Information Sheet – Assessment (modules)

This information sheet provides specific details on how **assessment of modules** for collaborative programmes may be managed, depending on the nature of a particular collaboration and any agreement between the relevant partner institutions.   It provides guidelines on the recording of module assessment grades/marks, as well as the indicative timeframes for grades/marks approval.

Collaborative Programme Basics: the programme approval mechanism

The **Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework (PDARF)** provides the relevant information for supporting programme development, including collaborative programmes, within the University (see https://www.ucd.ie/registry/staff/registryservices/curriculum/programmeapprovalpdarf/).

All collaborative programmes must be approved through the normal routes for new programme approval. The relevant forms for collaborative programmes include Global Partnerships Proposal Form - Strategic Case, PDARF2, PDARF3 and PDARF4, and where a collaboration is being introduced into an already existing programme, PDARF7 is to be used in place of PDARF2 and PDARF3. All of the forms are available at the above weblink.

All forms must be completed and submitted to the relevant College Executive and/or Governing Board, as well as the University Management Team (UMT) (where applicable) in accordance with the procedures outlined in the PDARF approval process.

Collaborative Programme Co-ordinators should list as much detail as possible about the collaborative programme on these forms – all of this information is critical for ensuring that the University can support the programme effectively.

Assessment (modules)

This information regarding the assessment of modules for collaborative programmes is divided into two sections: 1) Recording module assessment; and 2) Timeframe for grades/marks approval.

1) Recording module assessment

There are three options by which module assessment on collaborative programmes is recorded by UCD on a student's record and subsequently included in the transcript:

Option 1: Transfer credit block– grade point and GPA neutral credits
A single block of credits is attached to the student's record to represent activity that they undertook and successfully completed at another institution. This may be represented by generic transfer credits or by a block of credits with the institution's name in the title. These credits are undifferentiated and therefore do not show the exact details of the individual modules that a student may have undertaken. These credits are normally grade point neutral and GPA neutral. For example:

> If a student spends a semester (normally of a value of 30 credits) at the University of Deusto (Spain) they may have a single module called 'Transfer Credits (Deusto)' of a value of 30 credits put up against their record. These credits are graded simply as 'pass' or 'completed'.

In such cases, a list of the certified modules successfully completed by a UCD student at the partner institution are normally sent by the partner institution to the UCD Programme Director or UCD Programme Administrator who then records the transfer credit block against a student's record.

Option 2: Transfer credit block – composite grade and bearing a UCD grade point and GPA value

Through discussion and negotiation with the partner institution, it may be possible to arrive at a composite grade for the transfer credit block.   In these instances, there must be a 'Grades/Marks Table of Equivalences', normally included in the formal Memorandum of Agreement that underpins the collaboration, so that it is clear how UCD grades relate to the grading/marking system of the partner institution. In such instances, a single block of credits is attached to the student's record representing a specified block of transfer credits, with a composite grade reflecting all the modules they completed in the partner institution. For example:

> Students on the MSc Humanitarian Action joint degree award programme spend their second semester at a partner institution and a single module called 'Orientation Period' of a value of 30 credits is put up against their record. These credits are awarded with a composite grade based on the agreed table of equivalence for assessing modules across each of the partners, which is included in the formal Memorandum of Agreement for this collaboration.

In such cases, the grades for these modules (and/or the composite grade for the transfer credit block) are ratified by the relevant UCD Programme Examination Board and contribute to the student's GPA and degree award calculation.

Option 3: Graded 'Shadow Modules'[1]

'Shadow modules' are where 'shadow' versions of modules provided by another institution are created on the UCD system. The marks/grades for these modules need to be converted to the UCD grading system and may be applied in the same way that grades for any UCD-owned modules are applied (i.e. through Gradebook), and therefore can contribute to the student's GPA. For example:

> ECON42035 Global Economics (TCD), 5 credits – for a module in Global Economics offered by Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

In such cases, a table of equivalence must be provided by the collaborative programme via the Memorandum of Agreement. This table act as a mechanism for converting module marks/grades awarded in a partner institution to module grades in UCD.

2) Timeframe for grades/marks approval

Individual collaborating institutions determine the structure of their academic sessions. From an assessment perspective, this means that the timing of Examination Boards in partner institutions is not always identical to that of UCD. Collaborative Programme Co-ordinators should seek to obtain grades/marks for modules from other institutions as soon as the module has been completed. Where it is not possible for grades/marks from other institutions to be applied in Gradebook in accordance with the UCD Grade Approval Process (GAP), please consult with the Chair of the relevant Examination Board and the Director of Assessment, UCD Registry for assistance.

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[1] Please see *Information Sheet Programme Structures* for information on 'shadow modules' including how to request a new 'shadow module'.