

**Amendments to UPR AS14 (Structure and Assessment Regulations - Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes) for 2013/14**

This paper summarises the approved amendments to UPR AS14 for the 2013/14 academic year.

**1. Additional academic levels for University credit and awards**

The 8 May 2013 meeting of ADC approved a range of ‘Graded Examination in Music Performance’ awards to be delivered by Music Teacher’s Board Exams Ltd (MTB), offered at QCF levels 1 to 3. However, UPR AS14 only identifies QCF/FHEQ academic levels 4 to 7 (plus level 0 for Foundation studies) as being available for the University’s taught modules and awards. At the 13 March 2013 meeting of Academic Board, an amendment to UPR AS14 section A2.6 was therefore approved, recognising the University’s ability to make awards at QCF levels 1 to 3 (but only for awards regulated by OfQual):

**A2.6 Definition of module/short course level**

All modules must be identified with one of the following Levels according to their academic function:

<b>Academic Level</b> (also QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Level, <i>and Qualifications and Credit Framework level</i> ):	<b>Description:</b>
<b>1</b>	<i>The University recognises modules and awards at Level 1. These are reserved for Further Education level awards regulated by OfQual.</i>
<b>2</b>	<i>The University recognises modules and awards at Level 2. These are reserved for Further Education level awards regulated by OfQual.</i>
<b>3</b>	<i>The University recognises modules and awards at Level 3. These are reserved for Further Education level awards regulated by OfQual.</i>
<b>0</b>	The University recognises modules and programmes of study at Level <b>0</b> . These are designed for entrants to higher education who do not possess the appropriate entry qualifications for direct entry to specific programmes of study at Level <b>4</b> . They may be offered as part of an extended degree programme or foundation programme.
<b>4</b> (previously Level 1)	Level <b>4</b> is typically .....

## 2. Maximum study rates within an academic year

The University currently identifies a maximum study rate for undergraduate programmes of 150 credit points per academic year, based on a 2-Semester academic year. However, many collaborative partners offer an accelerated study pattern, based on a 3-Semester academic year. The December 2012 meeting of ASAC therefore agreed that the maximum study rate be increased to 180 credit points over a 3-Semester academic year. Additionally, in 2011/12, the University recognised the fact that full-time students are also able to register to study up to 30 credits of additional modules that are not part of their normal programme of study. These elective modules are taken from any discipline area in the University, subject to availability and module pre-requisites. However, some Schools have asked for clarification on whether additional 'elective' modules should be included in a student's maximum study rate. The following amendments have therefore been approved to UPR AS14, section A4:

### A4 Normal and maximum study rates within an academic year

#### A4.1 Normal study rate - full-time undergraduate

The normal rate of full-time study for undergraduates is **120** credit points per two (2) semester academic year, *or 180 credit points per three (3) Semester academic year for programmes designed with an accelerated study pattern.*

#### A4.2 Maximum study rate – full-time undergraduate

A.4.2.1 Individual undergraduate students may increase their study rate to a maximum **150** credit points over a two (2) semester academic year (subject to timetabling constraints, *and including any additional modules which are not part of a validated programme of study*) ~~, but only with the specific approval of the appropriate Associate Dean of School or Dean of School~~ *and*, normally, with the objective of retrieving previous failure. In order for *this increased study rate* to be approved, the student must have no more than **30** credit points of failure outstanding.

A.4.2.2 *Individual undergraduate students may not increase their study rate above the maximum 180 credit points over a three (3) semester academic year (including any additional modules which are not part of a validated programme of study).*

## 3. Clarification of the restrictions on a Chairman of a Board of Examiners meeting

Advice has been sought from Schools on whether there is a conflict of interest if a member of a module teaching team subsequently acts as a chairman of the Module Board at which the module is considered. The advice given was that there is potentially a conflict of interests, and that this should be avoided. However, this restriction is not stated in the regulations. The following amendment to UPR AS14, section C2.3 has therefore been approved:

### C2.3 Composition of Module Boards and Short Course Boards

A Module Board of Examiners or Short Course Board of Examiners shall be composed as follows:

- i a Chairman, nominated by the Dean of School and appointed by the Vice-Chancellor. Deans of School shall not be appointed as Chairmen.

*(Chairmen of Module Boards of Examiners are not allowed to chair the Board whilst any modules or short courses are being considered for which they are either (a) the module or short course leader or (b) also in attendance as a representative of the module or short course in membership category ii, below. In addition, Chairmen are required to declare to the Board any modules or short courses under consideration on which they have taught or assessed)*

- ii at least one representative from the academic staff having a major responsibility for teaching and/or assessment of each module or short course

#### **4. Attendance of the University Secretary and Registrar (or nominee) at Boards of Examiners meetings**

From time to time, the University observe Boards of Examiners meetings in order to (i) observe the application of the UPRs at Boards, to identify where clarifications and amendments are required, (ii) check on the consistency of application of the UPRs by Schools, and (iii) identify good practice in the operation of Boards. In order to clarify the role of this observer, the following clarification has been made to UPR AS14, sections C2.3 and C3.2:

##### **Officers in Attendance**

###### *Secretary and Registrar (or nominee)*

Clerk nominated by the School Administration Manager

##### **Role of the Secretary and Registrar**

*As Secretary to the Academic Board, the Secretary and Registrar is formally Secretary to all committees and boards within the Committee Structure of the Academic Board. The Secretary and Registrar may nominate another member of staff to attend meetings on his or her behalf. The individuals nominated will be expected to discharge all aspects of the Secretarial role and will have the authority to intervene on points of order and, where appropriate, to advise the Chairman on procedural issues.*

#### **5. Clarification of the attendance requirements of external examiners at Board of Examiners meetings**

In 2007/08 the University transferred responsibility for confirming module grades from the Programme Board to the Module Board. The Module Board of Examiners therefore has a much greater responsibility for setting and approving academic standards than it did prior to 2007. However, this greater responsibility has not been reflected in the respective roles of module and programme external examiners. The following amendments to UPR AS14 have therefore been approved (which should be read in conjunction with the approved amendments to UPR AS12), which clarify the attendance requirements of external examiners at Boards of Examiners:

##### **C2 Module Boards of Examiners (Module Boards) and Short Course Boards of Examiners (Short Course Boards)**

###### **C2.6 Issue of results**

C2.6.3 If External Examiners are not in attendance and have not yet been consulted, all grades determined by the Module Board or Short Course Board will be provisional. The results will then be sent to the External Examiner for agreement that they may be released to students as confirmed grades. In exceptional cases, for example, if the External Examiner is unavailable for some weeks, the Chairman/Chairmen of the Module Board(s) or Short Course Board(s) will be consulted and may agree to the release of grades to students on the clear understanding that they are provisional and subject to moderation (*section 9.3.1, UPR AS12/section 9.3.1, UPR AS13, refers*).

##### **C3 Programme Boards of Examiners (Programme Boards)**

###### **C3.4 Programme External Examiners**

*Programme External Examiners are expected to attend Programme Boards. If, exceptionally, they are unavoidably absent they should be consulted and their written agreement on the decisions of the Board obtained prior to the publication of Award Pass Lists (section 9.3.2, UPR AS12/section 9.3.2, UPR AS13, refers).*

## E EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

### E1 General information

#### E1.1 Programme External Examiners

- i Programme External Examiners are appointed by the University to have oversight of the programme-specific assessment and ensure that it has been undertaken in a manner which is just to the individual student and that the standard of the University's awards is maintained. Membership and attendance of Programme External Examiners at the Programme Board of Examiners is *expected mandatory* (but see also section E2.3).

#### E1.2 Module External Examiners

- i Module External Examiners are appointed by the University to ensure that the assessment and academic standards in cognate subject areas are appropriate. They will be asked to moderate assessment and standards, possibly across a broad range of credit-rated modules at different Levels. Module External Examiners are members of Module Boards of Examiners (see C2.5 'Involvement of External Examiners in Module Boards and Short Course Boards' above). *Membership and attendance of Module External Examiners at the Module Board of Examiners is expected (but see also section E3.2).* Where they are not also Programme External Examiners they are not members of the Programme Board but may be invited to attend by the Chairman/Chairmen of relevant Programme Board(s).

### E2 Role, responsibilities, rights and duties of Programme External Examiners

- E2.3 If a Programme External Examiner is absent from a meeting of a Board of Examiners which is concerned with the determination of the class or grade of award ~~or with the determination of any grade which contributes to such a decision~~ and, because of the circumstances, no substitute has been duly appointed, then *they should be consulted and their agreement on the decisions of the Board obtained (section 9.3.2, UPR AS12<sup>K</sup>/section 9.3.2, UPR AS13<sup>L</sup>, refers)* ~~a full account of the circumstances should be sent to the Academic Board with the recommendations for the award.~~ It is essential that, in such circumstances, every endeavour is made to ensure that at least one (1) of the Programme External Examiners is present at the meeting and that no decision of the Board be made final until the concurrence of the absent External Examiner(s) has been established.

### E3 Role, responsibilities, rights and duties of Module External Examiners and Short Course External Examiners

- E3.2 If a Module or Short Course External Examiner is absent from a meeting of a Module Board or Short Course Board then his or her written agreement to the decisions of the Board must be obtained (*section 9.3.1, UPR AS12<sup>K</sup>/section 9.3.1, UPR AS13<sup>L</sup>, refers*). The decisions of the Board will be provisional until the agreement of the absent External Examiner has been obtained (see section C2.6).

## 6. Clarification of final compensatory credit restrictions

In 2011/12, a restriction was placed on the ability of Programme Boards to compensate failed modules, whereby compensation was not allowed for a module with an overall grade of zero due to non-submission and/or non-attendance in all elements. There is a need to clarify that a non-submission/non-attendance in a single component of assessment on a module should not restrict the ability of a Programme Board to compensate the failure. The following amendment to UPR AS14 has been approved:

### D4 Final Compensatory credit

- D4.2 Final compensation shall not be awarded for any module or short courses where:

- i a student has not attempted *any* elements of assessment, *leading to a numeric grade of zero (0) for the module or short course;*
- ii a programme learning outcome is associated uniquely with *the* module *or short course.*

## **7. Contribution of elective modules to programme credit and classification requirements**

In 2011/12, the University recognised the fact that full-time students are also able to register to study up to 30 credits of additional modules that are not part of their normal programme of study. These elective modules are taken from any discipline area in the University, subject to availability and module pre-requisites. However, some Schools have asked for clarification on whether additional 'elective' modules contribute towards the credit and classification requirements for an award. The following amendment to UPR AS14 has therefore been approved (in parallel, an amendment to UPR AS11 has also been approved):

### **D6 Final awards – Honours classification**

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

D6.1.6 All pass grades (including referred passes) and compensated grades are eligible for inclusion in the determination of the combined average numeric grade, *with the exception of grades awarded for additional modules which are not part of a validated programme of study.*

D6.1.7 For direct entrants to Level 6, .....

NB. Identical amendments should have also been made to sections D6.2.6 and D7.2.8.

## **8. Withdrawal of the right of an external examiner to examine a student by viva voce**

The University currently permits a Module External Examiner to conduct viva voce examinations with students, the aim being to enable the external to gain an opinion across the cohort rather than on the performance of individual students. However, across the HE sector there has been a decline in this practice, for two main reasons:

- (i) larger student cohorts mean that a significant proportion of students cannot always be examined, which could therefore lead to doubts over the fairness of the process;
- (ii) Boards of Examiners dates do not coincide with University term dates, and so student availability means that either the external would have to make an additional visit several weeks prior to the Board, or students would be required to attend the University at the time of the Boards.

It has therefore been agreed that Module External Examiners should no longer have the right to examine by viva-voce (although, with the approval of Schools, these examinations may still take place), and UPR AS14, section E3.3 is amended as follows:

### **E3 Role, responsibilities, rights and duties of Module External Examiners and Short Course External Examiners**

E3.3 The following outlines the responsibilities of Module and Short Course External Examiners. They should:

i be able to judge each student impartially .....

~~ix have the right to examine any student viva voce in addition to the assessments specified in the module or short course regulations;~~

ix ensure that the assessments are conducted .....

## 9. Clarification of the academic misconduct process at collaborative partners

In 2012/13, the processes for dealing with student assessment offences were revised. Student disciplinary procedures were defined for University-based students, but UPR AS14 Appendix III failed to acknowledge that collaborative partner processes were different. The following footnote within UPR AS14 Appendix III has therefore been approved:

### 3 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT - CASES DEALT WITH THROUGH THE STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

3.1 Alleged Academic Misconduct offences which necessarily involve making decisions that go beyond purely academic judgement will be dealt with in accordance with the provision of UPR SA13<sup>4</sup>. The University regards the following as matters to be referred for consideration under the provisions of UPR SA13<sup>4</sup>:

i **Plagiarism**, as defined in section 2.1.2, where .....

3.2 Where a Student Academic Misconduct Panel (*or equivalent panel in a partner institution, where agreed*), convened under the provisions of UPR SA13<sup>4</sup>, finds that an Academic Misconduct offence, as defined in this section (3.1), has been committed, the Student Academic Misconduct Panel will so inform the Short Course/Module Board of Examiners. The Short Course/Module Board of Examiners will exercise its academic judgement and allocate marks (section 5.4.2 refers).

3.3 The role of the Short Course/Module Board of Examiners .....

4 UPR SA13 'Student Discipline', or equivalent Student Discipline Code operating in a partner institution, where agreed

## 10. Recommended penalty from the Associate Dean (AQA) (or nominee) for assessment offences.

It has always been the practice for an Academic Conduct Officer to make a recommendation as to a penalty for an assessment offence (i.e. an offence that does not go through disciplinary procedures), but this has been overlooked in the regulations. Although their report would recommend the academic penalty it would also set out their investigation of the allegation and inform the Module Board that an assessment offence has been committed (e.g. admitted collusion, plagiarism, etc.) which then justifies the academic penalty (which is why the student needs the chance to see the report, and respond). The following amendment has therefore been approved to UPR AS14, Appendix III:

### 5 PROCEDURE

5.3 Responsibilities of the Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) (or nominee)

5.3.6 *Following the conclusion of the process before the Student Academic Misconduct Panel, the Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) (or nominee) will provide a report to the Chairman of the Short Course/Module Board so that it may determine the appropriate academic penalty to be applied under section 5.4.2 of this document.*

5.3.7 *Where ~~Notwithstanding that~~ an allegation is upheld at the level of the Student Academic Misconduct Panel, in addition to any sanction or penalty imposed under the provisions of UPR SA13<sup>5</sup>, the Short Course/Module Board may, where cheating, plagiarism, collusion or other Assessment Offences (as defined in section 2 of this document) has occurred, impose one or more of the academic penalties set out in section 5.4.2 of this document.*