

## **New and amended temporary Academic Regulations (COVID-19 pandemic) applicable to students impacted in the academic year 2020/21 only (undergraduate/taught postgraduate)**

The temporary and amended regulations are to ensure all students are able to progress and/or complete their award. They have been designed around the principle of ensuring that no student is academically disadvantaged (or improperly advantaged) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All measures agreed for this academic year are set out here in the temporary COVID-19 Academic Regulations and approved by the Academic Board. This approach replaces the one given for last academic year (2019/20).

To ensure that qualifications hold their value at the point of their award and over time we are using the following principles:

- Attainment to date from the best performing minimum of 105 credits at each qualifying levels of study will be used to set an alternate calculation against which student performance will be measured, and the best 105 credits will include, at L6, the dissertation or equivalent always
- We will not award a credit-weighted average lower than the alternate calculation as long as students qualify to progress/graduate
- If insufficient credits have been completed to ascertain an alternate calculation then the alternate calculation is provisional until sufficient credit is accrued to confirm the alternate calculation
- The alternate calculation will be calculated after all assessment processes have been completed i.e. mitigation, malpractice etc
- The credit-weighted average will be compared to the alternate calculation and the higher of two will be awarded

The rationale for the approach taken for calculating the alternate for undergraduate students is based on these General Principles:

- To formulate an alternative approach that is simple, which has integrity, is transparent, easy to understand by all and easy to explain to students.
- To create an alternate calculation that is based upon actual attainment to date.
- That the alternate calculation is a comparator calculation and will always sit alongside the “normal” award calculation.
- That the alternate calculation needs to be consistent and work when applied to this year’s finalists and future years’ finalists (i.e. those presented to the summer 2020/21 Boards of Examiners) who have marks in their profiles, which were affected by the pandemic.
- Finalists this year (i.e. those presented to the summer 2020/21 Boards of Examiners) and in future affected years will benefit from the higher result achieved after applying both the “normal” degree calculation and the alternate calculation.
- This approach is in alignment with and in addition to a range of measures applicable to students this academic year, articulated in previous emails from the DVC (Student Experience), including “self-certification”.
- The assumption is that with the move to robust hybrid and online teaching, students can still achieve positive results and therefore they are encouraged to engage fully with the remainder of their studies this academic year.
- An additional measure has been taken for this year’s finalists including:

- A deferral option on their dissertation/independent project if the mark achieved is lower than their 2020-21 average mark, i.e. a further “first sit” opportunity.

We will make sound judgments about the basis on which we calculate the classification of awards in the current circumstances. Where the normal range of evidence of student achievement is not available, this will need particular care and we have factored this in (as above) and are recording our approach (via the Academic Board).

## **1.0 Teaching and assessment**

1.1 Exceptionally, the University has implemented hybrid and online teaching and assessment without any requirement for a full programme re-approval as a temporary measure in response to the pandemic situation.

## **2.0 Mitigating circumstances**

2.1 Mitigating circumstances will not be considered in cases of academic malpractice, but may in relation to the penalty applied.

2.2 The mitigating circumstances will be accepted by the Board of Examiners as mitigation against failure in those modules only resulting in the waiving of the assessment undertaken and provision being made for the student to take the assessment as a first attempt. Students will usually only be permitted a maximum of four attempts (including the original first sit and the re-sit) at an assessment.

2.3 All work submitted for assessment, for which an application for mitigating circumstances has been given, shall be marked at face value and the marks shall be submitted to the Board of Examiners in the normal way. Marks are not altered as a result of a student’s claim for mitigation.

2.4 Operating alongside our standard mitigating circumstances process, there is a process enabling ‘Self-Certification’, which is exclusively for pandemic-related matters. If a student is encountering difficulties - relating to the pandemic specifically - that are preventing them from engaging with or undertaking their assessments to the best of their ability, they would have the option of completing a self-certification form that would not need to be accompanied by the usual medical and/or other independent evidence that a standard mitigating circumstances claim would require.

## **3.0 Assessment**

3.1 The University had adopted the following Regulations previously:

### **7B Award of Credit (Undergraduate and Postgraduate)**

7B.1 Each module will generate one final grade from all the component elements of assessment within the module. Total compensation of grades will be allowed within the module, which includes where an element has been non-submitted and the mark is zero. A fail grade is, therefore, when the overall result for the module is less than 40% and re-assessment must take place in the form of one piece of pass/fail coursework (which tests the achievement of the learning outcomes of the module), subject to the following exceptions:

- Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) requirements stipulate re-assessment must be in all module assessment components.

- There are mitigating circumstances in which case first sit module assessment components apply.

7B.2 Coursework in the context of a pass/fail re-assessment will include similar or equivalent assessments, other than examinations, e.g. essay, presentation, performance, report, portfolio.

3.2 These Regulations have been applied to all assessments other than where there is a PSRB requirement and/or the assessment does not lend itself to coursework and will be deferred until such a point as it is possible to undertake the assessment.

#### **4.0 Calculation of awards (undergraduate)**

- On an exceptional basis, the DVC (Student Experience) as Chair of the main Boards of Examiners will have discretion to apply further measures as appropriate to the circumstances.
- It is a requirement for both the “normal” and an alternate calculation that all applicable modules must have been completed and passed. On some programmes, particularly performance-based programmes, some modules have had to be deferred and therefore award calculations will also have to be deferred until all applicable module results are available.
- The only exception to the above is that the application of the two calculations articulated in the General Principles section above will continue to apply to future finalists who have marks in their academic profile impacted by the pandemic which count towards their award calculation.

4.1 Two award calculations will be determined: (a) the usual method, 120 credits from Level 5, weighted at 40% and 120 credits from Level 6, weighted at 60%; (b) a second method to create an alternate calculation, using a credit-weighted average of the best performing 105 credits at each qualifying level of study. Whichever is the higher outcome will form the basis of the classification to be awarded.

4.2 This will be calculated and applied after all other normal assessment processes have been completed (e.g. compensation, mitigation, malpractice). Students must qualify to graduate (or to progress) based on the marks obtained this academic year.

4.3 The student transcript will reflect the calculation used.

4.4 For all final-year students in 2020/21 who undertake and submit their dissertation or independent project (or equivalent) in Semester 2 of 2020/21 that receive a mark for this which is lower than their 2020-21 average mark, mitigating circumstances will apply and they will be given the following choice: (1) To accept the mark that they have been given and for their degree classification to be calculated accordingly, or (2) To submit their dissertation or independent project (or equivalent) one further time on a ‘first-sit’ basis and, if receiving a higher mark than on the previous attempt, for this mark to be used in calculating their degree classification.

#### **Undergraduate QTS programmes**

4.5 These will use the same alternate calculation as for undergraduate provision (with arrangements for the recommendation of award of QTS developed by the programme team).

#### **Undergraduate Social Work**

4.6 These will use the same alternate calculation as for undergraduate provision (with deferrals of placements, where necessary, managed by the programme team).

### **Undergraduate four-year Adventure Education programmes**

4.7 This will be calculated in accordance with the same principles as for three-year standard undergraduate provision but noting that the best performing 120 credits of the 150 credits (where a placement has been undertaken) at L5 will be included in the calculation for final year students.

### **Ordinary degree**

4.12 These awards are unclassified so there is no requirement to consider any alternative calculation.

### **Integrated Masters**

4.13 For integrated Masters, these are usually calculated on a 20/30/50 weighting against Levels 5/6/7. As with Honours classifications the calculation will be considered in accordance with the approach for Honours i.e. two methods will be used to calculate the outcome and the most favourable will be used to determine classification. Students would need to successfully pass research methods modules to progress to Level 7. Students would also need to average 50% across all preceding modules to successfully progress to Level 7, and/or meet with any programme-specific Regulations.

4.14 For final-year (Level 7) students, the alternate calculation will be calculated on the best performing 105 credits from Level 7, plus the full profile of marks achieved at L5 and the best performing 105 credits from L6 to calculate an overall average mark to determine an alternate calculation.

4.15 For current Level 6 students, the alternate calculation will be calculated on the successfully attained best performing Level 6 marks plus the best performing 105 credits for marks achieved at L5 and a full profile L7 to calculate an overall average mark to determine an alternate calculation.

4.16 For current Level 5 students, the alternate calculation will be calculated on the successfully attained best performing 105 credits at Level 5 marks plus the full profile of marks achieved at L6 and L7 and calculate an overall average mark to determine an alternate calculation.

### **Progression to Honours (top-up)**

4.17 For progression to Honours students, these are usually calculated on a 100% weighting against Level 6.

4.18 Therefore, an alternate calculation based upon the average achieved will be provisional until sufficient credit (best performing 105 credits) has been accumulated to confirm an alternate calculation. The Board of Examiners will exercise discretion when awarding the classification.

### **Foundation degrees**

4.19 Usually, for Foundation degrees, students must qualify to graduate (or progress) based on the marks obtained this academic year. Students must have completed Levels 4 and 5 successfully, and have gained 240 credits to be awarded the qualification. Students will receive a Distinction if they have an overall average of 70% across Level 5; students will receive a Merit if they have an overall

average of 60% across Level 5; students will receive a Pass if they have an overall average of 40% across Level 5. For Level 5 students the alternate calculation will be based upon the best performing 105 credits successfully attained.

4.20 The Board of Examiners will exercise discretion when awarding the classification.

### **Higher Nationals**

4.21 Higher National qualifications will be calculated in accordance with the current Academic Regulations, i.e.:

6D.3 To be awarded an Higher National Certificate, a student must achieve 120 credits at or above the level of the qualification. The classification is based upon the best 75 credits.

6D.4 To be awarded an Higher National Diploma, a student must achieve 240 credits at or above the level of the qualification. The classification is based upon the best 150 credits.

6D.5 Students will receive a Distinction if they have an overall average of 70% or above across the best credits; students will receive a Merit if they have an overall average of 60% or above; students will receive a Pass if they have an overall average of 40% or above.

### **BMus**

4.22 The BMus is located at Level 6 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, comprising 480 credits of study over four years of study; 120 credits at Level 4, 120 credits at Level 5, 240 credits at Level 6 (undertaken during years 3 and 4 of the programme). The award is usually calculated on the basis of years 3/4 credit so all credit awarded at Level 6, usually on a 40/60 basis (so, 40% allocated on the Year 3 average, 60% on the Year 4 average). The exit qualification is a BMus (Ord) at the end of Year 3.

4.24 The alternate calculation will be to use the successfully completed Level 6 (usually years 3/4) marks, to use the best performing 105 credits at each of the two years' worth of Level 6 provision.

## **5.0 Calculation of awards (taught postgraduate programmes)**

5.1 For taught postgraduate students undertaking and submitting their Dissertation/Independent Project (or equivalent) in the remainder of the academic year, we have introduced the following supportive measure: If students achieve a grade of at least 'A' in the majority of modules (equivalent to at least 140 credits), students will be awarded a Master's degree with Distinction irrespective of the grade achieved in the dissertation. Similarly, if students achieve a grade of at least 'B' in the majority of modules (equivalent to at least 140 credits), students will be awarded a Master's degree with Merit, irrespective of the grade achieved in the dissertation.

## **6.0 The Conferment of Awards**

6.1 It is expected that students on the final year of an undergraduate Honours programme will attend the next scheduled Graduation Ceremony provided they have attained or intend to attain the minimum threshold of 240 credits successfully attained (120 credits at both L4 and Level 5), pending the outcome of any deferred or referred assessments. This is not applicable if the award of Ordinary Degree is not available for the programme, e.g. Social Work.

Student course type	Level of study this academic year (2020-21)	Alternative calculations for this year and subsequent affected years
Standard undergraduate 3 year taught programmes	L6	We will use the best performing 105 credits from Level 5 and from Level 6 to determine an alternate calculation.
Standard Undergraduate 3 year taught programmes	L5	We will use the best performing 105 credits from Level 5 to determine an alternate calculation in 2021-22.
Undergraduate QTS programmes	L6/L5	Same alternative calculations as Standard Undergraduate but based upon the best performing 90 credits to take account of the pass/fail placement modules.
Undergraduate Social Work	L6/L5	Same alternative calculations as Standard Undergraduate but based upon the best performing 90 credits to take account of the pass/fail placement modules.
BMus (4-year degree programmes)	L6 (final year)	We will use the best performing 105 credits from each of the two years of study at L6 to determine an alternate calculation.
BMus (4-year degree programmes)	L6 (third year)	We will use the best performing 105 credits from Level 6/Year 3, with a full profile of 120 credits from 2021-22.
Integrated Masters	L7	We will use the best performing 105 credits from Level 7 marks plus we will use the best performing 105 credits from Level 6 and from Level 5 we will use a full profile of 120 credits to determine an alternate calculation.
Integrated Masters	L6	<p>As per programme regulations students would still need to successfully pass research methods modules to progress to Level 7. Students would also need to average 50% across all preceding modules to successfully progress to Level 7.</p> <p>We will use the best performing 105 credits from Level 5 and from Level 6 to determine an alternate calculation, with a full profile of 120 credits at Level 7 from 2021-22.</p>

Integrated Masters	L5	As per programme regulations students would still need to successfully pass research methods modules to progress to Level 7. Students would also need to average 50% across all preceding modules to successfully progress to Level 7.  We will use the best performing 105 credits from Level 5 to determine an alternate calculation, with a full profile of 240 credits at Level 6 and Level 7 from 2021-22.
UG Adventure Education	L5 without placement	Same principle as Standard Undergraduate but noting that the best performing 105 credits from Level 5 will be included in the calculation.
UG Adventure Education	L5 with placement	Same principle as Standard Undergraduate but noting that the best performing 120 credits (of the available 150 credits) at Level 5 will be included in the calculation.
UG Adventure Education	L6	Same principle as Standard Undergraduate but noting that the best performing 120 credits (of 150 credits) at Level 5 will be included in the calculation (assuming a placement year is included).
Ordinary Degree	L5 and L6	Unclassified, so no need to run alternative calculation.
Foundation Degrees	L5	As the award is based upon the final year only an alternate calculation based upon the best performing 105 credits will be used.
Progression to Honours (top-up)	L6	As the award is based upon the final year only an alternate calculation based upon the best performing 105 credits will be used.
Higher nationals		No change to the existing calculation method, as follows:  <b>6D.3</b> To be awarded a Higher National Certificate, a student must achieve 120 credits at or above the level of the qualification. The classification is based upon the best 75 credits. <b>6D.4</b> To be awarded a Higher National Diploma, a student must achieve 240 credits at or above the level of the qualification. The classification is based upon the best 150 credits. <b>6D.5</b> Students will receive a Distinction if they have an overall average of 70% or above across the best credits; students will receive a Merit if they have an overall average of 60% or above;

		students will receive a Pass if they have an overall average of 40% or above.
Postgraduate taught programmes		For taught postgraduate students undertaking and submitting their Dissertation/Independent Project (or equivalent) in the remainder of the 2020-21 academic year, we have introduced the following supportive measure: If students achieve a grade of at least 'A' in the majority of modules (equivalent to at least 120 credits), students will be awarded a Master's degree with Distinction. Similarly, if students achieve a grade of at least 'B' in the majority of modules (equivalent to at least 120 credits), students will be awarded a Master's degree with Merit. The 120 credits used for the calculation will include the dissertation.

**Coronavirus Impact Statement Policy - March 2021**  
**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS**  
**University of Chichester**

**Introduction**

Where possible, postgraduate research students should adapt their research activities to address disruption caused by COVID-19, but it may be necessary to include a statement as an addendum to the Thesis on the impact of disruption on their work.

Examiners will consider this statement in relation to the scope and volume of the research student's work but will always uphold the requirements for the award of research degrees. The standard of the award remains unchanged and there must be no compromise in the integrity of the examination or the award.

This policy covers all research degrees and is applicable for submissions made from 1 March 2020 to 31 July 2022. The University may decide to extend the period depending on circumstances.

Adjustments to research projects are common, but the pandemic has potentially created disruption. Research students will reflect on the impact of the pandemic on the design and conduct of their research, including through discussions that form part of the annual progress review process. Any redesigns to their research will form part of the narrative of the work and should be included in the research design section of the Thesis. Suspensions and extensions may also be appropriate ways of mitigating the impact of the pandemic but will not always be sufficient on their own.

Even where redesigned research is discussed in the Thesis and/or where suspensions or extensions have been granted, research students may wish to provide a statement to their examiners on how the impact of COVID-19 disruption has impacted upon their project.

The focus of the policy is on assessment and the inclusion of a statement as an addendum to their Thesis submitted for examination. Academic Departments and Institutes may have discipline-specific advice for students in place that aligns with, and complements, this policy.

**The decision to include a COVID-19 statement**

Any research student who submits a Thesis in the timeframe permitted by this policy may include a COVID-19 statement in the format set out below. A statement is not compulsory and should only be included where a research student wishes to highlight the impact of the pandemic and the steps taken to adjust their research.

Research students should discuss the inclusion of a Covid-19 statement in their Thesis with their supervisors, but the decision to include the statement ultimately rests with the student.

**COVID-19 statement format**

The COVID-19 statement must be included as an addendum to Thesis.

The statement, which must not exceed 800 words, will form a summary of any planned research disrupted by COVID-19 restrictions and the extent to which it was possible to adapt their research in those changed circumstances.

**The following may be included:**

Details of any planned research activities curtailed by the pandemic because of, for example, lack of access to facilities, libraries, archives, research participants, fieldwork, etc.

Information on any curtailed training should be included only insofar as it relates to the impact on research activities and on the Thesis.

An acknowledgement of the anticipated contribution and value to the Thesis if those research activities had not been curtailed and what was possible to include in the Thesis in the circumstances, including where alternative choices were made to adapt the work and whether there are any weaknesses that could not be overcome.

Any other relevant factors on the impact of COVID-19 on research activities and on the contents of the Thesis.

Issues arising from illness, disability, bereavement, or any exceptional circumstances not related to disruptions to research activities caused by the pandemic must not be included, as there are standard mechanisms to address those issues.

**Guidance for examiners on COVID-19 statements**

Examiners must maintain academic standards in relation to the criteria for awards. Where a COVID-19 statement is included in a Thesis there can be some flexibility in the consideration of the scope and volume of the work produced, but not on its standard, quality or on the thresholds for the award.

The Thesis must embody the results of research that may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student in the period of study specified in the regulations for the degree. The examiners' consideration of the scope and volume of the work produced in the Thesis may take account of where curtailed research activities have reduced what was possible in the period allowed. The Thesis must however still satisfy the standard required for the award.

Examiners must discount any information in a COVID-19 statement that does not relate to disruptions to research activities caused by the pandemic and to the content of the Thesis.

The recommendation from examiners is a matter of academic judgement and therefore it is their decision on what allowance to give to any limitations in the volume and scope of the Thesis due to the impact of COVID-19. Examiners must consider closely the result of pandemic-related disruptions in the production of the Thesis and decide whether in their academic judgement the Thesis meets the criteria for the award of the research degree.

The examiners' joint final report must incorporate an overview of their consideration of a Covid-19 statement and their determination of the impact on the scope and volume of the Thesis within the context of maintaining the academic standards required for the award.

Any corrections, or a resubmission, required by the examiners must take account of any allowance made by them on the limitations in volume and scope of the Thesis due to the pandemic.

Examiners must consider what corrections are necessary to meet the criteria for the award and must not require additional work aimed only at addressing where research activities have been curtailed by COVID-19 restrictions.