching Committee	1. Updates on fixed credits and credit distribution between taught modules and project/dissertation modules; 2. Addition of exit award of PG Diploma into MRes programme; 3. Administrative updates
28th Aug 2024	University Learning and Teaching Committee	1. Revised by EQA to incorporate a PG Dip option for MRes programmes, as specified by UoL, along with necessary updates; 2. Administrative updates by Registry in alignment with the revised Mitigating Circumstances Policy
22nd Oct 2025	ULTC	Revisions to align degree classification criteria with UoL's for merit and distinction grades.
5th Nov 2025	AB	Endorsement

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[1] The Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, also see
https://www.qaa.ac.uk//en/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks