

Amendments to University Policies and Regulations for 2018/19

This paper summarises the amendments to the University's UPRs (University Policies and Regulations for the 2018/19 academic year, available at:

http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/secreg/upr_azlist_info.htm) that students need to be aware of.

Amendments are identified in red italics.

This paper should be read in conjunction with UPR SA07 (*Regulations and Advice for Students' Particular Attention – Index*, (at: <http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/secreg/upr/SA07.htm>) and the StudyNet guidance on the Academic Regulations (at:

<http://www.studynet2.herts.ac.uk/ptl/common/studentcentre.nsf/page/98370E73AE82CA21802577E60057CE00x>) (please **copy this URL and paste it into your browser**).

1. Clarification of timescales for submissions of exceptional Serious Adverse Circumstances (SACs)

A report of a Working Group to review the operation of serious adverse circumstances (SACs) recommended that 'the UPRs should be amended to make it clearer that the same timescales as SACs submitted to explain absence from assessments apply to the exceptions'. The following amendments to UPR AS14, section C3.8 have been approved:

C3 **Module Boards of Examiners (Module Boards) and Short Course Boards of Examiners (Short Course Boards)**

C3.8 **Serious Adverse Circumstances**

C3.8.1 'Serious Adverse Circumstances' are significant circumstances beyond a student's control that would have affected his or her ability to perform to his or her full potential if he or she were to sit or submit an assessment at the appointed time.

C3.8.2 If a student has problems or difficulties significantly affecting performance on his or her programme of study, he or she should discuss this with appropriate University staff. Lecturers and/or Examiners may take appropriate action, such as extending the deadline for submission of a piece of work.

C3.8.3 ~~Other than in the circumstances described in section C3.8.3, i and ii,~~ Students who sit or submit an assessment deem themselves to be sufficiently able to take the assessment and cannot later claim to have suffered Serious Adverse Circumstances.

C3.8.4 *However, the following two circumstances are considered to be exceptions to C3.8.3, above:*

- i where, at the time of sitting or submitting the assessment concerned, 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 where a student suddenly becomes unwell during an examination or in-class test and elects to leave without completing the assessment. In these circumstances, before leaving the examination room, the student must notify the Invigilator of the Serious Adverse Circumstances which have necessitated his or her leaving the examination or test.

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 ~~Where it is believed that there are significant Serious Adverse Circumstances adversely affecting performance, which should be drawn formally~~ to the attention of the Module Board or Short Course Board when it meets to consider confirmation of grades, ~~it is the student's responsibility to notify the Chairman of the Board, in writing, of the circumstances.~~ This must be done at the earliest possible time, before the Board of Examiners' meeting.*

2. Degree classification of students with APL at level 5

On some UH programmes, students can enter with 180 credits at level 4/5, including 60 credits at level 5. As a result, these students do not study sufficient credits on the programme to enable the normal Bachelor's Degree classification algorithm, as outlined in UPR AS14 D6.1.1, to be used. Therefore the classification of the final award is determined in the same way as direct entrants to level 6. However, this is not made explicit within the regulations. The following amendment to UPR AS14, section D6.1 has been approved, to ensure consistent practice in the classification of award for all students entering degree programmes with 45 credits or more APL at level 5:

D6 Final awards – Honours classification

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

D6.1.6 For direct entrants to Level 6, *direct entrants with 45 credits or more of APL at level 5*, and for those students who have replaced all or part of their University of Hertfordshire level 5 studies with study abroad, Honours classification will be determined from the average numeric grade of the best 90 credits at Level 6 or higher.

D6.1.7 For direct entrants to Levels 5 or 6,

3. Viva voce examinations

Viva voce testing is regularly used by SACOs to investigate contract cheating and other assessment offences such as collusion, and the recent QAA guidance urges HE Providers to make use of vivas to detect academic misconduct. Currently, UH regulations do not technically allow for this without the permission of the Module Board. Therefore, the following amendments to the UPR AS14, section D11 have been approved:

D ASSESSMENT AND AWARD REGULATIONS

D11 Viva Voce examinations

D11.1 Except when *(i) part of the approved module assessment process for all candidates, (ii) written into programme-specific regulations, or (iii) authorised by the Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) (or nominee) where suspected plagiarism or another assessment offence is being investigated*, viva voce examinations may only be used at the discretion of Module Boards or Short Course Boards.

D11.2 The results of the viva voce must be reported to the Module Board or Short Course Board and may be used:

- i to confirm the standards achieved on modules or short courses;
- ii as an alternative or additional assessment where valid reasons for poor performance have been established;

~~iii — where plagiarism or other examination offence is suspected.~~

4. Contract cheating

The University has considered the adequacy of its policies in relation to academic integrity and academic misconduct, in light of the recently published QAA guidance on 'Contracting to Cheat in Higher Education'. In addition to the revised guidance to Schools, the following amendment to UPR AS14, Appendix III, section 2.1.1 has been approved:

2 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Appendix I, UPR AS12¹, and Appendix I, UPR AS13², define cheating plagiarism, collusion and other Assessment Offences/Academic Misconduct as follows:

"2.1.1 'cheating':

to attempt to gain an unfair, improper or dishonest advantage in the assessment process;

to gain an unfair, improper or dishonest advantage in the assessment process;

where on the balance of probability it could reasonably be construed that a candidate intended to gain an unfair, improper or dishonest advantage in the assessment process.

Cheating includes:

- a impersonation - either where a student allows any other person to take an assessment on their behalf or to present themselves as being that student or where a current University of Hertfordshire student takes an assessment on behalf of another University of Hertfordshire student;
- b obtaining or attempting to obtain unauthorised access to examination papers;
- c the copying of, or attempting to copy, the work of another candidate in the examination or other in class assessment, whether by overlooking what he or she has written or is writing or by asking him or her for information in whatever form;
- d the introduction into an examination room (or any other room in which a formal assessment is taking place) of aids including books, notes, personal notes or revision notes in any form, papers, stationery, computer disks or other devices of any kind other than those permitted in the rubric of the examination paper. This includes, for example, unauthorised information stored in the memory of a pocket calculator, in a mobile telephone, personal organiser or any other device;
- e requesting a temporary absence from an examination room (or any other room in which a formal assessment is taking place) with the intention of gaining, or attempting to gain, access to information that may be relevant to a formal assessment;
- f false statements made in order to receive special considerations by the Board of Examiners or to obtain extensions to deadlines or exemption from work;
- g assisting or attempting to assist another University of Hertfordshire student to gain or attempt to gain an unfair, improper, or dishonest advantage in the assessment process;
- h the ~~purchase or theft~~ *misappropriation* of material submitted for assessment;
- i *contract cheating - using one or more of a range of services provided or input from a third party, with or without payment of any kind:*
 - (i) *'services' includes the provision of essays or other types of assignments, conducting research;*
 - (ii) *'third party' includes web-based companies or auction sites (essay mills), sharing websites (including essay banks), or an individual such as a lecturer, fellow student, friend or relative;*
 - (iii) *'Input' means that the third party contributes to the work of the student, such that there is reasonable doubt as to whose work the assessment represents';*
- j academic misconduct offences as defined by section 2.1.4, a - f, where on a balance of probability, it could reasonably be construed that a candidate attempted or intended to gain an unfair, improper or dishonest advantage in the assessment process.