

## SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC POLICY DECISIONS 2015-16

This document provides the annual summary of key decisions made during the 2015-16 academic year at the following meetings:

**Senate (S):** 28.10.15, 20.1.16, 20.04.16, 29.06.16

**Education Committee (EC):** 9.12.15, 10.02.16, 23.03.16, 15.06.16

**Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC):** 14.10.15, 27.1.16, 01.06.16

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	Category	Name of New or Amended Policy	Summary of change	Link to source paper/committee minutes
1.	<b>All Ordinances and Regulations</b>	<b>Amendment to all Ordinances and Regulations</b>	All University Ordinances and Regulations need to be amended to reflect the changes to the titles of the Director of Information Systems and the Librarian to the Director of IT Services and University Librarian and Director of Library Services respectively.	<b>Senate and Council Senate</b> 28 October 2015 <a href="#">S/15/51</a> S.M.197/15
2.	<b>Ordinances</b>	<b>Ordinance 31 Graduation</b>	That Ordinance 31 should be amended in order to ensure that it reflected the provisions in Ordinance 3 <i>The Pro-Chancellors</i> and Ordinance 46 <i>Boards of Examiners</i> .	<b>Senate and Council Senate</b> 20 April 2016 <a href="#">S/16/15</a> S.M. 56-57/16
3.	<b>Ordinances</b>	<b>Amendments to Ordinances 45 and 46</b>	That Ordinances 45 and 46 be amended to include reference to the arrangements for research degrees and research provision. The changes also seek to clarify the arrangements for appointing External Examiners for taught provision.	<b>Senate and Council Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/25</a> S.M 100/16
4.	<b>General Regulations</b>	<b>University Compliance Obligations and Academic Progress or Student Status Decisions</b>	<b>A procedure for dealing with conflicts between University compliance with legal responsibilities and academic regulations.</b> The following text will be added to the <i>University Compliance Obligations and Academic Progress or Student Status Decisions</i>  6.39 If a decision taken in accordance with University student progress or assessment regulations conflicts with the University's legal or compliance obligations	<b>Senate</b> 20 January 2016 <a href="#">S/16/12</a> , Appendix B, S.M 48/16

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			<p>then the matter shall be referred to the Registrar who shall decide upon a course of action.</p> <p>6.40 A student may appeal that decision to the Vice-Chancellor, in writing, within five days of the Registrar's decision on the grounds of:</p> <p>(a) substantive factual error; and/or</p> <p>(b) Extraordinary circumstances where the student was physically unable to support the University in discharging its compliance obligations.</p> <p>6.41 The Vice-Chancellor will accept or reject the appeal within 10 days and their decision is final; there is no further right of appeal.</p> <p>6.42 Where the Vice-Chancellor is unavailable to review the appeal within the timescale the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro-Vice Chancellor(s) may consider the appeal.</p>	
5.	<b>Delegated Powers</b>	<b>Schedule of Delegated Powers</b>	The annual schedule of functions and specific powers delegated to Senate's Boards and Committees	<b>Senate</b> 28 October 2015 <a href="#">S/15/62</a> , S.M. 226/15
6.	<b>University initiative</b>	<b>Digital Skills</b>	Senate agreed that the recommendations in relation to the development of Digital Skills should be approved. This includes the adoption of the JISC definition of "digital literacy" and a series of additional areas of development for departments, Employability and Careers, the TEL team, as well as the constituting of a Task and Finish Group, and investigation into intercalated degrees.	<b>Senate</b> 20 April 2016 <a href="#">S/16/22</a> Appendix A Annex A-B <a href="#">S.M.</a> 90/16
7.	<b>Programme Specifications and Student Transcripts</b>	<b>Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)</b>	<p><b>Update and implementation of the HEAR</b></p> <p>i. That oversight and general responsibility of the HEAR should be delegated from Senate to Student Experience Committee</p> <p>ii. That all additional activities should be recorded through the Big Essex Award.</p> <p>iii. That the <i>University of Essex HEAR Section 6.1 Activity Protocols</i> be followed when new activities</p>	<b>Senate</b> 28 October 2015 <a href="#">S/15/56</a> S.M. 219/15

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			may be added to the HEAR.	
8.	<b>Periodic Review</b>	<b>Periodic Review</b>	<b>All courses which fall under the scope of a Periodic Review should be included in the Review, irrespective of how long the course had been running.</b> This applies to both undergraduate and postgraduate Periodic Reviews.	<b>AQSC</b> 27 January 2016 <a href="#">AQSC/16/12</a> AQSC. M.16/77-16/79
9.	<b>Ethics</b> (All provision)	<b>Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants</b>	<b>The Guidelines and the ethics review process have been amended:</b> i. To reflect current best practice ii. To provide clearer information about expectations with regard to protection of participants and their rights and informed consent.	<b>Senate</b> 28 October 2015, <a href="#">S/15/58</a> , S.M. 221/15
10.	<b>Module Optionality</b> (All provision)	<b>Module Optionality</b>	Interim recommendations regarding the degree of Module Optionality in taught programmes were approved. It was agreed departments should continue to review Module Optionality over the support in accordance with the proposed approach in the paper. Final recommendations will be considered by Senate in November 2016.	<b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/29</a> S.M.154/16
11.	<b>Academic Policy</b>	<b>Academic Offences Procedures</b>	Senate approved major revisions to the Academic Offences Procedures including an updated list of examples of academic offences, an updated list of penalties and updated guidance. A programme of Academic Integrity Tutorials to help students who had been found to have committed a first academic offence was also agreed.	<b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/37 (Appendix H)</a> S.M 157/16
12.	<b>External Examiners</b>	<b>External Examiners Reviews</b>	Senate supported the recommendations from Education Committee for a number of reviews to be carried out in the following areas during 2016/17: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External Examiner roles and responsibilities should be amended to confirm the requirement for module level External</li> </ul>	<b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/37</a> S.M 158/16 Education Committee 15 June

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			<p>Examiner to liaise with the relevant award External Examiner(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dates for meetings of Boards of Examiners should be set and published to External Examiners before the start of the academic year, with effect from 2017/18.</li> <li>A Review Group should be established to undertake a review of the operation of meetings of Board of Examiners.</li> <li>Where available, student work should be made available to External Examiners electronically.</li> <li>External Examiners should have electronic access to University systems.</li> <li>A review of methods for collating and recording evidence of marking should be undertaken in 2016/17.</li> <li>University Data Retention Policies should be reviewed in 2016/17</li> </ul>	2016 <a href="#">EC/16/40</a>
13.	<b>Taught Provision</b>	<b>Revision to progress procedures for taught programmes 2016/17</b>	<p>Senate approved proposed revised progress procedures for taught programmes of study to take effect from 2016/17.</p> <p>Attendance that falls short of the expected standard refers to any unauthorised absence from any timetabled event related to a course or module. Definitions were described and agreed in the paper.</p>	<b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/32</a> S.M 133/16
14.	<b>Taught Provision</b>	<b>Examination scheduling policy</b>	<p>An Examination Scheduling Policy was proposed to support effective exam scheduling with effect from 2016/17:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A student will have no more than five examinations between Monday and Saturday and none on Bank Holidays</li> <li>Every effort will be made to ensure a student has not more than one examination per day</li> </ul>	<b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/37</a> S.M 153/16

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the impact of the agreed changes should be kept under review</li> <li>• That where scheduling summer examinations, departments and schools should ensure greater use of the fourth week of the examination period where feasible.</li> </ul>	
15.	<b>All taught provision</b> (including taught elements of postgraduate research awards)	<b>Marking Policy</b> (All taught provision)	<p>The policy applies to assessment contributing to a mark at all levels, including the bridging year, level three, level four as well as the mark appearing on the Examination Board grids from which a student's final degree classification is derived.</p> <p>Definitions provided for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summative assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ These contribute to a module mark, award mark, degree classification or any professional requirements of a course.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Formative assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ These are for which students may receive a mark, but which does not contribute to any module mark, award mark, degree classification or any professional requirements of a course.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Marking policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Only an examination which is invigilated should be classed as an examination and displayed as such on the transcript. This definition would also cover open-book examination and Stage 1 MCQ tests in Biological Sciences</li> <li>○ Take home examinations should be classed as coursework and departments would need to make this</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/37</a> Appendix K S.M 160/16

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			<p>clear in the module information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Invigilated in-class tests and progress tests are classed as coursework.</li> <li>• Marks for participation in Tutorial, Class or Seminar discussions</li> <li>• Anonymous marking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Formative and Summative assessment</li> <li>○ Anonymous Marking in Examinations</li> <li>○ Anonymous Marking in Coursework</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Clarification given on when students can request have work re-marked and the procedure relating to this.</p>	
16.	<b>Taught Provision</b> (Undergraduate)	<b>a. Undergraduate Credit Framework</b>	To remove the reference to the International Diploma in the table in paragraph 2.3 of the Credit Framework.	<b>Senate</b> 20 January 2016 <a href="#">S/16/12</a> Annex A S.M. 47/16
17.	<b>Taught Provision</b> (Undergraduate)	<b>b. Rules of Assessment</b> (Undergraduate)	<b>Variations approved for the International Academy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Approved variations for the International Year 1 from 2016/17</li> </ul>	<b>Senate</b> 20 January 2016 <a href="#">S/16/12</a> Annex A S.M. 47/16
		<b>c. Undergraduate Entry Requirements</b>	<b>Amendments to entry requirements for the following European countries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <i>Czech Republic</i> – to lower the entry requirements for applicants studying the Czech Maturitni Zkouska/Maturita</li> <li>ii. <i>Bulgaria</i> – to lower the entry requirements for applicants studying the Bulgarian Diploma za Zavaresheno Obrazovanie</li> <li>iii. <i>Poland</i> – to lower the entry requirements for applicants studying the Polish Matura</li> <li>iv. <i>Belgium</i> – to lower the entry requirements for applicants studying the Belgium Certificat d'Enseignement Secondaire</li> </ul>	<b>Education Committee</b> 9 December 2015 EC. M 250-257/15  <i>Czech Republic</i> <a href="#">EC/15/92</a> <i>Bulgaria</i> – <a href="#">EC/15/93</a> <i>Poland</i> – <a href="#">EC/15/94</a> <i>Belgium</i> – <a href="#">EC/15/95</a>

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			Superieur (CESS). In all cases, to lower the A Level and GCSE subject equivalencies in line with this.	
		<b>d. Rules of Assessment</b> (Postgraduate)	<b>Introduction of a non-registerable exit award in Health and Human Sciences</b> An exit award of MSc Health Studies to be introduced for students on the MSc Adult Nursing (pre-registration) and the MSc Nursing (Mental Health) (pre-registration) from <b>2015/16</b> .	<b>Senate</b> 20 January 2016 <a href="#">S/16/12</a> Annex B, S.M. 47/16
18.	<b>Taught Provision</b> (Undergraduate)	<b>Admissions Regulation 1.8 Undergraduate Admissions Approval Process</b>	<b>Dean's approval process for undergraduate admissions</b> The Chair of Education Committee took Chair's Action to approve changes to the Dean's approval process for undergraduate admissions to give delegated authority to Undergraduate Senior Admissions Advisors	<b>Education Committee</b> 23 March 2016 <a href="#">EC/16/13</a> Appendix 1 <a href="#">EC. M</a> 60-61/16
19.	<b>Taught Provision</b> (Undergraduate)	<b>Rules of Assessment</b> (Undergraduate)	<b>Variations approved for East 15 for 2015/16:</b> Variations approved for Cert HE in Theatre Arts, FDA/BA Stage Management and Technical Theatre, BA Stage and Production Management to reflect course structures. <b>Variations approved for Language and Linguistics for 2017/18</b> Variations approved for all Modern Language courses with respect to Years Abroad.	<b>Senate</b> 20 April 2016 <a href="#">S/16/22</a> Appendix A Annex A-B <a href="#">S.M.</a> 90/16
20.	<b>Rules of Assessment</b> (Undergraduate)	<b>Review of Undergraduate Rules of Assessment</b>	Proposal to review and simplify the Undergraduate Rules of Assessment. Following a desk-research stage, a working group would be formed to bring forward draft year one Rules of Assessment for approval in Summer 2017.	<b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/37</a>
21.	<b>Taught Provision</b>	<b>Rules of Assessment</b>	Proposed changes to the Rules of Assessment and progression for taught provision for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language and Linguistics</li> </ul>	<b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/37</a> (Appendix

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School of health and Human Sciences</li> <li>East 15 Acting School</li> <li>Undergraduate Rules of Assessment</li> </ul> The details of the changes are noted in annexes.	U) S.M 169/16
22.	Taught Provision (Postgraduate)	<b>i. Postgraduate Entry Requirements</b>	<b>Amendments to the English language requirements for courses in Economics</b> The Chair of Education Committee took Chair's Action to approve the reduction of the IELTS from 6.5 to 6.0 excluding the MSc Economics and Econometrics and the MRes Economics.	<b>Education Committee 23</b> March 2016 <a href="#">EC/16/13</a> <a href="#">EC. M</a> 60-61/16
		<b>ii. Rules of Assessment (Postgraduate)</b>	<b>Variations approved for East 15 for 2015/16:</b> Variations approved for MA and MFA courses to reflect course structures. <b>Variations approved for Government for 2015/16:</b> Variations approved for the Government MRES course with respect to reassessment.	<b>Senate 20 April 2016</b> <a href="#">S/16/22</a> Appendix A Annex C-D <a href="#">S.M.</a> 90/16
23.	Taught Provision (Postgraduate)	<b>Postgraduate Credit Framework</b>	The Task and Finish Group made the following recommendations which were approved by Senate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departments may continue to choose one of the existing credit frameworks but are strongly encouraged to consistently adhere to one credit framework.</li> <li>Masters courses may consist of 180-190 credits (this does not include integrated Masters courses which should consist of 120-130 credits). Any exemptions would need a Variation to the Rules of Assessment.</li> <li>Departments running both 15 credit and 20 credit variants should review this and obtain permission from the DDE as part of Curriculum Review. Detailed rationales will be required for the approval of new 20 credit variants.</li> <li>The creation of 15 credit variants will not be</li> </ol>	<b>Senate 20 April 2016</b> <a href="#">S/16/20</a> Appendix A Annex C-D <a href="#">S.M.</a> 89/16



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			<p>permitted.</p> <p>v. Departments who wish to change their credit framework must provide a detailed rationale to the DDE and PVC (Education).</p> <p>vi. The PVC (Education)'s Advisory Group on Rules of Assessment will undertake a review of the Rules of Assessment for PGT courses during the Summer of 2016.</p> <p>vii. Departments should review the weighting of PGT dissertations during the academic year 2016/17 as part of Curriculum Review, in time for Spring 2017 Annual Update.</p>	
24.	<b>Taught Provision</b> (Postgraduate)	<b>Variation to the Policy on Re-use of Credit</b>	<p>Variation to the Policy on the Re-Use of credit for Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit towards a new postgraduate qualification at an equivalent or lower level will only be re-used up to one third of the total credit required for the new award</li> <li>• Credit will only be allowed to be re-used once</li> <li>• Approval to re-use credit would be given by the Dean/Associate Dean of Academic Partnerships on a case-by-case basis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016  <a href="#">S/16/37</a> S.M 171/16</p>
25.	<b>Postgraduate Research</b>	<b>Regulations for Research Degrees, Associated Policies and Code of Practice</b>	<p>Senate approved the revised regulations, policies and code of practise for research degrees set out in appendices A-G of paper S/16/37:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Principal Regulations for Research Degrees and Principle Regulations for Higher Doctorates.</li> <li>• The Policy for the Appointment of Independent Chairs in Vivas</li> <li>• The Policy on the Conduct of a Research Degree Viva by Video Link, Skype, or an equivalent audio-visual service</li> <li>• The Policy on Thesis Submission, Deposit</li> </ul>	<p><b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016  <a href="#">S/16/37</a>, S.M 155/16</p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and Retention</li> <li>The Policy on Dual and Joint Research Awards</li> <li>The changes to the regulations and policies</li> </ul> <p>With effect from 1 January 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The implementation of the new viva outcomes for all existing students who submit their thesis for examination.</li> </ul>	
26.	<b>Postgraduate Research</b>	<b>Postgraduate Research Milestones</b>	Faculty specific milestones are to be implemented in 2016/17	Senate 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/37</a> (Appendix M) S.M 164/16
27.	<b>Student Representation</b>	<b>Student Representatives Policy</b>	The revised Student Representatives Policy should provide clarity on activity which should be taking place and the links with departments, and to enable more effective student representation on committees.	<b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/37</a> (Appendix J) S.M 160/16
28.	<b>Student Representation</b>	<b>Student Assessment of Modules and Teaching (SAMT)</b>	<p>The amended policy was approved to take effect form 2016-17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions can be added at the discretion of th Deputy Dean (Education in liaison with Quality and Academic Development and on recommendation by the Head of Department.</li> <li>Threshold for including staff members in SAMT is 25% of teaching time on the module. Should a staff member who delivers less than 25% wish to be evaluated they could be included.</li> <li>The module co-ordinators should provide a written summary of feedback from the most recent SAMT; this should be provided in the first teaching session.</li> <li>The Head of Department should ensure</li> </ul>	<b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/37</a> (Appendix L) S.M 163/16

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			<p>teaching staff are aware of how data will be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The questionnaire is reviewed annually to consider the optional questions used by departments in order to remove unused questions and include new questions relating to new modes of study.</li> </ul>	
29.	<b>Appeals, Complaints and Conduct</b>	<b>Appeals, Student Complaints and Student Conduct procedures</b>	<p>Senate agreed revisions to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress and Appeals for Taught Programmes of Study</li> <li>Progress and Appeals for Research Degree Students</li> <li>The Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure</li> <li>The Student Code of Conduct</li> <li>The Student Code of Conduct in Residential Accommodation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016  <a href="#">S/16/37</a> (Appendices N-R)  S.M165/16</p>
30.	<b>Professional programmes</b>	<b>Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure</b>	<p>This policy has been updated and will provide improved and more robust appeals process. It also replaces the Mental Health Crisis Intervention Policy.</p>	<p><b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016  <a href="#">S/16/37</a> (Appendix S)  S.M166/16</p>
31.	<b>Tier 4 and Immigration Regulatory Frameworks</b>	<b>Regulations on Registration and Tier 4 students</b>	<p>This policy was amended to ensure the University continues to meet Tier 4 Sponsor obligations. The amendment introduced a category of registration 'with conditions' that would allow Tier 4 students to register for up to 28 days from the original registration date.</p>	<p><b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016  <a href="#">S/16/37</a> (Appendix T)  S.M168/16</p>
32.	<b>Marking</b>	<b>Use of Staff for marking</b>	<p>A Task and Finish Group to be established to consider University's policy on internal and external staff marking, to report during 2016/17. The Group will consider the role and requirements of permanent teaching staff and marking which might be carried out by GTAs.</p>	<p><b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016  <a href="#">S/16/37</a>  S.M162/16</p>

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33.	Reassessment	<b>Policy on Reassessment for Professional Purposes in the School of Law</b>	The policy had been developed in response to changes to professional regulation under the auspices of the Joint Academic Stage Board. The changes apply to any accredited law degree. The new arrangements provide for reassessment for students who fail a foundation module in the form of a retake for professional purposes. The new policy would allow students who have failed a foundation module in their final year, the opportunity to retake it after graduation. Policy had been approved by Vice-Chancellor following Education Committee to enable policy to be applied immediately.	<b>Education Committee</b> 15 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/25</a> , EC/16/43 <b>Senate</b> 29 June 2016 <a href="#">S/16/37</a> . S.M 171/16

#### Summary of Academic Policy Decisions

Authored by: Quality and Academic Development

Version: 2015-16 (1)

Date: August 2016