Programme Handbook 2023–2024

MA in Practical Theology

MA in Biblical Studies

Validated by the University of Chester

Preface

This Programme Handbook for the College's University of Chester MA in Practical Theology and MA in Biblical Studies and Theology, provides information on the academic structure, regulations and day-to-day management of the above courses. It is intended **only** as a local supplement and pointer to the definitive sources of this information on the University of Chester Portal system. Students should regularly consult this information, which from time to time may change. As far as possible, explanations provided here merely reference the appropriate University web page rather than duplicate information. This is usually done via footnotes showing where to find information on the Chester system, but also by hyperlinks directly in the text. If you are using Microsoft Word to view this file, then you can follow these links by "Control click" (PC) or "Command click" (Mac).

The Chester online enrolment process includes a declaration that you are responsible for familiarising yourself with the information provided by the University.

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Introduction

Missio Dei Leadership and Theological College has a vision to be a centre of excellence, not merely a place of learning, but of equipping and sending. Through exceptional teaching and impartation from the AoG GB National Leadership Team, leading practitioners within our movement, and lecturers from around the world, we believe we can offer a life-shaping experience.

This constitutes a commitment, by the College to its students, to provide appropriate training for Christian ministry (understood in both the narrow sense, and the widest sense of that term). Its academic programmes are intended to facilitate the development of the critical skills that enable both existing and potential leaders to engage with, analyse and evaluate theory and praxis, and thus to be better equipped to face the challenges and make the critically informed decisions associated with Christian life, ministry and mission in the 21st century. We will offer our services in a context of mutual respect and appreciation as, together, we seek to respond to Christ's call on our lives.

As a college we remain committed to (among other things):

- Maintain high academic standards, in accordance with national expectations, and awards that are comparable with those attained in other Higher Education institutions.

- Offer to students, and continually seek to improve, high quality learning opportunities. This includes ensuring the knowledge, ability, experience and development of our teaching faculty, the provision of appropriate learning resources, a programme structure that meets the needs of students, and an assessment strategy that is robust, fair, transparent, and ensures that students are properly rewarded for the work they do.

- Ensure that students (and prospective students) are provided with good and accurate information about all aspects of the College's life, programmes and processes, and that communication between the College and students is effective and maintained.

- Provide all such opportunities that we can to enhance the quality of our provision, and the learning opportunities of students.

- Engage appropriately with students in the development, monitoring and review of programmes and assessment strategies to ensure that they are appropriate, realistic, and meet students' needs.

- Receive and respond to feedback from students.

- Respond appropriately, and in a timely manner to students' complaints and appeals[1].

- Play our part (alongside the University of Chester) to meet standards and expectations set out in the Quality Assurance Agency's *Framework for Higher*

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[1]A policy document for general student complaints is available on the College website at https://www.missiodei.ac.uk/student-life/policies/. For specifically academic complaints and appeals, see section 5.4 below.

Education Qualifications (*FHEQ*)[2] and their *Quality Code*.[3] If it is felt that these expectations are not being met, please contact the Vice Principal (Academic), Mark Button.

This Handbook sets out details of the postgraduate academic programmes. It includes important information, and also notes our commitment in terms of the programmes to be delivered, assessment, a timetable for feedback, what to do to appeal a mark, etc. As part of our commitment to our students we will adhere, insofar as it is in our power to do so, and within the regulations set out by the University of Chester, to the processes set out here. If for any reason anything set out here needs to be changed, we undertake to inform students in good time. At the same time, and as part of a mutual commitment, we have expectations of students. We expect students to:

● Read and to pay serious regard to the content of this handbook, to comply with its requirements
● Adopt a good attitude towards learning and assessment processes
● Meet their financial commitment to the College – which includes meeting all deadlines for the payment of fees and fines
● Check, regularly and frequently, their College email addresses and their University of Chester email addresses, and to respond appropriately to communications from the College and the University
● Fulfil all requirements of the University of Chester – some of which (e.g. enrolment, module registration) may be communicated directly to the student by the University.

Further aspects of students' responsibilities are found in the Student Charter.

1. Contacts and Communication

1.1 Contacts

Vice Principal (Academic)	Mark Button	mark.button@missiodei.ac.uk
Academic Manager	Jonathan Osborne	jonathan.osborne@missiodei.ac.uk
Operations & Admissions Officer	Caroline Balfour	caroline.balfour@missiodei.ac.uk
Student Liaison Officer	Nav Sahota	nav.sahota@missiodei.ac.uk

External Quality Advisor - *Dr Minna Shkul, University of Sheffield*

The University engages External Examiners (EEs) and External Quality Advisors (EQAs) to both assure the quality and standards of our provision and enhance academic activity.

Under no circumstances are students permitted to independently contact an EE or EQA. If the student wishes to engage formally with the quality management process, there are appropriate mechanisms in place at the University of Chester, further guidance on which can be obtained from the AS section on Portal.

From September 2023 the University is creating a new role of External Quality Advisor (EQA) as an additional form of external scrutiny. Whilst External Examiners will continue to

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[2] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks

[3] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

be utilised where there is a professional body requirement the rest of our provision will be covered by EQAs.

EQAs provide an alternative but still rigorous approach to ensuring the University's assessment processes are fit for purpose with an emphasis on enhancement. EQAs submit an annual report in a similar way to our external examiners.

University of Chester:

Principal Academic Contact - *Dr Steve Knowles, Department of Theology and Religious Studies*

Students should generally not make contact with the Principal Academic Contact at the University for advice on modules, assessment, progression or other aspects of their programme. Normally the Principal Academic Contact will be approached by a member of Missio Dei's academic staff when their advice is needed. There will be opportunities during the academic year for Student Representatives to engage with the Principal Academic Contact.

Information for students at Partner Organisations can be found on the Chester Portal including University Support Services for Students at Partner Organisations.[4]

The Learning & Information Services Helpdesk can be contacted at lis.helpdesk@chester.ac.uk for help with difficulties accessing University Portal (e.g. forgotten password).

1.2 Communication

Communication between the student, the College and the University is primarily electronic. This involves the use of websites and email.

1.2.1 Websites

The University of Chester website is www.chester.ac.uk. Notices for students, definitive versions of course documents, regulations, and various important forms needed by students are held in a password protected area operated through a software tool called Sharepoint. This is also known as the 'Chester Portal', and is available via a link on the Chester front page.

The Missio Dei website is https://www.missiodei.ac.uk/. This will carry additional local and supplementary notices and information for students (such as college calendars, timetables, staff profiles etc.), as well as useful links and pointers to information held at Chester.

1.2.2 Email

It is <u>imperative</u> to check emails regularly, including in vacation periods. Students are typically given both college and university email addresses.

Each student is given access to a Missio Dei email address (of the form FirstnameSurname.pgstudent@missiodei.ac.uk) to use whilst they are a registered student with Missio Dei. These addresses are used for day-to-day communication with module tutors, personal tutors and the academic department. It is important to note that these email

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[4] Information for Students at Partner Organisations:
https://portal.chester.ac.uk/aqss/Pages/aqss-collab-key-contacts.aspx

accounts will become inactive shortly after a student has graduated on a date of which students will be notified nearer the time.

In addition, all students are given a University of Chester email address, in the form <<University Student Number>>@chester.ac.uk. Although the university knows your college and/or home email addresses, certain communications (e.g., module results or resubmission notifications) are sent ONLY to your Chester address. It is strongly recommended that you add both your Missio Dei and Chester emails to an email client in order to be kept up to date, and respond to, important information.

Given the above, it is imperative that students start their course with enough IT knowledge and experience to configure, manage and use confidently the various communication tools expected.

1.3   Student numbers

As noted above, all students are given a University Student Number on enrolment with Chester. This is a seven-digit number and is almost always required when filling in any academic form handled by the college on behalf of the university. You should make a note of your number when it arrives and have it to hand at all times.

2. Academic Management Structure

2.1   College and University responsibilities

The courses covered in this handbook are designed, taught, and assessed by Missio Dei, validated by the University of Chester, and delivered by Missio Dei under a Partnership Agreement. For an overview of the respective responsibilities expected of both parties under such an agreement, see the University of Chester's *Quality and Standards Manuals*, *Handbook C – Collaborative Provision*.[5]

2.2   Operational Management

At Missio Dei we have three Vice Principals, Lilly Brightwell, who is Vice Principal (Leadership and Pastoral), Mark Button, who is Vice Principal (Academic) and Glenn Balfour, who is Vice Principal (Theology). Together they fulfil a visionary role keeping the College and its academic provision on course to deliver tangible vocational as well as academic results. The desire to see ministry formation work alongside academic excellence is fundamental to the philosophy and practice of Missio Dei College.

The Board of Governors, which is currently made up of the Vice Principal (Leadership and Pastoral), Vice Principal (Academic), the General Manager for the Assemblies of God and the Leadership Development Director, supports the Vice Principals and is responsible for strategic decisions.

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[5] Available here

The Head of Academic Provision is Mark Button; in this capacity he oversees both the Graduate and Undergraduate departments and is responsible for the overall rationale and balance of all of Missio Dei's academic programmes.

The main point of contact for students with regards to academic queries and the day-to-day operation of the programmes is handled by our Academic Administration team, headed up by the Vice-Principal, Academic.

o   2.3 Staff Meeting

All academic and non-academic-related staff meet regularly and at these meetings, aspects of course management may be discussed. Matters of importance are likely to be referred to the Board of Studies.

o   2.4 Board of Studies (BoS)

The Board of Studies (BoS) meets weekly and comprises the Vice Principals and Academic Administration team. Periodically there is representation from the student body. It is chaired by the Vice Principal (Academic). The purpose of the BoS is to monitor the relevance and effectiveness of programme content, consider management data (including results and student feedback), and a range of other issues relating to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of our academic provision. This includes (but is not limited to):

1. Oversees the admissions process. This process, including interviewing prospective students, is managed on behalf of the BoS by the Admissions Team. Recommendations on acceptance are referred to the BoS for ratification;
2. Discusses and decides upon matters of academic relevance referred to it by the Board of Governors;
3. Receives reports from the Vice Principals and other officers of the College;
4. Receives comments made by the Student Representatives (see section Student Representatives below);
5. Monitors grading during the academic year and the use of Library resources;
6. Monitors student evaluation of modules;
7. Receives annual reports from the External Examiners and takes appropriate action;
8. Prepares Continuing Monitoring and Enhancement Reports (CMEs) and proposals for Programme Renewal Packs (PRPs).

o   2.5 Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprises the Vice Principal (Leadership Development), Vice Principal (Academic) and the Academic Manager. The purpose of the SLT is to serve the BoS by monitoring the day-to-day running of the College, including both the academic provision, and wider activities, such as venue, Chapel services, resources etc.

o   2.6 Module Assessment Boards (MABs)

The College hosts a University of Chester Module Assessment Board (MAB) at the end of each academic year, which usually involves all teaching faculty, the external examiner and

representatives of the University. As its name suggests, this board ratifies marks for individual modules only. A later Awards Assessment Board (AAB) held at the University considers matters of overall performance, including degree classification, progression between levels, and which resubmissions are necessary. Students will be informed of the outcome of any Assessment Board by the University via email.

o   2.7   Student Representatives

Each level of study elects two Student Representatives annually. There is a formal election process and details of this are given at the beginning of the academic year. The Student Representatives bring representative comments on courses to the faculty via meetings twice each Semester with the Vice Principal (Leadership Development), Vice Principal (Academic), and Academic team.

o   2.8   Monitoring and Review of Student Representation Processes

The usefulness and effectiveness of student engagement and of the processes contained in the Student Engagement Strategy[6] are reviewed annually during the June Extended Board of Studies (EBoS), as part of our Enhancement Action Plan. Key performance indicators in that review include:

1. Usefulness and effective use of student feedback data.
2. The usefulness and effectiveness of processes for involving students in enhancement – including their effectiveness in engaging with all groups of students (including protected groups).
3. Demonstrable enhancement of programme quality and of students' learning opportunities and experience as a result of student engagement.

o   2.9   Reporting

The annual External Examiner reports and Monitoring Reviews are available to students via the University of Chester portal.[7] Students will be notified by email when these become available. They can be accessed directly by clicking on the link https://psmd.chester.ac.uk/pos/index.php?th=931, and then searching by programme title. External Examiners' reports are also available on the Missio Dei website.

3. The Courses

3.1   Introduction

Missio Dei offers two masters programmes validated by Chester University: MAs in Practical Theology and Biblical Studies. The aims, objectives and structures of the programmes are described in more detail in the University of Chester programme specifications available on the Chester Website by clicking on the following links: [8]

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[6] The *Student Engagement Strategy* can be downloaded from the college website here.

[7] Information regarding Evaluation, Monitoring and Review of the programmes can be found here

[8] Students will be prompted to enter their login details for the Chester Portal in order to view the Programme Specifications.

[MA in Practical Theology](#)
[MA in Biblical Studies](#)

3.2 Levels and Exit Awards

The MA programmes form part of Level 7 of the UK Framework for Higher Education[9] and can generally be taken as one year full time or two year part-time courses. The MA programmes have exit awards of PGCert (60 taught credits) and PGDip (120 taught credits).

3.3 Modules and Credits

Most modern degrees are "modular". A module is a self-contained part of the course that addresses one subject area. Modules each have a unique code (e.g., TH7401) and can be of different "sizes", depending on the quantity of work involved. This is measured by different numbers of "credits", at postgraduate level, usually 20. The dissertations that conclude all the postgraduate courses also have module codes, but larger credit ratings, such as 80 for an MA dissertation, or 300 for the DMin.

The study time required for each 20-credit module is reckoned at 200 hours, divided roughly between attendance at lectures or seminars (10%), private study (50%) and completion of coursework (40%). Full-time postgraduate students must achieve 180 credits over a calendar year of full-time study, this amounts to maintaining 40-hour weeks over the duration of the course (holidays typical for those in full-time employment). Those who have responsibilities outside their studies need to be aware of these expectations, as job or family commitments may not be cited as an extenuating circumstance for late submission of coursework by a full-time student.

Each module is assessed separately, often by a single piece of coursework, but sometimes by several components. The requirements in each case are set out in the module descriptor (links included below). Postgraduate courses require all modules to be passed. There are various rules governing what happens when students fail one component or all of an assessment, which are outlined in the "Assessment" section below.

The same modules can appear in more than one programme, but programmes will usually have different rules about module choices.

3.4 Module choices

Most of the postgraduate courses involve some element of choice. Module Registration takes place at the beginning of the academic year and is conducted by the Academic Admin Team. Changing modules, whilst not encouraged, is possible, but requires the submission of a form. All such forms, which are available to download on the Chester Portal, must be approved and signed by the Programme Leader, and only after this are forwarded by the college to the University. Students are responsible for completing and returning forms in time for any university deadlines to be met. Students failing to submit work for modules for which they are registered will receive a zero score for non-submission. Students who have not

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[9] For the framework documents on which all UK HE provision and the Chester degree programmes are based, please see *UoC Handbook A* available [here](#).

registered for the right number of modules will, if this persists into the final stages of their registration, be unable to achieve a final award.

3.5 Assessment periods and Boards

Whether part or full time, postgraduate modules are taught and assessed within a single academic year. Deadlines for the submission of coursework are included below. Students should expect marks to be returned within four working weeks of the deadline for coursework submission or examination. Each year, in May and November, all the modular marks are submitted to a University of Chester Module Assessment Board, where they are confirmed. Approximately one month later, the University will email with a link to results for the year, and with notification of any resubmissions required. Resubmissions will be due in an additional retake assessment period running in October and March, and will be submitted to the following MAB.

3.6 Programme requirements and structure

All master's awards require the completion of 180 credits at level 7 (5 x 20 credits of taught modules plus an 80-credit dissertation) according to the criteria detailed below. Please note that some modules may not be available in every year, although every effort will be made to offer most at least once within each 18-month period so that there will be opportunity to take preferred modules at some point in the course. Students will be given the full available range of modules to choose from at the beginning of each year. Module descriptors, which include key references, are held on the University of Chester Portal.

3.6.1 MA in Practical Theology

Students must take TH7445 Critical Methods in Practical Theology plus four other taught modules, followed by the dissertation, TH7441. To maintain the character and balance of the course, of the four taught modules beyond Critical Methods, two must be taken from TH7416, TH7438, TH7444 and TH7439.

TH7405 Biblical Pneumatology (20)	TH7438 Pentecostal & Revivalist History (20)
TH7406 Biblical Theology of Mission (20)	TH7436 The World of the Bible (20)
TH7408 Johannine Studies (20)	TH7437 Paul's Letters: Methods, Context and Theology (20)
TH7411 New Testament Theology (20)	
TH7414 OT Theology (20)	TH7439 Contemporary Christian Leadership (20)
TH7416 Contemporary Issues in World Mission: Strategy and Praxis (20)	TH441 Dissertation (80)
TH7444 Christian Leadership and Current Issues (20)	

3.6.2 MA in Biblical Studies

Students must take TH7446 Critical Methods in Biblical Studies, and either TH7411 NT Theology or TH7414 OT Theology (students can take both, but must take at least one), plus three other taught modules, followed by the Dissertation, TH7440.

TH7405 Biblical Pneumatology (20)	TH7408 Johannine Studies (20)
TH7406 Biblical Theology of Mission (20)	TH7411 New Testament Theology (20)
TH7414 OT Theology (20)	TH7436 The World of the Bible (20)

	TH7437 Paul's Letters: Methods, Context and Theology (20)
	TH7440 Dissertation (80)
	TH7443 Greek Text of Mark's Gospel (20)

3.6.3 Module Guidance on Moodle

Guidance and information beyond that listed in the module descriptors above will be available on each module's Moodle page. The Moodle pages for each module the student has registered for will be available through the Moodle link on the University of Chester Portal. The individual Moodle pages for each module will allow the student to contact the module leader, view the module specifications and see the module outline. Notes for each module and the assessment questions will be distributed only via the Moodle page. Assignment submission will, usually, be via Turnitin, and this is also accessed via Moodle. Lecturers are also encouraged to include additional material relating to modules on the Moodle pages. It is important, therefore, that students are familiar with access to Moodle, and consult the relevant pages prior to lectures.

4. Assessment

4.1 Introduction

The following notes help explain some general principles about assessment. Students should refer, at all times, to the detailed University of Chester documentation.[10] Please refer, too, to the College's *Assessment Strategy*, available through the Missio Dei website.

4.1.1 Anonymous Marking

Students' names do not appear on submitted assignments. All students are allocated a unique reference number, which is used as the identifier for assignments, thus ensuring that at the point of marking, assessment is anonymous.

4.1.2 Principles of Assessment

All modules have stated learning outcomes, provided in the module descriptors. Assessments, whether coursework, examinations, or a mixture of the two, are based around these outcomes as well as the level at which the modules are defined.[11] All assignment and exam questions are available for scrutiny by external examiners and moderators, as are student scripts. The assessment (essay word count, length of exams, etc.) is matched to the number of credits associated with a module. This is typically 4500 words (or equivalent) for each 20 credits assigned to the module. A module can require a single assessment or a sequence of assessment components.

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[10] Academic assessment regulations and processes for levels 4-7 are found here.

[11] Thus, for instance, the level of critical engagement and analysis expected at Level 7 will be higher than that expected at the undergraduate levels 4-6.

4.1.3 Assessment Criteria

The criteria used by the college for grading assessed work are based on the generic criteria for these levels set out by the University of Chester.[12] A table setting out these expectations in the college context is set out in the appendix below. Though these criteria may be more readily applied to essay-type work, they are intended also to provide general guidance for examinations and other forms of assessment too.

4.1.4 Modular Assessment, Monitoring and Feedback

All work is initially marked by the tutor who taught or supervised the module. This tutor is responsible not only for giving your initial grade but also providing sufficient feedback for you to understand how you might improve performance in the future.[13] All assignments will be assessed anonymously except those that cannot be submitted electronically (e.g. presentations).

In line with University of Chester guidelines, all coursework and examinations are subject to 'monitoring' or second marking by another staff member. At level 7, most modules are monitored. Monitoring involves looking at a sample of assignments, including the highest marked assignment in the batch, all assignments first marked at 50% or below and at least five assignments spread among the rest. Assignments first-marked at 50% or below and 69% and above will be second-marked. If there is any disagreement between first- and second markers, this will be discussed, and a final mark agreed. It is this agreed mark that will be released to students. Other assignments in the sample will be second-marked, but only to determine whether the overall marking level is correct. Monitors may suggest that the marks for a cohort are increased, decreased, or remain the same, but within that category, cannot suggest changes to individual marks. Some modules (e.g., Dissertations and all modules at level 8) are routinely second-marked, and a final mark agreed. The marks that are released to students will reflect any changes made following the monitoring/second marking process. Full details of this process are available on the Chester website.[14] All marks and first markers' comments should be available to students within four working weeks of the submission deadline. If, due to unforeseen circumstances that is not possible, the Academic Department will inform students and set a new date.

The pass mark for level 7 modules registered as of September 2019 is 50%. The pass mark for modules registered before September 2019 is 40%. The module mark is calculated as the weighted average of the assessment components. Failure in one component can be allowed under certain circumstances so long as it does not score below 20% and the average for the module is still a passing grade. For details about re-assessment, see the section further below.

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[12] For the generic UoC assessment criteria for Levels 4-7, see Handbook A, The Design of Approved Academic Provision and structures, available at
http://www.chester.ac.uk/about/academic-regulatory/quality-and-standards-manual .

[13] Any student who feels their grade is difficult to understand may ask for further clarification from their tutor. No appeal against marking is permitted, although students discovering administrative errors such as incorrect calculation of results or imposition of penalties should certainly communicate these to the Vice Principal Academic.

[14] Handbook F - Requirements Governing the Assessment of Students available at,
http://www.chester.ac.uk/about/academic-regulatory/quality-and-standards-manual.

4.1.5 Re-assessment

If a student fails any individual module, they will be required to resubmit the work. Resubmissions should be completed at the next assessment opportunity. The results for such retaken modules at level 7 are always capped at 40% (for modules registered before September 2019) or 50% (for modules registered as of September 2019), which will certainly affect a student's overall result for the course. Third attempts may also be allowed. Where a student fails at a third attempt, or where required components are not submitted at a second attempt, students will have their studies terminated by the University.[15] For resubmission of failed essays an additional fee of £100 per 20 credits will be payable.

4.1.6 Classification

The MA programmes are awarded at Pass, Merit and Distinction levels. A pass is achieved if a student achieves the basic modular pass mark of 40% (for modules registered before September 2019) or 50% (for modules registered as of September 2019) in all the taught modules and the dissertation. Merits and Distinctions are awarded if a student achieves 60%+ or 70%+ respectively in half of the modular credits of the award. For further details concerning classification and awards, see the Assessment Regulations.[16]

4.2 Assessment Practicalities

4.2.1 Coursework

4.2.1.1 Submission of Coursework

All coursework assignments must be typed, and must comply with the College Style Guide, given in an appendix below. Assignment titles and submission deadlines are posted on the Moodle site for respective modules. All coursework assignments must be submitted in Word or PDF format, via Turnitin on the Moodle site for the respective module. The use of Turnitin ensures that assessment is anonymous. Sometime ahead of the assessment deadline a submission inbox will be created by the Academic Department. Assignments, including revised versions, may be uploaded at any time until the deadline. Once the deadline has passed, if an assignment has been uploaded, no further submissions will be possible. If the first submission is made after the deadline it will be recorded as late, and subject to penalties (see below). Failure to submit an assignment will result in a zero score.

When you submit your work, you assent to the following declaration:

> In submitting this assignment, I confirm that (a) the work and wording are wholly my own (b) the word-count is as stated (c) all sources are acknowledged, and quotations are clearly identified and referenced (d) I have made electronic and hardcopy backups of my work (e) I have read the Programme and College Handbook and the university Academic Integrity Policy and Appeals Procedure.

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[15] Guidance notes for students appear in Section 8: (Reassessment and Third Attempts) of the *Handbook F - Requirements Governing the Assessment of Students* available at, http://www.chester.ac.uk/about/academic-regulatory/quality-and-standards-manual.

[16] Regulations governing the Calculation of Degree Classification are found here.

Please note that (c) may become significant in any dispute about unfair practice. (d) is included to safeguard your work, as computer malfunction cannot be cited as a mitigating circumstance in any dealings with the University.

Further details relating to the process of submitting coursework is available on the Chester Portal.[17]

4.2.1.2 Return of Marked Assignments

Marked assignments should be available to view via Moodle within four working weeks of the essay deadline. There may be delays over public holidays (e.g., Christmas and Easter). Where it is not possible to mark the assignments within the four-week period due to unforeseen events, students will be informed of the delay and given a new date. Where practical, issues leading to a delay in the marking of assignments will be discussed in advance with Student Representatives.

Note that the mark given for assignments will be the agreed mark after second marking. The comments will be those of the first marker.

4.2.2 Oral Examinations

MA courses do not normally involve oral examinations, but these can be requested in exceptional circumstances to determine difficult or borderline cases or to help decide whether there is a *prima facie* case of academic integrity issues.

4.2.2.1 Attendance and Conduct

The oral examination for students (the *viva*) following the submission of their work is organised directly by the University of Chester. A date and time for the *viva* will be communicated via your Chester email address. The aims and conduct of the examination are described in Section 7 of Handbook G[18], and training for the *viva* will be provided at College in the closing stages of the course with which there an oral requirement, although students are also welcome to attend the seminars provided at the University of Chester if they wish.

4.2.2.2 Outcome/Results

Students will often be informed of the outcome of their oral examination at the *viva* itself. If this is favourable, and all other taught modules have been passed, then a pass overall can be assumed. Sometimes, examiners will request changes to the dissertation before it can be accepted. The exact outcome and any requests for modifications will be communicated officially via your University of Chester email account. The range of outcomes together with the time limits within which certain types of modification must be made are explained in detail in Handbook G.[19]

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[17] https://portal1.chester.ac.uk/ses/Documents/Useful

[18] The academic standards that inform the examiners questions during the viva are set out in Handbook G – Postgraduate Research Degrees, Section 7 – Examiners and Examination available at, http://www.chester.ac.uk/about/academic-regulatory/quality-and-standards-manual.

[19] Handbook G – Postgraduate Research Degrees, Section 7 – Examiners and Examination available at, http://www.chester.ac.uk/about/academic-regulatory/quality-and-standards-manual.

4.2.3 Assessment and Disability

The College has a Disability Policy[20] and a designated Disability Officer, who is available for discussions relating to learning and other disabilities. Where possible, we try to accommodate the needs of all students.

Students with a disability should contact the Disability Officer as soon as possible. Only where students have had a formal Post-16 Assessment may this be considered in assessments. Where there has been an assessment the College will do all it can to comply with the recommendations, and to make 'reasonable adjustments' to the assessment regime and methods. These are detailed more fully on the Chester Portal and website.[21] The default assumption for coursework is the provision of extra time. The standard amount is two additional weeks relative to the normal published deadline.

The college Disability Officer can be contacted through the Academic Administration Team.

4.2.4 Exceptional Circumstances (Extensions and Deferrals)

1. Exceptional circumstances is the term used by the University to describe how we will make allowances for certain serious difficulties a student has experienced which were likely to have an impact on their ability to complete an assessment to the best of their ability and/or by the deadline.

2. The processes which fall under the umbrella term 'Exceptional Circumstances' are as follows:

    - extensions to the submission deadline
    - a deferral of the assessment, without penalty, to the next assessment point
    - the waiving or reduction of a late-work penalty
    - an extension to the maximum period of registration (the number of years a student has to complete their award)

    More details on each of these may be found below.
3. With the exception of extensions to the registration period (see 7.6 below) the relevant Head of Department, in their capacity as Chair of the Module Assessment Board, has responsibility for taking decisions on requests made under this policy. The Head of Department may nominate other suitably experienced colleagues in their department to fulfil this function.

4.2.4.1 Categories of exceptional circumstances

Circumstances acceptable under this policy must be serious and exceptional relative to the normal daily challenges presented by academic study, and unpredictable in that the student could not reasonably have been expected either to avoid them, or to allow for them in planning the assessment work or preparation. The Exceptional Circumstances policy recognises that the assessment process itself can cause students to feel more pressurised

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[20] Available on the college website here: https://www.missiodei.ac.uk/student-life/policies/

[21] Handbook F - Requirements Governing the Assessment of Students available at, http://www.chester.ac.uk/about/academic-regulatory/quality-and-standards-manual.

than at other times of the academic year, and this should be considered to be one of the normal challenges presented by academic study, including where a student has multiple assessments due in a short period of time. Except in a very small number of cases, where the impact is serious and incapacitating, this would not be considered as a valid reason for submitting a claim under this policy.

There are many different reasons why a student's performance may have been adversely affected by exceptional circumstances, meaning that it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of everything the University is and is not able to take into account. However, the following are some of the types of exceptional circumstances the University may consider:

- Exceptional medical circumstances, such as where the student is ill either at the point of assessment or immediately in advance. The University is unable to make allowances for minor illnesses such as headaches, upset stomachs, coughs and colds. These affect everyone and it would not be practical or sensible to take account of them all. Students are expected to plan their work and allow leeway to cope with minor ailments;

- Long term illness/medical conditions, particularly those which flare up close to the assessment deadline;

- Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where the delay is not the fault of student;

- Symptoms of an infectious disease that could be harmful if passed onto others; this will primarily be acceptable for assessments which require attendance such as exams or performances and not for assessments such as coursework, which can be worked on and submitted without the risk of harming others;

- Bereavement or serious illness of a close family member; this would include spouse/partner, parent, grandparent, brother/sister or child/dependent (including step-father, step-sister etc). This is not an exhaustive list and departments should consider individual family circumstances when taking decisions;

- Victim of or witness to a serious crime/incident;

- Domestic problems (including divorce, separation, parental divorce);

- Unexpected caring responsibilities for a family member or dependent;

- Serious and sudden accommodation crisis such as eviction or where the home becomes uninhabitable;

- Exceptional work commitments (part time students and those repeating modules on a part time basis only);

- For assessments which require attendance at a specific location at a specific time (eg an exam or class test), difficulties associated with travel, but only where these difficulties are exceptional, impossible to anticipate in advance, not a result of poor planning or time management, and where there is clear independent evidence to substantiate the claim;

- Legal proceedings such as jury service or court cases requiring attendance;

- Unforeseeable financial difficulties such as the sudden withdrawal of funding by a student's sponsor;

- Competing in sport, or participation in other similar activity, with representation at national or international level. This does not include being part of a University sports team or society and will normally only be acceptable for timed assessments taking place at a particular time and date;

- Other personal factors which may reasonably be deemed to have had an adverse impact comparable with those above;

The following are not valid exceptional circumstances:
- Anything which could reasonably have been foreseen and/or prevented;

- Misreading the examination timetable or any other information relating to either timed assessments taking place at a particular point in time, or to submission deadlines;

- IT failure, including but not limited to computer failure/storage device failure/printer failure, unless the University's LIS department provide proof that the University was at fault;

- A minor illness such as a cough or cold;

- Having assessments scheduled close together;

- Normal anxiety resulting from taking assessments such as exams;

- Holidays or events such as weddings;

- Minor accommodation issues such as disturbances from other housemates;

- Submission of an incorrect document (eg a piece of work from another module or an incomplete draft of the assessment);

- Submission of the wrong file type or a corrupted file;

- English not being the student's first language;

- The death of a pet, or a person the student does not have a personal relationship with;

- Work commitments for full time students, or normal/unexceptional work commitments for part time/repeating students;

- Problems associated with travelling arrangements/holidays, traffic problems or stress caused by travel problems, unless these problems are exceptional, impossible to anticipate in advance, not a result of poor planning or time management, and where there is clear independent evidence to substantiate the claim. It is the responsibility of the student to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that assignments are submitted on time and/or that they present themselves for an examination on time. This should be borne in mind when making any plans to return to University after a home visit or when making holiday/travel

arrangements. In cases of extremis, travel issues may be taken into account for students with disabilities where the combination of unforeseen circumstances and disability related issues impinge on attendance;

● House moves, renovations or other routine accommodation difficulties.

4.2.4.2 Evidence in support of requests for the consideration of exceptional circumstances

If a student has exceptional circumstances they may self-certify in support of an extension of up to and including 7 calendar days. See section on extensions for more information.

Requests for an extension of more than 7 calendar days, and all requests for a deferral, the waiving of the late work penalty or an extension to the registration period, must be accompanied by independent documentary evidence demonstrating the impact on the student.

The evidence provided should include relevant dates so it is clear when the student was affected by the exceptional circumstances.

All evidence must be in English. Where the original documentation is in another language, a certified translation must be provided and the student must meet any cost arising from this.

Where a student provides medical certification which states that they are suffering from an on-going medical condition which will on an on-going or recurring basis impact on their studies, they will not be expected to provide new date-specific evidence for each assessment period for which they seek mitigation and will be able to submit the same evidence on each occasion.

The following provides some examples of the types of evidence which may be submitted to support a claim; it is intended to act as a guide and is indicative rather than exhaustive and there may be occasions on which the department and student need to discuss what can be provided and whether this is reasonable. In most cases a copy or photo of the evidence will be acceptable:

Examples of circumstances and the types of evidence which may be submitted in support of a claim
Medical Letter/certificate from a health professional, hospital appointment letter, hospital admission/discharge letter, details from the NHS App, a copy of prescription or medicine labelling with appropriate explanatory notes and clear evidence it is for the student. In order for the University to approve a request on medical grounds the evidence provided should: ● provide a clear diagnosis of illness or medical condition which would affect the student's ability to undertake assessment or to perform to the best of their ability. Evidence stating that, for example, '**the student informs me** that they suffered from a virus…..' is not acceptable; ● provide the specific dates or a date range in which the student's performance or ability to undertake assessment would have been impaired. In cases where the nature of the illness or condition would have a significant and prolonged impact this must be clearly stated as students often submit claims for assessments due at different points in the academic year;

- in the case of a letter, be signed and dated by the medical practitioner (eg GP, clinical specialist, registered professional in psychiatric practice or nurse practitioner) and on headed paper which clearly details the name, address and contact details of the practice;

- students should not submit photographs of injuries or the symptoms of medical conditions

Close bereavement

A death certificate, obituary or confirmation from an independent relevant professional e.g. solicitor or undertaker, or an order of service from the funeral ceremony. If the student is severely affected by the death of someone not defined as close within this policy, additional evidence from an independent third party demonstrating the impact on the student would be required.

Work commitments (part time students and those repeating modules on a part time basis only)

A letter from the employer confirming that the student's workload during the period in question has been exceptional. If you are self-employed please contact your department to discuss the circumstances.

Victim of or witness to a serious crime/incident

Documentation from the police or other relevant authority demonstrating that the student has reported/witnessed a crime/incident. An insurance claim or medical report may also be considered.

Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where the delay is not the fault of the student

A letter or email from Student Services

Exceptional and unforeseeable transport difficulties

Evidence of a major transportation incident, or a letter from the relevant transport company confirming the nature of the delay.

Legal proceedings requiring attendance

A letter from a solicitor or court.

Competing in sport, or participation in other activity, with representation at national or international level

A letter from the supporting sports/organising body indicating the dates when the student is required for training, competitions and/or attendance.

Other personal factors which may reasonably be deemed to have had an adverse impact comparable with those above.

For significant adverse personal or family circumstances encountered by a student, a signed and dated letter from one or more of the following: a medical practitioner, a social worker (stating their position with respect to the student), a registered psychological therapist, a registered professional in psychiatric practice, an officer of the law or a religious leader. The letter must provide information on the time when the circumstances occurred, whether they are continuing and an opinion on the severity and effect the circumstances are having on the student.

▪ **Practical problems**

The University will not take account of events such as computer breakdowns. For a submission deadline or an exam, students must allow extra time in case such things happen. It is the student's own responsibility to ensure their work is saved and not therefore lost.

▪ **Disability**

The University will take into account issues arising from a combination of disability and wholly exceptional circumstances

Evidence in respect of third parties

GDPR legislation means the University is not permitted to consider documentation which includes personal information such as health details relating to a third party in support of any request for mitigation.

Where a student has been affected by the illness of a third party such as a family member or close friend, they must provide evidence which demonstrates the impact this had on them, for example via provision of a medical note.

The University is only permitted to consider documentation relating to a third party in the following cases:
- Where the third party is deceased.
- Where the third party is a dependent of the student's under the age of 14

▪ **Evidence from the University**

In exceptional cases, a signed statement from the Director of Student Services, or their nominee, may be deemed acceptable evidence. However, this will be limited to those cases where in the view of the Director of Student Services, the nature of the exceptional circumstances are such that other independent documentary evidence could not reasonably be provided. The Director of Student Services or nominee are under no obligation to provide a supporting letter and will only do so where they feel this is required by the circumstances.

If a student is ill during an examination or other formal timed assessment, a statement from a member of University staff who witnesses the condition of the student in or on leaving the assessment may be considered.

Students will normally be granted an extension if the University's own computing systems were at fault. However, the failure has to be substantial, very close to the deadline, and documented by LIS.

4.2.4.3 Extensions

Students unable to complete an assessment on time may apply for an extension to the submission deadline, thereby allowing them to submit the work after the deadline without late-work penalties being imposed. Extensions are normally for relatively short periods of time as in all cases the mark for the work must be available to the Module Assessment Board at which the results of that module or modules are to be confirmed. If an academic

department confirms that the length of extension requested by the student means the mark cannot be confirmed by the relevant Module Assessment Board, the student must instead request a deferral of the assessment to the next assessment period (see 7.5).

All extension requests, including those for which a student is self-certifying, must be **submitted in advance of the deadline** for the assessment for which the extension is sought; requests, including those for which a student self-certifies, submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

For extensions of more than 7 days from the original deadline, the length of extension requested should be no longer than the length of time justified by the evidence provided.

By their very nature, an extension is not possible for all types of assessment; it is not possible, for example, to have an extension for an assessment such as an examination, in-class test or timed take home assessment, which takes place at a set time on set dates. Other examples of assessments where self-certification may not be possible are group work, placements, presentations and performances. The academic department will tell students which assessments are excluded from self-certification at the start of the module.

Self-certification

Students experiencing exceptional circumstances covered by this policy, and for an assessment where an extension is possible (see above) may self-certify for an extension of up to and including 7 calendar days; all extensions of more than 7 calendar days must be accompanied by independent documentary evidence (see 7.3). In cases where a student self-certifies for 7 calendar days but then requires additional time, a further request must be submitted and evidence must be provided.

4.2.4.4 Deferrals and late-work penalty waivers

In cases where an extension is not appropriate, either because the assessment deadline has already passed, the nature of the assessment means an extension is not possible, or where an extension would give insufficient time for the assessment to be completed and marked in advance of the Module Assessment Board, the student should request a deferral of the assessment to the next assessment point. If the student has submitted late without a pre-approved extension, and if the work can be marked in time for the Module Assessment Board, a student may request instead that the late work penalty be waived or reduced. A claim can be submitted where the student has:
- failed to submit the assessment (deferral);
- has submitted the assessment late (late work penalty waiver/reduction);
- the assessment was submitted but the student feels their exceptional circumstances meant the assessment was not completed to the best of their abilities and they would like another attempt at the next assessment point (deferral).

Independent evidence will be required in all cases; students cannot self-certify for a deferral or late work penalty waiver/reduction.

The outcome of a valid claim for deferral/waiving of the late work penalty shall be one of the following:

a) to defer the assessment without penalty to the next assessment point. In cases where the assessment was attempted and a deferral is subsequently approved, the deferral will replace any mark attained, unless the student specifically states in writing or via email, in advance of the Module Assessment Board, that they wish to cancel the deferral and keep the mark; in cases where a deferral is approved in advance of the deadline and the student subsequently submits the assessment, the deferral will be deemed null and void and the mark will stand;

b) to have the late-work penalty revoked or reduced in the case of an assessment submitted after the deadline. In these cases the student should normally have already submitted the assessment in order for the request to be considered;

c) Where a student has a chronic condition or her/his circumstances are not improving, an interruption of studies may be recommended.

Other than via the waiving or reduction of the late work penalty, under no circumstances will a mark ever be amended as a result of an approved claim under this policy.

If the claim is rejected no action will be taken and the original mark will stand, including the application of late work penalties where appropriate; if the student failed to submit the assessment a non-submission will be recorded.

A student has the right to appeal against a decision to reject a claim submitted under this policy. Information about appeals may be found in Chester's Handbook F10.

If it is subsequently discovered that a student had misled the Head of Department in any way, that Head of Department has the right to rescind the decision it has taken on the case and, where appropriate, this may be considered as a breach of academic integrity.

In cases where a request for exceptional circumstances is approved, but the student is found to have breached the University's Academic Integrity Policy, any penalty imposed as a result of the breach of the Academic Integrity Policy will take precedence over the approved exceptional circumstances.

4.2.4.5 Extensions to a student's period of registration

The maximum periods of registration for University of Chester awards are set out in Section D of the Principles and Regulations. In exceptional cases, students may apply for an extension to their registration period, with decisions taken by the Deputy Registrar and Head of Student Administration (or nominee). An extension will only be granted in exceptional cases where the student is able to provide independent documentary evidence proving they have suffered severe and prolonged exceptional circumstances which have affected their ability to complete within the approved period of registration. If approved, an extension will be granted for a period of 12 months in excess of the approved period of registration; further extensions are not normally granted.

4.2.4.6 Application Process

In respect of all the processes set out in this section of the Handbook, students must submit their applications online. Further specific details about the application process may be found on the Registry Services Portal pages.

4.2.4.7 Late Work

1. The following applies to any piece of assessed work for which a submission time and date has been given at the start of a module and where the assessment does not involve the attendance of the student during the assessment (e.g. the submission of an essay or project but not the presentation of a seminar, a drama performance, a written examination). Take home assessments (normally 24 or 48 hours) are covered under point 5 (below).

2. Assessed work submitted late will be penalised and the penalty incurred will be 5 marks for work submitted up to 24 hours after the deadline and 5 marks per day (or part thereof) after this, including weekends, e.g.:

Mark Awarded	Work submitted	Mark following Penalty
50	Up to 24 hrs late	45
50	Up to 48 hrs late	40
50	Up to 72 hrs late	35 ….and so on to 0

3. The penalty for late work is applied only to the assessment component which was submitted late.

4. Where an assessment component is assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, a fail will be recorded in cases where that component is submitted after the deadline.

5. For take home assessments (normally 24 or 48 hour papers), work submitted late will have a 5 mark penalty applied if submitted up to 30 minutes late, after which the mark will be reduced to zero.

6. Assessed work submitted late should be marked in the usual way so that the student is given feedback on the standard of work achieved and the full mark is available if a late work penalty waiver is agreed.

7. In order to ensure that students encountering technical difficulties with an online submission have access to support from LIS, deadlines should not fall on a Friday and must be set for times during the working day. Deadlines must be clearly publicised at or in advance of the start of the module.

8. A record shall be kept by departments of any work penalised for late submission. All such penalties shall be recorded in the minutes of the Module Assessment Board.

5.2.4.7 Word count

A penalty for excessive word count shall be applied to all coursework assignments where a word limit is specified. The word count does not include bibliographies or references to sources. Students should check the number of words written (excluding the items above) and note the word count on the assignment. This can usually be determined by using an electronic word count facility. There will be a 10% leeway allowed above the specified word

count before any penalty is imposed. After this, the penalty will be 5 marks per 1000 words excess or part thereof.[22]

Irrespective of any infringement, all assignments will be marked with full tutorial feedback. The grade it would have scored will be indicated clearly.

4.2.4.8 Academic Conduct

Penalties may also be applied in cases where students do not adhere to the principles of academic conduct and fair play in assessment. The University of Chester Academic Conduct Policy and Full Procedure are available on the Chester Portal.[23] When completing work for assessments, students are expected to 'act honestly and take responsibility for the fair presentation of the contents of any work they produce for assessment. This means that students will do nothing that has the potential for them to gain an unfair advantage in assessment'. [24]

In order to adhere to the University's definition of academic conduct, students are expected to 'acknowledge all sources of information, knowledge and ideas used when completing work for assessment; produce work that is the product of their own, individual effort; declare when they have used work before in a previous assessment'.[25]

A breach of the Academic Conduct Policy may occur when a student knowingly acts in a way that is contrary to the policy or does so inadvertently by means of careless scholarship. Inexperience, intention, lack of intention or unfamiliarity with the Academic Integrity Policy will not be regarded as a defence in the event that the policy is breached.

Breaches of academic conduct can include: plagiarism (see below), reuse of previously submitted material, collusion (the unauthorised collaboration between two or more students resulting in the submission of work that is unreasonably similar), commissioning (engaging another person or organisation to complete or undertake an assessment), falsification (the presentation of fictitious or distorted documents[26]), research misconduct and cheating.

Plagiarism can include (1) unreferenced or malformed quotations, verbatim copying or close paraphrasing of another's work without clear identification and/or acknowledgement (2) using an idea, concept, conclusion or term developed by another without due acknowledgment. Please note, all assignments are run through Turnitin, which can identify specific sections that are over-dependent on a source. Plagiarism is a particular problem and further guidance is given in a later section on writing essays.

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[22] See Appendix 5C of Handbook F - Requirements Governing the Assessment of Students available at, https://portal.chester.ac.uk/aqss/Pages/aqss-Handbook-F-Section-5.aspx

[23] The Academic Conduct Policy is available at:
https://portal1.chester.ac.uk/aqs/Pages/aqss-academic-conduct-information-students.aspx

[24] Please consult the information available on the following link, particularly the PowerPoint on Introduction to Academic Conduct for Students:
https://portal1.chester.ac.uk/aqs/Pages/aqss-academic-conduct-information-students.aspx

[25] This list is not exhaustive. For further information please see the UoC Academic Integrity Policy available at: https://portal.chester.ac.uk/aqss/Pages/aqss-academic-integrity.aspx

[26] This includes the submission of false evidence in an application to the Mitigating Circumstances Board or to the Academic Appeals Board.

Although occasional slips in referencing or simple over-dependence on sources are likely to be penalised within the usual marking scheme, substantial infringements of the above principles will be referred to the University of Chester. Penalties can include failing the whole module, completing the Academic Integrity Course, failing the entire level of study, having the final degree classification lowered by one class or in extreme cases, the student's programme of study is terminated with immediate effect.

4.3 Programme Assessment Grid

The following are the normal dates for the submission of assignments in the forthcoming academic year. These dates would be modified accordingly for those in receipt of an extension or for anyone who has a formally assessed disability. **The submission time is 4pm** on the dates listed below:

Assignment due dates: Year 1 of the Part Time MA Practical Theology & MA Biblical Studies		
The submission time is **16:00** on the dates listed below:		
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Date of Submission**
TH7445	Critical Methods in Biblical Studies	Wednesday 10th January 2024
TH7446	Critical Methods in Practical Theology	
TH7414	Old Testament Theology	Wednesday 28th February 2024
TH7444	Christian Leadership & Current Issues	
TH7437	Paul's Letters	Wednesday 24th April 2024
TH7416	Contemporary Issues in Global Mission: Strategy and Praxis	
TH7411	New Testament Theology	Wednesday 10th July 2024
TH7438	Pentecostal and Revivalist History	
TH7436	World of the Bible	
TH7439	Contemporary Christian Leadership	
Deferral and Reassessment Submission dates		Wednesday 25th September 2024
		Wednesday 19th March 2025
Module Assessment Boards		May 2024 (Date to be confirmed)
		November 2024 (Date to be confirmed)

Assignment due dates:		
Year 2 of the Part Time MA Practical Theology & MA Biblical Studies		
The submission time is **16:00** on the dates listed below:		
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Date of Submission**
TH7414	Old Testament Theology	Wednesday 28th February 2024
TH7416	Contemporary Issues in Global Mission: Strategy and Praxis	
TH7437	Paul's Letters	
TH7444	Christian Leadership & Current Issues	
TH7440	**Dissertation**	Wednesday 25th September 2024
TH7441		
Deferral and Reassessment Submission dates		Wednesday 25th September 2024
		Wednesday 19th March 2025
Module Assessment Boards		November 2023 (Date to be confirmed)
		May 2024 (Date to be confirmed)
		November 2024 (Date to be confirmed

	Assignment due dates: Full Time MA Practical Theology & MA Biblical Studies The submission time is **16:00** on the dates listed below:	
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Date of Submission**
TH7445	Critical Methods in Biblical Studies	Wednesday 10th January 2024
TH7446	Critical Methods in Practical Theology	
TH7414	Old Testament Theology	Wednesday 21st February 2024
TH7444	Christian Leadership & Current Issues	
TH7437	Paul's Letters	
TH7416	Contemporary Issues in Global Mission: Strategy and Praxis	
TH7411	New Testament Theology	Wednesday 24th April 2024
TH7438	Pentecostal and Revivalist History	
TH7436	World of the Bible	
TH7439	Contemporary Christian Leadership	
TH7440	**Dissertation**	Wednesday 25th September 2024
TH7441		
Deferral and Reassessment Submission dates		Wednesday 25th September 2024
		Wednesday 19th March 2025
Module Assessment Boards		May 2024 (Date to be confirmed)
		November 2024 (Date to be confirmed)
Reassessment Module Assessment Board		May 2024 (Date to be confirmed)
		November 2024 (Date to be confirmed)

5. Writing Essays and Assignments

5.1 What are tutors looking for?

You need to read the following whilst looking at the Assessment Criteria given in the appendix, and the sample marking grid given below. These below point to the kind of things that need to be evident in essays to obtain particular grades.

i.   Understanding of the question and of the main issues involved.
ii. A clear structure and development of thought through the essay, with connected points rather than random thoughts.
iii. Accurate information
iv. Evidence of research, beyond what is available in the course notes. There needs to be a substantial bibliography, covering a wide range of points of view (even ones you don't agree with), and evidence that books and articles have been read and understood.
v.   Good presentation, which adheres to the style guide. This includes good spelling and grammar; and referencing that is clear and easy to follow.
vi. Critical awareness (this is extremely important at levels 7 and 8). There are several points to note here:
   a. An academic essay must be objective, basing conclusions on evidence rather than on personal thoughts and feelings, or emotion (even though some of the issues might be very emotive). This involves compiling and discussing evidence from a range of sources and perspectives, and treating each one fairly, weighing up the strengths and weaknesses of the positions in order to come to a viable conclusion.
   b. Many essays are too descriptive: they contain accurate information setting out what happened or what a scholar says, but they do not go any further. A good academic essay needs to move from description to analysis. Analysis involves breaking down the discussion into its key components. Some of the questions that need to be asked are: Why does this scholar hold this view? What are the crucial elements in his or her argument? What are the conclusions and what evidence is being given to support those conclusions? What assumptions are being made?
   c. This leads to another important aspect of critical awareness: evaluation. This involves looking at the views expressed by scholars and asking whether the arguments support the conclusions. Are the arguments viable? What are their strengths and weaknesses compared with other points of view? And, of course, any criticism also needs to be supported. The essay writer also needs to produce evidence and viable arguments to support the position taken. The argument might look something like this:

   > Scholar A says X, and offers arguments E, F and G. Scholar B, on the other hand, says Y, and offers arguments P, Q and R. Arguments F and G are stronger than P and Q for the following reasons S, T and U – and scholar C and D take similar views. Argument E is not so strong; however, on balance scholar A's view is to be preferred.

   d. Because of the need for objectivity there has been a long standing tradition that an academic essay must be written impersonally. More recently that view is being questioned. The problem of using the first person is that an essay can become too subjective: these are my opinions; this is what I think about the issue. On the other

hand, remaining too detached can make it difficult to make judgments and come to a conclusion. For the purpose of essays at Missio Dei, some use of the first person is acceptable: 'my aim in this essay is to show'; 'having weighed up all the evidence I conclude'; 'in my opinion', etc. – always bearing in mind that any opinion needs to be backed up with evidence and with coherent and viable argument.

5.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism can be defined as using without acknowledgement another person's words or ideas and submitting them for assessment as though they were your own, for instance by copying, translating from one language to another or unacknowledged paraphrasing. Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to):

- Including verbatim material from the published or unpublished work of other persons (from textbooks, articles, the web etc.) which has not been clearly identified as a quotation and the source acknowledged and fully referenced.
- Slightly changing or paraphrasing other people's material to make it look different from the original, but where again the source has not been acknowledged or fully referenced[27].
- Even simply summarising another person's ideas without acknowledging them and indicating the literary sources.
- Use of services of essay banks and/or any other agencies.

Note that, as with other breaches of academic integrity, plagiarism carries serious consequences and may result in penalties that go beyond the module concerned. For further details, see the section on Academic Integrity, above.

6. Resources

6.1 Library resources

The Missio Dei Research Centre comprises the library and the archives as associated with it. There is an online catalogue available in order to aid students in the search of books.

The library will ordinarily be open during office hours (9am-4:15pm) but during intensive weeks the library will also be made available in the evenings. This is a non-lending library as we now give all of our students online library access (see section 7.2 below).

6.2 Online Library Access

Each student can access two online libraries to search for appropriate articles and ebooks for your assignments.

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[27] Even where sources are acknowledged, you should not *paraphrase* to any great extent. This might be useful for a phrase or two for the sake of clarity or by way of translation from another language, but this should always be acknowledged explicitly, with the exact extent of the re-worked words indicated clearly.

6.2.1 ATLA (EBSCO)

Missio Dei college has subscribed to EBSCO for its ATLA platform [American Theological Library Association]. On it there are many articles from many journals, with either a full PDF available or a link to the publisher's website which may contain the PDF. Students will be expected to make use of peer-reviewed articles throughout their studies and will be given a user ID and a password for our ATLA access during the first week of the year.

On the Chester Moodle page, students will also have limited access to archives of articles published by University of Chester staff.

6.2.2 Perlego

All students also receive access to Perlego, an online textbook subscription service which gives students access to over 500,000 books (across all subjects). This resource allows students to use many key resources with ease and in a more sustainable way and reduces the cost that they may have had to pay on textbooks.

Each student will receive their own account on this service and at the end of their studies with Missio Dei, they are able to contact Perlego to continue this subscription at their own cost if they wish.

6.3 Computer Services

Students should be aware that possession of a usable computer is a requirement of studying with the college. Please be aware that the minimum requirement is a suitable laptop or desktop computer since some mobile or handheld devices are not capable of doing all the things you will need to do. The college is unable to supply or repair computer hardware or provide computer instruction or other help. If you need training on the use of your machine or a particular application, you should find appropriate online guides or arrange to attend a course at a local FE college. The most important skills required are (i) the use of a web browser to search and navigate the internet and visit the college and University websites, (ii) the competent use of a standard word processing programme such as MSWord, (iii) the preparation of PDF files and the use of the Adobe PDF reader, (iv) the configuration and use of email facilities and the ability to send emails with attachments (the importance of both college and University of Chester emails has been mentioned above).

Students should back up their academic work frequently so that they can recover quickly from computer failure. Every student is provided with cloud storage space at Google.com as part of their college email facility (see below). Every time you submit a piece of work, you assent to a declaration that your work has been backed up. It is a University of Chester rule that computer problems will never constitute a mitigating circumstance in regard to the late submission of work.

6.3.1 College wireless system

The college is equipped with wireless broadband internet, which is available to students in most areas on campus.

You are expected to comply with the following rules for access to the internet:

● You should not attempt to view material on the internet that might reasonably be considered offensive or inappropriate. This includes visiting websites that might

propagate hate or discrimination, as well as weapons-making and security sensitive sites. The College has a duty, under the Government's Prevent initiative, to guard against extremism, and this includes acceptable use of the internet. The college will filter access and will log visited websites to ensure these rules are observed.

- You must not attempt to access the college's administrative network or other such systems or copy any software from the networked PCs or fileserver for any purpose, or install any other programs (games in particular) without prior authorisation.
- You must not share your username and password with anyone – if you suspect someone knows your password, please change it.
- You must not alter the network or PC settings or cabling or tamper with any of the hardware. You must not attempt to access other users' data files without their permission. Please report any faults immediately – do not attempt to fix them yourself.

Failure to observe these requirements will result in the removal of your network account and serious breaches may result in college disciplinary measures.

6.3.2 College emails

Each student will be provided with a college email address of the form firstnamesurname.pgstudent@missiodei.ac.uk. As noted above, students are expected to use their official college email for all communication with tutors and the college. The email accounts are provided by Google Apps for education, and can be accessed via Google's webmail interface (www.gmail.com), or any other preferred mail client. Details of how to configure such clients is provided within the Google Mail help system. The Google facilities extend beyond email and provide a calendar which can email you reminders about essay deadlines, 5Gb of cloud storage (called Google drive). This is a very useful place to make backups of your academic work which the academic regulations require you to keep and can be mapped to a folder on your desktop. There is also the capability of configuring personal web pages, setting up blogs etc.

6.3.3 University of Chester portal

After students have been officially registered with the University of Chester, they will be sent login details for the university student portal. Here you will be able to find all sorts of useful information, access the electronic library and your university emails. The service is managed by the University's Library and Information Services which has a comprehensive online help system as well as an interactive help desk.

7. Attendance at lectures

For all students, attendance at scheduled sessions (lectures [not distance learners] and webinars) is necessary, important and expected by Missio Dei, the University of Chester and various official UK inspectorates. A register will be taken for each scheduled session. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes after the start will be marked "late", and beyond this, will be logged as absent. This will count as an unauthorised absence unless the student has sought permission for the absence in accordance with the procedure below.

If a student knows that he or she is likely to miss (or be late for) a scheduled session or placement for a legitimate cause (for example doctor's or hospital appointments that cannot be arranged at any other time, interviews, etc.), he or she should seek permission from the lecturer or placement host and the Vice Principal (Academic) or the Academic Manager.

Where an absence cannot be anticipated in advance, for example due to an accident or illness, the student should contact lecturer or placement host and the Vice Principal (Academic) or the Academic Manager with an explanation as soon as possible.

Persistent lateness or unauthorised absence from scheduled sessions or placement will be reported to the Vice Principal (Academic), the Academic Manager and the Board of Studies.

8. Health & Safety / First Aid

Whilst Health & Safety is everyone's responsibility, the College has a legal responsibility to protect the health and safety of staff and others who may be affected by their work. We take our obligations very seriously and our overall objective is to provide staff, students and visitors with a safe environment in order to prevent accidents etc. Our general policy is to:

- Provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our activities
- Consult on matters affecting health and safety
- Provide information, instruction and supervision where appropriate
- Ensure everyone is competent to do their task, and to give them adequate training if needed
- Prevent accidents
- Maintain safe and healthy conditions

Requirement of students – we expect students to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of others who could be affected by their actions. We expect students not to interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety and to cooperate fully with any arrangements made in relation to health and safety issues. Finally, we ask that they report such concerns.

Reporting accidents and near-misses – all accidents and near-miss accidents must be reported through accident forms (located in the Reception and the Health & Safety Officer's office). Where appropriate the H & S Officer may undertake an investigation to identify the cause of the accident, incident or near-miss. By investigating adverse events and understanding what went wrong, we may prevent future issues.

First Aid – The purpose of a First Aider is to give first assistance until the casualty is passed on to either an ambulance, medical staff or appropriate person.

Guidance – On discovering an accident or injured person, make the area safe and send for first aid assistance. Do not hesitate to call an ambulance if you feel one is required. Do not move the casualty unless the area is unsafe. Keep the casualty calm and warm until the First Aider arrives and then let this person take charge. The First Aider will assess the situation, administer first aid and decide what further action is required. The First Aider will report the incident ASAP.

For further details regarding Missio Dei's Health & Safety Procedures please refer to the Policy which can be found on our website.[28]

9. Style Guide

Missio Dei follows the SBL (Society of Biblical Literature) Style Guide. This is a comprehensive style that covers referencing of a range of primary and secondary sources, abbreviations, grammar, and formatting. Students are encouraged to purchase their own copy of the *SBL Handbook of Style*.

Students are expected to comply with the style guide and failure to do so will be reflected in the mark awarded. Where there are things not covered in this style guide, the main thing we look for is consistency.

o   *9.1 Formatting and Punctuation*

Text must be in black ink, using Arial or Times New Roman font. Font size should be 12 point, and text should have 1.5 line spacing, with a margin of not less than 30mm. An essay can be uploaded to Moodle as either a Word or PDF document, though we recommend uploading as PDF to preserve formatting (this is particularly important where Greek or Hebrew text has been used).

General rules
1. The use of headings and subheadings is encouraged to help with the overall structure of the essay. These should be clear and consistent.
2. New paragraphs should be indented unless they come after a heading/sub-heading.
3. Only one space is needed after any punctuation, whether within or at the end of a sentence.
4. Quotations should be clearly indicated within the text with the use of **single quotation marks**. The material should then be accurately referenced using a footnote at the end of the quotation.
5. Punctuation should generally be inside the quotation marks, although question marks and exclamation marks may go outside, depending on whether they are part of the quoted material.
6. Longer quotations of more than four lines (block quotations) should be set as (left) indented text in smaller type. Block quotations should not be preceded or followed by quotation marks.
7. Where a source is referred to (as opposed to being directly quoted), the footnote can go at the end of the sentence.
8. Use gender-inclusive language, e.g., humankind, rather than mankind.

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[28] https://www.missiodei.ac.uk/student-life/policies/.

o   *9.2 Biblical Citations*

Citations of modern Bible versions do not require publisher's information in either footnotes or bibliography; instead, use the standard abbreviation for the Bible version (e.g., NRSV, RSV, NIV, NASB). If citing scripture from a single version, include the abbreviation of the version following the chapter and verse on the first scripture reference only. When citing more than one version in a paper, include the version after each citation.

"Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria" (2 Kgs 10:1 NRSV).

When citing specific chapters or chapters and verses, use the standard abbreviated titles of biblical books provided in SBLHS 8.3.1–3. If, however, a biblical book is the first word of the sentence, do not abbreviate it. In addition, when referring to the book as a whole or a person with the same name as a biblical book, do not abbreviate it.

Correct:	Revelation 3 begins with the letter to the church in Sardis.
	We know little about the historical Habakkuk.
Incorrect:	Rev 3 begins with the letter to the church in Sardis.
	We know little about the historical Hab.

Cite biblical verses with chapter and verse(s) using Arabic numerals separated by a colon. Do not write out the numbers. When referencing consecutive verses, separate the first and last verse numbers with an en dash, not a hyphen (see SBLHS 2.1.3.4).

Correct:	John 5:8–9
Incorrect:	John chapter five verses eight and nine.

When citing multiple passages, list the abbreviated title of each new biblical book followed by the chapter number and colon, with all verses in that chapter separated by a comma and space. A semicolon should separate references to subsequent chapters or books. Do not include the conjunction "and" or an ampersand before the last citation. List passages in canonical and numerical order.

Correct:	Matt 2:3; 3:4–6; 4:3, 7; Luke 3:6, 8; 12:2, 5; Acts 15:1–5; Rom 1:8–12
Incorrect:	Luke 3:6, 8; Luke 12:2
	Matt 2:3, 3:4–6; 4:3; Luke 3:6, 8 and 12:2
	Rom 1:8– 12; Matt 2:3; 4:3, 7; 3:4–6

Abbreviations

Students should use the following abbreviations when referencing the Bible:	
OT	Gen, Exod, Lev, Num, Deut, Josh, Judg, Ruth, 1 Sam, 2 Sam, 1 Kgs, 2 Kgs, 1 Chron, 2 Chron, Ezra, Neh, Esth, Job, Ps/Pss, Prov, Eccl (or Qoh.), Song (or Cant), Isa, Jer, Lam, Ezek, Dan, Hos, Joel, Amos, Obad, Jon, Mic, Nah, Hab, Zeph, Hag, Zech, Mal
NT	Matt, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Rom, 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1 Thess, 2 Thess, 1 Tim, 2 Tim, Tit, Phlm, Heb, Jas, 1 Pet, 2 Pet, 1 Jn, 2 Jn, 3 Jn, Jude, Rev.

○ *9.3 Books*

▪ **9.3.1 A Book by a Single Author**

[27] John Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 25.

[29] Barclay, *Gift*, 97.

The bibliography follows a similar pattern, except the surname comes first, and brackets are removed:

Barclay, John, *Paul and the Gift*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.

When using commentaries, include the series (and volume number) within the reference *after* the book title, e.g.,

[11] James Dunn, *Romans*, WBC 38B (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 150

[12] Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 100

N.B. Standard abbreviations for commentaries should be used. These can be found in the SBL Handbook of Style.

▪ **9.3.2 A Book by Two or Three Authors**

[27] James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 237.

[31] Robinson and Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity*, 23.

Robinson, James M., and Helmut Koester. *Trajectories through Early Christianity.* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.

- ### 9.3.3 A Book by More Than Three Authors

If a work is by more than three authors, simply list one and "et al." to indicate additional authors (without a comma following the first author's name). All names are generally listed in the bibliography.

- ### 9.3.4 A Translated Volume

[40] Wilhelm Egger, *How to Read the New Testament: An Introduction to Linguistic and Historical-Critical Methodology*, trans. Peter Heinegg (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 28.
[44] Egger, How to Read, 291.
Egger, Wilhelm. *How to Read the New Testament: An Introduction to Linguistic and Historical-Critical Methodology*. Translated by Peter Heinegg. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.

- ### 9.3.5 A Book with One Editor

[50] Jeffrey H. Tigay, ed., *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 35.
[51] Tigay, Empirical Models, 38.

Tigay, Jeffrey H., ed. *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

- ### 9.3.6 A Book with Two or Three Editors; with Four or More Editors

Similar rules apply as with 12.3.2 and 12.3.3. Add "eds.," after the names (separated by a comma) and before the title of the book.

- ### 9.3.6 A Book with and Author and an Editor

[52] Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, ed. Robert J. Schreiter (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 20.

Schillebeeckx, Edward. *The Schillebeeckx Reader*. Edited by Robert J. Schreiter. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986.

- ### 9.3.7 An Article in an Edited Volume

[55] Alicia Batten, "God in the Letter of James: Patron or Benefactor," in *The Social World of the New Testament*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric C. Stewart (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008), 47-61 (47).

Batten, Alicia "God in the Letter of James: Patron or Benefactor." Pages 47-61 in *The Social World of the New Testament*. Edited by Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric C. Stewart, Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008.

o   *9.4 Journals*

[49] J. Dewey, "Oral Methods of Structuring Narrative in Mark," *Interpretation* 43 (1989): 1-30.

[62] Dewey, "Structuring Narrative," 27.

Bibliography:

Dewey, J., "Oral Methods of Structuring Narrative in Mark," *Interpretation* 43 (1989): 1-30.

Standard abbreviations for journals may be used e.g.:

NTS – New Testament Studies

JSNT – Journal for the Study of the New Testament

TynBul – Tyndale Bulletin

A full list can be found in the SBL Handbook of Style.

o   *9.5 Dictionaries/Encyclopedias*

Use the same format as for articles from an edited volume, though in this case there is no need to note the editor(s), and it is enough to include the standard abbreviation for the dictionary. Where there is a volume number (as in most cases), include this followed by a colon and the page range (or number). Do not include p. or pp.

Examples

[45] J. D. G. Dunn, "Spirit, Holy Spirit," *IBD* 3:1478-83

[47] Dunn, "Spirit", *IBD* 3:1479

Bibliography:

Dunn, J.D.G., "Spirit, Holy Spirit," *IBD* 3:1478-83

o   *9.6 Lexicon/Theological Dictionary*

For the discussion of a word or a family of words, give the entire title and page range of the article:

[3] Karl Dahn and Walter L. Liefeld, "See, Vision, Eye," NIDNTT 3:511–21.

[4] Hermann W. Beyer, "διακονέω, διακονία, κτλ," TDNT 2:81–93.

[5] Ceslas Spicq, "ἀτακτέω, ἄτακτος, ἀτάκτως," TLNT 1:223–24.

For the discussion of a specific word in an article covering a larger group of words, name just the word discussed and those pages on which it is discussed:

6 Hermann W. Beyer, "διακονέω," TDNT 2:81–87.

7 Karl Dahn, "ὁράω," NIDNTT 3:511–18.

In the bibliography, cite only the theological dictionary:

Brown, Colin, ed. New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. 4 vols.

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1985.

Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. Theological Dictionary of the New

Testament. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids:

Eerdmans, 1964–1976.

Spicq, Ceslas. Theological Lexicon of the New Testament. Translated and edited by

James D. Ernest. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

o   9.7 eBooks

Each student has access to an online library, Perlego, which has a wide range of sources needed for completing assignments. Where an eBook is identical in all respects to the print edition, then normal referencing rules apply, and it is not necessary to indicate the format. Where this is not the case, student should indicate the format consulted:

47 Anthony Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: an Introduction*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), Perlego edition, chap. 1, "The Aims and Scope of Hermeneutics".

49 Thiselton, *Hermeneutics*, chap. 1 "The Aims and Scope of Hermeneutics".

Bibliography:

Thiselton, Anthony, *Hermeneutics: an Introduction*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. Perlego edition.

Perlego divides eBooks into sections; please make sure it is the chapter number, and not the section number, that is included in the footnote.

The same guidance applies to other eBook formats e.g., Kindle.

o   9.8 Material from the Internet

Students should be cautious about using material from the internet as it may not be appropriate for academic work. However, there are a number of blogs, podcasts, YouTube channels etc., produced by scholars and leading practitioners, and it may be useful, and appropriate to include these. Simply citing the web address is not sufficient and footnotes should generally follow similar rules for journal articles:

[25] Michael Bird, "Myth Busting Penal Substitution," *Word from the Bird*, 24 Nov 2021, https://michaelfbird.substack.com/p/myth-busting-penal-substitutionary

[26] Bird, "Myth Busting."

[35] Paula Gooder, "The Gospel of John," *Timeline Theological Videos*, 16 March 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBD1dRXBWk4

Bibliography:

Bird, Michael, "Myth Busting Penal Substitution," *Word from the Bird*, 24 Nov 2021, https://michaelfbird.substack.com/p/myth-busting-penal-substitutionary

Academia.edu

Academia.edu can be a useful resource for finding some helpful information as recognised scholars will often upload versions of journal articles, conference papers, and even chapters from books. Nonetheless, care should be taken when using this website, and subsequently referencing it in essays. A couple of things to consider:

- Is the author a recognised scholar? If so, then it is possible that it will be academically credible material.
- Can you find the original source?

N.B. It is acceptable to reference Conference papers, presentations, and unpublished PhD. Contact a module tutor for guidance on how to do this if needed.

o   *9.9 Citing Primary Sources*

As highlighted in the SBL Handbook of Style, citing primary sources can be difficult because of the diversity of texts, and publications. The SBL handbook does contain several examples and students are encouraged to use it as a guide.

General guidelines:
- Primary sources with no specifically known author, sources should be referenced in the same way as biblical texts e.g., 'And the Deluge is about to come upon all the earth; and all that is in it will be destroyed.' (1 Enoch 10:2)
- Primary sources with a known author should include the name, the work, and reference, e.g., 'They are a people unique of its kind.' (Pliny, *Natural History*, 5.73), or as described by Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities*, 18.11-25), who further notes… If using a translation, it is also appropriate to reference the translator's name e.g., (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 18.11-25, [Thackeray]). Full bibliographic information is then contained in the bibliography.
- Some texts may be contained either in a collection or be a well-known translation and may be cited as following similar rules to dictionaries and books.

Using Biblical Languages

Where students cite biblical texts in the original language, they should use the appropriate alphabet and writing protocol. For Greek, this includes breathings and accents. For Hebrew, this includes pointings (but not accent marks or cantillation, unless it is an extended piece of text).

A number of biblical language fonts are freely available online. A good Greek font is GalatiaSil, and a good Hebrew font is EzraSil.

o   *10. Assessment Criteria*

The following pages set out the general requirements at Postgraduate level of study. [29]

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[29] Marking criteria taken from University of Chester, Quality and Standards Manual: Handbook F - Requirements Governing the Assessment of Students 2016/17 (Appendix 5E)

Level 7 – Marking Criteria for Modules registered <u>before</u> September 2019 ONLY

	70+ **Distinction**	60–69 **Merit**	50–59 **Pass (strong)**	40–49 **Pass (threshold)**	20–39 **Fail**	0–19 **Fail**
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING of the academic discipline or field of study	*As 60–69 - and:* Excellent coverage, offering sophisticated or original insights; a synthesis of possibly disparate material; extensive reading.	*As 50–59 - and:* Awareness of problems and insights much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline; wide range of reading.	Systematic understanding of relevant knowledge including research at the forefront of the discipline; good identification, selection and sound understanding of key issues; conceptual awareness enabling critical analysis; accurate knowledge and detail;.	Adequate systematic understanding of relevant knowledge, including research at the forefront of the discipline; identification, selection and moderate understanding of key issues; some conceptual awareness enabling critical analysis; accurate knowledge, but may lack sustained depth or detail.	Poor coverage of relevant issues; limited understanding; identification of some issues but with many omissions.	Little relevant material; inadequate reading and use of sources; sources insufficiently acknowledged.
CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOLARSHIP AND SOURCES	*As 60–69 - and:* Imaginative, insightful, original or creative interpretations; sustained level of analysis and evaluation.	*As 50–59 - and:* A convincing command of accepted critical positions; a conceptual understanding that enables the student to propose new hypotheses.	Good range of reading beyond core and basic texts, with reasonably wide reference to research at the forefront of the discipline; critical awareness of advanced scholarship, current problems and/or new insights in the discipline.	Reading beyond core and basic texts with some reference to research at the forefront of the discipline; adequate critical awareness of advanced scholarship, current problems and/or new insights in the discipline.	Reading range limited to core and basic texts; very limited critical evaluation of research and scholarship.	Very limited analysis from limited sources.
STRUCTURE, ARGUMENT, METHODOLOGY	*As 60–69 - and*: Excellent structure and development of argument, with awareness of limitations; sophisticated use and evaluation of possibilities and limitations of the methodologies used by the student.	*As 50–59 - and*: A very good, coherent structure and sustained development of argument; critical use and interpretation of applicable methodologies and methods.	Good, coherent structure and development of argument, supported by evidence; critical awareness of techniques of research and enquiry and their use to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline; ability to critique methodologies and plan, appropriately, to allow gathering of adequate evidence; ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and	Some coherent structure and development of argument, supported by evidence; some critical awareness of techniques of research and enquiry and their use to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline; moderate ability to critique methodologies and plan, appropriately, to allow gathering of adequate evidence; some ability to deal with complex	Lack of structure and limited development of argument; some understanding of methodologies, but applied ineffectively; lack of ability to deal with complex issues; judgements not always well substantiated	Little or no structure and unclear or contradictory argument; very limited understanding of methodologies and approaches to the subject.

			creatively, and to make sound judgements (sometimes in the absence of complete data).	issues both systematically and creatively, and to make sound judgements (sometimes in the absence of complete data).		
COMMUNICATION AND PRESENTATION	*As 60–69 - and*: Authoritative, articulate communication demonstrating a balance of enthusiasm and control.	*As 50–59 - and*: Persuasive communication skills; the academic form largely matches that expected in published work	Clear expression, observing academic form; accurate in spelling and grammar; conclusions communicated clearly; sources fully and meticulously referenced using appropriately conventions.	Adequate expression, observing academic form; largely accurate in spelling and grammar; conclusions communicated satisfactorily to specialist and non-specialist audiences as appropriate; sources adequately referenced using appropriately conventions.	Some errors in academic form and/or in spelling and grammar; incomplete or inadequate referencing of sources.	Very poor observation of academic conventions; repeated deficiencies in spelling and grammar; sources inadequately referenced.
INDEPENDENT STUDY AND SELF-EVALUATION (primarily dissertation)	*As 60–69 - and*: A very sophisticated critical self-evaluation; new insights informing practical situations.	*As 50–59 - and*: Decision-making in complex situations; originality in addressing needs or specifications, and /or solving problems.	Evidence of collaborative or individual problem-solving, and of the exercise of initiative to plan and implement tasks appropriate to a professional context; evidence of the independent learning ability and self-evaluation required to continue to advance knowledge and understanding; evidence of taking personal responsibility for learning and ability to make decisions in complex situations and to learn and develop new skills.	Some evidence of collaborative or individual problem-solving; some evidence of the exercise of initiative to plan and implement tasks appropriate to a professional context; some independent learning ability and self-evaluation required to continue to advance knowledge and understanding; some evidence of taking personal responsibility for learning and ability to make decisions in complex situations; limited ability to learn and develop new skills.	Minimal initiative and personal or professional responsibility; limited self-evaluation	Clear weakness in independent learning, decision-making and/or self-evaluation.

Level 7 – Marking Criteria for Modules registered September 2019 onwards

	70+ **Distinction**	60–69 **Merit**	50–59 **Pass**	30–49 **Fail**	0–29 **Fail**
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING of the academic discipline or field of study	*As 60–69 - and:* Excellent coverage, offering sophisticated or original insights; a synthesis of possibly disparate material; extensive reading from across the field of study.	*As 50–59 - and:* Awareness of problems and insights much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline; wide range of reading; shows the potential for new insights.	Engagement with relevant knowledge including research at the forefront of the discipline; good identification, selection and understanding of key issues; conceptual awareness enabling critical analysis; accurate knowledge, but may lack sustained depth or detail; response is appropriate and addresses the learning outcomes.	Inadequate coverage of relevant issues, while showing some awareness; identification of some issues but with many omissions; missing or inaccurate knowledge presented.	Little relevant material and understanding of the key issues; substandard reading and use of sources; sources insufficiently acknowledged.
CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOLARSHIP AND SOURCES	*As 60–69 - and:* Imaginative, insightful, original or creative interpretations; sustained level of analysis and evaluation; a conceptual understanding that enables the student to propose new hypotheses.	*As 50–59 - and:* A convincing and sustained command of accepted critical positions; a conceptual understanding that enables the student to find new meanings in established hypotheses.	Range of reading beyond core and basic texts, with reasonable reference to research at the forefront of the discipline; a satisfactory evaluation of current research and insights in the discipline.	Reading range limited to core and basic texts; very limited critical evaluation of research and scholarship.	Very limited analysis from limited sources; engagement limited to a single source or perspective.
STRUCTURE, ARGUMENT, METHODOLOGY	*As 60–69 - and:* Excellent structure and development of argument; sophisticated evaluation of possibilities and limitations of the methodologies used by the student.	*As 50–59 - and:* A very good, coherent structure and sustained development of argument; critical use and interpretation of applicable methodologies and methods; fluent and persuasive expressions of ideas; evidence gathered and articulated in a clear and planned manner.	Good, coherent structure and development of argument, supported by evidence; critical awareness of techniques of research and enquiry that are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline; satisfactory ability to critique methodologies and plan, appropriately, to allow gathering of adequate evidence; ability to deal with	Lack of structure and limited development of argument; some understanding of methodologies, but applied ineffectively; lack of ability to deal with complex issues; judgements underdeveloped or unsubstantiated.	Little or no structure and unclear or contradictory argument; very limited understanding of methodologies and approaches to the subject; research shows little evidence of planning and understanding; may evidence self-contradiction.

			complex issues systematically and creatively; to make sound judgements (sometimes in the absence of complete data).		
COMMUNICATION AND PRESENTATION	*As 60–69 - and*: Authoritative, articulate communication demonstrating a balance of enthusiasm and control; high command of specialist language and concepts within the field of study.	*As 50–59 - and*: Secure and sustained expression; persuasive communication skills; the academic form largely matches that expected in published work; fully referenced using appropriately conventions	Clear expression, observing appropriate academic form; predominantly accurate in spelling and grammar; conclusions communicated satisfactorily to specialist and non-specialist audiences; sources appropriately referenced; may contain minor errors.	Some errors in academic form; weaknesses and recurring errors in spelling and grammar; incomplete or inadequate referencing of sources.	Very weak observation of academic conventions; repeated deficiencies in spelling and grammar; sources inadequately referenced.; potentially poor paraphrasing.
INDEPENDENT STUDY AND SELF-EVALUATION (primarily dissertation)	*As 60–69 - and*: A very sophisticated and insightful critical self-evaluation; new insights informing practical situations.	*As 50–59 - and*: Decision-making in complex situations; originality in addressing needs or specifications, and/or solving problems.	Evidence of collaborative or individual problem-solving; some evidence of the exercise of initiative to plan and implement tasks appropriate to a professional context; evidence of the independent learning ability and self-evaluation required to continue to advance knowledge and understanding; evidence of taking personal responsibility for learning and ability to make decisions in complex situations; may show a limited ability to learn and develop new skills.	Minimal initiative and personal or professional responsibility; limited self-evaluation of engagement and conduct.	Clear weakness in independent learning, decision-making and/or self-evaluation; inappropriate execution of key tasks.