RESTRICTED

VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL
GENERAL ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL

GENERAL ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR HIGHER DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES
(for implementation with effect from December 2021)

Preamble

The purpose of this set of General Academic Regulations (GARs) is to provide the academic framework for the operation of the Higher Diploma (HD) Programmes under the New Academic Structure. They have been formulated to conform to good practices in, and gain accreditation from, both local and international institutions. This set of GARs should be read together with the Student Handbook for compliance with the latest stipulations therein. The way in which the HD programmes meet these regulations is detailed within the respective Definitive Programme Documents.

The regulations have been designed to achieve a balance between the requirements of maintaining relevant academic standards and not placing unreasonable demands or conditions on students who take the programmes.

In general, each Board of Examiners (BoE) is empowered to make decisions according to this set of regulations under the delegated authority of the VETAB, or where appropriate, make recommendations on special cases, provided that academic standards are not jeopardized and students are not unfairly treated. All recommendations will require the ratification of the relevant Academic Committees[1] under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

As needs arise, the VETAB reserves the right to amend these regulations. Such changes will normally be implemented at the start of the Academic Year following the approval. In case the changes need to be implemented earlier, every effort will be made not to disadvantage students in their current year of study. All students must be informed in writing of the regulations that are in force for the Academic Year they are studying. It is the responsibility of the Academic Committees to ensure that the regulations detailed in the Definitive Programme Document for the HD Programmes under their purview comply with this set of General Academic Regulations.

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[1] There is an Academic Committee to assure the academic standards for all the programmes under its purview. This committee also has the authority to approve new programmes, special cases of programme/module assessment results, awards, and review programme quality on a more macro level.

Contents

1. Definitions

1.1   A **Programme** is a set of inter-related studies, defined through a set of programme aims and objectives and learning outcomes to be achieved and by a curriculum structure, leading to a specific qualification.

1.2   A programme can be further divided into **Streams**. A stream reflects the field of specialism within the programme and consists of clusters of related modules on a (number of) theme(s). A programme can have more than one stream or no stream.

1.3   A **Module** is a block of learning defined by a syllabus, including aims, intended learning outcomes, learning and teaching strategies, assessment plans, and, if necessary, pre-requisites, co-requisites and/or anti-requisites. It is a constituent part of a programme contributing to the award. Each module is assigned with a QF Level and the number of credits that it carries (See Clauses 1.8 and 1.17).

1.4   The **Notional Learning Hours (NLHs)** of a module is the amount of time an average student would take to acquire the learning outcomes. Notional Learning Hours are a summation of Contact Hours, Self-study Hours and Assessment Hours. **Contact Hours** are the amount of time spent by a student in direct contact with the teaching staff / workplace trainers of a programme, including attendance in class tutorials, conducting experiments in laboratories under supervision, etc. **Self-study Hours** are the amount of time spent by a student normally without direct contact with the teaching staff / workplace trainers, including time spent on self-studying, preparation for tests and examinations, research, writing reports for projects and work placement, studying on-line materials, etc. **Assessment Hours** refer to the amount of time spent by students in scheduled examinations, tests and other related assessment activities not yet included in contact hours and self-study hours (also see Clause 1.17).

1.5   An **Academic Year** is divided into three consecutive blocks of academic activities called **Semesters.**

1.6   Modules of a programme are normally grouped by semesters. Major teaching, learning and assessment activities of a module are normally

completed within one single semester.

1.7 **Maximum Registration Period** is the maximum number of years a student is allowed to complete a programme. While the nominal period to complete a Higher Diploma programme is 2 years or 5 semesters of full-time study, the maximum registration periods for studying the programme through full-time and part-time routes are 5 years and 7 years respectively (see Clause 12.1).

1.8 **QF Level** refers to the level under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF). As a whole, the Higher Diploma programmes are pegged at QF Level 4. Majority (i.e. over 50%) of the total number of credits of a Higher Diploma programme should be at QF Level 4 or above.

1.9 Under the Higher Diploma programmes, modules can be categorised as **General Education Modules** and **Vocational Modules**. General Education modules refer to modules in the generic subject areas, e.g. Vocational English, Vocational Chinese, Information Technology and Whole Person Development. Vocational modules refer to trade-specific modules which, in general, are specific to individual programmes / streams while some may be common to a number of programmes.

1.10 **Core Modules** refer to those modules that are critical to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude that are considered essential for the award of Higher Diploma in the programme / stream of studies concerned. They must be successfully completed to form part of the credit requirements. **Elective Modules** are modules that a student can elect to make up the remaining credit requirements for the Higher Diploma award in the programme / stream concerned.

1.11 There are two types of elective modules: **Discipline or Programme or Stream Specific Elective** modules which are available only to students of the Discipline / programme / stream concerned; and **Enrichment** modules which are open to all Higher Diploma students irrespective of the Discipline, programme or stream, upon meeting the pre-requisites / co-requisites / anti-requisites, if any.

1.12 To complement the modules relevant to the programme / stream of

studies concerned, the **Enrichment** modules aim to enhance students' multi-disciplinary knowledge, augment their employability or to better prepare them for further study. They are a compulsory component of the Higher Diploma programmes. **Successful completion of the Enrichment modules is a graduation requirement**.

1.13   The **Pre-requisite** of a module is the requirement that must be fulfilled before a student can register in this particular module. A student must pass the pre-requisite module before registering in the module concerned.

1.14   The **Co-requisite** of a module refers to other module(s) that must be taken concurrently with or prior to registration in this particular module.

1.15   **Anti-requisite** modules are modules where there is sufficient overlap in their contents to make it inappropriate for students to earn credits from more than one of these modules. Students will normally be restricted from registration in a module when they have already registered or earned credits from a corresponding anti-requisite module.

1.16   A **Definitive Programme Document** details the aims and objectives of the programme, the minimum entry requirements, programme content, module syllabuses, learning and teaching strategies, assessment plan, programme management and operation, resources, rules governing assessment and awards, and other relevant information.

1.17   Each module carries a number of **QF Credits (Credits)** which is an integer and is normally proportional to the number of Notional Learning Hours. One credit is equivalent to 10 Notional Learning Hours in studying of a module. The Higher Diploma programmes normally have a total of 280 credits or more, plus a minimum of 10 credits of Industrial Attachment (see Clauses 5.1 to 5.3).

1.18   In order to be eligible for an award, a student must have satisfactorily completed the **Credit Requirements** of the award in terms of the type,

the number of credits and the QF Level and other requirements as stipulated in the Definitive Programme Document, within the maximum registration period from the date of first enrolment in the programme.   The other requirements include, but not limited to, the successful completion of

- Industrial Attachment (see Clauses 5.1 to 5.3), and

- Enrichment modules (see Clauses 1.11 and 1.12)

1.19   The **Module Mark (M)** is a weighted average of the marks of all assessments of a student's achievement in the module expressed in percentage.   The maximum mark and minimum mark for a module are 100% and 0 respectively (see Clause 7.1).

1.20   The **Module Grade** is a letter grade derived from the module mark or from the student's performance in the module directly.   Each module grade, except for modules assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, is assigned with a **Grade Point (G)** for the purpose of measuring students' overall performance in the modules taken (see Clause 7.1).

1.21   The **Grade Point Average (GPA)** is a weighted average of the grade points received by a student over a specified period of time and is calculated via the following formula:

$$GPA = \frac{\left(\sum_i G_i C_i \right)_{in\ the\ specific\ period}}{\left(\sum_i C_i \right)_{in\ the\ same\ period}}$$

where Gi is the grade point of the ith module scored by the student in the specific period and Ci is the number of credits carried by the ith module.

There are three types of Grade Point Average: the Semester Grade Point Average, the Cumulative Grade Point Average, and the Award Grade Point Average.

For **Semester Grade Point Average (SGPA)**, the specific period is a given semester and the summation is over **all modules studied by the student during the semester, including passed and failed**

modules but excluding modules assessed on a Pass / Fail basis, exempted modules and modules completed through Credit Transfer (see Clause 3.1). For modules which have been failed and re-taken, only the grade points obtained in the last attempt are used in the calculation. The SGPA in general measures the performance of a student in the modules that **he/she has studied in the semester**.

For **Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA),** the calculation includes **all modules that the student has** studied in the Higher Diploma programme up to the time of calculation, including failed modules. Modules assessed on Pass / Fail basis and exempted modules are excluded from the calculation whereas modules completed through Credit Transfer (see Clause 3.1) are included. For modules which have been failed and re-taken, only the Grade Points obtained in the last attempt are used in the calculation. The CGPA in general measures the performance of a student in the modules of the programme that he/she has studied up to the time of calculation.

The **Award Grade Point Average (AGPA) is the final Grade Point Average value based on which the award classification of a student is determined**. It is calculated upon the student's successful completion of the credit requirements leading to the award and **includes all modules that the student has completed successfully in the programme** and modules completed through Credit Transfer (see Clause 3.1). On the other hand, modules assessed on a Pass / Fail basis and exempted modules are excluded from the calculation. If the student has successfully completed more Elective modules and/or Enrichment modules and earned more credits than that required for the award, the Elective modules and/or Enrichment modules shall be ranked according to their grade points and their credits. In addition to the core modules concerned, the summation shall include those Elective modules and the Enrichment module with higher grade points and are relevant to the award. At least one Enrichment module should be included. The AGPA in general measures the performance of a student in the whole programme upon graduation.

A Mark of 40% or a Grade D, hence a Grade Point of 1.0 (see Table in Clause 7.1), will be used for condoned modules in computing the Grade Point Average (see Clause 9.2).

1.22   When calculating the Grade Point Average, the result is rounded up to the nearest two decimal places.

2.   Enrolment and Transfer between Programmes

2.1   The **General Minimum Entry Requirement** to Higher Diploma programmes is five HKDSE subjects at Level 2, including English and Chinese Languages, or equivalent.   Individual programmes may have additional requirements as deemed appropriate by the relevant Academic Committee concerned.

2.2   To be enrolled on the programme, students must fulfil the entry requirements detailed in the Definitive Programme Document.

2.3   The regulations for admission of applicants with advanced standing must be defined in the Definitive Programme Document.   The granting of advanced standing status is based on the applicant's overall academic qualifications, instead of on a module-for-module basis.   An applicant with advanced standing normally is in possession of a formal qualification which is substantially higher than the minimum entry requirement for the programme.

2.4   A student may not be simultaneously enrolled in more than one full-time programme leading to a qualification in VTC without the prior approval of the Programme Board Chairperson(s) of the programmes concerned or his/her delegate(s).

2.5   Transfer from one programme to another must be approved by the Programme Board Chairperson of the receiving programme or his/her delegate.   Enrolment on a programme after successful completion of another VTC programme is considered a new admission instead of transfer.

2.6   Upon transfer between programmes, the student's grades and the corresponding grade points of relevant completed modules are transferred to the corresponding modules of the receiving programme for the purpose of calculating the CGPA and AGPA (see Clause 1.21), subject to the condition laid down under Clause 3.1.   Since these modules will not be studied by the student after the transfer, the marks

will not be used for calculating the SGPA (see Clause 1.21). The time already devoted to the old programme is counted towards the maximum registration period allowed for the new programme.

3. Credit Transfer and Module Exemption

3.1 Credit Transfer is made on an individual module basis. Credit transfer is normally based on formal academic achievements obtained within and/or outside VTC, on the condition that the module concerned is identical in terms of the number of credits, intended learning outcomes, the QF Level and assessment standards. Upon approval, the student will earn credits of the corresponding modules thereby contributing towards the awards of the programme.

3.2 Individual **Module Exemption** is normally granted based on formal academic achievements and / or relevant experience with documented evidence of attainment of the required learning outcomes and must be defined in the Definitive Programme Document. Where required, assessments on the attainment may be conducted. A student may also be granted, on other justifiable grounds such as disabilities, Module Exemption from studying a module which forms a requirement of the award he/she aims for.

3.3 When permission of Module Exemption is granted, the student will not earn credits from the module concerned and the credit requirements for the award for the student concerned will also be adjusted accordingly. The exemption granted shall be reflected in the student's Transcript of Study.

3.4 A student may not normally be allowed Credit Transfer and/or Module Exemption for more than 50% of the total number of credits of the programme, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 3.2) should normally not constitute more than 25% of the total number of credits of the programme concerned (see Clause 3.2).

3.5 The guidelines for granting Credit Transfer and Module Exemption must be defined in the Definitive Programme Document, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause

3.2) is considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval of Credit Transfer and Module Exemption as defined in the Definitive Programme Document rests with the respective Head of Department / Section Head.

4. Module Selection and Study Load

4.1 For modules which have pre-requisite / co-requisite / anti-requisite modules, a student must satisfy the pertinent requirements as stipulated in the relevant syllabus before taking the modules concerned.

4.2 Registration for modules is subject to availability of places and meeting the pre-requisite / co-requisite / anti-requisite requirements, if any.

4.3 In each semester, students studying the Higher Diploma programme through the full-time route are normally allowed to take a total credit of not more than 90 whereas those taking the part-time route are allowed a total credit of normally not more than 80. Within this limit, a student is allowed to choose the modules he/she wants to study for a semester subject to the condition stated in Clause 4.1 above. He/She may choose not to take any module in a semester if so wish.

4.4 Approval from the relevant Academic Director is required if the limit set out in Clause 4.3 is exceeded. In general, the limit may be exceeded if the student gets a Cumulative Grade Point Average of at least 3.3.

4.5 There is no limit on the number of attempts for a student to repeat a failed module within the maximum registration period.

4.6 If the failed module(s) is/are Elective module(s) (see Clause 1.11), the student can elect the failed module(s) or other Elective module(s) as required to make up the remaining credit requirements for the award.

4.7 A student is not allowed to re-study a module which he/she has already passed.

5. **Industrial Attachment**

5.1 Subject to Clause 5.3 below, students are required to attend **a minimum of 90-hour equivalent Industrial Attachment (IA)**, which can be in one of the following forms (ranked in descending order of priority):

- attachment in field/industry relevant to the programme of study
- workplace experience through industry-based projects
- other structured experiential learning experience (e.g. attachment in a field/industry not directly related to the programme of study)
- general workplace experience

5.2 **Industrial Attachment, plus related coaching activities, carries a minimum number of 10 credits** and is a mandatory part of the curriculum. All students are required to successfully complete the Industrial Attachment for graduation. Notwithstanding the above, it is assessed on a Pass / Fail basis (see also Clause 7.3) and hence will not be included in the calculation of the Grade Point Average (see Clause 1.21).

5.3 Subject to the approval of the relevant Quality Assurance Committee of the Discipline concerned, programmes adopting module(s) with workplace learning and assessment, work-integrated learning, field work, practicum, etc. are deemed to have fulfilled the IA requirement.

6. **Attendance**

6.1 The minimum attendance requirement for an individual module is 70% of the maximum attendance for full-time study, where maximum possible attendance includes normal class attendance only. Individual modules may impose a higher percentage as appropriate subject to the approval of the relevant Academic Committee. For part-time study, the decision of having attendance requirements rests with the respective Academic Committees, which should take into account the nature of the specific programmes and other related requirements.

6.2 Students not satisfying the minimum attendance requirement of a module shall not be allowed to undergo the End-of-module Assessment

nor be awarded a module mark/grade, unless approval of the Principal concerned has been granted.

7.   Marks and Grades

7.1   Except for modules which are assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, a student's performance in a module is expressed in grades with each grade assigned with a grade point for the purpose of measuring students' overall performance in the modules taken.   The grade points will be used to compute the relevant Grade Point Average (see Clause 1.21). The different grades and the corresponding grade points and mark ranges for a module are given below:

Pass / Fail	Grade	Grade Point #	Mark Range (X)
Pass	A	4.0	$75 \leq X \leq 100$
	A-	3.7	$70 \leq X < 75$
	B+	3.3	$67 \leq X < 70$
	B	3.0	$63 \leq X < 67$
	B-	2.7	$60 \leq X < 63$
	C+	2.3	$57 \leq X < 60$
	C	2.0	$53 \leq X < 57$
	C-	1.7	$50 \leq X < 53$
	D+	1.3	$46 \leq X < 50$
	D	1.0	$40 \leq X < 46$
Fail	F	0	$0 \leq X < 40$

No grade point conversion for modules assessed on a Pass / Fail basis

The minimum passing mark and grade are 40% and D grade respectively.

7.2   The symbol I, which represents incompletion, may be used by the Board of Examiners when a student has not satisfied the assessment requirements of a module but it is satisfied that the student had mitigating circumstances beyond his / her control which prevented the completion of one or more forms of assessment.   The Board will also decide on the additional work necessary for the student to reach a passing mark / grade and the date by which it must be completed.

7.3   For modules which are assessed on a Pass / Fail basis, a three-tier grading scheme, i.e.   Fail (F), Pass (P) and Pass with Merit (M) might be used if necessary and shown on the Transcript of Study to reflect the student's performance in the modules.   The grade "M" will be assigned

to modules with module marks of 70% or above. Modules assessed on a Pass / Fail basis will not be included in the calculation of the Grade Point Average (see Clause 1.21).

7.4 When grade is being used for **an individual assessment** of a module, it should be converted to marks according to a pre-defined conversion system agreed by the Academic Committee concerned for calculation of the final module mark.

8. Assessments and Reassessment

8.1 The assessment for a module of Higher Diploma programmes includes Continuous Assessment (CA) and End-of-module Assessment (EA). Both categories can be in the form(s) of reports, assignments, tests, laboratory work, projects, examinations, etc.

8.2 The End-of-module Assessment is an integrated assessment for assessing the students' overall attainment / mastery of the major / majority of learning outcomes of the module concerned. Normally, the End-of-module Assessment should carry a weighting of no less than 50% and no more than 60% of the total marks. For modules that are practice-oriented or skills-oriented, the End-of-module Assessment should contribute a minimum of 40% and a maximum of 50% to the total marks. The contributions of Continuous Assessment and End-of-module Assessment to the module mark / grade must be specified in the Definitive Programme Document.

8.3 Where considered appropriate, an End-of-module Assessment may contain more than one assessment event. For such cases, all of the assessment events concerned should be closely related and aligned with the intended learning outcomes being assessed. The assessment event(s) of the End-of-module Assessment should normally take place towards the end of the module but need not necessarily be in the last teaching week of the module or during the examination period.

8.4 Except for modules which are assessed on a Pass / Fail basis, the **minimum pass mark and grade** for a module are 40% and D grade respectively (see Clause 7.1). A mark of 40% is also the minimum pass requirement in each form of assessment as detailed in the Definitive

Programme Document.

8.5 **A student has to pass the End-of-module Assessment to pass the module concerned**. Individual Academic Committees may set additional criteria for the Continuous Assessment component based on the nature of the modules concerned and the requirements of related professional bodies, if relevant.

8.6 There is no reassessment on a module basis (which refers to one reassessment to cover Continuous Assessment and End-of-module Assessment). Students who fail a module will be required to re-take the module concerned, or to take another elective module, if the failed module is not a core module of the programme of study the student is pursuing (see Clause 4.6).

8.7 Normally, there is no reassessment for individual assessments (which can be Continuous Assessment(s) and/or End-of-module Assessment(s)) within a module.

8.8 Under the rare circumstances such as mitigating factors beyond a student's control that reassessment of an assessment component (Continuous Assessment(s) and/or End-of-module Assessment(s)) is allowed, the actual mark obtained in the reassessment of the component concerned will be used in the calculation of the module mark / grade.

8.9 The approval for students to be reassessed for Continuous Assessment(s) and/or End-of-module Assessment(s) rests with the relevant Head of Department / Section Head in accordance with the prevailing principles and criteria laid down by the VETPQC.

8.10 Under any circumstances, there will not be a second reassessment for individual assessments.

8.11 The Chairperson of the Academic Committee concerned should seek approval from VETPQC for modules that are, due to their unique nature, unable to conform to the above assessment and reassessment arrangements.

9. **Condonement**

9.1   A student may be granted a pass in a failed module by condonement on very special grounds which affect the student's academic performance in the module.   A student may have more than one module with condonement but should normally not have more than 20% of the credits earned through condonement in a semester. Condonement requires the recommendation of the Board of Examiners and the approval of the relevant Academic Committee.   All condonement cases should be reported to the VETAB on annual basis.

9.2   A student who passes a module by condonement shall be awarded a grade P for Pass / Fail modules or receive a mark of 40% or a grade D for the module condoned.   The changed module grade or mark shall be recorded in the Student Records System and shown on the student's Transcript of Study and will affect the calculation of Grade Point Average (see Clause 1.21).

10. **Assessment Regulations**

10.1   All assessments, including reassessment, shall follow the assessment regulations authorised by the VETAB.   The Board may decide, from time to time, to revise existing and/or to introduce additional regulations governing invigilation, the conduct of examinations and the judgement of allegations of cheating as appropriate.

11. **Transcript of Study**

11.1   The Transcript of Study is issued at the end of a semester and is a record of the performance of a student expressed in the form of the QF Levels, credits and module grades achieved in the modules studied (including exempted and transferred modules).   Also shown in the transcript are the corresponding SGPA and the CGPA, and, upon the student's graduation, the AGPA.

11.2   Upon graduation, only the credits earned, the QF Levels and module grades of the modules studied (including exempted or transferred modules), will be shown on the Award Transcript.   It will **not contain any information on failed modules**.

12. Extension of Maximum Registration Period, Withdrawal and Dismissal

12.1   If a student cannot complete a programme within the maximum registration period (see Clause 1.7) due to special circumstances and on justifiable grounds, he/she may apply for extension of the maximum registration period.   Applications for extension of maximum registration period will require the approval of the Principal.   The maximum extension period allowed will normally be 12 months.

12.2   A student whose CGPA is below 1.0 recorded by the end of an Academic Year will normally be required to withdraw from the programme.   Notwithstanding this, special consideration should be made on individual merits if the student concerned joins the programme in the middle of an academic year or has not studied any modules in a/some semester(s) of the academic year concerned.

12.3   In order to be eligible for an award, a student must have satisfactorily completed the credit requirements and other requirements, as stated in the Definitive Programme Document, within the maximum registration period from the date of first enrolment on the programme (see Clauses 1.7 and 2.6).   A student who fails to meet this time scale shall be required to withdraw from the programme, unless prior approval has been given to extend the maximum registration period (see Clause 12.1).

12.4   A student may officially withdraw from the programme by notifying the department / teaching section concerned in writing of his/her intention to do so.

12.5   A student shall be deemed to have unofficially withdrawn from the programme if, without prior notification to the department / teaching section concerned, he/she has not been present for scheduled programme activities for a period of four consecutive weeks.

12.6   The VTC may, at any time, require a student who is found to have committed serious violation of prevailing regulations to terminate his/her studies on disciplinary grounds.   Normally this requires the approval of the Principal concerned at the recommendation of the Campus-based Student Disciplinary Committee.

13. Awards

13.1   The Higher Diploma award shall normally be classified according to the recipient's AGPA upon successful completion of the programme as follows: -

Classification	Range of AGPA
Distinction	$3.50 \leq AGPA$
Credit	$3.00 \leq AGPA < 3.50$
Pass	$1.00 \leq AGPA < 3.00$

13.2   The Board of Examiners has the discretion to adjust the Distinction and/or Credit boundaries based on sound academic judgement by no more than 0.1 grade point without further approval from the relevant Academic Committee under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

13.3   A Higher Diploma programme may have an intermediate exit award if considered appropriate by the Academic Committee concerned.   If so offered, the intermediate exit award will normally only be granted to a student who chooses to exit without completing the Higher Diploma programme, subject to his/her meeting the credit requirements for the intermediate exit award concerned as stated in the DPD.

If a student who has exited the programme with an intermediate exit award re-applies the same or another Higher Diploma programme, his/her application is treated as a new application and considered according to the prevailing admission requirements.

With the special approval from the relevant Academic Committee, a programme may also have an intermediate award.   Based on justifiable grounds and upon meeting the relevant credit requirements, students of a programme with an intermediate award may apply to be granted the intermediate award concerned without exiting the programme. Approval of these applications lies with the Academic Committee concerned.   Students granted the intermediate award can still continue to study the Higher Diploma programme.

13.4   The classification for the intermediate exit awards should follow the same system as in Clause 13.1 above.

13.5 Where a student has failed to complete the requirements for the Higher Diploma award as stated in the Definitive Programme Document, the Board of Examiners may, as an exceptional case, consider the recommendation of an **Aegrotat** award on strong documented medical grounds or, in very exceptional cases, may consider the recommendation of an award for well documented reasons other than medical grounds. Such recommendations would require the formal approval of the Academic Committee.

14. External Examiners

14.1 Each programme shall have an **External Examiner** to oversee the overall academic standards / performance of students in the programme. He / She should be nominated by the Chairperson of the Programme Board and appointed by the Academic Committee to perform duties as specified in the Regulations for External Examiners approved by the VETAB.

14.2 Nominated by the Chairpersons of the Module Boards which own the modules and appointed by the respective governing Academic Committees, **External Module Examiners** will be appointed for individual Enrichment and General Education modules, or where appropriate, designated Vocational modules (see Clause 15.2), to oversee the academic standards / performance of students in the modules concerned. An External Module Examiner may be assigned to oversee a number of related modules.

15. Boards of Examiners

15.1 The performance of all students studying in a module / programme should be considered by a Board of Examiners (BoE) as specified in the Definitive Programme Document. There are two types of Board of Examiners, the Module-level Board of Examiners and the Programme-level Board of Examiners, as detailed below. All Boards of Examiners are delegated the authority by the VETAB to approve assessment results, except for special cases (see Clause 15.8).

15.2 Under the prevailing academic management structure, Module Board(s) should be set up in each Discipline to oversee the Enrichment modules offered by the Discipline. Similarly, the Information Technology, Languages and Student Development Disciplines should each set up Module Board(s) to provide academic management to its respective General Education modules[2]. The Academic Committees may also set up, at their discretion, Module Board(s) for their own respective designated Vocational modules. For all modules with a Module Board, Module-level Board of Examiners should be set up to consider and approve (except special cases) the assessment results of the modules under its ambit and submit the approved student assessment results to Programme-level Boards of Examiners concerned. Special cases should be approved by the Academic Committee of the Discipline offering the modules at the recommendation of the Module-level Board of Examiners. Where appropriate, respective Academic Committees can decide on holding joint Module-level Boards of Examiners.

15.3 The Module-level Board of Examiners normally meets at the end of each semester with at least the following composition:

☐ Chairperson: Chairperson of the Module Board (in case of a Joint Module-level Board of Examiners involving modules of more than one Module Board, he / she should be the Chairperson of one of the Module Boards and appointed by the Academic Director concerned)

☐ Members: All other relevant Module Board Chairpersons (for a Joint Module-level Board of Examiners);
Relevant Module Leader(s); and
Campus Module Coordinator from every offering site of the module(s) concerned

☐ A Secretary

On need basis, External Module Examiner(s) could be invited to attend the meeting at the discretion of the Chairperson.

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[2] As per approval of VETAB vide Paper 08/18, Generic Skills Module Board was set up under the Hospitality Discipline to provide academic management to relevant modules in the generic subject areas, including modules of Information Technology and Whole Person Development under the HD programmes offered by HTI/CCI/ICI.

15.4 The **Programme-level Board of Examiners of a programme will consider and approve the overall performance of all students enrolled on the programme,** and a list of students who will be required to withdraw from the programme. It will also endorse special cases, if any, and award lists including classification of the programme for approval by the relevant Academic Committee. In addition, subject to Clause 15.2 above, the performance of the students in Vocational modules not managed by any Module Board should be considered and approved by the respective Programme-level Board of Examiners (except special cases) designated by the Academic Committee concerned.

15.5 The Programme-level Board of Examiners shall comprise at least the following:
 □ Chairperson: An academic staff member at the Principal Lecturer / Training Consultant / Principal Instructor rank or above appointed by the Academic Director
 □ Members: Programme External Examiners of the programmes under the Board of Examiners' purview; and Programme Leaders of programmes under the Board of Examiners' purview
 □ Co-opted Members: Other teaching staff (including all Campus Coordinators of the programmes if there is more than one operating campus, and Module Leaders of Vocational modules of the programmes not managed by any Module Board) invited at the discretion of the Board of Examiners; and One representative from another Discipline at Senior Lecturer rank or above or equivalent as the Observer, invited at the discretion of the Academic Committee
 □ A Secretary

15.6 In the exceptional circumstance that an External Examiner is unable to attend a Programme-level Board of Examiners meeting which requires his/her attendance, he / she must submit a written report to the Chairperson of the Board commenting on the students' overall performances. If a Programme-level Board of Examiners is conducted without the presence of any External Examiner, the recommendations of the Board must be forwarded to the External Examiner(s) concerned for endorsement.

15.7   The Academic Committee has the authority to consider and approve all special cases submitted by the relevant Module / Programme Board of Examiners for the modules / programmes under its purview, and, where applicable, the award lists including classification, under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

15.8   Assessment is as much a matter of collective judgement as of calculation.   It is impossible to predict all of the exceptional circumstances that are likely to affect a small minority of the students and it is unrealistic to legislate for such cases.   Hence, in exceptional circumstances, each Board of Examiners is empowered to make recommendations on special cases, provided that academic standards are not jeopardized and students are not unfairly treated.   All recommendations will require the ratification of the Academic Committee under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

16.   Appeals

16.1   A student may appeal the decision of a Board of Examiners, and/or the rulings of a Disciplinary Board on an allegation of cheating in line with the Appeals Regulations approved by the VETAB.   Appeals must be received within 7 working days from the day the assessment results are published, or within 3 working days from the day the student is informed of the decision of the Disciplinary Board.

(GARs and Supplementary Information revised at the 62nd VETAB Meeting, vide Paper VETAB 06/21.   Latest version of GARs and Supplementary Information updated as per Paper VETAB 11/21.)

VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL

GENERAL ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR
DIPLOMA OF FOUNDATION STUDIES[1] PROGRAMME

(for implementation with effect from November 2022)

Preamble

The purpose of this set of General Academic Regulations is to provide the academic framework for the operation of the Diploma of Foundation Studies (DFS) Programme under the 334 Academic Structure. They have been formulated to conform to good practice in, and gain accreditation from, both local and international institutions. The way in which the DFS programme meets these regulations is detailed within the Definitive Programme Document.

The regulations have been designed to achieve a balance between the requirements of maintaining relevant academic standards and not placing unreasonable demands or conditions on students who take the programme.

In general, each Board of Examiners is empowered to make decisions according to this set of regulations under the delegated authority of the Vocational Education and Training Academic Board (VETAB), or where appropriate, make recommendations on special cases, provided that academic standards are not jeopardised and students are not unfairly treated. All recommendations will require the ratification of the Foundation Studies Board (FSB) under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

As needs arise, the VETAB reserves the right to amend these regulations. Such changes will normally be implemented at the start of the Academic Year following the approval. In case the changes need to be implemented earlier, every effort will be made not to disadvantage students in their current year of study. All students must be informed in writing of the regulations that are in force for the Academic Year they are studying. It is the responsibility of the FSB to ensure that the regulations detailed in the Definitive Programme Document for the DFS Programme under its purview comply with this set of General Academic Regulations.

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[1] Formerly named "Foundation Diploma (Level 3)"

1. Definitions

1.1 A **Programme** is a set of inter-related studies, defined through a set of programme objectives and learning outcomes to be achieved and by a curriculum structure, leading to a specific qualification.

1.2 A Programme can be further divided into **Streams**. A Stream reflects the field of specialism within the Programme and consists of clusters of related modules on a (number of) theme(s). A Programme can have more than one Stream or no Stream.

1.3 A **Module** is a block of learning defined by a syllabus, including aims, intended learning outcomes, learning and teaching strategies, assessment plans, and, if necessary, pre-requisites, co-requisites and/or anti-requisites. It is a constituent part of a programme contributing to the award. Each module is assigned with a Qualifications Framework (QF) Level and the number of Credits that it carries (see Clauses 1.8 and 1.15).

1.4 The **Notional Learning Hours (NLHs)** of a Module is the amount of time an average student would take to acquire the learning outcomes. Notional learning hours are a summation of Contact Hours, Self-study Hours and Assessment Hours. **Contact Hours** are the amount of time spent by a student in direct contact with the teaching staff / workplace trainers of a programme, including attendance in class tutorials, conducting experiments in laboratories under supervision, etc. **Self-study Hours** are the amount of time spent by a student normally without direct contact with the teaching staff / workplace trainers, including time spent on self-studying, preparation for tests and examinations, research, writing reports for projects and work placement, studying on-line materials, etc. **Assessment Hours** refer to the amount of time spent by students in scheduled examinations, tests and other related assessment activities not yet included in contact hours and self-study hours. (See Clause 1.15).

1.5 An **Academic Year** is divided into three consecutive blocks of academic activities called **Semesters.** Normally, the Programme is completed within three semesters and six semesters in full-time and part-time modes respectively.

1.6   Modules of a programme are normally grouped by Semesters. Major teaching, learning and assessment activities of a module are normally completed within one single Semester.

1.7   **Maximum Registration Period** is the maximum number of years in which a student is allowed to complete a programme.   The Maximum Registration Periods for studying the DFS Programme through full-time and part-time routes are 2 years and 5 years respectively (see Clauses 2.6 and 11.1).

1.8   **Qualifications Framework Level** refers to the level under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF).   As a whole, the DFS Programme is pegged at QF Level 3.   The majority (i.e. over 50%) of the total number of Credits should be at QF Level 3.

1.9   **Core Modules** refer to those modules that are critical to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude that are considered essential for the award of DFS in the programme/stream of studies concerned.   They must be successfully completed to form part of the Credit Requirements.   **Elective Modules** are modules that a student can elect to make up the remaining Credit Requirements for the DFS award in the programme/stream concerned. A Programme may have no Elective Module.

1.10   The **Optional Module(s)** are module(s) that a student can choose to study in addition to Core and Elective modules (see Clause 1.9) but does/do not form part of the Credit Requirements of the Programme and is/are not included in the calculation of Award Module Average (AMA) (see Clause 1.21). Optional module(s) cannot replace any module of the generic or vocational components of the Programme.

1.11   The **Pre-requisite** of a module is the requirement that must be fulfilled before a student can register in this particular module.   A student must pass the Pre-requisite module before registering in the module concerned.

1.12   The **Co-requisite** of a module refers to other module(s) that must be taken concurrently with or prior to registration in this particular module.

1.13   The **Anti-requisite** modules are modules where there is sufficient overlap in their contents to make it inappropriate for students to earn Credits from more

than one of these modules. Students will normally be restricted from registration in a Module when they have already registered or earned Credits from a corresponding anti-requisite module.

1.14   A **Definitive Programme Document** details the aims and objectives of the programme, the minimum entry requirements, programme content, module syllabuses, learning and teaching strategies, assessment plan, programme management and operation, resources, rules governing assessment and awards, and other relevant information.

1.15   Each Module carries a number of **QF Credits (Credits)** which is an integer and is normally proportional to the number of Notional Learning Hours. One Credit is equivalent to 10 Notional Learning Hours in studying for a Module.   The Programme normally has a minimum of 173 Credits.

1.16   In order to be eligible for an award, a student must have satisfactorily completed the **Credit Requirements** of the award in terms of the type, the number of Credits and the QF Level and other requirements as stipulated in the Definitive Programme Document, within the Maximum Registration Period from the date of first enrolment in the Programme (period of not taking any module is counted).

1.17   The **Module Mark (M)** is the weighted average of the marks of all assessments of a student's achievement in a Module expressed in percentage. The maximum mark and minimum mark for a module are 100% and 0 respectively.

1.18   The **Module Grade** is a letter grade derived from the student's performance in the Module which is assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, for which a three-tier grading scheme, i.e. Fail (F), Pass (P) and Pass with Merit (M) may be used if necessary.   A Grade "M" will be assigned to pass Modules with module marks of 70% or above.   The grade/mark of these modules will not be included in the calculation of the Semester Module Average, Cumulative Module Average or Award Module Average (see Clause 6.4).

1.19   The **Semester Module Average (SMA)** is a weighted average of the Module Marks of the Modules studied by a student in the Semester.   It reflects the student's performance in a Semester.   The SMA is defined as:

$$SMA = \frac{\sum(M_i C_i)}{\sum(C_i)}$$

where

- Mi is the Module Mark of the ith module scored by the student in the semester concerned and Ci is the number of Credit carried by the ith module.
- The summation is over all Modules studied by the student during the Semester, including passed and failed Modules but excluding modules assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, Modules completed through Credit Transfer (see Clause 3.1) and exempted Modules (see Clauses 3.2 & 3.3).
- All Module Marks used for the calculation of SMA are marks after reassessment and/or condonement, if any. (See Clauses 7.2, 7.3 and 8.2)
- If a student has passed all modules studied in the semester, including modules passed after condonement and/or reassessment, the minimum SMA that the student will get is 40%. (See Clauses 7.2 and 8.2)

1.20   The **Cumulative Module Average (CMA)** is the weighted average of the Marks of all Modules that the student has studied in the Programme up to the time of calculation. Modules assessed on Pass/Fail basis, exempted and Optional Modules are excluded whereas Modules completed through Credit Transfer (see Clause 3.1) are included in the calculation. For modules which have been failed and re-taken, only the Module Marks obtained in the last attempt are used in the calculation. The CMA in general reflects the performance of a student in the Programme up to the time of calculation. All Marks used in the calculation of the CMA are marks after re-assessment and/or condonement, if any.

1.21   The **Award Module Average (AMA)** of a student is a weighted average, calculated upon successful completion of the Credit Requirements leading to the award, of the Marks of all relevant Modules in the Programme the student has obtained.   It reflects the student's overall performance in the Programme.

The class of award a student obtains is mainly determined by the AMA (see Clause 12.1).

The AMA is defined as:

$$AMA = \frac{\Sigma(MC)}{\Sigma(C)}$$

where

- The summation includes Modules completed through credit transfer but excludes Modules assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, failed Modules, exempted Modules and optional Modules.
- For an internal transfer student, the summation covers also modules studied and passed by the student in other VTC courses/programmes provided that these modules can be mapped onto modules in the existing programme.
- All Module marks used for the calculation of AMA are marks after condonement, if any.   (See Clause 8.2)
- For Module attempted more than once, the Module Mark obtained at a successful, hence the last, attempt (see Clause 4.7) will be used in the calculation of AMA.
- If a student has passed all modules of the Programme, including modules passed after condonement and/or reassessment, the minimum AMA that the student will get is 40%.

1.22　When calculating the Semester Module Average (SMA), Cumulative Module Average (CMA) and the Award Module Average (AMA), the results are rounded up to the nearest 0.1%.

2.　Enrolment and Transfer Between Programmes/Streams

2.1　The **General Minimum Entry Requirement** to the DFS programme is Completion of Secondary 6, or equivalent.

2.2　To be enrolled on the Programme, students must fulfil the entry requirements detailed in the Definitive Programme Document.

2.3   The regulations for admission of applicants with advanced standing must be defined in the Definitive Programme Document.   The granting of advanced standing status is based on the applicant's overall academic qualifications, instead of on a module-for-module basis.   An applicant with advanced standing normally is in possession of a formal qualification which is substantially higher than the minimum entry requirement for the programme.

2.4   A student may not be simultaneously enrolled in more than one full-time Programme leading to a qualification in VTC without the prior approval of the Programme Board Chairperson(s) concerned or his/her delegate(s).

2.5   Transfer from one Programme/Stream to another must be approved by the Programme Board Chairperson of the receiving Programme/Stream or his/her delegate.   Enrolment on a Programme/Stream after successful completion of another VTC Programme/Stream is considered a new admission instead of transfer.

2.6   Upon transfer, the student's Marks and Grades and corresponding Credits of relevant completed Modules are transferred to the corresponding Modules of the receiving programme, for the purpose of calculating the CMA and AMA (see Clause*s* 1.20 and 1.21), subject to the conditions laid down under Clause 3.1.   Since these Modules will not be studied by the student after the transfer, the marks will not be used for calculating the SMA (see Clause 1.19).   The time already devoted to the old Programme/Stream is counted towards the Maximum Registration Period for the new Programme.

3.   Credit Transfer and Module Exemption

3.1   **Credit Transfer** is made on an individual module basis.   Credit Transfer is normally based on formal academic achievements obtained within and/or outside VTC, on the condition that the module concerned is identical in terms of the number of Credits, intended learning outcomes, QF level and assessment standards.   Upon approval, the student will earn Credits of the corresponding Modules thereby contributing towards the Programme/Stream he/she aims for.

3.2   Individual **Module Exemption** is normally granted based on formal academic achievements and/or relevant experience with documented evidence of attainment of the required learning outcomes and must be defined in the Definitive Programme Document.   Where required, assessments on the attainment may be conducted.   A student may also be granted, on other justifiable grounds such as disabilities, Module Exemption from studying a module which forms a requirement of the award he/she aims for.

3.3   When permission of Module Exemption is granted, the student will not earn credits from the module concerned.   The credit requirements for the Programme/Stream for the student concerned will also be adjusted accordingly.   The exemption granted shall be reflected in the student's Transcript of Study.

3.4   A student is not allowed to meet credit requirements of the Programme/Stream through 100% Credit Transfer.   Also, a student is not allowed Module Exemption for more than 50% of the total **remaining number of the Credits** of the Programme/Stream **after Credit Transfer**, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 3.2) should normally not constitute more than 25% of the total remaining number of Credits of the Programme/Stream after Credit Transfer.

3.5   The guidelines for granting Credit Transfer and Module Exemption must be defined in the Definitive Programme Document, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 3.2) is considered on a case-by-case basis.   Approval of Credit Transfer and Module Exemption as defined in the Definitive Programme Document rests with the respective Head of Department or Section Head.

4.   Module Selection and Study Load

4.1   For Modules which have pre-requisite/co-requisite/anti-requisite modules, a student must satisfy the pertinent requirement as stipulated in the relevant syllabus before taking the module concerned.

4.2   Registration for modules is subject to availability of places and meeting the pre-requisite/co-requisite/anti-requisite requirements, if any.

4.3   Modules in the DFS Programme should be arranged in a way such that students can complete the Programme within the nominal programme duration.

4.4   Students studying the Programme through the full-time route are normally allowed to take a total Credit of between 50 and 100 for Semesters 1 and 2; and no more than a total Credit of 50 for Semester 3.   For those students taking the part-time route, they are allowed to take a total Credit of normally no more than 60.   Within this range, a student is allowed to choose the modules he/she wants to study for a semester subject to the condition stated in Clause 4.2 above.

4.5   Approval from the DFS Programme Board is required if the limit set out in Clause 4.4 is exceeded, with the exception of the following:

   a)   The number of remaining credits that a student is required to complete the Programme is less than the lower limit;

   b)   The registration of some modules is prohibited by Clause 4.1 or Clause 4.2

4.6   There is no limit on the number of attempts for a student to repeat a failed Module within the Maximum Registration Period.

4.7   A student is not allowed to re-study a Module which he/she has already passed.

5.   Attendance

5.1   The minimum attendance requirement for an individual module is 80% and 70% of the maximum attendance for full-time and part-time students respectively, where maximum possible attendance includes normal class attendance only.

5.2   Students not satisfying the minimum attendance requirement of a module shall not be allowed to sit for the final examination nor be awarded a Module

Mark/Grade, unless approval of the Campus Principal concerned has been granted.

6. Assessments, Marks and Grades

6.1   The **minimum passing mark and Grade** for a Module is 40% and Grade P respectively.

6.2   The forms of assessment for a Module may include **Continuous Assessment** (CA), such as assignments, tests, laboratory work and others, and **Examination**.   The contributions of Continuous Assessment and Examination to the Module Mark must be specified in the Definitive Programme Document.

6.3   Module Marks shall be expressed as a percentage, rounded up to the nearest integer value.   When a student fails to obtain the minimum pass mark for a Module, the Module Mark (M) will be represented by the Module Grade F in the student's Transcript of Study (see Clause 10.2).

6.4   For Modules which are assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, a three-tier grading scheme, i.e. Fail (F), Pass (P) and Pass with Merit (M) may be used if necessary and shown on the Transcript of Study to reflect the student's performance in the Modules.   A Grade "M" will be assigned to Modules with module marks of 70% or above.   The grade/mark of these modules will not be included in the calculation of the Semester Module Average, Cumulative Module Average or Award Module Average (see Clauses 1.19, 1.20 and 1.21).

6.5   The symbol I, which represents incompletion, may be used by the Board of Examiners when a student has not satisfied the assessment requirements of a Module but it is satisfied that the student had mitigating circumstances beyond his/her control which prevented the completion of one or more forms of assessment.   The Board will also decide on the additional work necessary for the student to reach a passing mark and the date by which it must be completed.

7. Reassessments

7.1   There is no reassessment on a module basis (i.e. one reassessment to cover CA and Examination). Students who fail a module will be required to re-take the module concerned or to take another elective module, if the failed module is not a core module of the programme of study the student is pursuing.

7.2   Normally, there is no reassessment for individual assessments within a module (which can be Continuous Assessment and/or Examination). However, if reassessment for individual assessment(s) within a module is considered necessary, its provision and the criteria, if any, based on which a student is allowed to take the reassessment (e.g. meeting certain attendance and/or performance requirements), should be laid down and approved by the DFS Programme Board in consultation with the relevant Discipline Academic Committees. The actual mark that a student gets in the reassessment, subject to a maximum of 40%, will be used for computing the student's overall result in the module.

7.3   For students who are granted reassessment for individual assessments within a module based on mitigating factors beyond the students' control, the actual mark obtained in the reassessment of the component concerned will be used in the calculation of the Module Mark/Grade.   The approval for students to be reassessed for Continuous Assessment(s)/ Examination rests with the relevant Head of Department/ Section Head in accordance with the criteria laid down by the DFS Programme Board.

7.4   Under any circumstances, there will not be a second reassessment for individual assessments.

7.5   The Chairperson of the DFS Programme Board should seek approval from the VETPQC for modules that are, due to their unique nature, unable to conform to the above assessment and reassessment arrangements.

8. **Condonement**

8.1   A student may be granted a pass in a failed Module by condonement on very special grounds which affect the student's academic performance in the module.   A student may have more than one module with condonement but should normally not have more than 20% of the Credits earned through condonement in a Semester.   Condonement requires the recommendation of the Board of Examiners and the approval of the relevant Discipline Academic Committee and/or the FSB.   All condonement cases should be reported to the VETAB on annual basis.

8.2   A student who passes a Module by condonement shall be awarded a Grade P for Pass/Fail Modules or receive a Mark of 40% for the Module condoned. The changed Module Grade or Mark shall be recorded in the Student Records System and shown on the student's Transcript of Study.   The change, however, will affect the calculation of the SMA, CMA and AMA (see Clauses 1.19, 1.20 and 1.21).

9. **Assessment Regulations**

9.1   All assessments, including reassessments, shall follow the assessment regulations authorized by the VETAB.   The Board may decide, from time to time, to introduce additional regulations governing invigilation, the conduct of examinations and the judgement of allegations of cheating as appropriate.

10. **Transcript of Study**

10.1   The Transcript of Study is issued at the end of a Semester and is a record of the performance of a student expressed in the form of the QF Levels, Credits and Module Grades/Marks achieved in the Modules studied (including exempted, optional and transferred modules).

10.2   Upon graduation, only the Credits earned, the QF Levels and Module Grades/Marks of the Modules studied (including exempted, optional and transferred modules), will be shown on the Transcript.   **It will not contain any information on failed Modules.**

11. Extension of Maximum Registration Period, Withdrawal and Dismissal

11.1 A student will normally be de-registered from the programme upon reaching the Maximum Registration Period (see Clause 1.7). Under very special circumstances, a student may apply with supporting and justifiable grounds for an extension of the Maximum Registration Period. Applications for extension of Maximum Registration Period will require the approval of the Campus Principal concerned. The maximum extension period allowed will be normally 12 months.

11.2 A student whose Cumulative Module Average is below 40% by the end of an Academic Year will normally be required to withdraw from the Programme. Notwithstanding this, special consideration should be made on individual merits if the student concerned joins the Programme in the middle of an academic year or has not studied any modules in a/some semester(s) of the academic year concerned.

11.3 In order to be eligible for an award, a student must have satisfactorily completed the Credit Requirements, and other requirements as stated in the Definitive Programme Document, within the Maximum Registration Period from the date of first enrolment on the Programme (see Clauses 1.7 and 2.6). A student who fails to meet this time scale shall be required to withdraw from the Programme, unless prior approval has been given to extend the Maximum Registration Period (see Clause 11.1).

11.4 A student may officially withdraw from the Programme by notifying the department in writing of his/her intention to do so.

11.5 A student shall be deemed to have unofficially withdrawn from the Programme if, without prior notification to the department, he/she has not been present for scheduled programme activities for a period of four consecutive weeks.

11.6 The VTC may, at any time, require a student who is found to have committed serious violation of prevailing regulations to terminate his/her studies on disciplinary grounds. Normally, this requires the approval of the Campus Principal concerned at the recommendation of the Campus-based Student Disciplinary Committee.

12. Awards

12.1   The DFS award shall normally be classified according to the student's Award Module Average (AMA) as follows: -

Classification	Range of AMA
Distinction	75% ≤ AMA
Credit	65% ≤ AMA < 75%
Pass	40% ≤ AMA < 65%

12.2   The Board of Examiners has the discretion to adjust the Distinction and/or Credit boundaries by no more than 2 percentage marks without further approval from the FSB under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

12.3   Any other adjustment of the grade boundaries must be based on sound academic judgement and will require the approval of the FSB under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

12.4   Where a student has failed to complete the requirements for the award as stated in the Definitive Programme Document, the Programme Board of Examiners may, as an exceptional case, consider the recommendation of an **Aegrotat** award on strong documented medical grounds or, in very exceptional cases, may consider the recommendation of an award for well-documented reasons other than medical grounds.   Such recommendations would require the formal approval of the FSB under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

13. External Examiners

13.1   Each Programme/Stream will have an **External Examiner** to oversee the overall academic standards/performance of students in the Programme/Stream.   He/She should be nominated by the Chairperson of the DFS Programme Board and appointed by the FSB to perform duties as specified in the Regulations for External Examiners approved by the VETAB.

13.2   Nominated by the Chairpersons of the Module Boards which own the modules and appointed by the respective governing Academic Committee, External Module Examiners will be appointed for individual common modules (e.g. Vocational English, Mathematics modules) to oversee the academic standards/performance of students in the modules concerned.   An External Module Examiner may be assigned to oversee a number of related modules.

14. Boards of Examiners

14.1   The performance of all students studying in a Module/Programme should be considered by a Board of Examiners as specified in the Definitive Programme Document.

14.2   There are two types of Board of Examiners, the Module-level Board of Examiners and the Programme-level Board of Examiners.   All Boards of Examiners are delegated the authority by the VETAB to approve assessment results, except for special cases (see Clause 14.9)

14.3   There will be Module Boards set up on individual common modules, (e.g. Vocational English, Mathematics modules) to provide academic management to its respective Modules.   For modules with a Module Board, **Module-level Board of Examiners (BoE) should be set up to consider and approve (except special cases) the assessment results of the Modules under its ambit** and submit the approved student assessment results to Programme-level BoEs concerned.   Special cases should be approved by the Academic Committee of the discipline offering the modules at the recommendation of the Module-level BoE.   Where appropriate, joint Module-level BoEs may be conducted.

14.4   The Module-level Board of Examiners normally meets at the end of each Semester with at least the following composition:

   ● Chairperson:
       Chairperson of the Module Board (In case of a Joint Module-level Board of Examiners involving modules of more than one Module Board,

he/she should be the Chairperson of one of the Module Boards and appointed by the Academic Director concerned)

- Members:
  All other relevant Module Board Chairpersons (for a Joint Module-level Board of Examiners);
  Relevant Module Leader(s); and
  Campus Module Coordinator from every offering site of the module(s) concerned.
- A Secretary

On need basis, External Module Examiner(s) could be invited to attend the meeting at the discretion of the Chairperson.

14.5 **The Programme-level Board of Examiners of a Programme will consider and approve the overall performance of all students enrolled on the Programme** and a list of students who will be required to withdraw from the programme. It will also endorse special cases, if any, and award lists including award classification for approval by the FSB.

14.6 The Programme-level Board of Examiners shall comprise at least of the following:

- Chairperson:
  Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson of the DFS Programme Board
- Members:
  Programme External Examiners of the programmes under the BoE's purview; and
  All Stream Leaders of Streams under the Programme
- Co-opted Members:
  Other teaching staff (including all Campus Coordinators of the DFS Programme if there are more than one operating campus and Module Leaders of Modules not managed by any Module Board) invited at the discretion of the BoE; and One Representative from another discipline at Senior Lecturer rank or above or equivalent as the Observer, invited at the discretion of the DFS Programme Board.
- A Secretary.

14.7   In the exceptional circumstance that an External Examiner is unable to attend a Programme-level Board of Examiners meeting which requires his/her attendance, he/she must submit a written report to the Chairperson of the Board commenting on the students' overall performances.   If a Programme-level Board of Examiners is conducted without the presence of any External Examiner, the recommendations of the Board must be forwarded to the External Examiner(s) concerned for endorsement.

14.8   The FSB has the authority to consider and approve all special cases submitted by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners for the programmes under its purview, and, where applicable, the award lists including classification, under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

14.9   Assessment is as much a matter of collective judgement as of calculation.   It is impossible to predict all of the exceptional circumstances that are likely to affect a small minority of the students and it is unrealistic to legislate for such cases.   Hence, in exceptional circumstances, each Board of Examiners is empowered to make recommendations on special cases, provided that academic standards are not jeopardised and students are not unfairly treated. All recommendations will require the ratification of the FSB under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

15. Appeals

15.1   A student may appeal against the decision of a Board of Examiners, and/or the rulings of a Disciplinary Board on an allegation of cheating in line with the Appeals Regulations approved by the VETAB.   Appeals must be received within 7 working days from the day the assessment results are published, or within 3 working days from the day the student is informed of the decision of the Disciplinary Board.

(Revised at the 35th & 37th VETAB Meetings, vide Paper VETAB 08/14 and Paper VETAB 16/14 respectively.   The programme / award title and name of the Programme Board were revised as per VETAB's approval at the 36th and 41st VETAB Meetings, vide Paper VETAB 11/14 and Paper VETAB 02/16 respectively.   The latest version of GARs was updated as per Paper VETAB 12/22)

VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL

**GENERAL ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR
DIPLOMA OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND
DIPLOMA OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION – EARN AND LEARN SCHEME
PROGRAMMES**

(To take effect as from 2021/22 Cohort of Students[1])

Preamble

The purpose of these General Academic Regulations is to provide a framework within which the Diploma of Vocational Education (DVE) and Diploma of Vocational Education – Earn and Learn Scheme (DVE-ELS) Programmes can operate satisfactorily. The way in which the DVE and DVE-ELS Programmes meet these regulations is detailed within the respective Definitive Programme Documents.

The regulations have been designed to achieve a balance between the requirements of maintaining relevant academic standards and not placing unreasonable demands or conditions on the majority of students who attend the Programmes.

The DVE Programmes are designed for Secondary 3 to Secondary 6 school leavers under the 3+3+4 academic structure who wish to pursue a vocational and professional education and training route. The DVE-ELS Programmes are developed mainly for Secondary 3 school leavers who go for apprenticeship training under the ELS to enhance the vocational progression pathway. Operated in the form of a Module Accumulation Programme, the DVE and DVE-ELS Programmes comprise Modules that are defined in terms of Credits. A student earns Credits after successfully completing a module. The Credits can be accumulated leading to specific award(s) under the DVE or DVE-ELS Programmes. A student who has exited the Programme may make use of the Credits they have accumulated for further studies later or on a part-time basis whilst working.

As the need arises, the Vocational Education and Training Academic Board (VETAB) reserves the right to amend these regulations.

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[1] This set of academic regulations is also applicable to students who were admitted before AY2021/22 but later opt to transfer to another DVE/DVE-ELS Programme in or after AY2021/22.

Contents

1. **Definitions**

1.1 A **Programme** is a set of inter-related studies, defined through a set of programme objectives and learning outcomes to be achieved and by a curriculum structure that sets credits and module requirements, leading to one or more specific qualifications.

1.2 A programme can be further divided into **Streams**. A stream reflects the field of specialism within the programme and consists of clusters of related modules on a (number of) theme(s). A programme can have more than one stream or no stream.

1.3 In a **Module Accumulation Programme**, a student is normally enrolled in a programme and chooses one of the awards he/she wishes to pursue. For some programmes, the student may further elect one stream of studies. The student can elect relevant modules to suit his/her needs. He/She earns Credits after successfully completing a module. Subject to the Maximum Registration Period (see Clause 1.12) and Credit Requirements (see Clause 3), the Credits can be accumulated leading to the award he/she aims for and, where applicable, can be used more than once for one or several of the awards under the programme(s).

1.4 A **Semester** is the period during which academic activities are conducted. Normally, an academic year is divided into three consecutive blocks of academic activities called Semesters**.**

1.5 The **Notional Learning Hours** of a Module is the amount of time an average student would take to acquire the learning outcomes. Notional learning hours are a summation of contact hours, self-study hours and assessment hours. **Contact Hours** are the amount of time spent by a student in direct contact with the teaching staff / workplace trainers of a programme, including attendance in class tutorials, conducting experiments in laboratories under supervision, etc. **Self-study Hours** are the amount of time spent by a student normally without direct contact with the teaching staff / workplace trainers, including time spent on self-studying, preparation for tests and examinations, research, writing reports for projects and work placement, studying on-line materials, etc. **Assessment Hours** refer to the amount of time spent by students in scheduled examinations, tests and other related assessment activities not yet included in contact hours and self-study hours.

1.6 A **Module** is a block of learning defined by a syllabus, including aims, intended learning outcomes, pre-requisites and co-requisites (if necessary), learning and teaching strategies and assessment plans. It is a constituent part of a programme contributing to the award(s) under the programme. Each module is assigned with a Qualifications Framework (QF) Level and a Credit Value.

1.7 The **QF Level** of a module is an indicator of the relative depth and complexity of learning, characterised by the Generic Level Descriptors (GLDs) of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework, which set out the generic learning outcomes

of the qualifications located at that level.

1.8 Each module is valued in **QF Credits (Credits)** at a specified QF Level. The Credit value in each module is an integer and is normally proportional to the number of notional learning hours an average student would take to acquire the learning outcomes of the Module. One Credit is equivalent to 10 notional learning hours in the Module.

1.9 The **Pre-requisite** of a module is the requirement that must be fulfilled before a student can register in this particular module. Under circumstances where the pre-requisite is successful completion of another module, a student must pass the pre-requisite module before registering in the module concerned. A student who has been granted module exemption or credit transfer (see Clauses 4.1 and 4.2) for the pre-requisite module based on academic grounds and/or relevant experience (excluding cases where exemption is granted based on other justifiable grounds such as disabilities) will be considered having passed the pre-requisite module as far as pre-requisite requirements are concerned.

1.10 The **Co-requisite** of a module refers to other module(s) that must be taken concurrently with (or prior to registration in) this particular module.

1.11 A **Definitive Programme Document (DPD)** details the aims and objectives of the programme, the general entry requirements, programme contents, module syllabuses, learning and teaching strategies, assessment plans, programme management and operation, resources, rules governing assessment and awards, and other relevant information.

1.12 The **Maximum Registration Period** is the maximum number of years a student is allowed to register in the programme to study for one or several of the awards. The Maximum Registration Periods of the DVE and DVE-ELS Programmes are **six years for full-time study** and **eight years for part-time study.** Approval from the campus Principal concerned is required for extension (normally not more than 12 months) of the Maximum Registration Period (see Clause 9.3).

1.13 **Credit Transfer** refers to granting of Credits in recognition of students' prior learning within and/or outside VTC, upon meeting the condition(s) laid down in Clause 4.1. The Credits earned through Credit Transfer can be used to meet the Credit Requirements of the awards in a programme.

Module Exemption normally refers to the exemption of Credits in recognition of students' prior learning within and/or outside VTC, upon meeting the condition(s) laid down in Clause 4.2. The Credit Requirements of the awards in a programme for the students concerned will be adjusted accordingly when Credits are exempted through Module Exemption (see Clause 4.3).

1.14   Under the DVE and DVE-ELS Programmes, the modules can be categorised as **Generic Modules** and **Vocational Modules**. Generic Modules refer to modules in the generic subject areas, e.g. Vocational English, Vocational Chinese, Information Technology and Mathematics and Structured Whole Person Development (SWPD). Vocational Modules refer to trade-specific modules which, in general, are specific to individual programmes/streams while some of the vocational modules may be common to a number of programmes.

1.15   **Generic Credits** refer to Credits earned from Generic Modules. **Vocational Credits** refer to Credits earned from the Vocational Modules in individual programmes.

1.16   **Core Modules** refer to those modules that are critical to the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills for the individual awards in the programme/stream of studies concerned. Those modules must be successfully completed (with Credits earned) to form part of the Credit Requirements for the respective awards. **Elective Modules** refer to the modules that a student can elect to make up the remaining Credit Requirements for the respective award in the programme/stream of studies concerned. **Optional Modules** are modules that a student can choose to study in addition to Core and Elective modules but does/do not form part of the Credit Requirements of the programme and is/are not included in the calculation of Award Module Average (AMA) (see Clause 1.20). Optional module(s) cannot replace any module of the generic or vocational components of the programme.

1.17   The **Module Mark (MM)** is a weighted average of the marks of all assessments of a student's achievement in the module expressed in percentage ranged from the maximum of 100% to the minimum of zero, and is defined as:

$$MM = \frac{\sum_i W_i A_i}{\sum_i W_i}$$

where A_i is the mark of the ith Assessment scored by the student in the module, and W_i is the weighting of the ith Assessment.

1.18   Expressed in a 5-tier grading system, **Module Grades** are used to report a student's performance in a module, with three pass grades and two fail grades as shown in Table 1 below.   The minimum pass grade is Grade P.

Grade	Academic Performance	
EX	Pass	Excellent
M		Merit
P		Pass
MF	Fail	Marginal Fail
F		Fail

Table 1:   5-Tier Grading System for Reporting Students' Performance in a Module or in an Assessment

1.19   The **Module Grade** received by the student in a module is derived from the corresponding Module Mark received by the student in the module concerned in accordance with the conversion table as shown in Table 2 below:

Module Mark (X)	Module Grade
≥ 75	EX
$65 \leq X < 75$	M
$40 \leq X < 65$	P
$30 \leq X < 40$	MF
< 30	F

Table 2: Module Mark - Module Grade Conversion Table

1.20   The **Award Module Average** **(AMA)** of a student is a weighted average, calculated upon successful completion of the Credit Requirements leading to a specific award in the programme concerned, of the Marks of all relevant Modules the student has obtained. It reflects the student's overall performance in relation to the specific award. The AMA is mainly used to determine the classification of the award a student will obtain.   The AMA is defined as: -

$$AMA = \frac{\sum_i MMiCi}{\sum_i Ci}$$

where

- MMi is the Module Mark of Module i studied by the student for the specific award in the programme concerned, and Ci is the value of Credit of Module i.
- The summation includes those modules whose Credits are earned through Credit Transfer but excludes exempted modules, failed modules and modules assessed on a Pass/Fail basis.

- If a student has successfully completed more Electives Modules and earned more Credits than those required for the award, the Elective Modules shall be ranked according to their Module Marks. In addition to the Core Modules concerned, the summation shall include the Elective Modules with higher Module Marks.
- All Module Marks used for the calculation of AMA are marks before condonement, if any.
- If a student has passed all modules required for the award concerned, including modules passed after condonement, the minimum AMA that the student will get is 40.
- When calculating the AMA, the results are rounded to the nearest one decimal place.

2.   Admission and Enrolment

2.1   The General Minimum Entry Requirement to the DVE and DVE-ELS Programmes is **completion of Secondary 3 or equivalent**. Admission to individual DVE / DVE-ELS Programmes is subject to satisfying the stipulated Entry Requirements as prescribed in the DPD.

2.2   The regulations and conditions for admission of applicants with advanced standing must be defined in the Definitive Programme Document.   The granting of advanced standing status is based on the applicant's overall academic qualifications, instead of on a module-for-module basis. An applicant with advanced standing normally is in possession of a formal qualification which is substantially higher than the minimum entry requirement for the programme.

2.3   An applicant who has completed Secondary 6 or equivalent may be admitted with advanced standing, subject to his/her meeting any additional entry requirements the programme may have. Other qualifications may also be accepted for advanced standing admission, if so deemed appropriate by the Programme Board concerned. All qualifications accepted and the modules to be studied by students admitted with advanced standing in each programme must be specified in the respective DPD.

2.4   A student may not be simultaneously enrolled in more than one full-time Programme leading to a qualification in VTC without the prior approval of the Programme Board Chairperson(s) concerned or his/her delegates.

2.5   A student enrolled to a DVE / DVE-ELS Programme normally pursues the respective DVE / DVE-ELS award. DVE students may choose to exit with the intermediate award (see Clauses 11.1 and 11.2). For some DVE Programmes, the student*s* may further elect one stream of studies.

2.6   Transfer from one Programme/Stream to another must be approved by the Programme Board Chairperson of the receiving Programme/Stream or his/her

delegates. Enrolment on a Programme/Stream after successful completion of another VTC Programme/Stream is considered a new admission instead of transfer.

2.7   If a student is transferred to a DVE / DVE-ELS Programme from another DVE / DVE-ELS Programme or from another VTC programme/course, the time already devoted to the old programme/course is counted towards the Maximum Registration Period (Clause 1.12) for the DVE / DVE-ELS Programme.

3.   Credit Requirements

3.1   In order to be eligible for any of the awards under the DVE / DVE-ELS Programmes, a student must have satisfactorily completed the **Credit Requirements** in terms of the type, the number and the QF Level and other requirements for the respective awards, as stipulated in the DPD, within the Maximum Registration Period from the date of first enrolment in the Programme (period of deferment counted).   The Credit Requirements include:

(a)   Core Generic Credit Requirements – The requirements for individual types of awards are common to all DVE programmes/streams of studies; whereas those for the DVE-ELS award are common to all DVE- ELS programmes. A student must accumulate the required number of Generic Credits at specified levels in the designated Core Generic Modules;

(b)   Core Vocational Credit Requirements – The requirements for individual awards are specific to each DVE programme/stream of studies; whereas those for the DVE-ELS award are specific to each DVE-ELS Programme. A student must accumulate the required number of Vocational Credits at specified levels in the designated Core Vocational Modules of the programme/stream he/she studies; and

(c)   Elective Credit Requirements (for DVE Programmes only) - A student may elect from a suite of designated Vocational and/or Generic Modules to make up the remaining Credit Requirements in order to qualify for the award in the programme/stream he/she studies. The requirements for individual types of awards may vary from programme/stream to programme/stream.

3.2 A DVE Programme normally has an intermediate award (see Clauses 11.1 and 11.2), the Certificate of Vocational Education (CVE). The **Minimum Credit Requirements** and **Normal Study Duration** for the DVE and CVE awards are summarized as follows:

Award	Exit QF Level	Minimum Credit Requirements	Normal Study Duration	
			Full-time	Part-time
Diploma of Vocational Education (DVE)*	3	380	~ 3 Years	4 ~ 5 Years
Certificate of Vocational Education (CVE)	2	160	1.5 ~ 2 Years	2 ~ 3 Years

The normal study duration for students admitted to DVE Programme with advanced standing status based on completion of Secondary 6 (see Clause 2.3) is 1 year through full-time route and 2 years through part-time route.

3.3 The **Minimum Credit Requirements** and **Normal Study Duration** for the DVE-ELS award are summarized as follows:

Award	Exit QF Level	Minimum Credit Requirements	Normal Study Duration
Diploma of Vocational Education - Earn and Learn Scheme (DVE-ELS)	3	260	Full-time: 1 Year AND Part-time: 2 ~ 3 Years

3.4 Where applicable, Credits earned through successful completion of the modules of the DVE / DVE-ELS Programmes (see Clause 1.3) or Credit Transfer (see Clause 4.1) can be used more than once to meet the Credit Requirements of the awards under the Programmes.

4. Credit Transfer and Module Exemption

4.1 **Credit Transfer** (see Clause 1.13) is made on an individual module basis. Credit Transfer is normally based on formal academic achievements obtained within and/or outside VTC, on the condition that the module concerned is identical in terms of the number of Credits, intended learning outcomes, QF level and assessment standards. Upon approval, the student will earn Credits of the corresponding Modules thereby contributing towards the awards of the Programme.

4.2   Individual **Module Exemption** (see Clause 1.13) is normally granted based on formal academic achievements.   A student with other relevant prior learning and verifiable skills, knowledge and competencies acquired before the time of application may also apply for Module Exemption.   Where required, assessments on the attainment may be conducted. A student may also be granted, on other justifiable grounds such as disabilities, Module Exemption from studying a module which forms a requirement of the award he/she aims for.

4.3   When permission of Module Exemption is granted, the student will not earn credits from the module concerned and the credit requirements for the relevant award(s) for the student concerned will also be adjusted accordingly. The exemption granted shall be reflected in the student's Transcript of Study.

4.4   A student is not allowed to meet credit requirements of an award under the DVE / DVE-ELS Programme through 100% Credit Transfer.   Also, a student is not allowed Module Exemption for more than 50% of the total **remaining number of the Credits** required for an award **after Credit Transfer**, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 4.2) should normally not constitute more than 25% of the total remaining number of Credits required for an award after Credit Transfer.

4.5   For students admitted with advanced standing status (see Clause 2.2), Clause 4.4 applies to the part of curriculum these students are required to study.

4.6   The guidelines for granting Credit Transfer and Module Exemption must be defined in the DPD, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 4.2) is considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval of Credit Transfer and Module Exemption rests with the DVE Programme Board.

5.   Module Registration

5.1   Registration for modules is subject to availability of places and meeting the pre-requisite/co-requisite requirements.

5.2   A student shall plan his/her pace of study in pursuing the award(s) he/she is aiming for within the Maximum Registration Period. The choice of the electives is at the discretion of the student, subject to the availability of places and the pre-requisite/co-requisite requirements. The campus may decide not to offer one or more Elective Modules because of resource constraints, even though these electives are included in the Programmes.

5.3   A student is not allowed to re-study a Module which he/she has already passed.

5.4   There is no limit to the number of attempts for a student to repeat a failed module.

5.5　If the failed module(s) is/are Elective Module(s), the student can elect the failed Module(s) or other Elective Module(s) as required to make up the remaining Credit Requirements for the award subject to the offering of the Module(s) and availability of places.

6.　Study Load

6.1　A full-time student shall normally take not less than 450 contact hours[2] in an academic year with the exception of the following; otherwise, he/she will be treated as a part-time student:

(a)　the student chooses to opt for exit after the completion of the intermediate award he/she studies, and the student needs less than 450 contact hours to complete the Award; and/or

(b)　the registration of some modules is prohibited by pre-requisite requirements. Under such circumstances, if the modules concerned are Core Modules or Elective Modules (which are essential for the student to elect in order to make up the remaining Credit Requirements for the award concerned as no other electives are offered), the student must elect the pre-requisite modules as necessary in order to meet the pre-requisite requirements. However, the student shall still elect other modules as far as possible subject to pre-requisite/co-requisite requirements in order to meet the contact hour requirements.

6.2　A student shall not take more than 85 Credits of modules in each of Semesters 1 and 2, and not more than 55 Credits of modules in Semester 3. Approval from the campus Principal concerned is required if the limit is exceeded.

7.　Attendance

7.1　The minimum attendance requirement for an individual module is 80% and 70% of the maximum possible attendance for full-time and part-time students respectively, where the maximum possible attendance includes normal class attendance only. Students not satisfying the minimum attendance requirement of a module shall not be awarded a module mark/grade, unless approval of the campus Principal concerned has been granted. (See also Clause 9.6) Individual modules may impose a higher percentage as appropriate, subject to the approval of Foundation Studies Board (for Vocational Modules) or the relevant Academic Committee(s) (for Generic Modules).

2　Equivalent to 80-120 Credits on average.

8. Assessments, Marks and Grades

Assessments

8.1 The assessment of a Module may take the form of any one or any combination of the following: class work, written work, assignments, laboratory work, projects, presentations, portfolios, artefacts, oral examinations, tests, examinations and others. In general, the assessments are categorised into **Topic Assessments** and **Integrated Assessments**:

- A Topic Assessment (TA) is to be administered on completion of each or a group of topic area(s) in the module. It is to provide information/feedback on the effectiveness of learning and teaching of the topic area(s) and to inform on students' performance in the related part(s) of the module.

- An Integrated Assessment (IA) is to evaluate students' overall comprehension and application of the knowledge and skills learned in the module. A successful attempt of an Integrated Assessment will call for, on the part of the students, the ability to integrate what has been learned in individual topics.

8.2 The assessments shall be conducted in accordance with the **Module Assessment Guidelines** for the DVE / DVE-ELS Programmes.

8.3 A student's performance in individual assessments of a module can be expressed in marks or grades as appropriate. If marks are given, the maximum mark is 100 with 40 being the minimum pass mark. If grades are used, same as Module Grades, the evaluation shall also be expressed in a 5-tier grading system, with three pass grades and two fail grades as shown in Table 1 (see Clause 1.18). The minimum pass grade is Grade P.

8.4 If grades are used to express the results of some or all of the assessments in a module, for the purpose of calculating the Module Mark (see Clause 1.17), the grades have to be converted into marks based on Table 3 as shown below:

Assessment Grade	Converted Assessment Mark
EX	81
M	70
P	52.5
MF	35
F	26

Table 3: Assessment Grade – Assessment Mark Conversion Table

8.5   There is no reassessment on a module basis (i.e. one reassessment to cover Topic Assessment and Integrated Assessment). Students who fail a module will be required to re-take the module concerned, or to take another elective module, if the failed module is not a core module of the programme of study the student is pursuing.

8.6   For individual assessments (which can be Topic Assessment and/or Integrated Assessment), if a student fails to achieve the minimum pass grade or mark, i.e. Grade P or 40, where considered appropriate, the student may be allowed to conduct further works and/or be reassessed in order to make up the shortfall. Criteria for granting individual reassessments shall be given in the Assessment Plan.   In general, the following should be observed:

- Only students who obtained Grade MF or not less than 30 marks can be given the chance to be reassessed. The actual marks that a student gets in the reassessment of the assessment component concerned, subject to a maximum of 40%, will be used for computing the overall results in the module.
- For students who are granted reassessment for individual assessments within a module based on mitigating factors beyond the students' control, the actual mark/grade obtained in the reassessment of the assessment component concerned will be used in the calculation of the Module Mark.

8.7   The reassessment so granted can be conducted in a form that is comparable, though not necessarily identical, to the original assessment.

8.8   Under any circumstances, there will not be a second reassessment for individual assessments.

Module Marks and Module Grades

8.9   Module Marks are only used to calculate the overall average scores of a student studying for an award under the DVE / DVE-ELS Programmes, i.e. the Award Module Average (AMA) (see Clause 1.20).

8.10   The Module Mark will not be shown on a student's Transcript. Instead, Module Grades are used to report a student's performance in a module (see Clause 1.18) and only the Module Grades shall be shown on a student's Transcript of Study.

8.11   The Module Grade received by the student in a module is derived from the corresponding Module Mark received by the student in the module (see Clause 1.19).

Condonement

8.12   A student may be granted a pass in a failed module by condonement on very special grounds which affect the student's academic performance in the module. A student may have more than one module with condonement but should normally not have more than 20% of the Credits earned through condonement

in a Semester. The condonement requires the recommendation of the Programme Board of Examiners (BoE) (or Module BoE if the Module concerned is under a Module Board) and the approval of the Foundation Studies Board (FSB) (or the respective Discipline Academic Committee). All condonement cases should be reported to the VETAB on annual basis.

8.13 A student who passes a module by condonement shall be awarded a Grade P for Module Grade while his/her Module Mark will stay unchanged. The changed Module Grade shall be recorded in the Student Records System and shown on the student's Transcript of Study. The change will not affect the calculation of the AMA (See Clause 1.20).

Assessment Regulations
8.14 All assessments shall follow the assessment regulations approved by the VETAB. The Board may decide, from time to time, to introduce additional regulations governing invigilation, the conduct of assessments and the judgement of allegations of cheating as appropriate.

9. Deferment, Withdrawal and Dismissal

Deferment
9.1 Under special circumstances and on justifiable grounds, a student may be permitted to defer his/her studies for a period of up to 12 months. The period of deferment is counted in calculating the Maximum Registration Period (see Clause 1.12). Applications for deferment of studies will require the approval of the campus Principal concerned.

Withdrawal
9.2 A student who acquires less than 40% of the total Credits for the modules taken in each of 2 consecutive semesters (including Semester 3) within the same academic year shall be required to withdraw from the DVE / DVE-ELS Programme.

9.3 At the expiry of the Maximum Registration Period (MRP), a student shall be required to withdraw from the DVE / DVE-ELS Programme, unless approval from the campus Principal concerned is granted for an extension of the MRP which should normally be not more than 12 months (see Clause 1.12).

9.4 A student may officially withdraw from the DVE / DVE-ELS Programme by notifying the campus in writing of his/her intention to do so.

9.5 A student shall be deemed to have unofficially withdrawn from the DVE / DVE-ELS Programme if, without prior approval of the department, he/she has not been present for the scheduled Programme activities for a period of four consecutive weeks.

9.6 A student will not be allowed to continue his/her study at any time during a semester if he/she fails to meet the minimum attendance requirement in 50% or more of the modules studied in that semester, **with the exception of the following:-**

    (a) the student is required to study no more than two modules in that semester for completion of the award he/she aims to exit with; or

    (b) the student can register for no more than two modules in that semester due to prohibition by pre-requisite requirements or no other relevant modules are offered by the campus concerned.

Dismissal

9.7 The campus may, at any time, require a student who is found to have committed serious violation of prevailing regulations to terminate his/her studies on disciplinary grounds.

10. Transcript of Study

10.1 The Transcript of Study is issued at the end of each Semester, and is a record of the performance of a student expressed in the form of the QF Levels, Credits and Module Grades achieved in the Modules studied.

10.2 Upon graduation, only the Credits earned, the QF Levels and Module Grades in the Modules studied (including exempted, optional and transferred modules), will be shown on the Transcript. It will not contain any information on failed modules.

11. Awards

11.1 A DVE Programme normally has an intermediate award, the Certificate of Vocational Education (CVE). Subject to meeting the Credit Requirements and other requirements as stipulated in the respective DPD, students of the programme with an intermediate award may apply to be granted the intermediate award concerned without exiting the programme, and can continue to study the DVE Programme.

11.2 A DVE / DVE-ELS Programme may introduce new intermediate award(s), where appropriate. For such inclusion, approval of the VETAB must be sought and credit and other requirements for the intermediate award must be given in the respective DPD.

11.3 The awards under the DVE / DVE-ELS Programmes shall normally be classified according to the recipient's Award Module Average (AMA) for that particular award as follows:-

Classification	Range of AMA
Distinction	$75 \leq AMA$
Credit	$65 \leq AMA < 75$
Pass	$40 \leq AMA < 65$

11.4 Where a student has failed to complete the Credit Requirements for any of the awards of the DVE / DVE-ELS Programmes, the BoE may, as an exceptional case, consider the recommendation of an Aegrotat award on strong documented medical grounds or, in very exceptional cases, well documented reasons other than medical grounds. Such recommendations would require the formal approval of the FSB under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

11.5 Credits earned, including those earned through Credit Transfer (Clause 4.1), during the Maximum Registration Period are, unless otherwise specified, valid throughout the period for the purpose of claiming awards under the DVE / DVE-ELS Programmes (see Clauses 3.2 and 3.3).

12. External Examiners

12.1 Each programme shall have an External Examiner to oversee the overall academic standards / performance of students in the programme. He/She should be nominated by the Chairperson of the Programme Board and appointed by the FSB to perform duties as specified in the Regulations for External Examiners approved by the VETAB.

12.2 Nominated by the Chairpersons of the Module Boards which own the modules and appointed by the respective governing Discipline Academic Committee, External Module Examiners will be appointed for individual Generic Modules to oversee the academic standards / performance of students in the modules concerned. An External Module Examiner may be assigned to oversee a number of related modules.

13. Boards of Examiners

13.1 The performance of all students studying in the DVE / DVE-ELS Programmes in each Semester shall be considered by a Board of Examiners (BoE). The BoE normally meets at the end of each Semester.

13.2 There are two types of Board of Examiners, the Module-level Board of Examiners and the Programme-level Board of Examiners. All Boards of Examiners are delegated the authority by the VETAB to approve assessment

results, except for special cases and award lists (see Clauses 13.7 and 13.8).

13.3   Under the prevailing academic management structure, the Information Technology, Languages and Student Development Disciplines should each set up Modules Board(s) to provide academic management to its respective Generic Modules. For modules with a Module Board, Module-level Board of Examiners (BoE) should be set up to consider and approve (except special cases) the assessment results of the Modules under its ambit and submit the approved student assessment results to Programme-level BoE concerned. Special cases should be approved by the Discipline Academic Committee of the discipline offering the modules at the recommendation of the Module-level BoE. Where appropriate, respective Discipline Academic Committee can decide on holding joint Module-level BoEs.

13.4   The Module-level BoE normally meets at the end of each Semester, and its minimum composition is: -

- Chairperson:
  Chairperson of the Module Board (in case of a Joint Module-level BoE involving modules of more than one Module Board, he/she should be the Chairperson of one of the Module Boards and appointed by the Academic Director concerned)

- Members:
  All other relevant Module Board Chairpersons (for a Joint Module-level BoEs);
  Relevant Module Leader(s); and
  Campus Module Coordinator from every offering site of the module(s) concerned

- a Secretary.

On need basis, External Module Examiner(s) could be invited to attend the meeting at the discretion of the Chairperson.

13.5   The Programme-level BoE of DVE / DVE-ELS programmes will consider and approve the overall performance of all students enrolled on the Programmes, and a list of students who will be required to withdraw from the Programmes. It will also endorse special cases, if any, and award lists including award classification for approval by the FSB. In addition, subject to Clause 13.3 above, the performance of the students in Modules not managed by any Module Board should be considered and approved by the Programme- level BoE (except special cases) designated by the FSB. Its minimum composition is: -

- Chairperson:
  Chairperson of the Programme Board or his/her representative (who shall normally be an academic staff member at PL rank or above);

- Members:
  External Examiner(s) of the DVE / DVE-ELS Programme(s) concerned;
  Academic Secretary of the Programme Board;
  Programme Leader(s) of the DVE / DVE-ELS Programme(s) concerned (and Campus Coordinators if more than one campus/centre);
- Co-opted Members :
  Other teaching staff invited at the discretion of the BoE; and
- a Secretary.

13.6 In the exceptional circumstance that an External Examiner is unable to attend the Programme-level BoE meeting which requires his/her attendance, he/she must submit a written report to the Chairperson of the Board commenting on the students' overall performance. When such a BoE is conducted without the presence of any External Examiner, the recommendations of the BoE must be forwarded to the External Examiner(s) concerned for endorsement.

13.7 The FSB has the authority to consider and approve all special cases submitted by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners for the programmes under its purview, and, where applicable, the award lists including classification, under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

13.8 Assessment is as much a matter of collective judgement as of calculation. It is impossible to predict all of the exceptional circumstances that are likely to affect a small minority of the students and it is unrealistic to legislate for such cases. Hence, in exceptional circumstances, each BoE is empowered to make recommendations on special cases, provided that academic standards are not jeopardized and students are not unfairly treated. All recommendations will require the ratification of the FSB under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

14. Appeals

14.1 A student may appeal against the decision of a BoE, and/or the rulings of a Disciplinary Board on an allegation of cheating in line with the Appeals Regulations approved by the VETAB. Appeals must be received within 7 working days from the day on which the assessment results are published, or within 3 working days from the day the student is informed of the decision of the Disciplinary Board.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL
GENERAL ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR
DIPLOMA OF VOCATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMMES

Preamble

The purpose of these General Academic Regulations is to provide an academic framework within which the Diploma of Vocational Baccalaureate Programmes (the Programmes) can operate satisfactorily. The way in which the Programmes meet these regulations is detailed within its Definitive Programme Document.

The regulations have been designed to achieve a balance between the requirements of maintaining relevant academic standards and not placing unreasonable demands or conditions on the majority of students who attend the Programmes.

The Programmes are designed for full-time study mainly for Secondary 3 school leavers under the 3+3+4 academic structure who wish to pursue a vocational and professional education and training route when they progress further from the junior secondary level. The Programmes focus on nurturing young aspiring students through a variety of Generic Modules and Vocational Modules.

These modules in the Programmes are defined in terms of Credits. A student earns Credits after successfully completing a module. The Credits can be accumulated leading to Diploma of Vocational Baccalaureate (DVB) award.

As the need arises, the Vocational Education and Training Academic Board (VETAB) reserves the right to amend these regulations.

Contents

1. Definitions

1.1 A **Programme** is a set of inter-related studies, defined through a set of programme objectives and learning outcomes to be achieved and by a curriculum structure that sets credits and module requirements, leading to a specific qualification.

1.2 A **Semester** is the period during which academic activities are conducted. Normally, an academic year is divided into two consecutive blocks of academic activities called Semesters.

1.3 The **Notional Learning Hours** of a Module is the amount of time an average student would take to acquire the learning outcomes. Notional learning hours are a summation of contact hours, self-study hours and assessment hours. **Contact Hours** are the amount of time spent by a student in direct contact with the teaching staff of a programme, including attendance in class tutorials, conducting experiments in laboratories under supervision, etc. **Self-study Hours** are the amount of time spent by a student normally without direct contact with the teaching staff, including time spent on self-study, preparation for tests and examinations, research, writing reports for projects and work placement, studying on-line materials, etc. **Assessment Hours** refer to the amount of time spent by students in scheduled examinations, tests and other related assessment activities not yet included in contact hours and self-study hours.

1.4 A **Module** is a block of learning defined by a syllabus, including aims, intended learning outcomes, pre-requisites and co-requisites (if necessary), learning and teaching strategies and assessment plans. It is a constituent part of a programme contributing to the award under the programme. Each module is assigned with a Qualifications Framework (QF) Level and a Credit Value.

1.5 The **QF Level** of a module is an indicator of the relative depth and complexity of learning, characterised by the Generic Level Descriptors (GLDs) of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework, which set out the generic learning outcomes of the qualifications located at that level.

1.6 Each module is valued in **QF Credits (Credits)** at a specified QF Level. The Credit value in each module is an integer and is normally proportional to the number of notional learning hours an average student would take to acquire the learning outcomes of the Module. One Credit is equivalent to 10 notional learning hours in the Module.

1.7 The **Pre-requisite** of a module is the requirement that must be fulfilled before a student can register in this particular module. Under circumstances where the pre-requisite is successful completion of another

module, a student must pass the pre-requisite module before registering in the module concerned. A student who has been granted credit transfer or module exemption (see Clauses 4.1 and 4.2) for the pre-requisite module based on academic grounds and/or relevant experience (excluding cases where exemption is granted based on other justifiable grounds such as disabilities) will be considered having passed the pre-requisite module as far as pre-requisite requirements are concerned.

The **Co-requisite** of a module refers to other module(s) that must be taken concurrently with (or prior to registration in) this particular module.

1.8 A **Definitive Programme Document (DPD)** details the aims and objectives of the programme, the general entry requirements, programme contents, module syllabuses, learning and teaching strategies, assessment plans, programme management and operation, resources, rules governing assessment and awards, and other relevant information.

1.9 The **Maximum Registration Period** is the maximum number of years a student is allowed to complete the Programme for the Diploma of Vocational Baccalaureate (DVB) award. While the normal period to complete a DVB Programme is 3 years of full-time study, the Maximum Registration Period of the Programme is 5 years. Approval from the Principal concerned is required for extension (normally not more than 12 months) of the Maximum Registration Period (see Clause 9.3).

1.10 **Credit Transfer** refers to granting of Credits in recognition of students' prior learning within and/or outside VTC, upon meeting the condition(s) laid down in Clause 4.1. The Credits earned through Credit Transfer can be used to meet the Credit Requirements of the DVB award.

Module Exemption normally refers to the exemption of Credits in recognition of students' prior learning within and/or outside VTC, upon meeting the condition(s) laid down in Clause 4.2. The Credit Requirements of the awards in a programme for the students concerned will be adjusted accordingly when Credits are exempted through Module Exemption (see Clause 4.3).

1.11 Under the Programme, the modules can be categorised as **Generic Modules** and **Vocational Modules**. Generic Modules refer to modules in the generic subject areas, e.g. English, Chinese, Mathematics and Whole Person Development. Vocational Modules refer to those specific to individual Programmes.

1.12 **Core Modules** refer to those modules that are critical to the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills for the award in the programme of studies

concerned. Those modules must be successfully completed (with Credits earned) to form part of the Credit Requirements for the award. **Elective Modules** refer to the modules that a student can elect to make up the remaining Credit Requirements for the award in the programme of studies concerned. Optional Modules are modules that a student can choose to study in addition to Core and Elective modules but does/do not form part of the Credit Requirements of the programme and is/are not included in the calculation of Award Module Average (AMA) (see Clause 1.16). Optional module(s) cannot replace any module of the generic or vocational components of the programme.

1.13 The **Module Mark (MM)** is a weighted average of the marks of all assessments of a student's achievement expressed in percentage ranged from the maximum of 100% to the minimum of zero, and is defined as:

$$MM = \frac{\sum_i W_i A_i}{\sum_i W_i}$$

where A_i is the mark of the ith Assessment scored by the student in the module, and W_i is the weighting of the ith Assessment.

1.14 Expressed in a 6-tier grading system, **Module Grades** are used to report a student's performance in a module, with three pass grades and three fail grades as shown in Table 1 below. The minimum pass grade is Grade P.

Grade*	Academic Performance	
D		Distinction
M	Pass grades	Merit
P		Pass
MF		Marginal Fail
F	Fail grades	Fail
U		Unclassified

Table 1: 6-Tier Grading System for Reporting Students' Performance in a Module or in an Assessment

* Subject to requirements of other accreditation bodies, if any, some modules may not have the "MF" and "F" grades.

1.15 The **Module Grade** received by the student is derived from the corresponding Module Mark received by the student in the module concerned in accordance with the conversion table as shown in Table 2 below:

Module Mark (X)	Module Grade
≥ 75	D
$65 \leq X < 75$	M
$40 \leq X < 65$	P
$30 \leq X < 40$	MF
$0 < X < 30$	F
0	U

Table 2: Module Mark-Module Grade Conversion Table

1.16 The **Award Module Average (AMA)** of a student is a weighted average, calculated upon successful completion of the credit requirements leading to the award of the Programme concerned, of the Marks of all relevant Modules the student has obtained. It reflects the student's overall performance in relation to the DVB award. The AMA is mainly used to determine the classification of the DVB award. The AMA is defined as: -

$$AMA = \frac{\sum_i MM_i C_i}{\sum_i C_i}$$

where
- MM_i is the Module Mark of Module i studied by the student for the DVB award in the Programme concerned, and C_i is the value of Credit of Module i.
- The summation includes those modules whose Credits are earned through Credit Transfer but excludes exempted modules, failed modules and modules assessed on a Pass/Fail basis.
- If a student has successfully completed more Elective Modules and earned more Credits than those required for the award, the Elective Modules shall be ranked according to their Module Marks. In addition to the Core Modules concerned, the summation shall include the Elective Modules with higher Module Marks.
- All Module Marks used for the calculation of AMA are marks before condonement, if any.
- If a student has passed all modules required for the DVB award, including modules passed after condonement, the minimum AMA that the student will get is 40.
- When calculating the AMA, the results are rounded to the nearest one decimal place.

2. Admission and Enrolment

2.1   The General Minimum Entry Requirement to the Programme is completion of Secondary 3 or equivalent.   Admission to individual Programmes is subject to satisfying the stipulated Entry Requirements as prescribed in the DPD, if any.

2.2   A student may not be simultaneously enrolled in more than one full-time programme leading to a qualification in VTC without the prior approval of the Programme Board Chairperson(s) concerned or his/her delegates.

2.3   Transfer from one Programme to another must be approved by the Programme Board Chairperson of the receiving Programme or his/her delegates.   Enrolment on a Programme after successful completion of another VTC Programme is considered a new admission instead of transfer.

2.4   If a student is transferred to a DVB Programme from another DVB Programme or from another VTC programme/course, the time already devoted to the previous Programme is counted towards the Maximum Registration Period (Clause 1.9) for the DVB Programme.   Upon transfer between one DVB Programme to another, the student's Module Marks and Module Grades of relevant completed modules are transferred to the corresponding modules of the receiving Programme for the purpose of calculating the AMA (Clause 1.16).

3. Credit Requirements

3.1   In order to be eligible for the DVB award, a student must have satisfactorily completed the **Credit Requirements** in terms of the type, the number and the QF Level and other requirements, as stipulated in the DPD, within the Maximum Registration Period from the date of first enrolment in the Programme (period of deferment counted).   The Credit Requirements include:

(a) Core Generic Credit Requirements – The requirements for the DVB award are common to all DVB Programmes.   A student must accumulate the required number of Generic Credits at specified levels in the designated Core Generic Modules;

(b) Core Vocational Credit Requirements – The requirements for the DVB award are specific to each DVB Programme.   A student must accumulate the required number of Vocational Credits at specified levels in the designated Core Vocational Modules of the programme he/she studies; and

(c) Elective Credit Requirements - A student may elect from a suite of designated Vocational and/or Generic Modules to make up the remaining Credit Requirements in order to qualify for the award in the Programme he/she studies.   The requirements for the DVB award may vary from programme to programme.

4.   Credit Transfer and Module Exemption

4.1   **Credit Transfer** (see Clause 1.10) is made on an individual module basis. Credit Transfer is normally based on formal academic achievements obtained within and/or outside VTC, on the condition that the module concerned is identical in terms of the number of Credits, intended learning outcomes, QF level and assessment standards.   Upon approval, the student will earn Credits of the corresponding Modules thereby contributing towards the award of the Programme.

4.2   Individual **Module Exemption** (see Clause 1.10) is normally granted based on formal academic achievements.   A student with other relevant prior learning that is relevant and verifiable skills, knowledge and competencies that have been acquired before the time of application may also apply for Module Exemption.   Where required, assessments on the attainment may be conducted.   A student may also be granted, on other justifiable grounds such as disabilities, Module Exemption from studying a module which forms a requirement of the DVB award.

4.3   When permission of Module Exemption is granted, the student will not earn credits from the module concerned and the credit requirements for the DVB award for the student concerned will also be adjusted accordingly.   The exemption granted shall be reflected in the student's Transcript of Study.

4.4   A student is not allowed to meet credit requirements of an award under the DVB Programme through 100% Credit Transfer.   Also, a student is not allowed Module Exemption for more than 50% of the total remaining number of the Credits required for the DVB award **after Credit Transfer**, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 4.2) should normally not constitute more than 25% of the total remaining number of Credits required for the DVB award after Credit Transfer.

4.5 The guidelines for granting Credit Transfer and Module Exemption must be defined in the DPD, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 4.2) is considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval of Credit Transfer and Module Exemption rests with the DVB Programme Board.

5. Module Registration

5.1 Registration for modules is subject to availability of places and meeting the pre-requisite/co-requisite requirements.

5.2 A student is not allowed to re-study a Module which he/she has already passed.

5.3 There is no limit to the number of attempts for a student to repeat a failed module within the Maximum Registration Period.

5.4 If the failed module(s) is/are Elective Module(s), the student can elect the failed Module(s) or other Elective Module(s) as required to make up the remaining Credit Requirements for the award subject to the offering of the Module(s) and availability of places.

6. Study Load

6.1 A student shall not take more than 100 Credits of modules in each Semester. Approval from the Principal concerned is required if the limit is exceeded.

7. Attendance

7.1 The minimum attendance requirement for an individual module is 80% of the maximum possible attendance, where the maximum possible attendance includes normal class attendance only. Students not satisfying the minimum attendance requirement of a module shall not be awarded a module mark/grade, unless approval of the Principal concerned has been granted. (See also Clause 9.6) Individual modules may impose a higher percentage as appropriate, subject to the approval of Foundation Studies Board (for Modules not under a Module Board) or the relevant Discipline Academic Committee(s) (for Modules under a Module Board).

8. Assessments, Marks and Grades

<u>Assessments</u>

8.1   The assessment of a Module may take the form of any one or any combination of the following: class work, written work, assignments, laboratory work, projects, presentations, portfolios, artefacts, oral examinations, tests, examinations and others.   In general, the assessments are categorised into **Continuous Assessments** and **End-of-Module Assessments**:

- A Continuous Assessment (CA) is to be administered on completion of each or a group of topic area(s) in the module.   It is to provide information/feedback on the effectiveness of learning and teaching of the topic area(s) and to inform on students' performance in the related part(s) of the module.

- An End-of-Module Assessment (EA) is to evaluate students' overall comprehension and application of the knowledge and skills learned in the module.   A successful attempt of an EA will call for, on the part of the students, the ability to integrate what has been learned in individual topics.   An EA may or may not be administered at the end of the module.   For example, projects can take place throughout the whole module whereas an EA in pen-and-paper form normally occurs towards the end of the module.

8.2   The module assessment scheme should be stipulated in the Definitive Programme Document, and where applicable, with contribution of individual assessments towards the module grade / mark of a module.

8.3   A student's overall performance for an entire module or his/her performance in individual assessments of a module can be expressed in marks or grades as appropriate.   If marks are given, the maximum mark is 100 with 40 being the minimum pass mark.   If grades are used, same as Module Grades, the evaluation shall also be expressed in a 6-tier grading system, with three pass grades and three fail grades as shown in Table 1 (see Clause 1.14).   The minimum pass grade is Grade P.

8.4   If grades are used to express the results of an entire module or some / all of the assessments in a module, for the purpose of calculating the Module Mark (see Clause 1.13), the grades have to be converted into marks based on Table 3 as shown below:

Assessment Grade	Converted Assessment Mark
D	81
M	70
P	52.5
MF	35
F	26
U	0

Table 3: Assessment Grade – Assessment Mark Conversion Table

8.5 There is no reassessment on a module basis (i.e. one reassessment to cover CA and EA). Students who fail a module will be required to re-take the module concerned (see Clauses 5.3 and 5.4), or to take another elective module, if the failed module is not a core module of the programme of study the student is pursuing.

8.6 For individual assessments (which can be CA and/or EA), if a student fails to achieve the minimum pass grade or mark, i.e. Grade P or 40, where considered appropriate, the student may be allowed to conduct further works and/or be reassessed in order to make up the shortfall. Criteria for granting individual reassessments shall be given in the Assessment Plan. In general, the following should be observed:
- Only students who obtained Grade MF or not less than 30 marks can be given the chance to be reassessed. The actual marks that a student gets in the reassessment of the assessment component concerned, subject to a maximum of 40%, will be used for computing the overall results in the module.
- For students who are granted reassessment for individual assessments within a module based on mitigating factors beyond the students' control, the actual mark/grade obtained in the reassessment of the assessment component concerned will be used in the calculation of the Module Mark.
- Other requirements of relevant accreditation bodies, if any.

8.7 The reassessment so granted can be conducted in a form that is comparable, though not necessarily identical, to the original assessment.

8.8 Under any circumstances, there will not be a second reassessment for individual assessments.

Module Marks and Module Grades

8.9 Module Marks are only used to calculate the overall average scores of a student studying for the DVB award, i.e. the Award Module Average (AMA) (see Clause 1.16).

8.10 The Module Mark will not be shown on a student's Transcript. Instead, Module Grades are used to report a student's performance in a module (see Clause 1.15) and only the Module Grades shall be shown on a student's Transcript of Study.

8.11 The Module Grade received by the student in a module is derived from the corresponding Module Mark received by the student in the module (see Clause 1.15).

Condonement

8.12 A student may be granted a pass in a failed module by condonement on very special grounds which affect the student's academic performance in the module. A student may have more than one module with condonement but should normally not have more than 20% of the Credits earned through condonement in a Semester. The condonement requires the recommendation of the Programme Board of Examiners (BoE) (or Module BoE if the Module concerned is under a Module Board) and the approval of the Foundation Studies Board (FSB) (or the respective Discipline Academic Committee). All condonement cases should be reported to the VETAB on an annual basis.

8.13 A student who passes a module by condonement shall be awarded a Grade P for Module Grade while his/her Module Mark will stay unchanged. The changed Module Grade shall be recorded in the Student Records System and shown on the student's Transcript of Study. The change will not affect the calculation of the AMA (See Clause 1.16).

Assessment Regulations

8.14 All assessments shall follow the assessment regulations approved by the VETAB. The Board may decide, from time to time, to introduce additional regulations governing invigilation, the conduct of assessments and the judgement of allegations of cheating as appropriate.

9. Deferment, Withdrawal and Dismissal

Deferment

9.1 Under special circumstances and on justifiable grounds, a student may be permitted to defer his/her studies for a period of up to 12 months. The period of deferment is counted in calculating the Maximum Registration

Period (see Clause 1.9). Applications for deferment of studies will require the approval of the Principal concerned.

Withdrawal

9.2   A student who acquires less than 40% of the total Credits for the modules taken in the same academic year shall be required to withdraw from the Programme.

9.3   At the expiry of the Maximum Registration Period (MRP), a student shall be required to withdraw from the Programme, unless approval from the Principal concerned is granted for an extension of the MRP which should normally be not more than 12 months (see Clause 1.9).

9.4   A student may officially withdraw from the Programme by notifying the campus in writing of his/her intention to do so.

9.5   A student shall be deemed to have unofficially withdrawn from the Programme if, without prior approval from the campus, he/she has not been present for the scheduled Programme activities for a period of four consecutive weeks.

9.6   A student will not be allowed to continue his/her study at any time during a semester if he/she fails to meet the minimum attendance requirement in 50% or more of the modules studied in that semester, with the exception of the following:

(a)   the student is required to study no more than two modules in that semester for completion of the award; or

(b)   the student can register for no more than two modules in that semester due to prohibition by pre-requisite requirements or no other relevant modules are offered by the campus concerned.

Dismissal

9.7   The campus may, at any time, require a student who is found to have committed serious violation of prevailing regulations to terminate his/her studies on disciplinary grounds.

10. Transcript of Study

10.1   The Transcript of Study is issued at the end of each Semester, and is a record of the performance of a student expressed in the form of the QF Levels, Credits and Module Grades achieved in the Modules studied.

10.2   Upon graduation, only the Credits earned, the QF Levels and Module Grades in the Modules studied (including exempted, optional and

transferred modules), will be shown on the Transcript. It will not contain any information on failed modules.

11. Award

11.1 In order to be eligible for the Diploma of Vocational Baccalaureate (DVB) award, a student must have satisfactorily completed the <u>Credit Requirements</u> in terms of the number and the QF Level and other requirements, as stipulated in the DPD, within the Maximum Registration Period from the date of first enrolment in the Programme being studied (period of deferment counted).

11.2 The DVB award shall normally be classified according to the recipient's Award Module Average (AMA) as follows, subject to the recipient's fulfillment of other requirements, if any:-

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Range of AMA</u>
Distinction	$75 \leq AMA$
Credit	$65 \leq AMA < 75$
Pass	$40 \leq AMA < 65$

11.3 Where a student has failed to complete the Credit Requirements for the DVB award, the BoE may, as an exceptional case, consider the recommendation of an Aegrotat award on strong documented medical grounds or, in very exceptional cases, well documented reasons other than medical grounds. Such recommendations would require the formal approval of the FSB under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

12. External Examiners

12.1 Each Programme shall have an External Examiner to oversee the overall academic standards / performance of students in the Programme concerned. He/She should be nominated by the Chairperson of the Programme Board and appointed by the FSB to perform duties as specified in the Regulations for External Examiners approved by the VETAB.

12.2 Nominated by the Chairpersons of the Module Boards which own the modules and appointed by the respective governing Discipline Academic Committee, External Module Examiners will be appointed for individual Generic Modules to oversee the academic standards / performance of students in the modules concerned. An External Module Examiner may be assigned to oversee a number of related modules.

13. Boards of Examiners

13.1 The performance of all students studying in the Programme in each Semester shall be considered by a Board of Examiners (BoE). The BoE normally meets at the end of each Semester.

13.2 There are two types of Board of Examiners, the Module-level Board of Examiners and the Programme-level Board of Examiners. All Boards of Examiners are delegated the authority by the VETAB to approve assessment results, except for special cases and award lists (see Clauses 13.7 & 13.8).

13.3 Under the prevailing academic management structure, the Languages and Student Development Disciplines should each set up Modules Board(s) to provide academic management to its respective Generic Modules. For modules with a Module Board, Module-level Board of Examiners (BoE) should be set up to consider and approve (except special cases) the assessment results of the Modules under its ambit and submit the approved student assessment results to Programme-level BoE concerned. Special cases should be approved by the Discipline Academic Committee of the discipline offering the modules at the recommendation of the Module-level BoE. Where appropriate, respective Discipline Academic Committee can decide on holding joint Module-level BoEs.

13.4 The Module-level BoE normally meets at the end of each Semester, and its minimum composition is: -

- Chairperson:
  Chairperson of the Module Board (in case of a Joint Module-level BoE involving modules of more than one Module Board, he/she should be the Chairperson of one of the Module Boards and appointed by the Academic Director concerned)

- Members:
  All other relevant Module Board Chairpersons (for a Joint Module-level BoEs);
  Relevant Module Leader(s); and
  Campus Module Coordinator from every offering site of the module(s) concerned

- a Secretary.

  On need basis, External Module Examiner(s) could be invited to attend the meeting at the discretion of the Chairperson.

13.5 The Programme-level BoE of the programme will consider and approve the overall performance of all students enrolled on the DVB Programmes, and a list of students who will be required to withdraw from the Programme. It will also endorse special cases, if any, and award lists including award classification for approval by the FSB. In addition, subject to Clause 13.3 above, the performance of the students in Modules not managed by any Module Board should be considered and approved by the Programme-level BoE (except special cases) designated by the FSB. Its minimum composition is: -

- Chairperson:
  Chairperson of the Programme Board or his/her representative (who shall normally be an academic staff member at PL rank or above);

- Members:
  External Examiner(s) of the DVB Programme(s) concerned;

  Programme Leader(s) of the DVB Programme(s) concerned (and Campus Coordinators if more than one campus/centre);

- Co-opted Members:
  Other teaching staff invited at the discretion of the BoE; and

- a Secretary.

13.6 In the exceptional circumstance that an External Examiner is unable to attend the Programme-level BoE meeting which requires his/her attendance, he/she **must** submit a written report to the Chairperson of the Board commenting on the students' overall performance. When such a BoE is conducted without the presence of any External Examiner, the recommendations of the BoE must be forwarded to the External Examiner(s) concerned for endorsement.

13.7 The FSB has the authority to consider and approve all special cases submitted by the relevant Programme Board of Examiners for the programmes under its purview, and, where applicable, the award lists including classification, under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

13.8 Assessment is as much a matter of collective judgement as of calculation. It is impossible to predict all of the exceptional circumstances that are likely to affect a small minority of the students and it is unrealistic to legislate for such cases. Hence, in exceptional circumstances, each BoE is empowered to make recommendations on special cases, provided that academic standards are not jeopardized and students are not unfairly treated. All recommendations will require the ratification of the FSB under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

14. Appeals

14.1 A student may appeal against the decision of a BoE, and/or the rulings of a Disciplinary Board on an allegation of cheating in line with the Appeals Regulations approved by the VETAB.   Appeals must be received within 7 working days from the day on which the assessment results are published, or within 3 working days from the day the student is informed of the decision of the Disciplinary Board.

**GENERALACADEMIC REGULATIONS
FOR CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMA,
PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE AND PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA
PROGRAMMES AT QF LEVELS 1 TO 4**

For Implementation Starting AY 2017/18

(Approved at 45th VETAB Meeting held on 18 January 2017 vide Paper VETAB 01/17)

Preamble

The purpose of these General Academic Regulations is to provide a framework within which Programmes leading to a formal qualification at the Certificate (Cert), Diploma (Dip), Professional Certificate (PC) and Professional Diploma (PD) at QF Levels 1-4 from the VTC can operate satisfactorily. They have been formulated to conform to good practice in, and assist to gain accreditation from local, national and international institutions. The way in which a specific Programme meets these regulations is detailed within its Definitive Programme Document.

The regulations have been designed to achieve a balance between the requirements of maintaining relevant academic standards and not placing unreasonable demands or conditions on the majority of learners who attend the Cert, Dip, PC and PD Programmes.

Operated as a Module Accumulation Programme, the Cert, Dip, PC and PD Programmes comprise Modules that are defined in terms of Credits. A learner earns Credits after successfully completing a module. The Credits can be accumulated leading to the award(s) the learner is pursuing.

Assessment and progression are as much a matter of collective judgement as of calculation. It is impossible to predict all of the exceptional circumstances that are likely to affect a small minority of the learners and it is unrealistic to legislate for such cases. Hence, in exceptional circumstances, each Board of Examiners is empowered to make decisions on special cases according to this set of regulations, provided that academic standards are not jeopardized and learners are not unfairly treated. All decisions for programmes at Cert, Dip, PC and PD

levels will require the ratification of the relevant Academic Committee[1] (AC) under the delegated authority of the Vocational Education and Training Academic Board (VETAB).   As the need arises, the VETAB reserves the right to amend these regulations.

It is the responsibility of the Academic Committee concerned to ensure that the regulations detailed in the Definitive Programme Document for Cert, Dip, PC and PD level programmes comply with these General Academic Regulations.

1. Definitions

1.1 A **Programme** refers to a structured academic programme defined through a set of programme objectives and learning outcomes to be achieved and by a curriculum structure that sets credits and module requirements.   It may consist of a suite of modules leading to a specific qualification.   A Certificate (Cert) programme may comprise one or more Modules.

1.2 Under a **Module Accumulation Mechanism**, a learner earns Credits after successfully completing a module. Subject to the Maximum Registration Period (see Clause 1.10) and Credit Requirements (see Clauses 3.1 and 3.2), the Credits can be accumulated leading to the award he/she aims for.

1.3 The **Notional Learning Hours (NLHs)** of a Module is the amount of time an average learner would take to complete all the learning and acquire the learning outcomes.   The NLHs is a summation of contact hours, self-study hours and assessment hours of a programme/module.   **Contact hours** are the amount of time (in terms of hours) spent by a learner in direct contact with the teaching/training/instructing staff of a programme.   It includes attendance in class, tutorials, conducting experiment in laboratory under supervision, conducting practical training in workshop under supervision, etc.   **Self-study hours** are the amount of time (in terms of hours) spent by a learner normally without direct contact with teaching/training/instructing staff.   This includes time spent on self-studying, preparation for tests and examinations, research, writing reports for projects and work placement, studying on-line materials, etc.   **Assessment hours** refer to the amount of time (in terms of hours) spent by learners in scheduled examinations, tests and other related assessment activities not yet included in contact hours and self-study hours.

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[1]   In the context of this set of GARs, the term Academic Committee is used to refer to the Discipline Academic Committee, PEAK Academic Committee, HTI/CCI/ICI Academic Committee, and Pro-Act Centres and MSTI Course Planning Committee.

1.4   A **Module** is a block of learning defined by a syllabus, including aims, intended learning outcomes, learning and teaching strategies and assessment plans and, if necessary, pre-requisites, and co-requisites.   It is a constituent part of a programme. Each module is assigned with a Qualifications Framework (QF) Level and a number of Credits.

1.5   The **QF Level** of a module is an indicator of the relative depth and complexity of learning, characterised by the Generic Level Descriptors (GLDs) of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework, which set out the generic learning outcomes of the qualifications located at that level.

1.6   Each module is valued in terms of **QF Credits (Credits)**.   The value of the Credits in each module is an integer and is normally proportional to the number of NLHs an average learner would take to acquire the learning outcomes of the Module.   One Credit is equivalent to 10 NLHs in the Module.

1.7   The **Pre-requisite** of a module is the requirement that must be fulfilled before a learner can register in the particular module.

1.8   The **Co-requisite** of a module refers to other module(s) that must be taken concurrently with (or prior to registration in) the particular module.

1.9   A **Definitive Programme Document (DPD)** details the aims and objectives of the programme, general entry requirements, programme contents, module syllabuses, learning and teaching methods, assessment plans, programme management and operation, resources, rules governing assessment and the awards, and other relevant information.

1.10   The **Maximum Registration Period** is the duration a learner is allowed to register in the course of study.   Credits earned, including those earned through Credit Transfer (see Clause 1.11), during the Maximum Registration Period are, unless otherwise specified, valid throughout the period for the purpose of claiming the award concerned.   The Maximum Registration Period is normally 4 years, or for a period of years normally equivalent to the programme duration[2] (N) plus 2 more years, as deemed appropriate by the respective Programme Board.   For a programme with a programme duration shorter than 12 months, the Programme Board concerned should decide on the Maximum Registration

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[2]   The programme duration refers to the nominal study duration of the programme as defined by the DPD.

Period with due reference to the above principle.

1.11 **Credit Transfer** refers to granting of Credits in recognition of learners' prior learning within and/or outside VTC, upon meeting the conditions laid down in Clause 4.1. The Credits earned through Credit Transfer can be used to meet the Credit Requirements of a programme, except for a programme that comprises one single module (see Clause 4.1).

1.12 **Module Exemption** normally refers to the exemption of Credits in recognition to learners' prior learning within and/or outside VTC, upon meeting the condition(s) laid down in Clause 4.2.

1.13 **Core Modules** refer to those modules that are critical to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude that are considered essential for the award the programme of studies concerned leads to. They must be successfully completed to form part of the Credit Requirements. **Elective Modules** are modules that a learner can select to make up the remaining Credit Requirements for the respective award in the programme concerned. A programme may include Elective Modules where appropriate.

1.14 The **Module Mark (M)** is a weighted average of the marks of all assessments received by a learner in a module and will appear on the learners' Transcript of Study (see Clause 13.1) but not on the respective Programme Certificate (see Clause 13.2). Module Mark is defined as:

$$M = \frac{\sum_i W_i A_i}{\sum_i W_i}$$

where A_i is the mark of the ith Assessment scored by the learner in the module, and W_i is the weighting of the ith Assessment.

Module Marks shall be expressed as a percentage rounded to the nearest integer value. The maximum mark of a module and individual assessment is 100 with 40 being the Pass Mark (see Clause 7.2).

1.15 The **Cumulative Module Average (CMA)** of a learner is a weighted average, calculated upon successful completion of the Credit Requirements leading to the award concerned, of the Marks of all relevant Modules the learner has

obtained. It reflects the learners' overall performance in the programme/award concerned. The CMA is mainly used to determine the classification of the award a learner will obtain and will not appear on the learners' Programme Certificate and Award Transcript (see Clause 13.2). The CMA is defined as:-

$$CMA = \frac{\sum_{i} M_i C_i}{\sum_{i} C_i}$$

where

- M_i is the Module Mark of Module i studied by the learner, and C_i is the value of Credit of Module i.
- The summation includes Modules whose Credits are earned through Credit Transfer but excludes failed Modules, exempted Modules and Modules assessed on a Pass/Fail basis.
- If a learner has successfully completed more Elective Modules and earned more Credits than those required for the award, the Elective Modules shall be ranked according to their Module Marks. In addition to the Core Modules concerned, the summation shall include the Elective Modules with higher Module Marks.
- If a learner has attempted the same module more than once, the Module Marks of the best attempt will be used for the calculation of CMA.
- If a learner has passed all modules required for the award concerned, including modules passed after condonement, the minimum CMA that the learner will get is 40.

1.16 For a programme which comprises one single module, the CMA is the Module Mark.

1.17 When calculating the CMA, the results are rounded to the nearest one decimal place.

2. Enrolment

2.1 To enrol on a Programme, learners must fulfil the entry requirements detailed in the DPD.   The minimum entry requirement of a programme is the minimum academic qualification (and/or, where appropriate, other relevant attributes) that an applicant should normally attain to reasonably assure that he/she will be able to complete the programme of study, within the Maximum Registration Period.

2.2 Specifically, the General Minimum Entry Requirements are listed as follows:

Programme	General Minimum Entry Requirements
PC and PD Programmes	◆ Five HKDSE subjects at Level 2 or above, including English and Chinese Languages, or equivalent; or ◆ Five HKCEE subjects at Grade E/Level 2 or above, including English and Chinese Languages, or equivalent ; or ◆ Completion of a QF Level 3 programme that is deemed acceptable to the respective Programme Board[3]; or ◆ Relevant RPL qualification(s) at QF Level 3 or above; or

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[3] Programme Board is a board to oversee the day-to-day operation of the programme and monitor its quality. The name of Programme Board may vary depending on the related programme management structure.

	◆ Other relevant verifiable prior learning and/or work experience that is/are deemed appropriate by respective Programme Board[4].
Programmes at QF Level 3	◆ Completion of S6 under the new academic structure/ S5 under the old academic structure, or equivalent; or ◆ Completion of a QF Level 2 programme that is deemed acceptable to the respective Programme Board; or ◆ Relevant RPL qualification(s) at QF Level 2 or above; or ◆ Other relevant verifiable prior learning and/or work experience that is/are deemed appropriate by respective Programme Board[4].
Programmes at QF Level 2	◆ Completion of S3; or ◆ Completion of a QF Level 1 programme that is deemed acceptable to the respective Programme Board; or ◆ Relevant RPL qualification(s) at QF Level 1 or above; or ◆ Other relevant verifiable prior learning and/or work experience that is/are deemed appropriate by respective Programme Board[4].

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[4] The type of prior learning and/or work experience should be specified in the Definitive Programme Document.

Where appropriate, requirements on work experience / employment status of an applicant may also be included.[5]   Individual programmes may have additional requirements as deemed appropriate by the Programme Board concerned.   Details of additional entry requirements must be stipulated in respective DPDs.

Mature applicants, i.e. those aged 21[6]   or above with at least two years' relevant work experience, may also be accepted.   For programmes with a different age requirement for consideration of admission of mature applicants, VETAB approval must be sought.

Both normal and mature applicants, where appropriate, may be required to pass an entrance assessment, which can be in an oral and/or written form.

3. Credit Requirements

3.1   In order to be eligible for the award that the programme leads to, a learner must have satisfactorily completed the **Credit Requirements** in terms of the type, number, QF Level and other requirements for the award, as stipulated in the DPD, and within the Maximum Registration Period from the date of first enrolment in the Programme.

3.2   The minimum Credit Requirements for programmes leading to a Certificate, Diploma, Professional Certificate or Professional Diploma award are depicted in the table below:

QF Level	Award Title	Minimum Credit Requirements
1 - 4	Certificate	3 Credits
3	Diploma	60 Credits
4	Professional Certificate	36 Credits
4	Professional Diploma	60 Credits

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[5] Irrespective of mode of delivery, programmes can be classified as pre-employment programmes which are in general for school leavers and in-service programmes which are in general for working adults. There are normally requirements on work experience or employment status of the applicants for entry to in-service programmes.
[6] The age requirements of mature applicants of programmes offered by PEAK is 23 (approved by VETAB vide Paper VETAB 13/15).

3.3   If a learner fails an Elective Module, the learner can elect the failed module or another Elective Module as required to make up the remaining Credit Requirements for the award subject to the offering of the module and availability of places.

3.4   Credits earned through Credit Transfer on meeting the condition laid down in Clause 4.1 are counted in the calculation of a learner's CMA of the award concerned (see Clause 1.15).

4.   Credit Transfer and Module Exemption

4.1   Credit Transfer is made on an individual module basis.   Credit Transfer is normally based on formal academic achievements obtained within and/or outside VTC, on the condition that the module concerned is identical in respective programmes in terms of the number of Credits, intended learning outcomes, QF level and assessment standards.   Upon approval, the learner will earn Credits of the corresponding Modules thereby contributing towards the awards of the Programme he/she aims for. A learner is not allowed to meet credit requirements of a programme through 100% Credit Transfer.   Under this principle, Programme Boards should set the maximum percentage of Credit Transfer allowed for their programmes.

4.2   Individual Module Exemption is normally granted based on formal academic achievements, RPL qualifications and/or relevant experience with documented evidence of attainment of the required learning outcomes and must be defined in the DPD.   Where required, assessments on the attainment may be conducted.   A learner may also be granted, on other justifiable grounds such as disabilities, Module Exemption from studying a module which forms a requirement of the award he/she aims for.

4.3   When permission of Module Exemption is granted, the learner will not earn credits from the module concerned and, accordingly the credit requirements for the awards of the Programme for the learner concerned will also be adjusted accordingly.   The exemption granted shall be reflected in the learner's Transcript of Study.

4.4　A learner is not allowed to meet credit requirements of the awards of the Programme through 100% Credit Transfer.　Also, a learner is not allowed Module Exemption for more than 50% of the total **remaining number of the Credits** of the awards of the Programme **after Credit Transfer**, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 4.2) should normally not constitute more than 25% of the total remaining number of the Credits required for an award after Credit Transfer.

4.5　The guidelines for granting Credit Transfer and Module Exemption must be defined in the DPD, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 4.2) is considered on a case-by-case basis.　Approval of Credit Transfer and Module Exemption rests with the respective Programme Board.

5.　Multiple Attempts of a Module

5.1　The decision of allowing a learner multiple attempts to study a module that he/she already passed rests with the respective Academic Committee, which will take into account nature of the programme and related requirements.　In such cases, within the Maximum Registration Period, there is no limit to the number of attempts for a learner to study a passed module.

5.2　There is no limit on the number of attempts for a learner to repeat a failed module within the Maximum Registration Period.

5.3　If a learner attempts the same module more than once, the highest of the module marks of the same module will be used for the calculation of CMA.

6.　Attendance

6.1　The decision of having attendance requirements for a Programme rests with the respective Academic Committee, which will take into account nature of the Programme and related requirements.　For pre-employment

Programmes[7], the minimum attendance requirement for an individual Programme/Module is normally 70% of the maximum possible attendance, where maximum possible attendance includes normal class attendance only. Individual Programmes/Modules may impose a higher percentage as appropriate subject to the approval of the relevant Programme Board.

6.2   Where attendance requirements are applicable, a learner's attendance is calculated based on the maximum possible attendance for the Programme/Module. Information regarding attendance policy and its implementation arrangements must be detailed in the DPD of the Programme concerned.

6.3   Where attendance requirements are applicable, learners not satisfying the minimum attendance requirement of a Programme or a specific Module of a Programme will not be awarded the qualification concerned, unless approval of the Director/Principal of the VTC member institute concerned has been granted.

7.   Assessments, Marks and Grades

7.1   The assessments for a Module may include End-of-Module Assessment (EA) or Continuous Assessment (CA) or both. Both EA and CA can be in the form of laboratory work, assignments, tests, projects, case studies, practical assessments, and performance appraisal, etc.   The contribution of EA and/or CA to the Module Mark must be specified in the DPD.

7.2   The minimum pass mark for a module is 40%, which is the minimum requirement in each assessment as detailed in the DPD.   Learners need not pass all individual assessments / components to pass a module. Where appropriate, individual Programme/Module Board may set additional criteria on passing a Module, based on the nature of the module concerned and/or requirements of relevant industry, professional bodies and/or financial funding scheme.

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[7] Pre-employment programmes in general are for school leavers, irrespective of mode of delivery. There are normally no requirements on work experience or employment status of the applicants for entry to these programmes.

7.3   The EA, if any, of a module normally takes place towards the end of a module. Assessment components under CA are normally completed before the start of EA.

7.4   Module Marks shall be expressed as a percentage, rounded to the nearest integer value.   When a learner fails to obtain the minimum pass mark for a Module, the Module Mark will be represented by the Module Grade 'F' in the Learner's Transcript of Study.

7.5   For Modules which are assessed on a simple Pass/Fail basis, a three-tier grading scheme, i.e. Fail (F), Pass (P) and Pass with Merit (M), might be used if necessary.   Modules assessed on a Pass/Fail basis will not be included in the calculation of the CMA (see Clause 1.15).

8.   Reassessment Mechanism

8.1   There is no reassessment on a module basis (which refers to one reassessment to cover Continuous Assessment and End-of-module Assessment).   Learners who fail a module will be required to re-take the module concerned, or to take another elective module, if the failed module is not a core module of the programme of study the learner is pursuing.

8.2   If a learner fails an individual assessment of a module, he/she may be allowed to conduct further works and/or be reassessed in order to make up for the shortfall.   Learners passing the reassessment shall be awarded a mark of 40%, or the minimum pass mark as stipulated in respective DPD (see Clause 7.2), for the assessment component concerned in the calculation of the Module Mark.   For learners who are granted reassessment for individual assessments within a module based on mitigating factors beyond the learners' control, the actual mark obtained in the reassessment will be used in the calculation of the Module Mark.

8.3   Reassessment can be administered at a time deemed appropriate by the Programme Team concerned, and should normally be conducted in a form that is comparable, though not necessarily identical, to the original assessment.

8.4   Under any circumstances, there will not be a second reassessment for individual assessments.

8.5 Notwithstanding Clauses 8.1-8.4, where deemed necessary, Programme Board may instead adopt Module Assessment (Repeat) for a Programme, to allow learners of the Programme concerned to improve on their overall module marks of a Module. If so adopted, details of the justifications and related criteria for allowing Module Assessment (Repeat) must be included in the respective DPD. In general, if learners who have already passed a Module are allowed to take Module Assessment (Repeat), the approval is normally given to cater for external circumstances such as meeting requirements of professional bodies or financial funding scheme. Personal reasons on the part of the learners (e.g. for self-challenge) should not be considered.

8.6 The adoption of Module Assessment (Repeat) for a Programme, once decided, applies to all Modules within the Programme concerned, and is implemented in accordance with the conditions laid down in Clauses 8.7 – 8.9.

8.7 In general, the application for Module Assessment (Repeat) should be made by a learner and the Module Assessment (Repeat) should be taken, within the Maximum Registration Period allowed for the programme concerned.

8.8 The Module Assessment (Repeat) should be similar to the original module assessment in terms of the number and type of individual assessments and their level of difficulty. Learners taking the Module Assessment (Repeat) of a module must take all of its individual assessments.

8.9 The actual marks obtained in each individual assessment of the Module Assessment (Repeat) shall be used for the calculation of the module mark after the Module Assessment (Repeat) and the learner concerned will be issued another Transcript of Study which records his/her performance in the Module Assessment (Repeat). The highest of the module marks obtained in all attempts of the same module shall be used in the calculation of the CMA for the award (See Clause 1.15).

9. Condonement

9.1 Condonement shall only be granted under special circumstances with the

support and endorsement of the Board of Examiners and subsequent approval of the Academic Committee concerned.

10. Assessment Regulations

10.1 All assessments shall follow the assessment regulations approved by the VETAB. The Board may decide, from time to time, to introduce additional regulations governing invigilation, conduct of assessments and judgement of allegations of cheating as appropriate.

11. Withdrawal

11.1 In order to be eligible for the award of the Programme a learner is enrolled on, he/she must have satisfactorily completed the requirements, as stated in the DPD, within the Maximum Registration Period from the date of the first enrolment on that Programme. A learner who fails to meet this time scale shall be required to withdraw from the Programme, unless approval of extension of Maximum Registration Period is granted (See Clause 12.1).

11.2 A learner may officially withdraw from a Programme by notifying the Programme Leader in writing of his/her intention to do so.

11.3 A VTC member institute may, at any time, require a learner who is found to have committed serious violation of prevailing regulations to terminate his/her studies on disciplinary grounds. Normally, this requires the approval of the Director/Principal of the VTC member institute at the recommendation of the Programme Leaders.

12. Extension of Maximum Registration Period

12.1 A learner who wishes to extend his/her Maximum Registration Period may apply to the Programme Leader in writing. Extension, if given, should normally not exceed 12 months.

13. Transcript and Certification for Module and Programme

13.1 A **Transcript of Study** may be issued at a time specified by the Programme/Module Board concerned as a record of the performance of a

learner during the period, including failed modules and exempted modules and modules for which the credits are gained through Credit Transfer.

13.2 Upon successful completion of the respective Credit Requirements and other requirements as stipulated in the DPD for the Programme concerned, learners will be granted the relevant award and issued the **Programme Certificate** (see Clause 13.3) together with the **Award Transcript**. The Award Transcript normally includes a list of the modules passed (including those after Credit Transfer) and/or exempted in the programme upon graduation but not the failed modules. For modules with multiple attempts, only the best result is shown. The learner's performance in each Module is expressed in the form of a Module Mark or Grade as defined in Clauses 1.14, 7.4 and 7.5. A designated symbol is also used to denote a Module which was exempted (see Clause 4.2).

13.3 A Programme Certificate contains information on the title and the QF level of the respective award, and the classification of the award and date of conferment for the learner concerned. A certification for individual modules may also be issued if considered necessary.

14. Award

14.1 Cert, Dip, PC & PD programmes shall normally be classified according to the recipient's Cumulative Module Average (CMA) as follows.

Classification	Range of CMA
Distinction	$75 \leq CMA$
Credit	$65 \leq CMA < 75$
Pass	$40 \leq CMA < 65$

14.2 The CMA is not shown on the Programme Certificate and Award Transcript.

15. External Examiner

15.1 The Cert, Dip, PC and PD programmes shall each have a Programme External Examiner to oversee the overall academic standards/performance of learners in the programme concerned. A Programme External Examiner is nominated by the respective Programme Board and appointed by the

Academic Committee concerned to perform duties as specified in the Regulations for External Examiners approved by the VETAB. Where appropriate, Module External Examiners may also be appointed to oversee the academic standard/performance of learners of individual modules.

16. Boards of Examiners

16.1　The performance of the learners in a Cert, Dip, PC or PD Programme shall be considered and approved (except special cases) by a Board of Examiners (BoE), which may look after a number of programmes.

16.2　The minimum composition of the BoE is: -

- the Chairman: an academic staff member at the Senior Lecturer/Training Consultant/Principal Instructor (or equivalent) rank or above nominated by the Chairman of the Academic Committee;
- the Programme External Examiner;
- the Programme Leaders; and
- a secretary.

16.3　In the exceptional circumstance that the Programme External Examiner is unable to attend the BoE meeting which requires his/her attendance, he/she must submit a written report to the Chairman of the Board commenting on the learners' overall performances. When such a BoE is conducted without the presence of any External Examiner, the recommendations of the BoE must be forwarded to the External Examiner(s) concerned for endorsement.

16.4　The BoE shall be responsible for the decisions it makes on the qualification and classification to be awarded to each learner as well as its decisions concerning the assessment of individual modules.

16.5 The Academic Committee has the authority to consider and approve special cases recommended by the BoE and award lists and classification of award for Programmes under its purview, under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

17. Appeals

17.1 A learner may appeal against the decision of a BoE, and/or the rulings of a Disciplinary Board on an allegation of cheating in line with the Appeals Regulations approved by the VETAB. Appeals must be received within 7 working days from the day on which the assessment results are published, or within 3 working days from the day the learner is informed of the decision of the Disciplinary Board.

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GENERAL ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR CERTIFICATE, PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE, PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA, POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE AND POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES AT QF LEVELS 5 AND 6
(for Disciplines/OUs under Purview of VETAB)

For Implementation Starting AY 2017/18

(Approved at 45th VETAB Meeting held on 18 January 2017 vide Paper VETAB 01/17)

Preamble

The purpose of these General Academic Regulations (GARs) is to provide a framework within which Programmes leading to a formal qualification of a Certificate (Cert), Professional Certificate (PC), Professional Diploma (PD), Postgraduate Certificate (PgC) and Postgraduate Diploma (PgD) at QF Levels 5 and 6 from the VTC can operate satisfactorily. They have been formulated to conform to good practices in, and assist to gain accreditation from local, national and international institutions. The way in which a specific Programme meets these regulations is detailed within its Definitive Programme Document.

The regulations have been designed to achieve a balance between the requirements of maintaining relevant academic standards and not placing unreasonable demands or conditions on the majority of learners who attend the Cert, PC, PD, PgC and PgD Programmes.

Operated as a Module Accumulation Programme, the Cert, PC, PD, PgC and PgD Programmes comprise Modules that are defined in terms of Credits. A learner earns Credits after successfully completing a Module. The Credits can be accumulated leading to the award(s) the learner is pursuing.

Assessment and progression are as much a matter of collective judgement as of calculation. It is impossible to predict all of the exceptional circumstances that are likely to affect a small minority of the learners and it is unrealistic to legislate for such cases. Hence, in exceptional circumstances, each Board of Examiners is empowered to make decisions on

special cases according to this set of regulations, provided that academic standards are not jeopardised and learners are not unfairly treated. All decisions for Programmes at Cert, PC, PD, PgC and PgD levels will require the ratification of the relevant Academic Committee[1] (AC) under the delegated authority of the Vocational Education and Training Academic Board (VETAB). As the need arises, the VETAB reserves the right to amend these regulations.

It is the responsibility of the AC concerned to ensure that the regulations detailed in the Definitive Programme Document for Cert, PC, PD, PgC and PgD programmes comply with these GARs.

1. Definitions

1.1 A **Programme** refers to a structured academic programme defined through a set of programme objectives and learning outcomes to be achieved and by a curriculum structure that sets Credits and Module requirements. It may consist of a suite of Modules leading to a specific qualification. A Certificate (Cert) Programme may comprise one or more Modules.

1.2 Under a **Module Accumulation Mechanism**, a learner earns Credits after successfully completing a Module. Subject to the Maximum Registration Period (see Clause 1.10) and Credit Requirements (see Clauses 3.1 and 3.2), the Credits can be accumulated leading to the award he/she aims for.

1.3 The **Notional Learning Hours (NLHs)** of a Module is the amount of time an average learner would take to complete all the learning and acquire the learning outcomes. The NLHs is a summation of contact hours, self-study hours and assessment hours of a Programme/Module. **Contact Hours** are the amount of time (in terms of hours) spent by a learner in direct contact with the teaching/training/instructing staff of a Programme. It includes attendance in class, tutorials, conducting experiment in laboratory under supervision, conducting practical

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[1] In the context of this set of GARs, the term AC is used to refer to the Discipline Academic Committee, PEAK Academic Committee, HTI/CCI/ICI Academic Committee, and Pro-Act Centres and MSTI Course Planning Committee.

training in workshop under supervision, etc.   **Self-study Hours** are the amount of time (in terms of hours) spent by a learner normally without direct contact with teaching/training/instructing staff.   This includes time spent on self-studying, preparation for tests and examinations, research, writing reports for projects and work placement, studying on-line materials, etc.   **Assessment Hours** refer to the amount of time (in terms of hours) spent by learners in scheduled examinations, tests and other related assessment activities not yet included in Contact Hours and Self-study Hours.

1.4   A **Module** is a block of learning defined by a syllabus, including aims, intended learning outcomes, learning and teaching strategies and assessment plans and, if necessary, Pre-requisites, and Co-requisites.   It is a constituent part of a Programme.   Each Module is assigned with a Qualifications Framework (QF) level and a number of Credits.

1.5   The **QF Level** of a module is an indicator of the relative depth and complexity of learning, characterised by the Generic Level Descriptors (GLDs) of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework, which set out the generic learning outcomes of the qualifications located at that level.

1.6   Each Module is valued in terms of **QF Credits (Credits)**.   The value of the Credits in each Module is an integer and is normally proportional to the number of NLHs an average learner would take to acquire the learning outcomes of the Module.   One Credit is equivalent to 10 NLHs in the Module.

1.7   The **Pre-requisite** of a Module is the requirement that must be fulfilled before a learner can register in the particular Module.

1.8   The **Co-requisite** of a Module refers to other Module(s) that must be taken concurrently with (or prior to registration in) the particular Module.

1.9   A **Definitive Programme Document (DPD)** details the aims and objectives of the Programme, general entry requirements, Programme contents, Module syllabi, learning and teaching methods, assessment plans, Programme management and operation, resources, rules governing assessment and the awards, and other relevant information.

1.10   The **Maximum Registration Period** is the duration a learner is allowed to register in the course of study. Credits earned, including those earned through Credit Transfer (see Clause 1.11), during the Maximum Registration Period are, unless otherwise specified, valid throughout the period for the purpose of claiming the award concerned. The Maximum Registration Period is normally 4 years, or for a period of years normally equivalent to the Programme duration[2] (N) plus 2 more years, as deemed appropriate by the respective Programme Board. For a Programme with a Programme duration shorter than 12 months, the Programme Board concerned should decide on the Maximum Registration Period with due reference to the above principle.

1.11   **Credit Transfer** refers to granting of Credits in recognition of learners' prior learning within and/or outside the VTC, upon meeting the conditions laid down in Clause 4.1. The Credits earned through Credit Transfer can be used to meet the Credit Requirements of a Programme, except for a Programme that comprises one single Module (see Clause 4.1).

1.12   **Module Exemption** normally refers to the exemption of Credits in recognition to learners' prior learning within and/or outside the VTC, upon meeting the condition(s) laid down in Clause 4.2.

1.13   **Core Modules** refer to those modules that are critical to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude that are considered essential for the award the Programme of studies concerned leads to. They must be successfully completed to form part of the Credit Requirements. **Elective Modules** are Modules that a learner can select to make up the remaining Credit Requirements for the respective award in the Programme concerned. A Programme may include Elective Modules where appropriate.

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[2]   The programme duration refers to the nominal study duration of the programme as defined by the DPD.

1.14 The **Module Mark (M)** is a weighted average of the marks of all assessments received by a learner in a Module and will appear on the learners' Transcript of Study (see Clause 13.1) but not on the respective Programme Certificate (see Clause 13.2). The Module Mark is defined as:

$$M = \frac{\sum_i W_i A_i}{\sum_i W_i}$$

where A_i is the mark of the ith assessment scored by the learner in the Module, and W_i is the weighting of the ith assessment.

Module Marks shall be expressed as a percentage rounded to the nearest integer value. The maximum mark of a Module and individual assessment is 100 with 40 being the pass mark (see Clause 7.2).

1.15 The **Cumulative Module Average (CMA)** of a learner is a weighted average, calculated upon successful completion of the Credit Requirements leading to the award concerned, of the marks of all relevant Modules the learner has obtained. It reflects the learners' overall performance in the Programme/award concerned. The CMA is mainly used to determine the classification of the award a learner will obtain and will not appear on the learners' Programme Certificate and Award Transcript (see Clause 13.2). The CMA is defined as:

$$CMA = \frac{\sum_i M_i C_i}{\sum_i C_i}$$

where
- M_i is the Module Mark of Module i studied by the learner, and C_i is the value of Credit of Module i.
- The summation includes Modules whose Credits are earned through Credit Transfer but excludes failed Modules, exempted Modules and Modules assessed on a pass/fail basis.
- If a learner has successfully completed more Elective Modules and

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earned more Credits than those required for the award, the Elective Modules shall be ranked according to their Module Marks. In addition to the Core Modules concerned, the summation shall include the Elective Modules with higher Module Marks.

- If a learner has attempted the same Module more than once, the Module Marks of the best attempt will be used for the calculation of the CMA.
- If a learner has passed all Modules required for the award concerned, including Modules passed after condonement, the minimum CMA that the learner will get is 40.

1.16 For a programme which comprises one single Module, the CMA is the Module Mark.

1.17 When calculating the CMA, the results are rounded to the nearest one decimal place.

2. Enrolment

2.1 To enrol on a programme, learners must fulfil the entry requirements detailed in the DPD. The minimum entry requirement of a programme is the minimum academic qualification (and/or, where appropriate, other relevant attributes) that an applicant should normally attain to reasonably assure that he/she will be able to complete the Programme of study, within the Maximum Registration Period.

2.2 Specifically, the General Minimum Entry Requirements are listed as follows:

Programme	General Minimum Entry Requirements
PgC/PgD	♦ A recognised Bachelor's Degree, or equivalent[3].

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[3] A relevant professional qualification, where justifiable and deemed acceptable to the respective Programme Board, may be recognised as an equivalent to a Bachelor's Degree.

Programme	General Minimum Entry Requirements
Cert/PC/PD at QF Level 6	• A recognised Bachelor's Degree, or equivalent[3]; or • A recognised Higher Diploma/Associate Degree with at least three years' relevant work experience, or equivalent; or • Completion of a QF Level 5 programme that is deemed acceptable to the respective Programme Board; or • Other relevant verifiable prior learning and/or work experience that is/are deemed appropriate by respective Programme Board[4].
Cert/PC/PD at QF Level 5	• A recognised Higher Diploma/Associate Degree, or equivalent[5]; or • Five HKDSE subjects at Level 2 or above, including English and Chinese Languages, with at least three years' relevant work experience, or equivalent; or • Five HKCEE subjects at Grade E/Level 2 or above, including English and Chinese Languages, with at least three years' relevant work experience, or equivalent; or • Completion of a QF Level 4 programme that is deemed acceptable to the respective Programme Board; or • Relevant RPL qualification(s) at QF Level 4; or • Other relevant verifiable prior learning and/or work experience that is/are deemed appropriate by respective Programme Board[4].

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[3] A relevant professional qualification, where justifiable and deemed acceptable to the respective Programme Board, may be recognised as an equivalent to a Bachelor's Degree.

[4] The type of prior learning and/or work experience should be specified in the Definitive Programme Document.

[5] A relevant professional qualification, where justifiable and deemed acceptable to the respective Programme Board, may be recognised as an equivalent to a Higher Diploma/Associate Degree.

Normally for programmes at QF Levels 5 and 6, requirements on work experience / employment status of an applicant are included.[6] Individual Programmes may have additional requirements as deemed appropriate by the Programme Board concerned. Details of additional entry requirements must be stipulated in respective DPDs.

Mature applicants for programmes at QF Levels 5 and 6, i.e. those aged 21[7] or above with at least three years' relevant work experience, may also be accepted. For programmes with a different age requirement for consideration of admission of mature applicants, VETAB approval must be sought. Such applicants **MUST** pass an entrance assessment, which can be in an oral and/or written form, to be admitted to the programme concerned.

Normal applicants, where appropriate, may also be required to pass an entrance assessment, which can be in an oral and/or written form.

3. Credit Requirements

3.1 In order to be eligible for the award that the programme leads to, a learner must have satisfactorily completed the **Credit Requirements** in terms of the type, number, QF Level and other requirements for the award, as stipulated in the DPD, and within the Maximum Registration Period from the date of first enrolment in the Programme.

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[6] Irrespective of mode of delivery, programmes can be classified as pre-employment programmes which are in general for school leavers and in-service programmes which are in general for working adults. There are normally requirements on work experience or employment status of the applicants for entry to in-service programmes.

[7] The age requirements of mature applicants of programmes offered by PEAK is 23 (approved by VETAB vide Paper VETAB 13/15).

3.2 The minimum Credit Requirements for programmes leading to a Cert, PC, PD, PgC or PgD award are depicted in the table below:

QF Level	Award Title	Minimum Credit Requirements
5 to 6	Certificate	3 Credits
5 to 6	Professional Certificate	36 Credits
5 to 6	Professional Diploma	60 Credits
6	Postgraduate Certificate	36 Credits
6	Postgraduate Diploma	60 Credits

3.3 If a learner fails an Elective Module, the learner can elect the failed module or another Elective Module as required to make up the remaining Credit Requirements for the award subject to the offering of the module and availability of places.

3.4 Credits earned through Credit Transfer on meeting the condition laid down in Clause 4.1 are counted in the calculation of a learner's CMA of the award concerned (see Clause 1.15).

4. **Credit Transfer and Module Exemption**

4.1 Credit Transfer is made on an individual module basis. Credit Transfer is normally based on formal academic achievements obtained within and/or outside VTC, on the condition that the module concerned is identical in respective programmes in terms of the number of Credits, intended learning outcomes, QF level and assessment standards. Upon approval, the learner will earn Credits of the corresponding Modules thereby contributing towards the awards of the Programme he/she aims for. A learner is not allowed to meet credit requirements of a programme through 100% Credit Transfer. Under this principle, Programme Boards should set the maximum percentage of Credit Transfer allowed for their programmes.

4.2 Individual Module Exemption is normally granted based on formal academic achievements, RPL qualifications and/or relevant experience with documented evidence of attainment of the required learning outcomes and must be defined in the DPD. Where required,

assessments on the attainment may be conducted.   A learner may also be granted, on other justifiable grounds such as disabilities, Module Exemption from studying a module which forms a requirement of the award he/she aims for.

4.3   When permission of Module Exemption is granted, the learner will not earn credits from the module concerned and, accordingly the credit requirements for the awards of the Programme for the learner concerned will also be adjusted accordingly.   The exemption granted shall be reflected in the learner's Transcript of Study.

4.4   A learner is not allowed to meet credit requirements of the awards of the Programme through 100% Credit Transfer.   Also, a learner is not allowed Module Exemption for more than 50% of the total **remaining number of the Credits** of the awards of the Programme **after Credit Transfer**, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 4.2) should normally not constitute more than 25% of the total remaining number of the Credits required for an award after Credit Transfer.

4.5   The guidelines for granting Credit Transfer and Module Exemption must be defined in the DPD, while Module Exemption granted on other justifiable grounds (see Clause 4.2) is considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval of Credit Transfer and Module Exemption rests with the respective Programme Board.

5. Multiple Attempts of a Module

5.1   The decision of allowing a learner multiple attempts to study a module that he/she already passed rests with the respective Academic Committee, which will take into account nature of the programme and related requirements.   In such cases, within the Maximum Registration Period, there is no limit to the number of attempts for a learner to study a passed module.

5.2   There is no limit on the number of attempts for a learner to repeat a failed module within the Maximum Registration Period.

5.3   If a learner attempts the same module more than once, the highest of the module marks of the same module will be used for the calculation of CMA.

6. Attendance

6.1   The decision of having attendance requirements for a Programme rests with the respective Academic Committee, which will take into account nature of the Programme and related requirements.

6.2   Where attendance requirements are applicable, a learner's attendance is calculated based on the maximum possible attendance for the Programme/Module. Information regarding attendance policy and its implementation arrangements must be detailed in the DPD of the Programme concerned.

6.3   Where attendance requirements are applicable, learners not satisfying the minimum attendance requirement of a Programme or a specific Module of a Programme will not be awarded the qualification concerned, unless approval of the Director/Principal of the VTC member institute concerned has been granted.

7. Assessments, Marks and Grades

7.1   The assessments for a Module may include End-of-Module Assessment (EA) or Continuous Assessment (CA) or both. Both EA and CA can be in the form of laboratory work, assignments, tests, projects, case studies, practical assessments, and performance appraisal, etc.   The contribution of EA and/or CA to the Module Mark must be specified in the DPD.

7.2   The minimum pass mark for a module is 40%, which is the minimum requirement in each assessment as detailed in the DPD.   Learners need not pass all individual assessments / components to pass a module. Where appropriate, individual Programme/Module Board may set additional criteria on passing a Module, based on the nature of the

module concerned and/or requirements of relevant industry, professional bodies and/or financial funding scheme.

7.3   The EA, if any, of a module normally takes place towards the end of a module. Assessment components under CA are normally completed before the start of EA.

7.4   Module Marks shall be expressed as a percentage, rounded to the nearest integer value.   When a learner fails to obtain the minimum pass mark for a Module, the Module Mark will be represented by the Module Grade 'F' in the Learner's Transcript of Study.

7.5   For Modules which are assessed on a simple Pass/Fail basis, a three-tier grading scheme, i.e. Fail (F), Pass (P) and Pass with Merit (M), might be used if necessary.   Modules assessed on a Pass/Fail basis will not be included in the calculation of the CMA (see Clause 1.15).

8.   Reassessment Mechanism

8.1   There is no reassessment on a module basis (which refers to one reassessment to cover Continuous Assessment and End-of-module Assessment).   Learners who fail a module will be required to re-take the module concerned, or to take another elective module, if the failed module is not a core module of the programme of study the learner is pursuing.

8.2   If a learner fails an individual assessment of a module, he/she may be allowed to conduct further works and/or be reassessed in order to make up for the shortfall.   Learners passing the reassessment shall be awarded a mark of 40%, or the minimum pass mark as stipulated in respective DPD (see Clause 7.2), for the assessment component concerned in the calculation of the Module Mark.   For learners who are granted reassessment for individual assessments within a module based on mitigating factors beyond the learners' control, the actual mark obtained in the reassessment will be used in the calculation of the Module Mark.

8.3   Reassessment can be administered at a time deemed appropriate by the

Programme Team concerned, and should normally be conducted in a form that is comparable, though not necessarily identical, to the original assessment.

8.4   Under any circumstances, there will not be a second reassessment for individual assessments.

8.5   Notwithstanding Clauses 8.1-8.4, where deemed necessary, Programme Board may instead adopt Module Assessment (Repeat) for a Programme, to allow learners of the Programme concerned to improve on their overall module marks of a Module.   If so adopted, details of the justifications and related criteria for allowing Module Assessment (Repeat) must be included in the respective DPD.   In general, if learners who have already passed a Module are allowed to take Module Assessment (Repeat), the approval is normally given to cater for external circumstances such as meeting requirements of professional bodies or financial funding scheme. Personal reasons on the part of the learners (e.g. for self-challenge) should not be considered.

8.6   The adoption of Module Assessment (Repeat) for a Programme, once decided, applies to all Modules within the Programme concerned, and is implemented in accordance with the conditions laid down in Clauses 8.7 – 8.9.

8.7   In general, the application for Module Assessment (Repeat) should be made by a learner and the Module Assessment (Repeat) should be taken, within the Maximum Registration Period allowed for the programme concerned.

8.8   The Module Assessment (Repeat) should be similar to the original module assessment in terms of the number and type of individual assessments and their level of difficulty.   Learners taking the Module Assessment (Repeat) of a module must take all of its individual assessments.

8.9   The actual marks obtained in each individual assessment of the Module Assessment (Repeat) shall be used for the calculation of the module mark after the Module Assessment (Repeat) and the learner concerned

will be issued another Transcript of Study which records his/her performance in the Module Assessment (Repeat). The highest of the module marks obtained in all attempts of the same module shall be used in the calculation of the CMA for the award (See Clause 1.15).

9. Condonement

9.1 Condonement shall only be granted under special circumstances with the support and endorsement of the Board of Examiners and subsequent approval of the Academic Committee concerned.

10. Assessment Regulations

10.1 All assessments shall follow the assessment regulations approved by the VETAB. The Board may decide, from time to time, to introduce additional regulations governing invigilation, conduct of assessments and judgement of allegations of cheating as appropriate.

11. Withdrawal

11.1 In order to be eligible for the award of the Programme a learner is enrolled on, he/she must have satisfactorily completed the requirements, as stated in the DPD, within the Maximum Registration Period from the date of the first enrolment on that Programme. A learner who fails to meet this time scale shall be required to withdraw from the Programme, unless approval of extension of Maximum Registration Period is granted (See Clause 12.1).

11.2 A learner may officially withdraw from a Programme by notifying the Programme Leader in writing of his/her intention to do so.

11.3 A VTC member institute may, at any time, require a learner who is found to have committed serious violation of prevailing regulations to terminate his/her studies on disciplinary grounds. Normally, this requires the approval of the Director/Principal of the VTC member

institute at the recommendation of the Programme Leaders.

12. Extension of Maximum Registration Period

12.1 A learner who wishes to extend his/her Maximum Registration Period may apply to the Programme Leader in writing. Extension, if given, should normally not exceed 12 months.

13. Transcript and Certification for Module and Programme

13.1 A **Transcript of Study** may be issued at a time specified by the Programme/Module Board concerned as a record of the performance of a learner during the period, including failed modules and exempted modules and modules for which the credits are gained through Credit Transfer.

13.2 Upon successful completion of the respective Credit Requirements and other requirements as stipulated in the DPD for the Programme concerned, learners will be granted the relevant award and issued the **Programme Certificate** (see Clause 13.3) together with the **Award Transcript**. The Award Transcript normally includes a list of the modules passed (including those after Credit Transfer) and/or exempted in the programme upon graduation but not the failed modules. For modules with multiple attempts, only the best result is shown. The learner's performance in each Module is expressed in the form of a Module Mark or Grade as defined in Clauses 1.14, 7.4 and 7.5. A designated symbol is also used to denote a Module which was exempted (see Clause 4.2).

13.3 A Programme Certificate contains information on the title and the QF level of the respective award, and the classification of the award and date of conferment for the learner concerned. A certification for individual modules may also be issued if considered necessary.

14. **Award**

14.1 Cert, PC, PD, PgC or PgD programmes shall normally be classified according to the recipient's Cumulative Module Average (CMA) as follows.

Classification	Range of CMA
Distinction	$75 \leq CMA$
Credit	$65 \leq CMA < 75$
Pass	$40 \leq CMA < 65$

14.2 The CMA is not shown on the Programme Certificate and Award Transcript.

15. **External Examiner**

15.1 Cert, PC, PD, PgC or PgD programmes shall each have a Programme External Examiner to oversee the overall academic standards/performance of learners in the programme concerned. A Programme External Examiner is nominated by the respective Programme Board and appointed by the Academic Committee concerned to perform duties as specified in the Regulations for External Examiners approved by the VETAB. Where appropriate, Module External Examiners may also be appointed to oversee the academic standard/performance of learners of individual modules.

16. **Boards of Examiners**

16.1 The performance of the learners in a Cert, PC, PD, PgC or PgD programme shall be considered and approved (except special cases) by a Board of Examiners (BoE), which may look after a number of programmes.

16.2   The minimum composition of the BoE is:

- the Chairman, who is an academic staff member at the Principal Lecturer/Senior Training Consultant (or equivalent) rank or above nominated by the Chairman of the Academic Committee;
- the Programme External Examiner;
- the Programme Leaders; and
- a secretary.

16.3   In the exceptional circumstance that the Programme External Examiner is unable to attend the BoE meeting which requires his/her attendance, he/she must submit a written report to the Chairman of the Board commenting on the learners' overall performances.   When such a BoE is conducted without the presence of any External Examiner, the recommendations of the BoE must be forwarded to the External Examiner(s) concerned for endorsement.

16.4   The BoE shall be responsible for the decisions it makes on the qualification and classification to be awarded to each learner as well as its decisions concerning the assessment of individual modules.

16.5   The Academic Committee has the authority to consider and approve special cases recommended by the BoE and award lists and classification of award for Programmes under its purview, under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

17.   Appeals

17.1   A learner may appeal against the decision of a BoE, and/or the rulings of a Disciplinary Board on an allegation of cheating in line with the Appeals Regulations approved by the VETAB.   Appeals must be received within 7 working days from the day on which the assessment results are published, or within 3 working days from the day the learner is informed of the decision of the Disciplinary Board.

RESTRICTED

VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL

GENERAL ACADEMIC REGULATIONS
FOR SENIOR SECONDARY APPLIED LEARNING (APL) COURSES
(To take effect from January 2021)

<u>Preamble</u>

The purpose of this set of General Academic Regulations is to provide the academic framework for the operation of the senior secondary Applied Learning (ApL) courses offered and/or delivered by the VTC.   The way in which the ApL courses meet these regulations is detailed within its Definitive Course Document (DCD).

Under the senior secondary curriculum, students have to take 4 core subjects and 2 to 3 elective subjects.   A wide spectrum of ApL courses are made available as elective subjects, for students' choice to suit their different orientations and abilities in their senior secondary studies.   ApL complements senior secondary subjects by offering studies with stronger elements of practical learning linked to broad professional and vocational fields.   With equal emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes, ApL aims at enabling students to understand fundamental theories and concepts through application and practice, and to develop their generic skills using authentic contexts.

ApL courses, being an integral part of the senior secondary curriculum, follow the curriculum design and assessment framework with reference to *the Applied Learning Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Senior Secondary Level)* jointly prepared by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA).   Requirements, including study duration, entry requirements and student attendance, have been prescribed in the 'Applied Learning for Senior Secondary Curriculum Implementation Handbook (2018)', prepared by the Education Bureau (EDB) and the '*Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education – Examination Regulations*' prepared by the HKEAA.   It also stipulates that all assessment results are to be submitted to the HKEAA for moderation to ensure consistency of assessment standards.   This set of regulations,

developed under the broad framework as set by the EDB and the HKEAA and with due reference to the GARs of the other VTC programmes at similar level, is formulated with a view to ensuring the academic standards of the ApL courses offered and/or delivered by the VTC.

The Vocational Education and Training Academic Board (VETAB) reserves the right to amend these regulations in accordance with new / revised requirements of the EDB and the HKEAA for ApL courses. All students must be informed in writing of the regulations that are in force for the Academic Year in which they are studying. It is the responsibility of the Applied Learning Course Board (ApLCB) to ensure that the regulations detailed in the DCD for the ApL courses under its purview comply with these General Academic Regulations.

1. Definitions

1.1 A **Course** is a set of inter-related studies, defined through a set of course aims and objectives and learning outcomes to be achieved and by a curriculum structure, leading to a specific qualification.

1.2 A Course can be further divided into Streams. A **Stream** reflects the field of specialism within the Course and consists of clusters of related modules on a (number of) theme(s). A Course can have more than one Stream or no Stream.

1.3 A **Module** is a block of learning defined by a syllabus, including aims, intended learning outcomes, learning and teaching strategies, assessment plans, and, if necessary, pre-requisites and co-requisites. It is a constituent part of a course contributing to the award. Each module is assigned with a QF Level and the number of credits that it carries (See Clauses 1.6 and 1.8).

1.4 The **Notional Learning Hours (NLHs)** of a module is the amount of time an average student would take to acquire the learning outcomes. Notional Learning Hours are a summation of Contact Hours, Self-study Hours and Assessment Hours. **Contact Hours** are the amount of time spent by a student in direct contact with the teaching staff of a course,

including attendance in class tutorials, conducting experiments, etc. **Self-study Hours** are the amount of time spent by a student normally without direct contact with the teaching staff, including time spent on self-studying, preparation for assessment tasks, research, writing reports for projects, studying on-line materials, etc.   **Assessment Hours** refer to the amount of time spent by students in scheduled examinations, tests and other related assessment activities not yet included in contact hours and self-study hours (see Clause 1.8).

1.5   Normally, the Course is completed within two academic years in part-time day mode or part-time day mode with Summer Block.   A **Summer Block** is a block of intensive lessons normally conducted in July / August of the first academic year.

1.6   QF Level refers to the level under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF).   The ApL courses are pegged at QF Level 3.

1.7   A **Definitive Course Document (DCD)** details the aims and objectives of the course, the minimum entry requirements, course content, module syllabuses, learning and teaching strategies, assessments, course management and operation, resources, rules governing assessment and awards, and other relevant information.

1.8   Each module carries a number of **QF Credits (Credits)** which is an integer and is normally proportional to the number of Notional Learning Hours.   One credit is equivalent to 10 Notional Learning Hours in studying of a module.   The ApL courses normally have a total of 27 credits.

1.9   The **Module Contribution (C)** is a weighting which reflects the value the Module contributing to a course as defined in the DCD.

The **Module Mark (M)** is the overall assessment of a student's achievement in a Module expressed in percentage and is based on a variety of assessment components, as described in the DCD.   It is used for the calculation of Course Module Average (CMA) (see Clause 1.10).

1.10 The **Course Module Average (CMA)** of a student is a weighted average of the Marks of all Modules the student has obtained in the Course. The result is rounded up to the nearest 0.1%; and reflects the student's overall performance upon course completion.

The CMA is defined as:

$$CMA = \frac{\sum (MC)}{\sum (C)}$$

where the summation does not include the module(s) for which the student has been exempted from all of its/their assessments (see Clauses 5.5 – 5.7).

The CMA will be considered and approved by the Board of Examiners (BoE) for submission to the HKEAA for moderation and determination of the level of attainment.

2. Entry Requirements and Enrolment

2.1 To be enrolled on the Course, students must fulfil the entry requirements and meet the selection criteria, if any, as detailed in the DCD.

3. Attendance

3.1 The minimum attendance requirement for a Course is 80% of the maximum attendance, on a course basis, where maximum possible attendance includes normal class attendance only. Students not satisfying the minimum attendance requirement will not be awarded the Course Module Average, unless approval of the Chairperson of the ApLCB has been granted.

3.2 Under the circumstance where approval of minimum attendance requirement cannot be granted, students whose attendance rate below the

minimum requirement of 80% are considered "Unattained" irrespective of their assessment results in the respective ApL course.

4. Credit Transfer

4.1 **Credit Transfer** is made on an individual module basis. Credit Transfer is normally based on formal academic achievements, on the condition that the module concerned is identical in terms of the number of credits, intended learning outcomes, the QF Level and assessment standards. Upon approval, the student will earn credits of the corresponding modules thereby contributing towards the award of the Course.

4.2 A student is normally not allowed to meet the requirements of an award through 100% Credit Transfer.

4.3 The guidelines for granting Credit Transfer must be defined in the DCD. Approval of Credit Transfer as defined in the DCD rests with the Chairperson of the ApLCB.

5. Assessment, Marks and Exemption from Assessment

5.1 There are four levels of performance in ApL courses as promulgated by the HKEAA:
   (a) Attained with Distinction (II);
   (b) Attained with Distinction (I);
   (c) Attained; and
   (d) Unattained

   A cut score will be proposed to the HKEAA for the minimum level of "Attained" for the respective ApL course.

5.2 The forms of assessment for a Module may include assignments, tests, practical work and others. The contributions of each form of assessment to the Module Mark must be specified in the DCD.

5.3 Normally there is no reassessment for individual assessments of a module. However, a student absent from an assessment with valid reasons may

apply, in written form and substantiated with documented proof, for reassessment.   Upon the granting of the approval, the actual marks obtained in the reassessment will be used in the calculation of the Module Mark.

The reassessment can be conducted in a form that is comparable, though not necessarily identical, to the original assessment.

5.4   Module Mark shall be expressed as a percentage rounded up to the nearest integer value.

5.5   Students with special needs (e.g. SEN) may apply for exemption from an assessment or part of an assessment.   Such applications must be based on valid grounds substantiated with documented proof and are subject to the approval of the Chairperson of the ApLCB with due regard to the VTC's general guidelines for exemption.   In general, the part(s) being exempted should contribute to no more than 20% of the maximum possible marks of the Course.

5.6   If a student is exempted from all the assessments of a module, the module will not be included when calculating the CMA of the student (see Clause 1.10).

5.7   If the exempted assessment(s) / part(s) of an assessment constitute(s) only a portion of all the assessments of a module, the exempted assessment(s) / part(s) of an assessment will not be included in the calculation of the Module Marks of the Module concerned.   The mark(s) obtained in the remaining assessment(s)/part(s) of the assessment(s) will be used on a pro-rata basis for the calculation of the Module Mark.

5.8   Where applicable, details of exemption on assessment should be shown on the Transcript of Study for the student concerned (see Clause 7.1).

5.9   A student who is exempted from an assessment or part of an assessment is still required to attend all scheduled classes of the Module concerned; the attendance of which will be counted in calculating the student's overall attendance in the course.

6. Assessment Regulations

6.1 All assessments shall follow the Examination Regulations approved by the VETAB. The Board may decide, from time to time, additional regulations governing invigilation, the conduct of examinations and the judgement of allegations of cheating, which shall be promulgated amongst students not later than the date when examination schedules are published.

7. Transcript of Study

7.1 The Transcript of Study is issued on completion of the Course after any reassessment or additional work, showing all the modules and the student's attainment level in the Course after moderation by the HKEAA and, where applicable, details of exemption on assessments (see Clauses 5.5 – 5.7).

8. Repeating, Deferment, Withdrawal and Dismissal

8.1 Repeating the same ApL course(s) is subject to the approval of the EDB and HKEAA and the relevant regulations stipulated by the EDB and/or HKEAA.

8.2 Deferment of studies is subject to the approval of the EDB and the HKEAA.

8.3 A student may officially withdraw from the Course by notifying the EDB in writing of his / her intention to do so. He / She should also inform the department / centre in writing.

8.4 The VTC may, at any time, require a student who is found to have committed serious violation of prevailing regulations to terminate his / her studies on disciplinary grounds.

9. **Award**

9.1 In order to be eligible for an award, a student must have satisfactorily completed the requirements, as stated in the Definitive Course Document, and subject to moderation and determination of level of attainment by the HKEAA.

9.2 The award to be granted to the recipients will be based on the final results announced by the HKEAA, with three levels of classification as stated below:-

   a) Attained,
   b) Attained with Distinction (I), or
   c) Attained with Distinction (II)

   The classification of awards lies with the HKEAA. Students whose level of performance is classified as "Unattained" are not eligible for the award.

   Changes to the above award classifications would require the formal approval of the Foundation Studies Board (FSB) under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

9.3 ApL Course may have intermediate exit award(s) if considered appropriate. The intermediate exit award(s) will normally only be granted to a student who chooses to exit without completing the ApL course subject to meeting the credit requirements for the intermediate exit award(s) concerned as stipulated in the DCD.

10. **External Examiners**

10.1 The Course shall have an External Examiner nominated by the Chairperson of the ApLCB and appointed by the FSB to perform duties as specified in the Regulations for External Examiners approved by the VETAB.

11.   Boards of Examiners

11.1   The performance of all students studying in the Course in each academic year should be considered by the Board of Examiners (BoE) as specified in the Definitive Course Document.

11.2   The BoE of the Course will consider the performance of all students enrolled on the Course and approve the assessment results which will then be submitted to the HKEAA for moderation and determination of level of attainment

11.3   The composition of the BoE comprises at least the following: -
- the Chairperson: Chairperson of the ApLCB or his / her representative (who shall normally be an academic staff member at PL rank or above);
- the External Examiner(s);
- the Course Leader(s); and
- a secretary.

11.4   In the exceptional circumstance that an External Examiner is unable to attend a BoE meeting, he / she must submit a written report to the Chairperson of the Board commenting on the students' overall performances.   If a BoE is conducted without the presence of any External Examiner, the recommendations of the BoE must be forwarded to the External Examiner(s) of the Course for endorsement before confirmation of the BoE minutes.

11.5   The Board of Examiners shall be responsible for decisions it makes regarding students' results in individual Modules.

11.6   The FSB has the authority to receive and review the results from each Board of Examiners under its purview, under the delegated authority of the VETAB.

12. Appeals

12.1 A student may appeal the decision of a BoE on his / her assessment results in individual Modules and/or the rulings of a Disciplinary Board on an allegation of cheating. Appeals must be received within 7 working days from the day on which the assessment results are released, or within 3 working days from the day the student is informed of the decision of the Disciplinary Board.

12.2 Students are not allowed to appeal against the classifications of attainment as announced by the HKEAA.