

## SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC POLICY DECISIONS – SUMMER 2010

This information note refers to decisions made at the following meetings:

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee – 12/05/10

Undergraduate School Board – 09/06/10

Graduate School Board – 16/06/10

Senate – 07/07/10

Minute numbers are given to indicate the source of the information set out below. Where extracts of minutes are included verbatim, this is indicated by speech marks.

### LIST OF CONTENTS

#### SECTION A – FOR ACTION

1. Reassessment and the role of externals
2. Marks Conversion
3. Coursework Deadline Policy
4. Monitoring of Student Progress and Attendance

#### SECTION B – FOR INFORMATION

1. Operation of Examination Pre Boards
2. Higher Degree Regulations
5. Working Party on Academic Offences Policy
6. Maximum Period of Study
7. Variation to the PGT Rules of Assessment/Credit Framework
8. Code of Practice on Teaching and Demonstrating by Graduate Students
9. Sub-Committee on Graduate Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators

### FOR ACTION

#### **1. Reassessment and the role of externals (S.M.M.243-244/10)**

Resolved 'that external examiners should be required to approve final year resit papers, as detailed in the revised policy in respect of final year reassessment, presented as Annex A of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee Report to Senate (S/10/47).'

See Annex A below.

#### **2. Marks Conversion (S.M.248/10)**

Resolved 'that the University should operate a single marks conversion scheme for marks obtained outside the UK and that the scheme used should be as set out on the Study Abroad Office website ([www.essex.ac.uk/studyabroad/outgoing\\_MarksConversionGrids.shtml](http://www.essex.ac.uk/studyabroad/outgoing_MarksConversionGrids.shtml))

#### **3. Coursework Deadline Policy (S.M.M.265-266/10)**

Resolved 'that the Graduate School Coursework Deadline Policy, as set out in Appendix 3 of the Graduate School Board Report to Senate (S/10/49), be introduced with effect from 2010-11, subject to the revisions agreed by Senate.

Senate noted that the policy captured current practice in a streamlined way and that option 1 was a mixture of two systems being used by different Departments. The Graduate School Board had agreed that Departments should have the choice of operating option 1 with pre-arranged extensions but could operate a version of option 1 without extensions. It was agreed that the final sentences in options 1 and 2 should be bracketed and highlighted as optional. '

See Annex B below.

#### **4. Monitoring of Student Progress and Attendance (S.M.293/10)**

Recommend ed to Council 'that the changes to the monitoring of student attendance and progress regulations as detailed in Appendix 2 of Senate paper S/10/59 be approved'

*The changes were approved at Council on the 19 July 2010.*

See the Progress and Appeals Procedure webpage at:  
[www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/progress.shtm](http://www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/progress.shtm)

### **SECTION B – FOR INFORMATION**

#### **1. Operation of Examination Pre Boards (S.MM.65-68/10)**

Noted 'New guidelines for Pre-Boards were presented for approval. The guidelines sought to reflect present practice and make the distinction between the function of the Pre-Board and the main Board of Examiners clearer. If approved, the guidelines would be incorporated in the document entitled, [Assessment policies for undergraduate and taught postgraduate awards of the University of Essex](#)' which was published on the web.

Resolved that, subject to those minor editorial amendments noted at the meeting, the new guidelines for UG and PGT Pre-Board Meetings be approved with immediate effect.'

#### **2. Higher Degree Regulations (S.M.259/10)**

Resolved 'that the changes to the Higher Degree Regulations set out in Appendix 1 of the Graduate School Board Report to Senate (S/10/49) be approved with effect from 2010-11.'

See the Higher Degree Regulations webpage at:  
[www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/highercont.shtm](http://www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/highercont.shtm)

#### **3. Working Party on Academic Offences Policy (S.M.M.254-255/10)**

Resolved 'that:

(a) recommendations a, c, d, e and f contained in Appendix 2 of the Graduate School Board Report to Senate (paper S/10/49), be approved with effect from 2010/11, subject to the minor revisions agreed by Senate;

(b) asterisks representing academic offences at module level may be marked on the grids considered by the Boards of Examiners.'

See the Academic Offences webpage at:  
[www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/offpro.shtm](http://www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/offpro.shtm)

#### **4. Maximum Period of Study (S.M.256/10)**

Resolved 'that:

in line with the Framework for University of Essex Undergraduate Awards, the maximum period of study permitted for the Bridging Year (level 3) and the Certificate in Higher Education (level 4) be changed to 2 years full time, from 2010/11.'

## **5. Variation to the PGT Rules of Assessment/Credit Framework (S.M.267/10)**

Resolved 'that:

that the variations to the PGT Rules of Assessment/Credit Framework Essex Business School, School of Health and Human Sciences and East 15, as detailed in the Graduate School Board Report to Senate (S/10/49), be approved from 2010/11.'

*Changes will be published in the revised version of the Rules of Assessment on the web over the summer.*

## **6. Code of Practice on Teaching and Demonstrating by Graduate Students (S.M.268/10)**

Resolved 'that the changes to the Code of Practice on Teaching and Demonstrating by Graduate Students set out in Appendix 4 of the Graduate School Board Report to Senate (S/10/49) be approved with effect from 2010-11.

See the Code of Practice on Teaching and Demonstrating by Graduate Students webpage at: [www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/gstudents.shtm](http://www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/gstudents.shtm)

## **7. Sub-Committee on Graduate Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators (S.M.269/10)**

Resolved ' that, with immediate effect, the Sub-Committee on Graduate Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators be discontinued and that GTA/D/GLA matters be dealt with as a standing item by the Graduate School Student Liaison Committee, which should include a representative membership of GTA/D/GLAs.'

Rachel Lucas  
Assistant Registrar (Quality)

### **CIRCULATION**

#### **FOR ACTION:**

Heads of Department/School  
Directors of  
    Human Rights Centre  
    Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities  
    Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies  
    Study Abroad Office  
    Centre for Theoretical Studies  
Departmental Administrators (including Centres listed above)

#### **FOR INFORMATION:**

Vice-Chancellor  
Pro-Vice-Chancellors  
Deans  
Academic Registrar  
Faculty Managers  
Academic Officers

## Reassessment of Final Year Undergraduate Students

### 1 Criteria for Reassessment

- a) Boards of Examiners will only offer reassessment to final year students who have not met the minimum criteria for the award on which they are studying.
- b) Boards of Examiners will only offer reassessment in a sufficient number of modules to enable students to meet the minimum criteria for the award. For example, if a student has failed 60 credits' worth of non-core modules in the final year s/he will only be offered reassessment in 30 credits.
- c) Where students must take reassessment in 30 out of 60 failed credits, the Board of Examiners should offer students the choice of module in which they are to be reassessed. However, the default position is that the compulsory reassessment will be suggested in the module for which students have the highest mark.
- d) Boards of Examiners will continue to check whether students have met the criteria for an exit award, and offer this as an alternative to reassessment.
- e) Students on the final stage of a Foundation Degree should be offered reassessment in more than the minimum credits required to obtain an award (nb - students can only fail 15 credits), since a number of students continue with their studies to achieve an honours degree, and it is therefore preferable to give them the chance to retrieve fails in all their level 5 modules, as is the case with students in Stage Two of an honours programme.

### 2 The Method of Reassessment

- a) The main Board of Examiners (at which the External Examiners are present) will decide on the form of reassessment based on what elements the student has failed, and the reassessment strategy for the modules concerned.
- b) Students must confirm, within five working days of the publication of results, whether they are taking up the offer of reassessment and in which module(s).
- c) Departments will not be required to set resit exam papers for final year modules at the time they set the main exam paper. (Please note, where resit exams are being sat at the start of September, the Department will need to provide the Exams Office with an exam paper by the normal resit paper deadline set by the Office. Departmental Administrators should confirm the arrangements for submitting papers for their department with the Exams Office in advance).
- d) Where students are being asked to submit coursework, they should be set the work within two weeks of the results being published.

### 3 Involvement of External Examiners

- a) The Department should discuss and confirm its assessment and reassessment strategy with the External Examiner **and agree the timing for the scrutiny and approval of resit papers.** ~~However, there is no requirement that External Examiners must scrutinise or approve resit exam papers.~~
- b) External Examiners will not **normally** be required to consider reassessed work, confirm overall results or attend Reassessment Boards of Examiners, since their involvement in the earlier examination board should have confirmed that marking standards and assessment practice were appropriate and that reassessment was being offered in line with the rules. **External Examiners can have more involvement in the reassessment process if they or the department wishes, and this should be discussed and agreed in advance.**
- c) ~~The following year the External Examiners should be given access to the reassessment tools and the results.~~ Part of the discussion with the External regarding the Department's learning, teaching, assessment and reassessment strategy should include an evaluation of the success of the previous year's reassessment process.
- d) ~~Individual External Examiners can have more involvement in the reassessment process if they wish or the department wishes, and this should be discussed in advance.~~

#### **4 Ratification of Results**

- a) Boards of Examiners will need to be held to consider the results, but each Faculty can decide on the most appropriate way of convening the boards. For example, the results could go to an existing Faculty-wide Second Year Reassessment Board of Examiners. Alternatively, departments could hold a separate Board of Examiners which could meet physically or virtually.
- b) Departments will need to consider extenuating circumstances in advance of the Board of Examiners' meeting.
- c) Boards of Examiners' meetings should normally take place by the end of the summer vacation. Dates should be scheduled in advance and published on the web in the same way as they are published for first and second year boards.

#### **5 Conferral of Awards**

- a) The award will be conferred on students automatically, but they will still be invited to attend the Graduation Ceremony in the following year.

Deanna Walker & Rachel Lucas

**Graduate School**

**Coursework Deadline Policy**

Departments shall assign, to cover all their postgraduate and graduate programmes, one of the following provisions to govern the late submission of coursework, and publish it in their course handbooks:

- 1 All coursework submitted after the deadline will receive a mark of zero. The mark of zero shall stand unless the student submits satisfactory evidence of extenuating circumstances that indicate that the student was unable to submit the work prior to the deadline. Extensions may be approved in advance of the deadline for submission.
- 2 All coursework submitted after the deadline is subject to a marks penalty of two marks for each 24 hour period (including weekends and public holidays) up to a maximum of seven days. Thereafter, work will receive a mark of zero. The marks penalty/mark of zero shall stand unless the student submits satisfactory evidence of extenuating circumstances that indicate that the student was unable to submit the work prior to the deadline. Extensions may be approved in advance of the deadline for submission.
- 3 No late penalty. Students can request an extension in advance of the deadline for submission'

Extenuating circumstances claims for late submission for departments who operate a marks penalty (options 1 and 2 above) shall be dealt with as follows:

'If you have experienced extenuating circumstances immediately around the time of the deadline, which prevent you from submitting your work by the deadline, you should submit your late work along with a Late Submission of Coursework Form to your Department within 7 days (including weekends and/or bank holidays) of the deadline date. Your Late Submission of Coursework Form will then be considered by the department's Late Submissions Committee.'

'If you have experienced significant (longer term) extenuating circumstances that prevent you from submitting your work either by the deadline or within seven days of the deadline, you should submit an Extenuating Circumstances Form for the Board of Examiners to consider at the end of the year, which should clearly explain how your extenuating circumstances affected your ability to submit your work.'

June 2010