

# THE STUDENT GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT AT LJMU

LJMU Academic Year  
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## THE STUDENT GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT AT LJMU

### ARE THERE ANY RULES ABOUT ASSESSMENT AT LJMU THAT I NEED TO BE AWARE OF?

The Academic Framework Regulations provide the structure and rules that help us to define how your programme is taught and assessed. This means that you can be sure that any decision related to your performance is fair and transparent. <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations/academic-framework>

### WHAT IS MY COURSE?

At LJMU, we refer to a course as a Programme of Study, often shortened to programme. This includes everything that you study in order to gain your qualification. For example, at School or College you may have studied an 'A' Level in Geography. At University, your programme of study may be a Bachelor of Science with Honours Geography, which may also be referred to as a BSc Hons Geography.

Each programme of study is made up of several modules.

These are individual subjects or units that you study as you progress through the programme. Module structure and size will differ from programme to programme. Many modules last for a full semester but some may be shorter, and others can span the academic year. Successful completion of a module results in the award of academic credit. This credit is released when you pass the relevant assessments and this has been confirmed by a Board of Examiners. Modules may have different credit ratings, and these are published in the module key information section on Canvas. In addition, modules and their associated credits are specific to a level of study.

For most students, level of study mirrors the year of study as outlined below, although this is not always the case – for example if your programme is part-time:

- Level 3 – Foundation year
- Level 4 - First year
- Level 5 – Second year
- Level 6 – Third year
- Level 7 - Masters

This follows a nationally recognised system – the National Qualifications Framework - and you may see the abbreviations NQF 3 to NQF 7 to describe the level of study.

As you work through the programme, you will acquire more and more academic credits until you have enough to be awarded a qualification. This is determined by an internationally recognised system. A standard undergraduate degree (e.g. Bachelor of Arts with Honours History, or BA Hons History) is made up of 360 credits, with 120 credits studied at each level. You'd need to acquire all these credits, at the right level, to be awarded that qualification.

Learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills or expertise that you will need to demonstrate you have acquired to pass the assessment.

### ASSESSMENTS

#### WHAT TYPE OF ASSESSMENT WILL I BE ASKED TO COMPLETE?

This largely depends on the programme you are studying. It will have been approved as the most appropriate way to assess whether you have met a specific module's learning outcomes. Examples of different assessment types are

1. Essay
2. Report
3. Examination
4. Presentation
5. Performance
6. Podcast/Blog
7. Simulation
8. Creative work
9. Reflection

You will be provided with guidance for every assessment. This will include information regarding the focus of the assessment and what you need to do.

### PASSING MY ASSESSMENTS

As an undergraduate student, the pass mark for your assessments is usually 40%. If you are a postgraduate student, your pass mark is usually 50%. This pass mark is the threshold at which you demonstrate to the assessor that you have met the learning outcomes.

Every module will outline assessments that you need to complete. The number of individual assessment tasks may differ from module to module. These tasks might not have

the same value. We use the term 'weighting' to describe the relative value of each assessment task. This explains how much an individual assessment item is worth or how much it contributes towards the overall module mark. Here is an example, a 20-credit level-4 module in Business Management and Practice has two assessment items (these may be referred to as components): an essay and a presentation. The essay has a weighting of 50%, and the presentation has a weighting of 50% (in this example both assignments are equally weighted). If you receive 70% on your essay, and 80% on your presentation, you will achieve an overall module mark of 75%. You do not normally need to pass all assessments as long as your overall module mark meets or exceeds the pass mark, but you must attempt all assessments. There are some programmes such as nursing, engineering and law, that follow professional body rules that may mean you need to pass all assessment items. Where there are rules like this, you can find out the information from your programme specification document or by speaking to your Programme Leader.

Attaining all the credits on your programme is the only way to achieve your target award, for example BSc (Hons) Biology. It is important to understand normally you will receive the credit for any module that you pass, regardless of the actual mark. If your programme is accredited by a professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) there may be rules that mean you need to pass every assessment. In some circumstances we may be able to award credit for modules where the pass mark has not been achieved - this is referred to as compensation. Below are some rules related specifically to compensation- it is important to understand not all modules may be eligible and there are specific rules to manage application of compensation.

### COMPENSATION

On any LJMU programme of 120 credits or more, and where there are no PSRB related assessment rules, if you fail a module or modules of upto 20 credits weighting, you may be eligible for compensation.

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Compensation can be permitted if you receive a minimum module mark in a failed module. This is 30% for Level 3-6 and 40% for Level 7. You need to have acquired 100 credits at the same level for any module(s) upto 20 credits to be compensated and the credits awarded. The mark on your transcript will reflect the actual mark that you achieved, but you will be awarded the credits for the module(s).



Compensation will only be applied once you have had a referral attempt at the module. For Level 7 programmes compensation will only be applied following the completion of the taught 120 credit of the programme (the dissertation/ honours project is excluded from this calculation).

Once compensation is applied, it cannot be revoked or removed from your programme transcript.

### WHAT IF I NEED HELP AND I AM IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN TRYING TO COMPLETE MY ASSESSMENT?

Here at LJMU, we understand that people sometimes struggle to complete their assessments. Reasons for this could include sickness, bereavement, accidents etc. The last thing anyone wants is for someone not to pass a module because of circumstances beyond their control. We have a Personal Circumstances (PC) Policy that can be applied for via your MyLJMU page.

The single most important thing you can do if you feel you cannot meet the assessment deadline is to talk to someone. Your Personal Tutor, Module Leader or Programme Leader will be able to help, if your request is reasonable.

#### WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

- 1) **Extensions.** An extension is usually a relatively short period of extra time to complete your assessment. You should apply via MyLJMU and follow the instructions for 'Personal Circumstances: Extension'. Your request will go straight to your Module Leader or a member of the programme team. They will approve or reject the request, and you will be notified via email. You will not normally need to provide evidence but will be asked to explain why you need extra time.
- 2) **Non-attempt at assessment (NAT).** A non-attempt at assessment is when you cannot complete the assessment and need more time than an extension would allow. In these cases, you need permission to submit at a much later date. The request can be submitted up to 5 days after the assessment deadline. This is commonly referred to as a 'Deferral' - in other words you have deferred or postponed completion of your assessment to a later date. It is important that you understand that a deferral may delay your completion of the programme and you might not graduate with your cohort (although, of course you will be invited to a later graduation ceremony). We have additional guidance available in the videos

accompanying this guide. Application for a deferral is via MyLJMU - follow the instructions for 'Personal Circumstances: Non-attempt'. Evidence will be required where it is feasible for you to provide it.

#### 3) **Personal Circumstances (Special Mitigation)**

Whenever you take any form of assessment, you declare yourself 'fit to attempt' that assessment. However, we understand that there may be occasions when a student begins a time-limited form of assessment (such as a presentation or examination) but is taken ill during the assessment and is unable to complete it. If this happens to you, please inform the University as soon as possible. This will allow us to decide whether there is sufficient evidence to declare the attempt as null and void and give you a further without penalty to assign a mark to the work completed. If there is insufficient evidence or the university is not informed, marks will be assigned to the work that was completed. If you need to submit a Special Mitigation claim this is completed via MyLJMU, Personal Circumstances, Special Mitigation (Timed Assessment)

#### 4) **Personal Circumstances (revoking a 'fit to attempt' declaration)**

Under normal circumstances, you would not be able to apply for mitigation after an assessment has been attempted. This is because, when you attempt an assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so. However, we acknowledge that there might be times when you would not know that you were unfit to attempt. This could include, for example, a medical condition that comes to light after the assessment attempt. In such cases, you can apply to revoke your 'fit to attempt' declaration. The university will then review the evidence provided to make an informed decision on whether your circumstances at the time of the assessment warrant a revocation of that declaration. If you need to submit a Special Mitigation claim this is completed via MyLJMU, Personal Circumstances, Special Mitigation (Revoking Fit to Sit).

### THE IMPACT OF ASSESSMENT EXTENSION OR DEFERRAL ON YOUR ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

Asking for help when you are struggling is really important. It is something that we will always encourage. That said, it is important that you think about the impact this may have

on other deadlines on other modules. Please consider talking to your teaching team and making plan with them for how to manage your time effectively. A deferred assessment is treated as first attempt at assessment, i.e. the full range of marks are available.

It is really important to understand that if you apply for a Personal Circumstances Non-Attempt (NAT), this might extend your period of study by deferring your assessment attempt to a later date. For example, if you are a level 6 undergraduate in Semester 1 and you submit a Non-attempt (deferral) for any module assessment, you will undertake that assessment in the reassessment period and you will not be able to graduate with the rest of your peers, if you are successful in the assessment.

### MARKING AND FEEDBACK

To help us ensure that everyone is treated fairly, the University has developed standard grading descriptors. These reflect what we would normally look for at different levels of study and are based on common practice across all universities. The descriptors reflect general expectations and are different to marking criteria. The latter are specific to an individual assessment task and will outline the process you should follow to meet the learning outcomes.

If work is submitted within 5 working days of the advertised deadline without an approved extension, it will be marked but that mark will be capped at the pass mark (usually 40% at Level 3-6 and 50% at level7). Work submitted after 5 working days will receive a mark of 0%, but you will still be entitled to feedback. Marking of late submissions will only occur for the first attempt at a module assessment. *Please note: Programmes with PSRB requirements may be exempt from this rule- please see the programme specification or speak to your programme leader for more information.*

When your work has been marked, you will normally be provided with a provisional mark and feedback. This may be via Canvas or direct from a tutor. Feedback is important because it tells you what you did well, what needed improvement and what lessons you can learn for future assessments. Feedback comes in many forms. It can be written, audio or video. It may be delivered in person or remotely through Canvas or via email. However you get it, please engage with your feedback - and feel free to ask your tutor if there is anything that you don't understand. Programme teams will do everything they can to get feedback and marks to you in a timely manner.

In normal circumstances, this is 15 working days from the official submission deadline if you submit in time. Of course, teams have to manage their own workloads, so feedback on late submissions may be delayed. Sometimes, marking teams or module leaders are unable to get feedback to you in time. In these circumstances, they will let you know.

It is important that you are aware that there is a chance that the provisional mark may change. As part of the University's quality assurance responsibilities, we need to make sure the marking of your assessments is fair, consistent and meets the same benchmark standard as in all other UK universities. To achieve this, we use a process called moderation. This is where other members of academic staff review marked assessments to make sure that the mark is appropriate. After this, the work is then reviewed by an External Examiner. They are an academic from a different university, college or equivalent institution, who is an expert in the programme area. This process confirms that the assessments are fair, the learning outcomes have been met and the marks awarded reflect national standards. Only after this stage can the marks go to a Board of Examiners to be confirmed. Once this has happened, your marks are finalised and can only be changed if there has been a serious mistake (we refer to this as a material irregularity).





## WHAT DO MY RESULTS MEAN AND WHAT IF I DO NOT PASS FIRST TIME?

### RESULTS NOTIFICATIONS

On your official results day, which is published on the Academic Calendar for standard programmes or communicated by your Programme Leader on non-standard programmes, your confirmed Results Statement and Progress transcript will be available via MyLJMU accessible at <https://my.ljmu.ac.uk/>. A transcript is a record of the modules you have studied and the grades you have received. We may also send a text message to remind you that this is available, to encourage you to check your results, and to contact your Personal Tutor or programme team where required.

### WHAT DO YOUR RESULTS MEAN?

Here is what you might see on your Results Statement and what it means:

#### **Board Of Examiners' Outcome: Target Award Achieved**

This means you have achieved the award you registered for (for example a BA Hons Criminology)

#### **Board Of Examiners' Outcome: Progress to Next Level**

This means that you have successfully passed all your registered modules and can move on to the next level of study (for example, you may have passed all your Level 4 modules, so you can return to study when Level 5 begins).

#### **Board Of Examiners' Outcome: Progress to the next stage of study trailing module(s)**

This means you have passed some, but not all, of your modules. You can move onto the next level of study, but you must pass the module(s) by the specified date to be able to complete your programme. Information regarding what assessment you need to complete and when will be included in the Results Statement.

If this is not a first referral or deferral and you have still not passed up to 20 credits, then the final opportunity to gain these 20 credits will be as an Exceptional Second Referral – this is a third and final attempt at a module. Marks are capped and the highest achievable mark is equal to the minimum passing mark for the module. You can progress to the next level of study whilst you complete this.

#### **Board Of Examiners' Outcome: Cannot progress to the next stage of your programme**

This means you have not yet passed all of the modules required, but you do have at least one more go - this may be described as a Referral, or Deferral. This may be because you have referrals for assessments you have not yet passed, to be

able to progress to the next level. It is important to recognise that this outcome means you cannot yet progress to the next stage of your study - it is important to discuss this with your Programme Leader or Assistant Academic Registrar via MyLJMU.

**Referral** – this is classed as a second attempt at a module. In these instances, marks are capped. This means that the module mark will not be awarded more than the minimum pass mark for the module.

**Deferral** – this is classed as a first attempt at a module. Deferral marks are not capped and your assessment item can be awarded the full range of marks. In some cases, you may have a deferred referral, in this case marks are capped as it is a referral.

#### **Board of Examiners' Outcome: Cannot progress to the next stage of your programme (FMA)**

This means you have not yet passed all of the modules required, and the final option available to you is to have one final attempt at the module, known as a Final Module Attempt (FMA).

**Final Module Attempt (FMA)** - this is a third and final attempt at a module - Marks are capped and the highest achievable mark is equal to the minimum passing mark for the module. You will be charged per credit for a final module attempt and have a limited time to accept this offer. You will need to attend all scheduled classes during the next academic year.

#### **Board of Examiners' Outcome: Alternative Exit Award**

This means that you haven't been able to pass one or more modules and have run out of attempts to complete the work so you cannot complete your programme of study. You have achieved enough credits to gain an alternative award based on the number of modules you have passed successfully.

#### **Board of Examiners' Outcome: Withdrawn from programme**

Unfortunately, you have not passed enough modules to be able to complete your programme and there are no alternative awards available. Therefore, you have been withdrawn from your programme and cannot continue.

### WHAT NEXT?

For most of you, results notification brings good news and you can get on with preparing for the next stage in your education. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. If you haven't successfully passed, your Results Statement will tell you what you need to do and by when. If you have any questions, are confused about your results, or want more

information on what you need to do, please contact your Personal Tutor or Programme Leader. You can also contact Academic Registry via the MyLJMU help desk form and someone will get back to you.

Remember that our Student Advice and Wellbeing team is also on hand if you are feeling stressed or need support following your results. You can find further information here <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/discover/student-support>.

### APPEALS

If you feel that there has been error in your assessment, you can appeal. There are different types of appeal:

- **Academic Appeal:** an appeal against finalised marks or the decision of a Board of Examiners. This includes the right to appeal against a decision that means you cannot continue on the programme.
- **Academic Misconduct Appeal:** an appeal against the decision of an Academic Misconduct Panel.
- **Personal Circumstances Appeal:** an appeal against a decision of a Personal Circumstances Panel.

### THE GROUNDS FOR APPEAL ARE:

1. that there has been a material administrative error
2. that the assessment, in whatever format, was not conducted in accordance with current regulations
3. that some other material irregularity has occurred.
4. that the decision of a Personal Circumstance Panel in considering a claim was unreasonable.

Disagreeing with the academic judgement of a marker does not (in itself) constitute grounds for an Academic Appeal. Nor does disagreeing with the decision of an Academic Misconduct Panel or Personal Circumstances Panel. In all cases, there needs to be evidence of a material irregularity or some other error in the process. The University will not accept an appeal that does not meet the criteria – for example you cannot appeal if you disagree with the mark you were given.

Appeals procedures are open to all registered or former students. There is a strict time limit for submitting an appeal form which is within 10 working days of a) the decision of a Board of Examiners or the formal release of results via a University transcript, b) the formal release of the decision of an Academic Misconduct Panel or, c) the formal release of a decision of a Personal Circumstances Panel.



