

BRIEFING NOTE ON AMENDMENTS TO THE ACADEMIC REGULATIONS
For Implementation
Session 2017-18

Where appropriate, amended/inserted text is underlined and deleted text is ~~struck through~~. The appropriate minute reference number, recording approval of the amendment, is indicated in brackets [AC = Academic Council].

The term 'working days' is used consistently throughout the Academic Regulations and the Academic Regulations have been updated to make it explicit that 'working days' refers to Monday to Friday and excludes days that the University is closed.

1. INTRODUCTION

Page numbers in the *Table of Contents* and paragraph references have been updated as appropriate.

A2: ADMISSION

Appeals Procedure for Applicants

The *Appeals Procedure for Applicants* has been updated and incorporated as a schedule into Regulation A2: Admission; the *Procedure* previously sat outwith the Academic Regulations. [AC: Chair's Action]

A3 - SECTION 1: ACADEMIC APPEALS (AWARDS AND PROGRESSION) PROCEDURE

Timescales for Submission of Student Appeals (Award and Progression)

Regulation A3 – Section 1 has been revised to include a finite period of 12 months beyond which no academic appeal will be considered. Any *Student Appeal Form: Academic Appeal* should normally be submitted no later than 20 working days after publication of the results from the Assessment Board. In the event an appeal is *exceptionally* submitted beyond that timescale then the Head of School and Assistant Chief Academic Officer will liaise to determine whether failure to meet the deadline is due to verifiable circumstances which were outwith the control of the student. The inclusion of a finite period of 12 months will assist in the management of late appeals. [AC/17/2/4.1.2]

7. Academic Appeals Procedure: Stage 1 – Submission of Appeal

Submission after the 20 working day period

- 7.9 Where the *Student Appeal Form: Academic Appeal* is lodged later than 12 months following the publication of results then it shall not be considered and the Head of School shall communicate this to the student by email, normally within 10 working days of the lodgement of the appeal. There shall be no further right of appeal.

8. Academic Appeals Procedure: Consideration by Assessment Board

Validity of an Appeal for Consideration

- 8.1 An appeal shall be deemed valid for consideration by an Assessment Board only if:
- (i) the *Student Appeal Form: Academic Appeal* is submitted to the School no later than 20 working days after publication of the results. The only exception to this requirement would be where the Head of School and Assistant Chief Academic Officer have previously concluded, in accordance with [paragraph 7.7](#) of this Regulation and taking account of paragraph 7.9, that the appeal may be considered because the *Student Appeal Form: Academic Appeal* had been lodged beyond the 20 working day period due to verifiable, evidenced circumstances which were outwith the control of the student;

A3 - SECTION 2: STUDENT MISCONDUCT PROCEDURE

Criteria for Determining a Proportionate Penalty

Regulation A3 – Section 2: Student Misconduct Procedure has been amended to include an additional criterion when determining a proportionate penalty following established misconduct; this is specifically in relation to the proximity of two proven cases of the same form of misconduct and whether there has been sufficient opportunity for learning between cases. [AC/17/3/4.1.2(ii)].

10. PENALTIES

10.1 Criteria

When determining a proportionate penalty, the following criteria will be used, taking due cognisance of whether the penalty relates to academic or non-academic misconduct as described in [paragraph 6](#) of this Regulation:

- (vi) the proximity in time of multiple established misconducts (for example, whether two established cases of the same form of misconduct, such as plagiarism, occurred in quick succession) and whether the student has had an opportunity to learn;

A4: ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF ASSESSMENT BOARDS

Student Responsibilities

Regulation A4, paragraph 3.4, has been revised to align it more explicitly with the *Fit to Sit Policy* and *Grounds for Appeal*. [AC/17/2/4.1.2]

3. ASSESSMENT – STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.4 It is the student's responsibility to ensure the School is informed of any circumstances ~~such as illness or exceptional personal circumstances, which might~~ which have prevented him/her from undertaking an assessment, and which he/she wishes to be taken into account by the Assessment Board (also refer to the University's [Fit to Sit Policy](#)).

The mechanisms for notifying the School of such circumstances:

- prior to a coursework submission deadline is through submission of the [Coursework Extension Request Form](#), with verifiable evidence, by email to the School Office;
- otherwise through completion submission of the [Deferral Request Form](#), with verifiable evidence, by email to the School Office no later than five working days from the date of the assessment submission deadline or examination.

Failure on the part of the student to provide such information within these ~~published~~ timescales, either through the submission of a [Coursework Extension Request](#) or a [Deferral Request](#), may be taken by the Assessment Board, the *Student Appeals Committee* or the Principal as sufficient reason to dismiss an appeal (refer also to [Regulation A3, Section 1: Academic Appeals \(Awards and Progression\) Procedure](#), paragraph 6.5).

~~The [Deferral Request Form](#) should be accompanied by verifiable evidence and should be submitted by email to the School Office not later than five working days after the date of the examination and/or the assessment submission date.~~

Re-assessment at Honours

The University has approved a change to the assessment Regulations relating to the Honours Stage. The change relates to the introduction of a re-assessment at Honours subject to certain criteria. [AC/16/3/4.2]

5. Progression and Awards - General

- 5.1 A student shall be deemed to have passed a module if he/she obtains an overall minimum of Grade D for the module.
- 5.2 A student shall normally pass all modules central to the objectives of the course at each progression and award point as specified by Academic Council and defined in the Course Specification at each stage of his/her course before being permitted to receive the appropriate award or to proceed to the subsequent stage of the course, except that:
 - (i) the Assessment Board shall have discretion to exceptionally allow a student to proceed to the subsequent stage of his/her course carrying modules, normally amounting to no more than 15 credits and not designated as prerequisites for the subsequent stage of study;
 - (ii) for undergraduate courses a student who, after one or two assessment opportunities fails to satisfy the Assessment Board in a non-continuing elective module, may be permitted to proceed to the subsequent stage of his/her course taking a specified alternative elective module as a replacement. In such event the opportunities available to students to satisfy the Assessment Board shall be limited to those remaining from the original module.

6.2 Honours Classification

6.2.1 To be eligible for a Degree with Honours the student must achieve 480 SCQF credits (refer Regulation A1, [paragraph 5.2](#)). The student is required to achieve a pass grade in all modules undertaken in the Honours Stage of the degree.

6.2.2 In accordance with paragraph 9.10 of this Regulation, the student shall be permitted one further assessment opportunity in any failed Honours Stage module subject to the following requirement. To be eligible for a re-assessment opportunity the student must achieve a pass grade at the first assessment opportunity in at least 50% of the SCQF credits in the Honours Stage of the degree. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the student being ineligible for any re-assessment opportunity.

6.2.3 In determining the honours classification the Assessment Board shall consider two factors:

- (i) whether all modules contributing to the Degree with Honours have been successfully achieved, including those defined as central to the objectives of the course (refer also to [paragraph 11](#) of this Regulation); and
- (ii) the overall performance as indicated by the profile of grades across all contributing modules (refer Regulation A4, [paragraph 6.2.4](#)).

6.2.4 The honours classification shall be based upon grades **achieved at the first assessment opportunity**. On this basis the decisions of the Assessment Board shall normally reflect the following criteria:

Class 1 At least 50% of the SCQF credits represented by the modules contributing to the honours classification to be at Grade A, at least 75% of the SCQF credits to be at Grade B or better, and normally 100% of the SCQF credits to be at Grade C or better.

Class 2.1 At least 50% of the SCQF credits represented by the modules contributing to the honours classification to be at Grade B or better, at least 75% of the SCQF credits to be at Grade C or better, and normally 100% of the SCQF credits to be at Grade D or better. ~~In addition, the student must obtain at least a Grade D in any modules defined as central to the objectives of the course~~

Class 2.2 At least 50% of the SCQF credits represented by the modules contributing to the honours classification to be at Grade C or better, and at least 75% of the SCQF credits to be at Grade D or better. ~~In addition, the student must obtain at least a Grade D in any modules defined as central to the objectives of the course.~~

Class 3 At least 50% of the SCQF credits represented by the modules contributing to the honours classification to be at Grade D or better. ~~and at least 75% of the SCQF credits to be at Grade E or better. In addition, the student must obtain at least a Grade D in any modules defined as central to the objectives of the course.~~

Fail The student has failed to achieve any of the above.

6.3 Degree with Honours - Re-assessment

- (i) ~~The Assessment Board may exceptionally permit a student to present him/herself for re-assessment in each failed module once only, in which event the Board shall state the form of re-assessment. For the purposes of award classification, a re-assessed module can only attain a maximum of the threshold pass of Grade D (refer to [paragraph 9.6](#) of this Regulation). If, following re-assessment, the student satisfies the criteria for the award of Degree with Honours, the Board may determine a Degree with Honours be awarded, with the classification of honours being determined in accordance with the provisions of [paragraph 6.2](#) of this Regulation.~~
- (i) If, following re-assessment (refer to [paragraph 9.10.2](#) of this Regulation), the student successfully achieves a pass grade in all modules contributing to the Degree with Honours then the Board shall determine a Degree with Honours be awarded, with the classification of honours being determined in accordance with the provisions of [paragraph 6.2](#) of this Regulation and based upon the grades achieved at the first assessment opportunity (refer also to [paragraph 11](#) of this Regulation).
- (ii) Where, following re-assessment, a student has failed to satisfy the Assessment Board that a Degree with Honours be awarded, the Board may:
 - (a) confirm the award of Degree; or
 - (b) confirm that no award be made.

9. RE-ASSESSMENT

Undergraduate (excluding Honours Stage)

9.10.1 It shall be normal practice for a student undertaking an undergraduate course of studies to be permitted an initial assessment and, as necessary, up to a maximum of two further opportunities for re-assessment to be taken at the next two scheduled assessment occasions. All resit opportunities made available to students shall count as one of the three available assessment opportunities.

Undergraduate Honours Stage

9.10.2 It shall be normal practice for a student undertaking Honours Stage of a course to be permitted an initial assessment and, as necessary, and subject to the requirement below up to a maximum of one further opportunity for re-assessment to be taken at the next scheduled assessment occasion. To be eligible for a re-assessment opportunity the student must achieve a pass grade at the first assessment opportunity in at least 50% of the SCQF credits in the Honours Stage of the degree. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the student being ineligible for any re-assessment opportunity. The purpose of the re-assessment is to permit the achievement of credit. All resit opportunities made available to students shall count as one of the two available assessment opportunities.

11. Condonement of Failure

11.1 An Assessment Board has discretion to condone a partial failure in the assessment for an award or for progression to the subsequent stage of a course. A Board is not required to condone failure and any such exercise of discretion shall have due regard to the overall performance of the student, the standard of the award and to any regulations specific to the course. ~~For progression, Condonement shall be limited to one module only. Normally, condonement is not permitted where the failure concerned a module which was central to the objectives of the course, as specified in the Course Specification.~~

~~11.2 Where a student has satisfied the criteria for an Honours classification, as defined within paragraph 6.2, then condonement of any failed modules shall normally be automatic and the relevant credit awarded.~~

11.32 Where a fail is condoned this shall be recorded as "condoned" on the student's transcript, and the module's SCQF credit points awarded.

A6: RESEARCH DEGREES

A number of amendments were made to Regulation A6 [AC/17/3/5.2.2].

Significant changes have been made to the paragraphs on examiners' recommendations:

- (i) *Paragraphs 9.5 and 9.7 - Examiners' Recommendations:* examiners' recommendations for the first examination and for re-examination have been updated, including a specific statement that to achieve a doctoral degree both the thesis and oral defence must be passed, as two separate and discrete elements. Therefore, amendments have been made, in particular:
- to emphasise the requirement for both the thesis and oral defence to be passed in order for a research student to pass overall;
 - to clarify when an oral defence is required at re-examination;
 - to clarify that when a research student fails, the examiners' guidance should include both:
 - the deficiencies of the submitted thesis in terms of the original intended award; and
 - the corrections required to bring it to the right standard for the award.

Schedule 6.6: This is also a new Schedule, inserted at the suggestion of the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee, and attempts to provide a 'decision tree' of examiners' recommendations.

Other changes include:

- (ii) *Throughout the Regulation:* To avoid confusion with the use of, or over-reliance on, the term 'examination', all references to "oral examination" have been changed to "oral defence".
- (iii) *Introduction:* Additional wording, used by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the document, *Characteristic Statement: Doctoral Degree*, September 2015, has been incorporated to stipulate "research students shall be expected to ... have made an original contribution to the knowledge of the subject, field or profession through original research or the original application of existing knowledge or understanding".

- (iv) *Paragraph 1.2.2:* Reference has been added to the QAA *Quality Code*, the QAA *Qualification Descriptors* (inserted as *Schedule 6.4*) and the QAA *Qualification Characteristics* in order to provide a framework within which academic standards are set and maintained.
- (v) *Paragraph 1.3:* The paragraph “Academic Standards and Criteria for Award” is completely new to the Regulation, and attempts to make explicit what has previously been implicit.

The QAA *Qualification Descriptors* will inform a revision of the university’s *Assessment Criteria*, which will be added to the Regulation as *Schedule 6.5* once approved.
- (vi) *Paragraph 1.3.1:* There is now an explicit statement that to achieve a doctoral degree both the thesis and oral defence must be passed, as two separate and discrete elements.
- (vii) *Paragraph 2.5:* The terminology of ‘Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)’ has been updated to ‘Recognition of Prior Informal Learning (RPL)’ to reflect current practice.
- (viii) *Paragraph 10.2:* These have been amended to reflect recent changes to the Grounds for Appeal for taught provision contained in *Regulation A3, Section 1*, and reflecting the *Fit to Sit Policy*.
- (ix) *Paragraph 10.3.2:* In respect of the submission of research degree appeals, the previous “three month” submission period has been replaced with “20 working days” to accommodate *UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)* service requirements which have absolute limits of 60 calendar days, and to bring it into line with academic appeals for taught provision.
- (x) *Paragraph 10.3.3:* This new paragraph has been inserted to reflect proposed wording for *Regulation A3, paragraph 7.7* to confirm there should be a finite 12 month period beyond which no appeal will be considered.
- (xi) *Paragraph 11 – The Award of PhD by Public Output:* This has been updated to reflect changes elsewhere in the Regulation.

September 2017