
COVID-19: Remote Delivery and approved changes to the regulation of courses and assessment during 2020/21 in relation to restricted access to campuses

Summary

To mitigate the impact of disruption to academic delivery resulting from the current phase of the Coronavirus pandemic, Academic Board approved the following approach to learning in 2020/21. Effective and efficient communication of the beneficial impact on academic delivery of these proposed changes is imperative to ensure practical application and implications are fully understood by both staff and students.

Principles:

The principles and priorities for any action relating to academic delivery continue to be the safety of our community in:

- maintaining academic standards – there must be no reduction in credits required for awards, no changes to compensation regulations, and all learning outcomes must be met (this ensures compliance with the FHEQ, required as part of the thresholds standards criteria for OfS registration)
- minimising impact on student achievement or progression – we must continue to deliver our courses to enable progression and completion, shifting to online wherever possible.

Background

This academic year has already seen a move to blended learning as the primary mode of delivery for our students, with minimal course changes approved by AQC to enable this. These blended learning plans were published to students in their 2020/21 welcome guides, where they were also advised that we may do the following as part of our contingency plans:

- Moving learning and assessment online
- Looking at prior activity with a view to ensuring that learning outcomes are covered somewhere within the year of study and adjusting assessment tasks accordingly
- Providing alternative assessment where the original assessment is not deliverable
- Providing extensions for units where necessary for the learning and for individual students if their circumstances require it
- Where the University is not the awarding body, following the validator's requirements for predicted and other grades so that students receive a final outcome commensurate with effort and aptitude.

To continue to be agile in our delivery to ensure that students are able to attain and progress without any degradation of UCA standards, we commenced further planning in December 2020 to enable staggered returns for January 2021 and identify any potential need for further online learning into Term 2. To this end an audit is due to complete on 11 January 2021 to identify and resolve any blocks to online learning for the rest of Term 1 and for Term 2, taking us up until Easter Break 2021. The results of this audit, and any changes required to individual courses, will be taken to AQC for approval later in January 2021.

Proposals

A number of measures are proposed here for Academic Board approval to enable us to maintain standards whilst alleviating potential disadvantage to students. Many of these were used in 2019/20 in the initial stages of the pandemic during the first national lockdown:

Ref	Proposal																
1	Distance learning delivery to replace or supplement face to face delivery where academically appropriate																
2	Extensions to unit deadlines at unit level will be permitted as required by Programme Directors. Although Programme Directors are adjusting assessment deadlines wherever necessary to ensure that timescales are achievable, this has to take into account impact on subsequent units or progression/graduation. NB. for Level 6 the final mark submission to Campus Registry will be 11 June. This is an absolute deadline for any students in order to attend graduation as currently planned.																
3	Redesign of assessment where delivery of the original curriculum and assessment is not feasible (e.g some types of groupwork, performance or studio-based activities) at the discretion of the Head of School and Director of QAE																
4	Reordering unit delivery as necessary to bring forward activities most appropriate to online learning Allowing structural changes to levels to enable units to be partitioned into smaller blocks or combined into larger blocks in order to ensure appropriate phasing of assessment of learning outcomes related to accessibility of facilities																
5	Extending compensation to Levels 6 and 7, where failure is MARGINAL (i.e. 38% or above) in only one unit of up to 30 credits and all other units have been passed.																
6	2020/21 classifications will be made on the basis of the standard classification algorithm OR an alternative as follows, enabling recognition of a level of attainment:																
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Award</th> <th>Academic session</th> <th>UCA Standard algorithm</th> <th>Amended algorithm</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BA (Hons)</td> <td>2020/21</td> <td>All unit marks at level 5 (weighted at 25%) + All marks at level 6 (weighted at 75%)</td> <td>Mean of the best 120 credits across Levels 5 and 6 [NB – for the ARB prescribed programme BA (Hons) Architecture the calculation must include the 60 credits for unit CARC6005 Projects06]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BA (Hons)</td> <td>2021/22</td> <td>All unit marks at level 5 (weighted at 25%) + All marks at level 6 (weighted at 75%)</td> <td>All marks at level 5 (weighted at 25%) + All marks at level 6 (weighted at 75%) OR All marks at level 6 only (weighted at 100%) Both calculation methods to be applied and student award based on the higher of the two. [NB – for the ARB prescribed programme BA (Hons) Architecture the calculation must include the 60 credits for unit CARC6005 Projects06]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Masters</td> <td>2020/21</td> <td>All unit marks at level 7 (with the Final Major Project weighted at 50%)</td> <td>The unit marks from the best 120 credits at level 7 OR</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Award	Academic session	UCA Standard algorithm	Amended algorithm	BA (Hons)	2020/21	All unit marks at level 5 (weighted at 25%) + All marks at level 6 (weighted at 75%)	Mean of the best 120 credits across Levels 5 and 6 [NB – for the ARB prescribed programme BA (Hons) Architecture the calculation must include the 60 credits for unit CARC6005 Projects06]	BA (Hons)	2021/22	All unit marks at level 5 (weighted at 25%) + All marks at level 6 (weighted at 75%)	All marks at level 5 (weighted at 25%) + All marks at level 6 (weighted at 75%) OR All marks at level 6 only (weighted at 100%) Both calculation methods to be applied and student award based on the higher of the two. [NB – for the ARB prescribed programme BA (Hons) Architecture the calculation must include the 60 credits for unit CARC6005 Projects06]	Masters	2020/21	All unit marks at level 7 (with the Final Major Project weighted at 50%)	The unit marks from the best 120 credits at level 7 OR
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7	In addition to this replanning of assessment schedules, Mitigating Circumstances will continue to be available to students who have particular personal circumstances impacting over and above standard extensions. The burden of evidence has been reduced under the current circumstances so that students will not be asked to provide evidence in most cases.			
8	Removing the cap on reassessment undertaken as a Resit – the mark available for any unit reassessed by Resit will not be capped at 40.			