



## University College-wide emergency regulations, to be enacted in circumstances beyond the University College’s control

### Contents

A.	Context.....	1
B.	Principles .....	2
C.	Temporary modifications to approved definitive documents (course and/or unit specifications) and associated assessment briefs .....	2
D.	Marking and moderation/External moderation .....	3
	Contingency arrangements for marking assessments .....	3
E.	No detriment .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
F.	Scaling of marks .....	3
<b>G.</b>	<b>Assessment Boards</b> .....	3
	Preparatory Boards.....	3
	Assessment Boards.....	4
	Incomplete assessments .....	4
	Return of marks and feedback .....	5
H.	Exceptional Personal circumstances.....	5

### A. Context

1. In exceptional circumstances outside the University College’s control which may include industrial action, the impact of natural disaster or civil unrest, it may be necessary for changes to be made to the operation of the University College’s standard regulations, policies and procedures relating to learning, teaching, assessment and/or the making of progression and/or award decisions.
2. In circumstances in which the University College’s academic business is significantly disrupted by reason of exceptional circumstances the Principal may invoke these emergency regulations, as set out below. These regulations will be implemented only when absolutely essential due to the scale of impact on the timely completion of usual assessment processes. The decision to invoke these regulations will be reported to the next meeting of Academic Board.
3. Should additional emergency regulations be required to further modify approved regulations, policies and procedures as required, such amendments may be approved by Academic Board. In extremis, such amendments may be approved by the Chair but must be reported immediately to Academic Board in circulation.
4. When emergency regulations are operated a full record must be kept of all variations that are applied, with a rationale, to ensure that evidence can be provided to the Board of Governors and external regulatory bodies that the University College’s academic standards and the value of our awards have been protected. These records will in due course be presented to Academic Board for note, and a report will be submitted to the Board of Governors.
5. The implementation of emergency regulations shall not constitute a failure to apply correctly the relevant approved Regulations and shall therefore not of itself provide valid grounds for an academic appeal against a decision of an Assessment Board.

## B. Principles

6. The following principles have informed these emergency regulations and should be upheld when implementing operational changes:
  - a) The students' best interests are considered at all times
  - b) Facilitate assessment and/or support progression and award
  - c) Maintain academic standards and quality at all times, including the role of Academic Standards and Quality Committee and Academic Board
  - d) Uphold the principles of fairness, equity, clarity and consistency in relation to assessment and award
  - e) Take into account the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)
  - f) Maintain externality of assessment processes (through appropriate use of external examiners), although the arrangements for such engagement may vary from the norm.

## C. Temporary modifications to approved definitive documents (course and/or unit specifications) and associated assessment briefs

7. In exceptional circumstances a temporary change may be made to the approved content, mode of delivery/contact hours and/or assessment and feedback methods for units, as defined in the relevant course/unit specifications and/or associated assessment briefs.
8. Heads of School are responsible for working with key colleagues to determine the most appropriate assessment processes for each unit and/or course. This may involve, but is not limited to:
  - Agreeing an alternative form(s) of assessment for the specified period of time, provided it meets the requirements of the unit (in terms of assessing learning outcomes), and is fair to students (for example, take-home examinations)
  - Amending examination papers or other assessments to reflect material taught to students, while ensuring that students will be able to demonstrate achievement of appropriate learning outcomes
  - Modifying or removing assessments based on a learning outcome being met elsewhere in the course
  - Implementing processes to accept assessments (including formative assessments) already completed by students and which demonstrate the achievement of unit learning outcomes, as a substitute for assessments not yet undertaken
  - Making adjustments to the deadlines for coursework and/or examinations, for all students on a unit.
9. If assessment cannot be conducted then the Head of School shall recommend deferral of the assessment until the situation has changed sufficiently to enable such assessment(s) to take place. This decision should be recommended to the Chair of Academic Board.
10. Permission for temporary variations to the arrangements set out in the definitive documents should be presented to the Chair of Academic Board, under these emergency regulations, for approval.
11. Given the exceptional nature of these arrangements and the principle, set out in paragraph 6 that all decisions under these regulations will be taken in the best interest of students to facilitate assessment of courses and/or support student progression and award, the specific requirements for consultation with students prior to making changes as set out in paragraphs 5.3 – 5.8 of the Framework/Course and Unit Modifications Policy and Procedures will not apply. Alternative arrangements for consultation will normally be agreed with the Students' Union where possible. Students must be kept informed of plans and should be advised of decisions taken under these regulations as soon as feasible.
12. Such changes will be approved for a specified period only, but may be extended should the circumstances which necessitated the amendment also continue. Any requests to make such changes permanent and reflect these in the definitive documents must be taken forward in line with the full Modification policy.
13. Temporary arrangements under this provision may be made at any point in the academic year, as circumstances require, and may be brought in with immediate effect.
14. Students who have evidence that they have been disadvantaged by the changes, or by the impact of these changes on their assessment outcomes, may use the Student Complaints or Academic Appeals policies, as relevant.

## D. Marking and moderation/External moderation

### Contingency arrangements for marking assessments

15. Heads of School are responsible for ensuring that marking and moderation take place as required within the University College's marking and moderation policy. The requirement for moderation remains in place under emergency regulations. This may require the re-allocation of markers/moderators.
16. The Head of School should ensure that external examiners are informed of any changes made to the marking process including, for example, the method of moderation
17. It is expected that external examiners will have access to the normal samples of student work, in accordance with the External Examining Policy and Procedure, for external moderation.

## E. Scaling of marks

18. Scaling of marks may be employed to rectify anomalies in mark distributions that arise from these exceptional circumstances– for example, if the marks awarded are deemed not to be a fair and accurate reflection of student performance as a cohort in comparison with performance of cohorts in previous years (whether too high or too low), or with performance on other units in the same year of study that were not affected by the same exceptional circumstances
19. Scaling should only occur after the internal moderation process has been completed.
20. All scaling should be applied to the entire cohort affected; normally, this will be the cohort taking a particular unit, and must not unfairly benefit or disadvantage a subset of students
21. The raw marks, as well as the scaled marks should be available to the Assessment Board.
22. The rationale for scaling and the impact on marks must be presented to the Assessment Board for consideration and approval and must be recorded in the Assessment Board minutes.

## F. Assessment Boards

23. Where exceptional circumstances apply, and changes have been required to forms of assessment or to practical arrangements for marking and moderation, associated deadlines and dates for Assessment Boards may of necessity be delayed. Assessment Boards should normally take place as close to the scheduled date as possible with any adjustment to the date being decided on in consultation between the Chair, the Academic Registrar, the relevant external examiner(s) and other relevant colleagues. Students must be kept informed of any changes and the rationale for them, and advised of the new date as soon as this is confirmed.
24. Additional assessment boards may be required in order to facilitate progression and award decisions where timelines of assessment for different levels of the course may vary.
25. The following variations may be applied to the provisions set out in the Organisation and Conduct of Assessment Boards Policy and Procedure, in line with paragraph 3 of these emergency regulations, additional variations may be approved by the Chair of Academic Board, in discussion with the Chairs of the relevant Assessment Boards and the Academic Registrar (or nominees) to secure the smooth running of these Boards, while ensuring that academic standards are maintained at all times.

### Preparatory Boards

26. Preparatory Boards will be quorate providing they consist of at least the following:
  - Chair (Head of School or nominee)
  - Framework Leader (where applicable) (or nominee) or Programme Leader (or nominee)
  - Academic Registrar (or nominee)
  - Registry representative (Clerk)
27. Under these circumstances
  - (i) Preparatory Boards may take place remotely, by electronic means.
  - (ii) It is the responsibility of the attending Framework or Programme Leader (or nominee) to follow up, in discussion with Registry and other relevant colleagues, any queries arising from the work of the Preparatory Board, to ensure that all required and relevant information will be available to the

Assessment Board, that all data is available and accurate (or that, under exceptional circumstances, there is an explanation for missing data) and that any units or issues which merit detailed discussion (including where exceptional arrangements may be required) are identified.

## **Assessment Boards**

28. Assessment Boards will be quorate providing they consist of at least the following:
  - Chair (Head of School or nominee)
  - Framework Leader (where applicable) (or nominee) or Programme Leader (or nominee)
  - At least one external examiner
  - Academic Registrar (or nominee)
  - Registry representative (clerk)
29. Individual roles and responsibilities of members of the Assessment Board, as set out in paragraphs 7.3 – 7.7 of the Organisation and Conduct of Assessment Boards Policy and Procedure may be varied or undertaken by other appropriate persons. It is the responsibility of the Chair and Secretary to ensure the Assessment Board operates effectively and is able to fulfil the requirements set out in the terms of reference.
30. Assessment Boards may take place remotely, by virtual means. Where the meeting is taking place remotely, members joining the online meeting will be regarded as present for the purpose of confirming the quorum. In such circumstances, members must take all reasonable measures to ensure the confidentiality of the assessment board deliberations.
31. Where meetings are held remotely, relevant documentation will be shared with participants via a secure means, and participants are responsible for ensuring the security of such information and for deleting it following the meeting.
32. Where no external examiners are able to attend an Assessment Board in person, normally arrangements for attendance by at least one external examiner via tele/video conferencing should be made where possible, in line with the Organisation and Conduct of Assessment Boards Policy and Procedure. If at least one external examiner is available, but unable to attend remotely at the specified time, the meeting should be postponed to a time suitable for the external examiner to attend by virtual means.
33. In the event that no external examiners are able to serve (for example, due to illness) the Chair of ASQC may approve the appointment of a temporary external examiner to serve for the duration of the contingency arrangements. Existing conditions on appointments will normally continue to apply, except that under these circumstances, reappointment of a previous external examiner within a five year period may be considered, and/or the appointment of external examiners holding more than two external examiner posts. It is recognised that the appointment of a temporary replacement may of necessity delay the holding of the relevant Assessment Board.
34. If no replacement appointment is possible the Assessment Board must be postponed until a suitable external can be identified or at least one of the external examiners currently in post is able to act.

## **Incomplete assessments**

35. The Assessment Board may determine that a mark is awarded for a unit notwithstanding the absence of a small portion of assessed work if, in its academic judgement, there is sufficient evidence available to determine the overall result for the unit, or sufficient evidence that the learning outcomes have also been demonstrated elsewhere in the course. Assessment Boards may consider whether there is sufficient evidence to determine that a unit can be assessed on a pass/fail basis at this stage, with detailed marks being returned later. Such a step may be particularly useful for awarding credit to students to enable them to progress.
36. For final year students, where it has not been possible to complete the assessment process to enable a complete set of marks to be processed, then final year students will be issued with an interim profile of marks and grades. Where possible, credit will be given on a pass/fail basis to all units that have been assessed so that a student may leave with sufficient credit for the award of their degree. In this case, classification will be deferred until marks can be secured through the normal marking processes once the exceptional situation has passed and when a final transcript will be issued.
37. Where there are implications for registration with a PSRB, the University College may make an interim award based on the credits that the student has achieved, that, with the agreement of the PSRB concerned, would enable professional registration, pending resolution of classifications under paragraph 36 above.

38. When considering students' academic performance Assessment Boards will take into account all student performance across units at the end of each year, and will consider the impact of exceptional circumstances beyond the University College's control, including the impact of any changes to assessment format approved under paragraphs 8 – 13 and any evidenced impact on performance compared with previous years. Where exceptional circumstances beyond the University College's control apply, the Assessment Board's actions will not be limited by the provisions set out in the Assessment Board Decision-Making Procedure. Decisions taken by the Assessment Board in such cases must always be evidence-based, and the rationale for any adjustment must be clearly recorded in the assessment board minutes.
39. The Chair of the Assessment Board must remain cognisant of the potential for grade inflation in these circumstances to ensure that the academic standard of the University College's awards is maintained over time.

### **Return of marks and feedback**

40. In the event that published dates for release of marks/ feedback on assessed work cannot be met, it should be explained to students that this is due to the impact of exceptional circumstances beyond the University College's control; revised dates should be communicated to students as soon as feasible.

### **G. Exceptional Personal circumstances**

41. Exceptional circumstances outside the University College's control may impact directly or indirectly on a student's academic performance. When the Principal has enacted emergency regulations students wishing to submit a request for consideration of exceptional personal circumstances should complete an **exceptional personal circumstances form** in the usual way.
42. Circumstances that are not normally accepted as valid grounds for submission of an exceptional personal circumstance claim (such as issues relating to IT or internet access, access to required resources, challenging domestic situations) may be accepted under these emergency regulations. Students' circumstances will be reviewed on an individual basis and if reasonable, accepted as evidence.
43. If the exceptional circumstances are widespread the ability of students to obtain independent third party evidence may be reduced. In such situations, students will provide a written statement to this effect as part of their submission. False or overstated claims of exceptional personal circumstances will be considered seriously and may be regarded as an offence under the student disciplinary procedure.
44. Where exceptional circumstances outside the University College's control apply, Exceptional Personal Circumstances Panels may take place remotely, by electronic means. The Exceptional Personal Circumstances Panel may make recommendations to the Assessment Board that fall outside the normal provisions of the Exceptional Personal Circumstances policy – for example (but not limited to) a recommendation to waive the penalty for late submission, to allow an uncapped resit, an additional exceptional resit, or a 'first sit' for a student who has passed the assessment at the first attempt.
45. Where revised deadlines for the submission of exceptional personal circumstances requests are required, these revised deadlines will be communicated to all students by Registry.

Version:	2.2
Ratified by:	Academic Board
Originator/Author	Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance)/Academic Registrar
Policy Owner	Academic Registrar
Date approved	18 September 2020
Effective from	14 September 2020
Review date	June 2023
Target	All staff and all students enrolled on courses leading to AECC University College awards
Policy location	SIP/VLE
Amendment	Section outlining no detriment removed September 2020 Section E – No detriment added 10 June 2020 Rubrics added 25 June 2020