

Amendments to UPR AS14 (Structure and Assessment Regulations - Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes) for 2024/25

1. Exceptional Circumstances

Amendments have been made to align the University's exceptions to the 'fit to sit' policy with the OIA guidance on the operation of 'fit to sit' policies in universities (<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/resources-and-publications/good-practice-framework/requests-for-additional-consideration/fit-to-sit-policies/>). This requires the University to broaden the circumstances in which we are prepared to accept an exception to the 'fit to sit' principle. The UPR has been intentionally drafted to allow for some flexibility, as the OIA guidance stresses that circumstances of students are many and varied, and it is important that decisions are taken based on the individual circumstances of the student. The following amendments to UPR AS14, section C3.8 and D5.1 have been approved:

C3.8 Exceptional Circumstances

C3.8.5 However, the following two circumstances are considered to be exceptions to C3.8.4, above:

- i where a student suddenly becomes unwell during an examination or in-class test and elects to leave without completing the assessment.

Where the examination or test is invigilated during the assessment, before leaving the student must notify the Invigilator or Proctor of the Exceptional Circumstances which have necessitated their leaving the examination or test.

Where the examination or test is un-invigilated (or invigilated/reviewed as a post assessment activity), the student must submit a request based on exception i via their Student Portal by midnight on the calendar day after the on-line assessment. By submitting a request based on exception *i*, a student renders their original attempt null and void.

- ii ~~where, at the time of sitting or submitting the assessment concerned, the student was not capable of understanding that their performance was likely to be affected seriously by ill health and/or its treatment and this view has the written support from a psychiatrist or mental health practitioner who has been treating the student over a period of time. A GP may also give support if they are aware of (a) treatment or referrals to such specialists (b) an incident close to the assessment date that may have temporarily affected the student's capacity to take decisions. where, at the time of sitting or submitting the assessment concerned, the student was suffering from serious ill health or other circumstances which impaired their ability to make a rational judgement to take the assessment. This view must have the written support of a relevant professional who must have been consulted close to the assessment submission date.~~

Evidence from a relevant professional must be provided on the Fit to Sit Exemption Form and could be a statement from the student's doctor, care provider, a domestic violence service, the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme, or from sources of support within the University such as mental health adviser, disability adviser, safeguarding officer, or counsellor.

Requests based on exception **ii** must be made by a student via their Student Portal using the submit request function within fifteen (15) working days of the assessment date.

Late submissions will not be accepted unless explicitly supported by the relevant professional to the effect that they consider that it was not reasonable to expect the student to submit their request within fifteen (15) working days of the assessment date.

Late submissions after the student's results have been issued must be made via Stage 1 – 3 of the process set out in UPR AS 12 Appendix 1 (Early Resolution and Appeals Process.)

D5.1 Deferred assessments

D5.1.1 The Exceptional Circumstances team may recommend that a student who has attempted one or more assessments, because of proven Exceptional Circumstances, may be permitted to undertake deferred assessments in the following circumstances:

- i ~~the student was not capable of understanding that their 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; where, at the time of sitting or submitting the assessment concerned, the student was suffering from serious ill health or other circumstances which impaired their ability to make a rational judgement to take the assessment. This view must have the written support of a relevant professional who must have been consulted close to the assessment submission date.~~

Evidence from a relevant professional must be provided on the Fit to Sit Exemption Form and could be a statement from the student's doctor, care provider, a domestic violence service, the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme, or from sources of support within the University such as mental health adviser, disability adviser, safeguarding officer, or counsellor.

- ii the student became unwell during the examination or in-class test and has appropriate evidence of Exceptional Circumstances to support such request (see section C3.8.4).

The Module Board or Short Course Board will normally follow the recommendation of the Exceptional Circumstances team.

D5.1.2 Where a student submits a claim that, *at the time of sitting or submitting the assessment concerned, the student was suffering from serious ill health or other circumstances which impaired their ability to make a rational judgement about their ability to take the assessment* ~~the time of sitting or submitting the relevant assessment, they were not capable of understanding that their performance was likely to be affected by seriously by ill health and/or its treatment and this view is supported, in writing, by a doctor or psychiatric practitioner~~ and this claim is accepted, ~~by the Board,~~ the original mark will be null and void. If ~~the Module Board or Short Course Board rejects~~ the student's claim *is rejected*, the original mark will stand.

2. Referral opportunities for students with grades below 20

It is considered that the ineligibility of a student with a first sit grade of 0-19 to undertake a referral is no longer relevant, unnecessarily punitive and has a negative impact on continuation. The following amendments to UPR AS14, section D5.2.2 and D5.2.3 have been approved:

D5.2.2 Referral in undergraduate programmes

- i Module Boards and Short Course Boards ~~have the authority and discretion to will normally~~ allow a student the opportunity to be referred (indicated by the award of a FREFE/FREFC/FREFB status code) in an examination and/or coursework assessment ~~if they have achieved an overall module numeric grade of 20 or more~~. It is the responsibility of the student to choose which referral opportunities to accept, with the benefit of advice and counsel from the programme team and in accordance with University and programme regulations.

~~(NOTE:~~

~~18—Where a module numeric grade of 19 or less has been achieved through unintended non-submission of coursework or non-attendance at an examination or in-class test, Module Boards and Short Course Boards have the discretion to award a FREFE/FREFC/FREFB status code.)~~

D5.2.3 Referral in postgraduate programmes

- i Module Boards and Short Course Boards ~~have the authority and discretion to will normally~~ allow a student the opportunity to be referred (indicated by the award of a FREFE/FREFC/FREFB status code) in examination and/or coursework assessment ~~if they have achieved an overall module numeric grade of 20 or more~~. It is the responsibility of the student to choose which referral opportunities to accept, with the benefit of advice and counsel from the programme team and in accordance with University and programme regulations. Where a student has more than 60 credits of referral the Programme Board will not allow further study other than that relevant to the referrals.

~~(NOTE:~~

~~19—Where a module numeric grade of 19 or less has been achieved through unintended non-submission of coursework or non-attendance at an examination or in-class test, Module Boards and Short Course Boards have the discretion to award a FREFE/FREFC/FREFB status code.)~~

3. Fake referencing

References to a 'real source.... which contains no such article or words' is strictly not fake referencing and may occur due to poor academic writing skills without any intent to mislead/cheat. The following amendment to UPR AS14, Appendix III, section 2.9 has therefore been approved:

2.9 Fake referencing

Fake referencing includes ~~making up quotations and/or~~ supplying ~~fake-fabricated~~ citations. ~~The fake citation can be either completely fabricated or reference a real source (book, journal, or website) which contains no such article or words.~~ This offence includes AI generated fake references, whether or not you were aware that the references were fake.

4. Eligibility for awards with distinction and commendation

There has been a request from Boards for some additional clarity in the regulations around whether students receiving an interim award are entitled to a classification. The following amendment to UPR AS14, section D7.1 has been approved:

D7 Final awards – Awards with distinction and commendation

D7.1 *Only* the following awards ~~only~~ *(whether they be final or interim awards)* may be made 'with Distinction' or 'with Commendation' on the recommendation of the Programme Board of Examiners. The number and Level of credit points on which Distinction and Commendation awards are calculated for each award are specified alongside:

- i Taught Master's degrees (including Master of Business Administration):
- the best **150** credits contributing to the programme;
- ii Postgraduate Diploma:
- the best

5. Investigation of alleged academic misconduct at partner institutions

A recent investigation of an academic misconduct offence at a partner organisation has been reviewed due to a number of complicating issues:

1. The investigation was delegated to a member of staff at the partner organisation who was not experienced in investigation of academic misconduct;
2. The offence should have gone to Stage 3 investigation but did not;
3. A letter of Decision was never sent to the student at the end of the investigation. Instead, the case was referred straight to an Award Review Panel.

As a consequence of this, the following clarifications to UPR AS14, Appendix III, section 6.1.2, sections 8 and 9 have been approved:

6 The investigation of alleged academic misconduct

6.1 Who is responsible for investigating academic misconduct in your School?

6.1.1 Except where the alleged academic misconduct is a breach of ethics protocols (see sections 2.11, ii and iii, and UPR RE01¹), the Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) is responsible for investigating academic misconduct within the School. The Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) may delegate any investigation into academic misconduct to a School Academic Integrity Officer (SAIO).

6.1.2 *Where the alleged academic misconduct has taken place at a partner organisation, the Associate Dean (Academic Quality Assurance) may delegate the preliminary investigation and any subsequent Stage 1 investigation to a University-approved SAIO at the partner. Approval of the SAIO is through the Associate Dean (Academic Quality Assurance) in consultation with the Centre for Academic Quality Assurance.*

6.3 How will alleged academic misconduct be investigated?

6.3.1 The Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) or SAIO will carry out a preliminary investigation and decide whether no further action should be taken or whether the alleged academic misconduct will be dealt with at Stage 1 (see section 7), Stage 2 (see section 8) or Stage 3 (see section 9).

- 6.3.2 *Where the alleged academic misconduct has taken place at a partner organisation, only Stage 1 investigations may be undertaken by an approved SAIO at the partner. Stage 2 and Stage 3 investigations must be undertaken by the University.*

8 Stage 2 proceedings

- 8.10 Where you accept the allegation and the penalty either initially or following a meeting with the Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) or SAIO (or the Chair or Deputy Chair of the relevant ECDA in the case of an alleged breach of ethics protocols (see sections 2.11, ii and iii, and UPR RE01¹), the Academic Misconduct team will inform the Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) or SAIO (or the Chair or Deputy Chair of the relevant ECDA in the case of an alleged breach of ethics protocols (see sections 2.11, ii and iii, and UPR RE011)), the module leader and the *Chairs/Clerks* of the relevant Short Course/Module Board *and Programme Board* by means of a **Stage 2 Letter of Decision**.
- 8.11 *Where the Chair/Clerk of the relevant Programme Board believes that the penalty outlined in the **Stage 2 Letter of Decision** would lead to the withdrawal of an award, the Chair should recommend withdrawal in writing to the Head of Governance Services (see UPR AS21, section 2.1).*

9 Stage 3 proceedings

- 9.4 After the conclusion of the Student Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing, the Chair of the Student Academic Misconduct Panel will inform you of the outcome of the Hearing by way of a **Stage 3 Letter of Decision**. This will be copied to the Associate Dean of School (Academic Quality Assurance) or SAIO, the Programme Leader, the Module Leader and the *Chairs/Clerks* of the *relevant Short Course/Module Board and Programme Board*.
- 9.5 *Where the Chair/Clerk of the relevant Programme Board believes that the penalty outlined in the **Stage 3 Letter of Decision** would lead to the withdrawal of an award, the Chair should recommend withdrawal in writing to the Head of Governance Services (see UPR AS21, section 2.1).*

6. Exceptional Circumstances at Partner Institutions

UPR AS14 contains details in C3.7 and C3.8 of the UH-based procedures for handling exceptional circumstances e.g. the requirement of submission of Exceptional Circumstances through the Student Portal which may not apply to students in partner institutions. However, UPR AS14 applies to both UH-based and Partner-based provision. Apart from the Herts HE Consortium, partner institutions have their own local procedures for handling exceptional circumstances. The following amendments have therefore been approved to UPR AS14, in Note A (on the front page) and sections C3.7 and C3.8:

- ^A **Note A for Partner Organisations (UK and overseas)**
*Apart from sections C3.7 and C3.8, this UPR applies in full to all franchised *and University-validated* programmes, *unless otherwise agreed*. Organisations will have their own standard operating procedures although they may refer to the Director of Academic Services at the University for guidance. Where programmes are conducted under validated arrangements, the principles and conduct of assessment must be set out in the approved programme documentation.*

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

C3.7 Exceptional Circumstances team

(NOTE:

9 *Section 3.7 does not apply to franchised or University-validated provision unless otherwise agreed. UPR AS13 Appendix 1 section 3 sets out the principles and procedures that apply in partner institutions the absence of express agreement to the contrary)*

C3.7.1 The Exceptional Circumstances team is established under powers delegated by the Academic Board.

C3.7.2 The Exceptional Circumstances team is designed to provide an 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 Exceptional Circumstances.

C3.7.3 The decisions of the Exceptional Circumstances team must be recorded. If necessary, an 'in confidence' record, accessible only to the Team Leader will be kept to provide justification for the decision of the team.

C3.8 Exceptional Circumstances

(NOTE:

10 *Section 3.8 does not apply to franchised or University-validated provision unless otherwise agreed. UPR AS13 Appendix 1 section 3 sets out the principles and procedures that apply in partner institutions the absence of express agreement to the contrary)*

C3.8.1 Exceptional Circumstances are significant unforeseen circumstances beyond a student's control that would have affected their ability to perform to their full potential if they 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 their programme of study, they should consult the online advice and guidance on Ask Herts and discuss their concerns with either their personal tutor or an academic support officer or their programme leader.

C3.8.3 Exceptional Circumstances