

Amendments to UPR AS14 (Structure and Assessment Regulations - Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes) for 2023/24

1. Exceptional Circumstances

One of the exceptions to the 'fit-to-sit' rule refers to a student becoming unwell during an examination or in-class test, but is focussed on invigilated examinations and tests. The process has therefore also been clarified for un-invigilated circumstances. The following amendments to UPR AS14 (Structure and Assessment Regulations – Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes) has been approved:

C3.8 Exceptional Circumstances

C3.8.4 Students who sit or submit an assessment deem themselves to be sufficiently able to take the assessment and cannot later claim to have suffered 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 assessment is the examination or test is~~ invigilated *during the assessment*, before leaving ~~the examination room~~ 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* must be made by a student~~ 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.

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.

~~*or*~~

- ~~*ii* where a student suddenly becomes unwell during an examination or in-class test and elects to leave without completing the assessment. Where the assessment is invigilated, before leaving the examination room, the student must notify the Invigilator or Proctor of the Exceptional Circumstances which have necessitated their leaving the examination or test.~~

~~Requests based on exception *ii* must be made by a student via their Student Portal by midnight on the calendar day after the on-line assessment. By submitting a request based on exception *ii*, a student renders their original attempt null and void.~~

2. Deferral for suspended students

UPR SA17 (Student Suspension Regulations) states that 'Students who suspend their studies and go dormant with outstanding assessments will normally be granted a deferral by the Module Board'. However, this is not widely known amongst chairs and clerks of examination boards. It has therefore been agreed that a similar statement is made in UPR AS14. The following amendment to UPR AS14, section D5.1 (Structure and Assessment Regulations – Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes) has been approved:

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; or
- 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 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, the original mark will stand.

D5.1.3 Where, in seeking a deferral, a student who has become ill suddenly during an examination or in-class test relies on proven Exceptional Circumstances, their original mark will be null and void. If, however, the student's circumstances are rejected by the Module Board or Short Course Board, the original mark will stand.

D5.1.4 At the discretion of the Module Board or Short Course Board, deferred assessments would normally be undertaken at the same time as referred assessments and be considered at the following Module Board or Short Course Board. Should such deferrals be failed and the student be offered referral or further deferral, these will be undertaken at the module's or short course's next regular assessment period.

D5.1.5 *Students who suspend their studies with outstanding assessments will normally be granted a deferral by the Module Board.*

D5.1.6 Where a student is being considered for a final award, the Programme Board will, where possible, first recommend an award which may be an interim award based on the results achieved by the student including those results where the student has claimed Exceptional Circumstances (see section D5.4).

3. 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, some of which continued to apply for the lifespan of the pandemic. It has been agreed that the remaining (temporary) arrangement is withdrawn for the 2023/24 academic session:

- D6.3 **Recommendation for an Honours classification**
and
D7.2 **Criteria for conferring University awards 'with Distinction' or 'with Commendation'**

(NOTE:

~~23/24 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, programme boards are instructed to compensate within existing limits and not apply the penalty to the classification grade. However, where there is a proven case of academic misconduct at stage 2 or stage 3, as defined in UPR AS14 Appendix III¹, in the failed module, the compensation penalty should be applied.~~

4. Non-engagement with the disciplinary academic misconduct process Stage 2 and Stage 3

A growing number of students are choosing not to engage with the academic misconduct process either at Stage 2 or Stage 3. Non-communication on the part of the student has three consequences:

- (i) It is not possible to gather robust evidence (e.g. from a conversation with the SAIO and/or a viva) to establish the student's academic misconduct where there are allegations of serious offences usually involving use of cheat sites or assessments 100% AI produced. There is evidence that the message, 'don't engage' is being passed by word of mouth among students in the belief that they will get away with such offences. This is unfair on students who do engage.
- (ii) A student's success is in jeopardy as they are not learning and getting the support necessary to pass the assessment and to avoid repeat offences.
- (iii) Non-engagement is resulting in significant additional resource, chasing up on Stage 2 and organising a SAMP (even more paperwork) and the time of three panel members, who have to meet to take a decision in the student's absence.

The following amendment to UPR AS14 Appendix III has therefore been approved:

- 8.7 If you fail to respond to the **Letter of Notification** within ~~five (5)~~ **ten (10)** working days of the date of the **Letter of Notification** ~~and/or~~ you request a meeting and then fail to attend after being given a reasonable opportunity to do so ~~and/or otherwise fail to engage with the processes outlined in this policy, the University will consider whether it already has sufficient evidence to impose an academic penalty. If, in its absolute discretion, the University considers this to be the case, then it will apply the appropriate academic penalty and a disciplinary warning will be issued to you based on the University's academic judgement regarding the nature and extent of the academic misconduct committed. However, you may request that this decision be reviewed (if you have additional evidence in support of your case), within ten (10) working days of receiving notification of the decision, by requesting~~ the allegation be referred to be considered under Stage 3 (see section 9) at a Student Academic Misconduct Panel, ~~provided that you attend the hearing, engage with the processes set out in this policy, and answer the case against you.~~

5. Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct

The University's regulations on academic integrity and academic misconduct are being updated to:

- a) clarify a number of academic misconduct offences in the light of (i) new AI tools and (ii) online rather than face-to-face assessments (section 1, section 2.1);
- b) explain the University's position on the use of AI tools in producing assessed work (sections 2.4 and 2.9);
- c) ensure that, where appropriate, English language can be tested in assessments as required by Condition B4 of the OfS's ongoing conditions of registration (section 3.3);
- d) make clear to Schools that Stage 1 proceedings are non-disciplinary and, as such, the process for handling academic misconduct at Stage 1 should reflect this (section 7)..

Amendments to UPR AS14, Appendix III (*Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct*) have been approved.

6. Apprenticeship Provision - End Point Assessment policy

The University's End Point Assessment (EPA) policy (UPR AS14, Appendix IV) has been amended to reflect revised external quality assurance arrangements for EPAs where the University is the End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 have been added to define the requirements for approval, delivery, marking and external assessment of EPAs.