**UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX**

**OVERSEAS EXAMINATIONS POLICY**

**JUNE 2011**

**1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

The University of Essex is committed to supporting all its students to achieve their full potential in every aspect of their studies. To this end, where possible and under certain circumstances, the University provides opportunities for University of Essex international students registered on University of Essex programmes[[1]](#footnote-1), regardless of the campus on which they are based, to undertake certain examinations (usually reassessment) in their country of residence. The purpose of this arrangement is to reduce costs and the need for long periods of travel for international students who would otherwise be required to return to the United Kingdom (UK) to undertake the assessment before being able to progress to the next stage of the programme of study. The arrangement aims to support students in preparing for the assessment by maximising the time spent on preparation rather than focusing on travel to the UK. The Overseas Examinations Policy (“the policy”) codifies the arrangement and sets out the circumstances around which the examinations are managed.

**2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY**

The policy is built upon a number of guiding principles, which are described below:

* To promote fairness for all students studying at all campuses of the University, particularly regarding reassessment opportunities;
* To ensure the provision of a high quality environment for students undertaking assessment that meets students’ full needs and support requirements;
* To manage staff and student expectations effectively around the management of overseas examinations; and
* To ensure maximum efficiency in the deployment of University resources.

**3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF OVERSEAS EXAMINATIONS**

3.1 The Examinations Office, which organises all centrally-managed examinations, has responsibility for organising and administering overseas examinations in conjunction with the appropriate British Council office.

3.2 All decisions around whether a student may be permitted to undertake an examination overseas is subject to the Examinations Office’s agreement, except in cases where the Academic Registrar is required to make a decision, which will be based on the considerations set out in sections 5 and 7 of the policy.

3.3 The Examinations Office is responsible for the logistical and organisational aspects of overseas examinations. Decisions around a student’s academic eligibility to undertake reassessment remain with the Examination Board or other academic decision-making authority.

**4. TIMING OF OVERSEAS EXAMINATIONS**

4.1 In accordance with the resolution of the Academic Board, any student who falls within the criteria established in section 5 is permitted to request to undertake a reassessment examination during the published September reassessment period.

4.2 Students are not normally permitted to undertake examinations overseas during the main summer or other examination periods. In rare and exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to offer a student an assessment opportunity overseas during these periods if the circumstances permit (see section 7).

**5. STUDENTS PERMITTED TO UNDERTAKE EXAMINATIONS OVERSEAS**

5.1 Any registered University of Essex student[[2]](#footnote-2) who does not reside in the UK as his/her permanent home is able to request permission to undertake a reassessment examination in his/her country of residence during the published September reassessment period. This is a special dispensation and no student has an automatic right to undertake an examination overseas.

5.2 A student may request to sit any reassessment examination overseas if such examinations are being offered in the relevant country. An up to date list of countries in which overseas examinations may take place is published on the Examinations Office webpages. The exam arrangements are managed through the British Council offices located within the relevant country. Countries not included on the standard list will be considered for hosting examinations overseas but the Examinations Office cannot guarantee that examinations will be permitted to take place there. Alternative venues other than British Council offices will not be considered.

5.3 Students taking holidays abroad are not eligible to undertake examinations overseas.

5.4 The decision to permit a student to undertake an examination overseas usually resides with the Examinations Office and is subject to the following considerations:

* consultation with the Registry and relevant Department, School or Centre about the module’s suitability for distant venue assessment; and
* whether it is practically and logistically possible for the examination to take place[[3]](#footnote-3), taking into account in particular (i) the overall availability of a relevant British Council office; (ii) the impact of the time zone of the country in which the overseas examination will be held on the timing of the local examination held at a campus of the University of Essex; and (iii) overseas public holidays that may affect British Council availability.

5.5 In the vast majority of cases, a student is permitted to undertake an examination overseas where s/he is required to undertake reassessment or has opted to undertake voluntary reassessment during the published September reassessment period following the main summer exam period in May/June.

5.6 Where it is not possible make the necessary arrangements with the relevant British Council office, the student will be expected to travel back to the UK to undertake the examination(s) at the appropriate University of Essex campus.

5.7 Following a student’s request and approval to undertake an examination abroad, the student may rescind the request where written notification to the Examinations Office has been provided at least 21 days before the start of the published September reassessment period. Under these circumstances, the student is required to return to the UK to undertake the assessment. Where a request is received within 21 days of the start of the published September reassessment period, the student is required to pay the standard £450 fee (see section 6) regardless of where the examination is undertaken.

5.8 The University is not able to guarantee that individual examination arrangements may be put into place for any examination undertaken overseas. Students are required to discuss these arrangements with the Examinations Office in the first instance and if necessary the Student Support team. In certain circumstances, students may be advised to return to the UK to ensure that full support is in place.

**6. FEES**

6.1 Students who undertake examinations overseas in accordance with this policy are required to pay a £450 fee to the University, which includes the University’s standard module reassessment fee.

6.2 A reduced fee may be applicable in cases where a student has a medical condition that prevents him or her from travelling or a death in the family (see section 7.3). The decision to apply a reduced fee resides with the Examinations Office.

6.3 The £450 fee will be waived where it relates to a visa refusal that prevents a student from entering the UK and evidence can be provided demonstrating that the refusal was as a result of an error on the University’s part (see section 7.7).

6.4 The £450 fee does not include the charge made by the British Council and any other non-University costs (e.g. postage) that may be applicable. These charges and costs vary and it is the student’s responsibility to the pay them direct to the appropriate authorities.

**7. EXAMINATIONS OVERSEAS OUTSIDE THE PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER REASSESSMENT PERIOD**

7.1 Examinations overseas are not offered outside the published September reassessment period without the approval of the Academic Registrar.

7.2 Students who are re-sitting out of residence are expected as a matter of course to return to the UK to undertake the reassessment during the published summer examinations period.

7.3 For students who are re-sitting out of residence, where there are rare and exceptional circumstances that prevent the student from returning to the UK and it is not physically possible for them to do so, the University may offer the student the opportunity to undertake the reassessment overseas where it possible to offer the service (as described in section 5.4). Such circumstances include visa refusal that prevents the student from entering the UK, a medical condition that prevents a student from travelling or a death in the family. Other circumstances will be considered.

7.4 Any decision to permit a student to undertake an examination overseas outside the published reassessment period is a special dispensation and no student has an automatic right to such assessment opportunities.

7.5 Due to scheduling considerations, except in rare and exceptional circumstances, examinations overseas are not offered following publication of the summer examinations timetable.

7.6 Where the opportunity to undertake an examination is offered outside the published September reassessment period as a result of a visa refusal, where the University is not at fault (e.g. the visa refusal is as a result of an error made by the student or the relevant immigration authorities), the University charges the standard £450 fee for the service.

7.7 If a student is able to provide evidence that demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Examinations Office that his or her inability to enter the country due to visa issues that were a result of an error on the University’s part, the University will attempt to provide an opportunity for the student to undertake the examination overseas during the summer examinations period (noting section 7.5) and the standard £450 fee will be waived[[4]](#footnote-4). Under these circumstances, no student has an automatic right to undertake an examination overseas.

7.8 Where it is not possible to offer the opportunity to undertake an examination overseas outside the published September reassessment period due to a visa refusal, the opportunity will be offered during the following published September reassessment period and the standard £450 fee will be waived[[5]](#footnote-5).

7.9 Where the Registry or Examinations Office is notified that a student has been refused a visa, the student will be referred to Student Support for immigration advice as a matter of course.

**8. POLICY REVIEW**

The policy is reviewed annually as part of the preparation for the annual summer examinations period to ensure it continues to meet the University’s legal and operational requirements.

**Richard Stock**

**Deputy Academic Registrar**

**June 2011**

1. This does not include incoming or outgoing international exchange or study abroad students. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Without discussion and agreement with the Examinations Office, this does not include incoming or outgoing international exchange or study abroad students. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Online examinations are not permitted to be undertaken overseas. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Under these circumstances, the student will still be required to pay the standard reassessment fee. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Under these circumstances, the student will still be required to pay the standard reassessment fee. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)