

Summary of changes to assessment regulations with rationale for change

The table below highlights the main changes over the assessment regulations in place in 2019-2020, with a rationale for the change. These are not the only changes but are those which are regarded as the most significant. Of these, changes which it is felt are likely to be key points of consideration are highlighted in yellow.

The guiding principles for the regulations are that:

- There should be a consistent set of regulations for the institution. Exceptions might be needed for a particular course, but the regulations should not be designed on the basis of exceptions
- Regulations should as far as possible be rules-based (ie rather than based on assessment board discretion), as this will make them more transparent, and avoid the possibility of bias. It will also streamline the administration of assessment and the Assessment Board itself.
- Regulations should as far as possible be self-explanatory/easy to understand, for both staff and students. There should be no need for a separate document setting out how the regulations should be applied. Students should be able to work out from the regulations and their own profile of marks what their likely degree outcome will be
- Everything necessary to determine a student's progression/classification must be explicit within the regulations. This means that in the revised regulations some new sections or paragraphs appear which are not new but which are currently in the explanatory document only.
- The regulations should support student progression (in particular the ability for a student to progress with their cohort), where students have the potential to succeed.

Section or Para(s) in revised regs	Nature of change	Rationale
1.1	Addition of reference to credit-bearing CPD courses and educational partnerships	To cross-refer to the new Approval, monitoring and review of short courses (credit-bearing and non credit-bearing)/ Continuing Professional Development (CPD) policy, and the Policy for the Consideration and Approval of Educational Partnerships
1.4	Addition of reference to honorary awards	For clarity.
1.6	Inclusion of information regarding reasonable adjustments	For clarity and for the avoidance of doubt
1.7	Addition of reference to data protection and freedom of information	For the avoidance of doubt
Para 2.2/2-3 (and thereafter):	Elements and sub-elements now called components and sub-components throughout	To avoid confusion with 'elements' within units in the chiropractic courses, and because this seems to be more straightforward terminology
2.2	More information added about calculating component marks	For clarity
2.6	Change to the definition of compensation	For simplicity/clarity for students and staff.
2.8	Extraordinary resits: now specifies that all reassessment will take place at the next official reassessment period, unless there is evidence of demonstrable institutional error	For clarity for students, formalises the current unwritten expectation; and with a view to preventing requests for such resits, framed as appeals, unless the specific 'institutional error' caveat applies
2.9	Repeats: changes the focus so that Repeats are now expected to be with attendance	To improve the educational experience of and continuity of learning for, Repeat students.
2.10	Adds a definition of 'working days'	For the avoidance of doubt
Section 3 –	Adds new section regarding actions that can be taken in response to exceptional circumstances affecting the institution eg civil unrest	To make provision for the institution to be able to respond and support students' assessments/ awards should such circumstances occur

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Section 4	New section regarding the responsibilities of students (note that this means separate paragraphs regarding students' responsibilities to be aware of deadlines/ assessment timetables can be removed)	For clarity – to reinforce the position to students-as formalises these requirements within regulations. As an aide memoire for tutors when talking to students,
5.1	Periods of registration – listed for each type of award (rather than per course under course specific regulations)	To set periods of registration as an institutional requirement, rather than as applicable per course. There is still provision made for exceptions. There have been some changes to existing limits, in order to standardise across the institution as far as possible – with the exception of certificate courses the standard provision has been amended to two years over and above the 'normal' length of the course/award study period
5.2	Periods of registration – specifies that periods of interruption (suspension) count towards the maximum period of registration(i.e. the 'clock doesn't stop' during suspension)	For clarity for students and staff
5.3	Periods of registration – clarifying cut-off times for part-time level 7 students	To prevent part-time level 7 students from taking up to five years to complete a PGCert and specify a cut-off for MSc student who have taken so long to complete early stages of the course that they could not complete the Masters component within the time limit
5.4	Includes reference to ensuring currency of learning, in considering proposals for students to exceed the maximum length of course – includes reference to exceptional personal circumstances as a rationale for extensions	To emphasise this point, given this is one of the primary reasons for having maximum periods of registration. For clarity in the light of feedback
5.5	Specifies that a student required to withdraw from the course because they have reached the end of their registration period will not normally be readmitted to the same course	Added for clarity, in the light of a specific case where such a request was made.
5.7	Specific reference to exceptions to institutional maximum periods of candidature as required by PSRBs	Stated to be explicit
6.1	Pass mark: amended to 40% as standard at level 6, and 50% at level 7 (including level 7 of integrated masters)	To come into line with sector norms
6.2	<p>Passing units with components: sets requirements for passing a unit with components, based on new pass marks.</p> <p>Uses same mark requirement for passing each component as for passing by compensation, rather than a different mark for each (now 35%, where the pass mark is 40%, and 45% where the pass mark is 50)</p>	<p>To take account of the revised pass marks.</p> <p>The change to using the same mark for passing components as the mark required for compensation is for simplicity and ease of understanding for student. (There was previously no specific rationale for using 48 for compensation and 46 here, against 50% pass mark). The same number of marks below the pass mark has been applied for both undergraduate and postgraduate, hence the change from 46 to 45</p>
6.4	Clause added to make clear that the situation that passed units cannot be retaken to improve a mark also applies where there are exceptional personal circumstances	For clarity (this is already the position, in accordance with the Exceptional Personal Circumstances Policy)
7.1.	Compensation: The mark at which compensation may be applied is amended to 35% (against a 40% pass mark). But now applies for optional units only and at levels 3	We had received feedback that our provision for compensation was quite harsh. However there was also feeling within the group that given the nature of many of our courses, the concept of

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	and 4 (which do not contribute to final degree classification)	<p>compensation (balancing failure in one unit by performance in others was not appropriate for core units or for units which count towards the final degree classification (ie levels 5 and above). It is also noted that within the current national discussion about degree algorithms, compensation is regarded as a form of 'discounting' and that therefore institutions are likely to have to publish an explanation of why they adopt the approaches they do.</p> <p>The proposed arrangements provide more scope for compensation for optional units, by reducing the mark required for a unit to be compensatable but tightens provision for core units where core learning outcomes are being demonstrated. Compensation would not be available only at levels 3 and 3, which do not contribute directly to the degree classification</p> <p>Note that it remains the case that there is no compensation in relation to pass/fail units.</p> <p>While this may appear counter to the additional principle of enabling progression, this is being proposed on academic grounds and was argued and supported by the Heads of all Schools. It is not uncommon across the sector for it to be expected that compensation should not apply to a unit that is central to the fulfilment of course objectives (normally such units are designated as core units).</p> <p>The new pass mark for chiropractic levels 3-6, the increase in the number of credits which can be reassessed, and the provision for compensation to apply for all attempts helps to mitigate.</p> <p>Across the sector there is a range of practice relating to compensation; this proposal is not out of line</p>
7.3	Compensation now to apply for all attempts not only at the first attempt	For consistency:, If it is ever reasonable for a student to progress on the basis of compensation without meeting the pass mark there is no logical reason why this should not also apply for repeats/resits, - to prevent this means that students who get a compensatable mark at the first attempt have an advantage over those who achieve such a mark subsequently. Hence the proposed change
	Deleted para 6.3 of current regulations - removes statement that compensation will not normally apply to unit/units with total credit value of 40 credits at any 1 level.	Deleted as repetition – it is already stated that compensation can only be applied where a student has passed at least 80 credits at that level.
8.3	Statement that work experience or placement may need to be completed	To avoid repetition - included here rather than under each set of course regulations
	Previous para 8.1 deleted (reference to students' responsibility to familiarise themselves with coursework deadlines)	Now included in new section 4
9.1	Late submission: the 72 hour rule and cap at the pass-mark have been retained; however late submissions no longer count towards	The 72 hour rule has been retained as being well understood by student and staff. However counting this towards reassessment limit has

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	reassessment limit (as in the current regulations)	been removed, as it both imposes a double penalty and is unclear to students.
9.2	Note: late submission continues to apply to first submission only	We discussed extending the 72 hour rule to resubmissions, for simplicity/consistency; however as work is already capped at the pass mark for resubmissions it was felt this was inappropriate, as there would then be no penalty for submitting up to 72 hours late.
9.5 and thereafter	'Mitigating' circumstances changed to 'Exceptional personal' circumstances. Statement added to make clear that additional extensions can be sought if there are further or continuing exceptional personal circumstances	As a result of a change to the mitigating circumstances policy. Added for clarity (as per the Extenuating Personal Circumstances Policy).
9.5	Addition to make clear that if an extension is approved, further extensions may be sought before the submission deadline, if there are new or continuing exceptional personal circumstances	For clarity
9.6	Adds reference to penalties for exceeding the word limit	For clarity as a reminder for staff and students
	Previous para 8.5 deleted (reference to students' responsibility to familiarise themselves with exam timetable)	Now included in new section 4
10.2	Specified that interim awards not made unless a student chooses or is required to withdraw	For simplicity of process: Interim exit awards made only at the point a student withdraws or is required to withdraw
10.3	Specified that core units and then best credits remaining will be used to calculate an exit award for a student who has completed more credits than are required for that award.	To make clear that core units for an award must always be counted when determining marks to contribute to an award classification in these circumstances. (There has been confusion regarding this in the past)
10.4	Classification arrangements for students admitted with Recognised Prior Learning – specific reference made to internal progression arrangements Further detail added, currently in assessment board guidance document	To make clear that students admitted to the MSc APP on the internal progression arrangement from the PGCert Professional Development (Chiropractic) will not have the PGCert unit marks used in the degree classification for the APP course they are now following Additional information for clarity and to avoid the need for a separate explanatory document
10.5	Award and classification arrangements for internal transfer students (New information)	To specify the arrangements for internal transfer students – primarily based on information in the transfer policy already approved, but also specifying that classification will be based on the units undertaken when studying for the course for which the award is being considered, unless the transfer is within a Framework/cluster, and the units involved are common units.
10.7-12	Aegrotat awards Award for students unable to complete the course	For clarity and to ensure academic standards are maintained in all circumstances It is now specified that normally a student unable to complete the course will simply be awarded the relevant exit award. Alternative arrangements are specified only in the instance of a student's terminal illness. In order to protect academic standards where there is any possibility that a student might be able to use an

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		<p>award the provision for awarding a classified degree where a student has not met the requirements has been removed.</p> <p>This Section has been moved under 'awards' rather than under 'provision for students with extenuating personal circumstances for poor performance' as at present, as this will not necessarily involve poor performance.</p>
10.13-15	Posthumous awards – specification of requirements for an award to be made	<p>For clarity – previously we had no requirements specified, Note that the proposal is that a posthumous award is unclassified, unless the student has completed sufficient credits for a classified award to be made under the 'standard' regulations</p>
Section 11 classification	All classification information brought into this section, as applicable to the whole institution, rather than given under separate courses. Any variations from the standard regulations are stated in course specific regulations but the number of these instances has been reduced.	
11.2	Statement that all credits above level 5 count towards degree classification except where the stipulations relating to 'best credits' (in relation to the award of interim exit awards), recognition of prior learning, or transfers between AECC University College courses apply	To make clear that we are not 'discounting'
11.3	CertHE and DipHE awards now unclassified	<p>For simplification. These are not awards for which a student normally 'aims', several other institutions award these as unclassified. Students will have a transcript that shows the level of their achievements alongside the final award certificate</p>
11.5	<p>Method of calculating final award – bachelor's degrees. Remains as weighted average and mark profile The phrase 'in whichever of the following is more advantageous to the student:' has been deleted</p> <p>Note these points are equally applicable to the paragraphs setting out the method of calculating final awards for other qualifications</p>	<p>To provide the opportunity to recognise both consistent performance and 'exit velocity'.</p> <p>The group discussed opting for one method of classification, to avoid the perception of grade inflation which might be seen as inherent in choosing whichever method advantages a student. However a strong argument was put forward to allow both consistency and exit velocity to continue to be recognised. Both methods have therefore been retained but this has been re-phrased so this is clear there is one classification algorithm with two parts, rather than two alternatives which are applied in the most advantageous way. This is automatic, not an assessment board recommendation. The aim would be for this to be calculated automatically</p> <p>The Group did discuss whether the weightings of years should be changed, to include a small weighting for level 4 units, in the interests of recognising and encouraging student effort. However the Group's conclusions were that it would be preferable to continue to exclude level 4 units, as recognising exit velocity and that some students may take time to settle into study at HE level.</p>

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11.8	'Normally' has been removed from the classification arrangements	For clarity as these arrangements will always apply, other than in the specific instance of students admitted under RPL, which is covered by a separate sentence
NOTE	Reference to the 1% uplift rule (which is currently stated in the explanatory document and not in the regulations themselves) has NOT been included and will no longer apply	For transparency, fairness, to avoid suggestions of bias and to reduce possibility of perceptions of grade inflation. In most discussions across the institution there has been support for the principle that we move from a discretionary to a rules-based approach, as discretion can lead to lack of transparency and allegations of bias. To maintain the 1% rule but change this to an automatic uplift could be regarded as leading to grade inflation. Therefore it is proposed that we operate a hard border, with no uplift provision.
11.10	Removal of 'normally' Weightings for integrated masters changed to put more weight on level 7	As above, regarding para 11.8 There was discussion about the possibility of amending these weightings, to place additional emphasis on level 7, but on further reflection it was felt that this was an unnecessary change, particularly as the current requirement to obtain a 50% aggregate to proceed to level 7 of the MChiro has been retained. There are a variety of weightings in use elsewhere in the sector for Integrated Masters awards
11.12	Classification calculations for Integrated Masters now based on 40% pass mark	In the light of previous recommendations
12.3	Removes any limit on the amount of credit/units a student may take as a reassessment Rephrased to make clear reassessment is not discretionary Exceptions are provided for.	To allow students more opportunity to be reassessed and thus progress with their cohort. After extensive discussions, including with students, it was determined that, as there is no explicit rationale or justification for regarding 60 credits (as was initially proposed) as a workload which would not cause undue stress for students, the limit should be removed. There was also a concern that such a limit would put particular stress on students taking semester 2 exams who knew they had already failed 40 credits or more This must however be accompanied by good support and counselling for students, although this is not something that we feel can appropriately be expressed within a set of regulations. In terms of benchmarking at least one institution has no limit.
12.4	Adds explanation about arrangements for reassessment (currently in a separate explanatory document)	To bring important information within the regulations rather than in a separate explanatory document.
	Deleted para Removes provision for assessment board to determine a lower reassessment limit on academic grounds.	Removed as provides for too much discretion, possibility of allegations of bias/unfairness. It was unclear to the group why the Board might ever act in this way. Greater clarity for students and staff

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12.5	Additional information about the format of reassessments	Included from current separate assessment boards document, to avoid the necessity to have such a document in future
12.6	Removes possibility for assessment board to require a student to withdraw rather than repeat units failed on reassessment, except where this would take a student outside the maximum registration periods (ie makes Repeat automatic). There is scope for exceptions to be specified in regulations	Clarity for students and staff. Reduces discretion, thus avoiding potential allegations of bias.
12.7	Introduces provision for third opportunity for students to redeem failed units where they have narrowly missed a pass, under specified conditions	To provide opportunity for students to seek to reduce the number of students required to Repeat units (and who are therefore put at risk of dropping out because of disengagement from the course/ separation from their cohort) Redeem attempt clearly defined, with criteria that can be automated, not an Assessment Board decision. Fairness for students where compensation does not apply, by providing this third opportunity to redeem a fail. Demonstration of improvement required, to discourage students from 'strategic failure'
12.8	Provides for third 'redeem' opportunity for pass/fail units	Third opportunity provided for all pass/fail units, given it is not possible easily to identify a percentage 'improvement' in a pass/fail unit
12.9	Provides for student to have the third opportunity to redeem failed units for any number of units, but gives them the opportunity to opt to Repeat units, after academic counselling, instead	Fairness for students; to avoid students who have failed a large number of students being put under excessive pressure
12.11	Specifies when students will Repeat units – including reference to students who fail at the redeem attempt	Clarity for students and staff
12.12	Repeat units made automatic except where this would take a student outside the maximum registration periods – removed alternative for withdrawal to be recommended at this stage There is scope for exceptions to be specified in course specific regulations 'once only' deleted	Clarity for students and staff. Reduces discretion, thus avoiding potential allegations of bias. The number of references to 'once only, in relation to reassessment and repeat was felt to be potentially confusing. Therefore a new paragraph has been added specifically explaining the provision in terms of the number of opportunities available (new para 12.8); therefore other references to 'once only' are no longer required
Section 12	Now no references to students exceeding the reassessment limit being required to Repeat –	In the light of the removal of a limit on the amount of credit/number of units that can be reassessed.
12.9	Adds explanation about repeats and the number of assessment opportunities	For clarity, as the previous references to 'once only', used in terms of both repeat and reassessment on repeat, were felt to be potentially confusing

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12.9	Repeat units made automatic except where this would take a student outside the maximum registration periods. removed alternative for withdrawal to be recommended at this stage There is scope for exceptions to be specified in course specific regulations 'once only' deleted	Clarity for students and staff. Reduces discretion, thus avoiding potential allegations of bias. The number of references to 'once only, in relation to reassessment and repeat was felt to be potentially confusing. Therefore a new paragraph has been added specifically explaining the provision in terms of the number of opportunities available (new para 12.8); therefore other references to 'once only' are no longer required
12.10	Adds explanation of how decisions taken regarding which units will be repeated and which reassessed, in instances where student has failed more than 60 credits	Information taken from separate assessment board document – but simplified so there is one normal option (repeat units with lowest marks) specified
12.12	Specified that a student failing to progress after reassessment on repeat will be withdrawn	To be explicit, and remove discretion
Section 13	Adds regulations regarding non- completion of placement/work experience- currently in explanatory document only	To bring all required information into one place, within the official regulations.
14.1	Makes clear that reassessments for exceptional personal circumstances are applied only where a student has failed an assessment	This is in line with existing regulations and, exceptional personal circumstances policy, but now stated explicitly here, for clarity.
14.2	A provision is now included for an additional assessment period before the end of the summer vacation to enable students whose performance has been affected by exceptional personal circumstances to take an assessment at this point rather than waiting a year	In line with the additional principle to support student progression (in particular the ability for a student to progress with their cohort), where they have the potential to succeed. This additional opportunity is being proposed for students with accepted exceptional personal circumstances only because the circumstances of student in this position are different from those who have failed an assessment in the resit period. The timescale between the resit assessment period and an additional third assessment period is likely to be very short – therefore a student who has failed to satisfy the examiners is unlikely to be in a position to improve their performance in the time available. This has the potential to place them under additional stress. However a student with extenuating circumstances will have already completed the revision for the assessment, and simply be awaiting an opportunity to demonstrate their attainment of learning outcomes. Previous discussions within SSLSC about a possible 'fit to sit' policy highlighted that students from different HE systems were used to, and supportive of, an arrangement such as this for handling exceptional circumstances
Section15	Adds regulations regarding exceptional viva exams currently in explanatory document only. This version now amended and simplified from that included in the current document	To bring all required information into one place, within the official regulations.

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Sections 16/17	Amplifies regulations regarding assessment board treatment of academic offences and disciplinary issues (the added detail is from explanatory document only). Reference to fitness to practice added.	To bring all required information into one place, within the official regulations.
Section 18	Added as above with regard to research misconduct	Added for completeness
Course specific regulations	Note that these are now stated by exception only – it is assumed that the general regulations apply unless an exception is listed; therefore sentences such as 'Reassessment will be applied in accordance with the provisions of section 11 of these regulations' are no longer included. Any points which are stated within the general regulations have been removed from individual sections. All references to reassessment limits have been removed.	To avoid repetition
	Deletion of current paragraph starting that repeats are not permitted in Year 0	This provision has been removed on the basis that as the GCC no longer stipulates a maximum period of registration, we can make provision for year 0 repeats by extending our maximum period.
20.1	Removal of requirement that MChiro students must achieve an overall aggregate of 50% to proceed to level 7	After further discussions within the Chiropractic course this is no longer felt to be required. In the light of the higher pass mark it is unclear how this would be implemented without offering students who fail to obtain 50% a reassessment or repeat year.
20.6	Reassessment of clinic entrance exam Removal of 'normally' and alternative decision that student be asked to withdraw rather than be reassessed Removal of 'once only'	To remove discretion/avoid potential for allegations of unfairness Simplification of wording, through cross-referencing
20.7	Reassessment of clinic entrance exam: Removal of 'normally' and alternative decision that student be asked to withdraw rather than be reassessed Includes provision for CEE to be taken outside the normal assessment period Removal of 'once only'	To remove discretion/avoid potential for allegations of unfairness To provide flexibility that may enable a student to progress into clinic with their cohort,, given this is a standalone assessment Simplification of wording, through cross-referencing
20.8	Adds a new requirement that students who have passed clinic entrance but are required to repeat taught units will be given the opportunity to take the clinic entrance exam again on a formative basis before proceeding to level 7	To give the small number of students in this position the opportunity to receive formative feedback on clinical skills, to help ensure patient safety at the point a student enters supervised practice in the chiropractic clinic
23.1	Includes credit requirements for PGCert award	For clarity/consistency
Deleted section – associated forms and documentation	All associated policies are already specifically referenced within the document text	To void repetition
Reference points	Moved into rubric box	Consistency with other policies