

Amendments to UPR AS14 (Structure and Assessment Regulations - Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes) for 2020/21

This paper summarises the amendments to UPR AS14 for the 2020/21 academic year.

1. Temporary regulations in response to the Covid-19 pandemic

The University introduced a Safety Net policy in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. These required the approval of temporary amendments to UPR AS14 by Academic Board. It is proposed that the following temporary amendments to UPR AS14 should continue to apply for the lifespan of the pandemic:

D5 Deferral, Referral, Re-enrolment

D5.2.2 Referral in undergraduate programmes

(NOTE:

20 *During the Covid-19 pandemic, deferral to next academic year should be offered, as an alternative to a referred attempt. The grade would be uncapped, and the status code would reflect a first attempt (from PREN to P, if the module was passed the following year.)*

(NOTE:

21 *During the Covid-19 pandemic, failed modules will retain their fail grade. However, if the module is passed at referral, grades for referred assignments will not be capped to the pass grade.)*

D5.2.3 Referral in postgraduate programmes

(NOTE:

23 *During the Covid-19 pandemic, deferral to next academic year should be offered, as an alternative to a referred attempt. The grade would be uncapped, and the status code would reflect a first attempt (from PREN to P, if the module was passed the following year.)*

(NOTE:

24 *During the Covid-19 pandemic, failed modules will retain their fail grade. However, if the module is passed at referral, grades for referred assignments will not be capped to the pass grade.)*

D6 Final awards – Honours classification

D6.1 Calculation of overall classification grade for Honours classification (Bachelor's Degree)

(NOTE:

26 *As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, overall classification grades may alternatively be calculated as follows:*

i **Current level 6 Bachelor's students**

The final programme board has the discretion to disregard all level 5 grades from the 2019/20 academic year when calculating degree classification. The best 90 credits at level 6 would be used, as if the student were a final year direct entrant.)

D6.2 **Calculation of overall classification grade for Honours classification (Integrated Master's Degrees)**

(NOTE:

27 *As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, overall classification grades may alternatively be calculated as follows:*

i **Current level 7 Integrated Master's students**

The final programme board has the discretion to disregard all level 6 grades from the 2020/21 academic year when calculating degree classification. The best 90 credits at L7 plus the best 120 credits from the remaining L5/7 modules would be used.)

D6.3 **Recommendation for an Honours classification**

(NOTE:

28 *University regulations allow for up to 30 credits of failed modules (at any academic level) to be compensated by the programme board, with the classification grade being reduced by 2.5 for each 15 credits compensated. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the limits of compensation are unaffected; however programme boards are instructed to compensate without applying the penalty to the classification grade (except where there are proven cases of cheating in a module.)*

2. Posthumous awards

A posthumous award could previously only typically be awarded at the highest academic level at which the student had achieved credit. However, over the past two years several Schools have stated that this policy is unfair in that it does not reflect a deceased student's potential achievement. The revised policy allows the award of a qualification that reflects what we predict a student might have achieved had he/she been able to complete their studies. The following amendment to UPR AS14 has been approved:

D9 Valid reasons for poor performance

D9.4 If it is established to the satisfaction of the Programme Board that a student's absence, failure to submit work or poor performance in all or part of an award was due to illness or other cause found valid on production of acceptable evidence, the Board may:

- i where it is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of the student's achievement or this evidence is subsequently obtained, recommend the student for the award for which he or she is a candidate (with or without Honours classification, Distinction or Commendation, as appropriate). In order to reach a decision, a Programme Board of Examiners may assess the candidate by whatever means it considers appropriate: it may also recommend a posthumous award, ~~typically at the highest academic level at which the student has achieved credit up to the candidate's final intended award~~ *where at least one third of the candidate's programme of studies had been completed;*
- ii where the Programme Board does not have enough evidence of the student's performance to recommend the award for which the student was a candidate or an interim award permitted under these regulations but is satisfied that, but for illness or other valid cause, the student would have reached the standard required, recommend the offer of an Aegrotat award (without classification). The student may, however, decline the award and seek reassessment as if for the first time.

The decision to grant a posthumous award, and the academic level and classification of that award, remains at the discretion of the final Programme Board having considered the evidence available to the Board (subject to UPR AS14, section D9.4,i).

3. Introduction of the Student Administration Service

The University's the Student Administration Service (SAS) was launched on Friday 1 May 2020, bringing together all student administrators from Schools, from parts of Academic Registry and the Student Centre. This has been reflected in UPR AS14, through:

- (i) Reallocation of the roles and responsibilities of the 'School Administration Manager' to the 'Student Administration Service Manager'
 - UPR AS14, sections C1.7, C1.8, C1.9, C3.3, C3.8note, C4.2, and C4.3.1xii;
 - UPR AS14, Appendix II, sections 1.1, 2.1.1xi, 2.1.1note, 2.2.4, and 3.2.4.
- (ii) Centralisation of the 'Serious Adverse Circumstances' (SACs) and administration of the Academic Misconduct processes:
 - See text below.

C3.4 Responsibilities of Module Boards and Short Course Boards

The responsibilities of Module Boards and Short Course Boards are:

- i to receive and consider marks and/or grades
- iv to decide on any changes to be made to un-amended marks and/or grades reported to the Board, in the light of proven cases of Serious Adverse Circumstances (see section C3.8 'Serious Adverse Circumstances'). Note that Module Boards and Short Course Boards must have available full details of all such cases, together with *any comments or recommendations from the Serious Adverse Circumstances Assessment Panel where it exists* (see section C3.7 'Assessment Panels');
- v to decide on the academic penalties to be imposed in proven cases of cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and other Academic Misconduct (Appendix III, UPR AS14, refers). Module Boards and Short Course Boards will take account of any recommendations from the Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) (or nominee) and *Serious Adverse Circumstances Assessment Panel where it exists*;
- vi In the case of Module Boards, to monitor the performance of

C3.7 *Serious Adverse Circumstance Assessment Panels*

~~C3.7.1 Deans of School may establish Assessment Panels chaired by the Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) (or nominee), to meet before Module Boards and Short Course Boards.~~

~~C3.7.1 The Serious Adverse Circumstance Assessment Panel are is deemed to operate on the authority of the Module Boards and Short Course Boards to which they report and are established under powers delegated to Deans of School by the Academic Board.~~

~~C3.7.2 Such aThe Panel may is designed to provide an useful and effective way to achieve consistency of approach and to facilitate the work of Module Boards and Short Course Boards in considering students who require special consideration because of Serious Adverse Circumstances. or assessment related regulatory issues, such as cheating or plagiarism.~~

~~C3.7.3 The meetings of the Serious Adverse Circumstance Assessment Panel must be minuted. If necessary, an 'in confidence' record, accessible only to the Chairperson Chairman of the Panel, the Chairperson Chairman and Clerk to the relevant Module Board(s) or Short Course Board(s) and the Module or Short Course External Examiner(s), will be kept which provides justification for the recommendations to Module Boards and Short Course Boards under C3.7.3 above.~~

~~C3.7.4 The Module Board or Short Course Board retains the responsibility for the final decision but it is expected that recommendations of the Serious Adverse Circumstance Assessment Panel will normally be accepted. Where an Assessment Panel is not established, the Module Board or Short Course Board will undertake the duties set out in this section (C3.7).~~

C3.8 Serious Adverse Circumstances

C3.8.5 Serious adverse circumstances adversely affecting student performance will therefore only be considered by a Module Board or Short Course Board if either (i) they have led to a student not being able to sit or submit an assessment, or (ii) in support of the circumstances described in C3.8.4, above. It is the student's responsibility to draw these evidenced serious adverse circumstances to the attention of the Module Board or Short Course Board when it meets to consider confirmation of grades. This must be done at the earliest possible time, before the Board of Examiners' meeting. *Information and guidance will be available to students via the 'Ask Herts' service to explain how to submit a request for Serious Adverse Circumstances to be brought to the attention of the relevant Board of Examiners together with the date when their Board of Examiners is due to convene. This will be in addition to guidance on what constitutes acceptable Serious Adverse Circumstances and their implications (see section 5.4.2, Appendix 1, UPR AS12.)*

~~C3.8.6 Schools will publicise to students information about how Serious Adverse Circumstances may be drawn to the attention of Module Boards and Short Course Boards, together with University guidance on what constitutes acceptable Serious Adverse Circumstances and their implications.~~

C3.8.6 Regardless of the circumstances (section C3.8.3, i or ii, or C3.8.4), the student's

C3.8.7 Students can be assured that all statements of Serious Adverse Circumstances will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed outside the *Serious Adverse Circumstances* Assessment Panel and Module Boards or Short Course Boards. *A small team of dedicated administrative staff will be required to process the statements for the purposes of supporting the Panel.* Where circumstances are particularly sensitive, students may request that they are disclosed only to the Chairman of the Assessment Panel, the Chairman of the Module Board or Short Course Board and the External Examiner(s).

D5 Deferral, Referral, Re-enrolment

D5.1.1 ~~The Serious Adverse Circumstances Assessment Panel may recommend A-Module Board or Short Course Board has discretion to decide~~ that a student who has *not* attempted one or more assessments because of proven Serious Adverse Circumstances, may be permitted to undertake deferred assessments. ~~The Board is permitted to exercise its discretion to offer deferred assessments to students~~ in the following circumstances:

- i the student was not capable of understanding that his or her performance was likely to be affected seriously by ill health and/or its treatment and this view has the written support of a doctor or psychiatric practitioner; or
- ii the student became unwell during the examination or in-class test and has appropriate evidence of Serious Adverse Circumstances to support such claim (section C3.8.3, refers).

The Module Board or Short Course Board will normally follow the recommendation of the Serious Adverse Circumstance Assessment Panel.

D9 Valid reasons for poor performance

D9.2 ~~It is for~~ The Module Board or Short Course Board, ~~taking account of any advice should normally follow the recommendation~~ from the *Serious Adverse Circumstance* Assessment Panel, to decide whether or not the student has presented a valid case. Where the Board is not satisfied, the student does not have a right to be reassessed as if for the first time. If the Board is not convinced by the evidence offered but does not wish to disregard it completely, it may choose to further assess the student in particular elements of the assessment.

D9.3 The Board, taking *into* account ~~of any advice the recommendation~~ from the *Serious Adverse Circumstances* Assessment Panel, may exercise discretion in deciding on the particular form any further assessment or reassessment should take: options include viva voce examination; additional assessment tasks; review of previous work or normal assessment at the next available opportunity. The student should not be put in a position of unfair advantage over other candidates: the aim should be to enable the student to be assessed or reassessed on equal terms.

UPR AS14, Appendix III (Academic Misconduct)

- 4.3.5 *A nominee of the Assistant Registrar (Academic Services) The School Administration Manager or nominee shall make a written record of any meeting between the Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) or nominee and the student as required.*

4. Incorporation of QAA Degree Classification Descriptors into UH regulations

In October 2019, QAA published a set of common **degree classification descriptions**, at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/annex-d-outcome-classification-descriptions-for-fheq-level-6-and-fqheis-level-10-degrees.pdf?sfvrsn=824c981_10. They set out the agreed general criteria that students across the UK should meet in order to achieve the different classes of qualification at bachelor's honours degree level. These criteria provide a useful tool for all HE Providers in ensuring the comparability and reliability of UK higher education qualifications. These descriptors should be used by Schools in the development of their own School/subject/programme grade descriptors, which are based on the skeletal University grade descriptors identified in UPR AS14, section D1.1, and so the following amendment has been approved:

D1.1 Interpretation of grades

Grade awarded				Interpretation of Grade			
100-point Numeric Grade	Grade Point ¹	19-point Numeric Grade	10-point Numeric Grade	Grade Descriptor ³		Indicative Classification Descriptor	
90-100 ²	4.50	95 ²	95 ²	Outstanding		1 st Class Honours/ Distinction	
80-89		85	85	Excellent			
75-79		77	75	Very good			
70-74		72					
67-69	3.75	68	65	Good		Upper 2 nd Class Honours/ Commendation	
64-66	3.50	65					
60-63	3.25	62					
57-59	3.00	58	55	Clear pass		Lower 2 nd Class Honours/ Pass	
54-56	2.75	55					
50-53	2.50	52					
				Levels 0, 4, 5, 6	Level 7	Levels 0, 4, 5, 6	Level 7
47-49	2.25	48	45	Marginal pass	Marginal fail	3 rd Class Honours/ Pass	
44-46	2.00	45					
40-43	1.75	42					
37-39	1.00	38	35	Marginal fail	Clear fail	Not applicable	
34-36	0.75	35					
30-33	0.50	32					
20-29	0.25	25	25	Clear fail	Not applicable		
0-19	0.00	10	10				
		0	0	Little or nothing of merit			

- 1 Module Boards award grade points alongside numeric grades for all modules from 2017/18.
- 2 For classification purposes, a cap of **90** shall be applied to all module or short course numeric grades contributing toward the average numeric grade used to determine Honours classification and for conferring University awards 'with Distinction' or 'with Commendation'.
- 3 *The University's Grade Descriptors are contextualised at School, subject or programme level. In doing so, Schools shall take account of the QAA outcome classification descriptions, at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/annex-d-outcome-classification-descriptions-for-fheq-level-6-and-fqheis-level-10-degrees.pdf?sfvrsn=824c981_10.*

5. Use of mobile phones or other electronic devices in examinations

In recent years the University has experienced several cheating cases in examinations and in-class tests involving students with mobile phones on their person. For examinations run by the Examinations Office, students are instructed to put their mobile phone in a plastic box under their desk, but with in-class tests there is often no clear instructions on the location of mobile phones.

The following addition to UPR AS14 Appendix III has therefore been approved to provide clarity to all students and therefore reduce the number of SAMPs:

2 DEFINITIONS

2.1 For the purposes of Appendix III, UPR AS14 and Appendix I, UPR AS13, Academic Misconduct is defined as follows:

2.1.4 'other Academic Misconduct':

evidence that a student failed to comply with the University's assessment and examination regulations, other than those offences falling under sections 2.1.1 to 2.1.3, above, including:

- a the falsification of data including the creation of false written materials or statistical data or its alteration, for example, by the invention of the statistics presented or the invention of quotations or references;
- b the duplication of assessed work – the submission of broadly similar academic work previously completed by the student for academic credit as part of the same programme without express acknowledgement of the previous submission;
- c the removal of an examination script or examination stationery or other materials from the examination room (or any other room in which a formal assessment is taking place);
- d failure to comply with the instructions of an invigilator, *including instructions about the location of mobile phones or other electronic devices. Failure to comply with the invigilator's instructions will be an academic offence, regardless of whether or not the phone or other electronic device has been used;*
- e the introduction into the examination room of any personal notes or revision notes in any form or stationery regardless of any attempt to use it;
- f breach of professional confidentiality;
- g failure to obtain ethics approval prior to undertaking work involving human participants (*see UPR RE01 refers*);
- h failure to comply with the terms and conditions of an ethics approval granted for work involving human participants (*see UPR RE01 refers*).

6. Introduction of Appendix IV – Apprenticeship Provision – End Point Assessment policy

This new appendix to UPR AS14 introduces a policy for managing the quality and standards of end point assessments in apprenticeship provision.

7. Introduction of Appendix V – Apprenticeship Provision – Fair Access Policy for end-point assessment

This new appendix to UPR AS14 identifies the principles that the University has adopted in the delivery of End Point Assessment to ensure that all learners are treated equally.