

SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC POLICY DECISIONS – AUTUMN 2005

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

ASC – 26 October 2005, 23 November 2005
Senate – 7 December 2005

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.

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SECTION A – FOR ACTION BY HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND CENTRES

1. Notification of new scheme proposals (ASC.MM.191-192/05)

'Noted

The new requirement, approved by the Chair on behalf of the committee, was that the Quality Enhancement Office be informed of all proposals for new degree schemes or award bearing programmes as early in their development as possible. This requirement would normally, but not exclusively, be met by sending the Quality Enhancement Office a copy of the 'Outline Approval for Publicity Purposes' proforma.

Some concern was expressed about how the Quality Enhancement Office would be informed about new awards where outline approval for publicity purposes was not sought. Departments had been informed of the new requirement and that the information about the approval process provided to departments via the Quality webpages included a reminder to inform the Quality Enhancement Office of all new proposals. It was hoped that this would be sufficient and that it would not be necessary to introduce an additional bureaucratic step in the approval process. However, the Quality Enhancement Office would keep the situation under review.'

2. Academic Offences Procedure (S.M.236/05)

'Resolved

that the Academic Offences Procedures be amended with immediate effect, as set out in Appendix A ([see below](#)) to the report of Academic Standards Committee (26.10.05 & 23.11.05).'

3. Report from the Graduate School – Research Student Feedback Report (ASC.MM.218-219/05)

'Noted

One new process in the University's Postgraduate Research Degree Code was the introduction of an annual report from departments to the Dean of the Graduate School on student feedback and action taken. A new [Research Student Feedback Report for departments](#) had therefore been developed and was submitted to ASC for approval.

'Resolved

that the new Research Student Feedback Report, as detailed in paper ASC/05/54, be approved with immediate effect.'

SECTION B – FOR INFORMATION

1. Rules of assessment and cohorts' year of matriculation (ASC.MM.205-206/05 and ASC.M.233/05)

'Resolved

that, from October 2005 and for implementation no later than 2006/07, where rules of assessment had been amended, candidates who had been admitted under the previous rules should be assessed under the most recent set of rules except where this would disadvantage them.'

'Noted

Further clarification was required in relation to the implementation of this resolution. The Committee agreed that the resolution should only be invoked where it was unambiguous that it would be advantageous for all candidates to be assessed under the most recent rules.'

2. Consideration of External Examiner Reports (ASC.MM.212-213/05)

'Noted

The Committee considered the current procedure of the consideration of reports by the PVC (Academic Standards) and by the Deans. It was agreed that there was, at present, some unnecessary duplication in the issues raised for departmental consideration, however, the PVC (Academic Standards) was in a position to observe University-wide trends and issues which might not be so apparent at School level.

Resolved

that the PVC (Academic Standards) should continue to receive external examiner reports at the same time as the Deans of School but that the issues raised for further investigation by the PVC

(Academic Standards) should be restricted to those of urgent concern and to those of University-wide significance.'

3. Examination Rubrics – Re-use of Coursework Material (ASC.MM.263-265/05)

'Noted

Members discussed the issue relating to examination rubrics. It was noted that ASC had, in the past, determined that a rubric such as that suggested should not be placed on examination papers as it might distract or confuse candidates. Instead, the University expected departments to have a mechanism in place for reviewing examination questions in order to eliminate, as far as possible, the opportunities for replicating coursework in formal examinations. In addition, external examiners were asked to approve examination questions and review coursework assignments to check that the departments' internal mechanisms to prevent overlap were effective.

While ASC was not minded to change its existing policy, it was agreed that it would be helpful to provide additional advice to students, in advance of examinations, regarding the use of material previously used in coursework when answering examination questions.

Resolved

that guidance on the use, in examinations, of material used elsewhere in coursework or other examination papers, should be included in the Examinations Guide sent to all students.'

4. Report of the Working Party on Academic Decision Making Structures (S.M.229/05)

'Resolved

that the recommendations of the Working Party on Academic Decision Making Structures, as set out in paper S/05/47 ([see attached link](#)), be approved for implementation in October 2006.'

5. Part-Time Candidature – General Requirements

'Resolved

that Regulation 4.35 be amended with effect from October 2006, as follows (new wording underlined, deleted wording struck through):

4.35

Part-time candidates may be permitted to not present themselves for final examination, including submission of dissertations or theses, ~~before the end of the prescribed period in the last term of study. No reduction in the period of study or fee will be permitted (except under the terms of Regulation 4.41. or where part-time study less than half-time is being raised to half-time).~~

6. Student Satisfaction Survey (ASC.M. 282/05)

'Resolved

that Heads of Department and Directors of other teaching units should be requested to deal with the outcomes of the SSS and NSS together and that the procedure for dealing with SSS outcomes should be revised accordingly.'

Note: this will apply from Autumn 2006 when the results of the Student Satisfaction Survey and the National Students Survey which take place in Spring 2006 will be available.

7. Awards Framework (ASC.M.278/05)

ASC approved a comprehensive table of University awards, as set out in [Appendix C](#)

8. Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training/Placement Learning Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosure) Procedure

Senate approved a procedure in respect of the above.

'Resolved

that the Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training Procedure and the Placement Learning Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosure) Procedure be approved for introduction in 2006/07, as set out in Appendix B to the report of Academic Standards Committee (26.10.05 & 23.11.05),' see [Appendix B](#).

Joanne Tallentire
Senior Assistant Registrar
6 February 2006

CIRCULATION

FOR ACTION:

Heads of Department
Directors of
 Areas and Study Abroad Office
 Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies
 Centre for Theoretical Studies
 English Language Teaching Centre
 Human Rights Centre

Departmental Administrators (including Centres listed above)

FOR INFORMATION:

Vice-Chancellor
Pro-Vice-Chancellors
Deans
Academic Registrar
Academic Section Administrators

Proposed changes are underlined

B. Alleged academic offences dealt with by Heads of Department

Alleged Offences dealt with by Heads

B1.

Heads of Department are responsible for the initial investigation of alleged academic offences relating to coursework in their own department.^[2]

B2.

All cases referred to a Head of Department must be investigated and dealt with on a formal basis.

B3.

Heads of Department can take decisions about all suspected academic offences relating to coursework where:

- a. The offence is a first academic offence, or it is a second offence but only a few sentences or the equivalent are affected **and** the first offence resulted only in a formal warning.
- b. The student does not request referral to the Dean.
- c. The student accepts that an offence has been committed.
- d. The assignment contributes no more than 15 per cent to the total assessment for all courses for the year (unless the likely penalty would lead to the student not being eligible for a degree, in which case it should be referred to the Dean); or it contributes more than 15 per cent to the total assessment, but the alleged offence is such that the outcome is likely to be a formal warning.
- e. The alleged offence does not involve any breach of the University's disciplinary regulations.

B3.

Where the alleged offence involves an alleged breach of the University's disciplinary regulations, the case must first be referred to the Proctor.

B4.

All other cases, including all cases relating to formal examinations and any allegation of an academic offence after the degree has been conferred, must be referred to the relevant Dean.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES PENALTY GUIDELINES FOR HEADS, DEANS AND ACADEMIC OFFENCES COMMITTEES

Principles

In determining penalties Heads, Deans and Academic Offences Committees will take the following into account:

- a. the degree of severity of the offence
- b. whether it is a first or subsequent offence
- c. the academic stage the student has reached (first year u/g, Masters, etc)
- d. any mitigating circumstances

Guidelines

Offence	Penalty for a first offence	Second or subsequent offences of this type
(i) Plagiarism which constitutes only a few lines of work	Usually a formal warning with the mark assigned to the work being based on the unplagiarised elements. ^[1]	Normally a zero. ^[2] No resubmission of work is permitted.
(ii) More extensive plagiarism	Normally a mark of zero for the work. In severe cases the penalty may be a mark of zero for the whole course/module. No resubmission of work is permitted. ^[3]	Normally withdrawal or non-award of degree.
(iii) Submitting work which has been submitted either previously or for a different, concurrent assignment	Ranges from a formal warning to a zero for one or both pieces of work.	Normally withdrawal or non-award of degree.
(iv) Falsifying data or evidence.	Normally a mark of zero for the work. In some cases a mark of zero for the whole course/module may be considered. In very severe cases, the requirement to withdraw or not be awarded a degree will be considered	Normally withdrawal or /non-award of the degree
(v) Submitting a fraudulent claim of extenuating circumstances.	Depending on the severity of the offence a penalty ranging from zero for the work/exam to which the extenuating circumstances refer to withdrawal or non-award of the degree	Normally withdrawal or/non-award of the degree
(vi) Assisting another student to commit an academic offence.	Penalty will depend on the extent of the assistance, but will range from a formal warning to zero for the student's own work on which assistance has been based	Normally withdrawal or non-award of the degree
(vii) Submitting jointly written work unless this is explicitly allowed; submitting work stolen from another	Penalty will depend on the extent of the joint writing, but ranging from a formal warning	Zero to withdrawal or non-award of the degree

student	to zero for the work. In cases of stolen work, a zero for the work or for the whole course/module will be awarded and disciplinary action may be taken.	
(viii) Copying the work of another candidate or otherwise communicating with another candidate in an examination.	Normally zero for the examination or in severe cases zero for the whole course/module	Normally withdrawal non-award of the degree
(viii) Introducing any information into an examination other than material expressly permitted in the instructions for that examination.	If information is not relevant to the exam the penalty will normally be a formal warning. Otherwise the penalty will normally be zero either for the question or the whole exam	Normally withdrawal or non-award of the degree

^[1]Departments may opt to require a student to submit a properly referenced version in order to obtain a mark or assign a mark on the basis of the unplagiarised elements;

^[2]Zeros that arise from academic offences must be carried forward even if the student repeats a year and the non-anonymised copy of the student's grid will be marked accordingly.

^[3] In cases where a zero mark for a piece of coursework will result in a student failing a degree, an AOC may allow re-submission of the work if it deems that the offence does not warrant such an outcome. The mark for the re-submitted work must be capped at the minimum mark allowable under the rules of assessment for the student's scheme of study. This does not apply to offences involving a dissertation or project, which are by definition 'aggravated' offences attracting a penalty equivalent to that of a second offence. In such cases, the AOC may decide whether or not the student may still be considered for a PG Diploma or Certificate, depending on the nature of the offence.

University of Essex

**Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training Procedure
(for students undertaking professional training schemes)**

Introduction

- 1 All University students are required to comply with the regulations of the University regarding conduct. Students enrolled on schemes where a practical professional placement is required (including health, social work and education) have additional responsibilities placed upon them regarding not only their conduct but also their professional suitability, as outlined in relevant professional body codes of practice. Failure to meet these responsibilities can lead to the *Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training Procedure* being invoked. Students will be notified on enrolment if their scheme of study is subject to the terms of this procedure.
- 2 The *Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training Procedure* applies to all relevant schemes leading to awards of the University of Essex, although the office holders identified in Sections A and B below may be adapted where the scheme is offered through a partner institution of the University.
- 3 In the event of one or more allegations of misconduct that does not reflect upon a student's professional suitability, these will be dealt with under the University's Disciplinary Procedures (or those of the relevant partner institution in the case of collaborative provision) and/or through criminal proceedings.
- 4 In the event of one or more allegations of misconduct that indicate that the student may not be suitable for engagement in the relevant profession, the University's *Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training Procedure* shall be invoked. A student may at any time be suspended or precluded from further study by the University if in breach, or alleged to be in breach, of professional conduct.
- 5 Breaches of professional standards by students may involve a range of actions or omissions but may include any of the following:
 - a) actions that are harmful to service users, other members of the public or service providers
 - b) actions that are likely to constitute an unacceptable risk to the student or others
 - c) failure to disclose information about previous matters relating to their professional suitability prior to enrolment on the scheme
 - d) contravention of the relevant professional code of conduct
 - e) actions that are prejudicial to the development or standing of professional practice.
- 6 In the event of an allegation of misconduct, students are advised to seek impartial help, advice, guidance and support from the Students' Union Advice Centre.

A Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Professional Misconduct or Professional Unsuitability

- A1 Allegations of professional misconduct or professional unsuitability against a student shall be made in writing to the Dean of the School offering the professional scheme or to the Dean of Learning Partnerships for schemes offered by a collaborative partner institution.

- A2 It must be borne in mind that an allegation of professional misconduct or professional unsuitability is a serious and potentially defamatory one. Consequently it is essential that the proceedings should be conducted on a basis of strict confidentiality.
- A3 On receipt of a written allegation, the Dean, in consultation with the relevant Scheme Director or equivalent, shall:
- a) take such immediate action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances to safeguard all relevant parties, but without prejudice to the outcome of the enquiry
 - b) interview the student and inform the student in writing of the nature of the allegation made
 - c) inform the student in writing of the nature of the action taken under A3(a) above
 - d) provide written information on the procedures for dealing with the allegation
 - e) appoint, after consultation with the Academic Registrar, a senior member of academic staff to act as Investigating Officer.
- A4 The Investigating Officer shall assemble impartially the evidence relevant to the allegation and shall prepare a written report for the Dean which shall not pass judgement for or against the accused nor recommend a particular course of action.
- A5 If the Dean deems that no *prima facie* case has been made against the student, he/she shall inform the student in writing.
- A6 If the Dean deems that a *prima facie* case has been made against the student, he/she shall refer the case as expeditiously as possible to a Professional Misconduct Committee which shall be appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Standards) and which shall normally comprise:
- a) a senior member of academic staff from another School as Chair
 - b) two members of academic staff from the relevant subject discipline within the School who have had no previous involvement in the case
 - c) one practising member of the relevant profession who is from outside the University and who has not been associated with the teaching of the appellant.
- A7 Neither the student's adviser/supervisor nor the Investigating Officer shall be members of the Committee.
- A8 The Secretary of the Professional Misconduct Committee shall be the Academic Registrar or his/her representative.
- A9 The Dean shall submit to the Secretary of the Professional Misconduct Committee such evidence, including the report of the Investigating Officer, as the Dean shall deem fitting. The Secretary shall send copies of the evidence to the members of the Committee and at the same time to the student concerned and shall convene a meeting of the Committee as soon as possible.
- A10 The Committee shall proceed in judicial fashion and, in particular, shall allow the student against whom allegations have been made to present his/her case in person and, if the student wishes, to bring to the Committee a student or employee of the University, the relevant partner institution or the Students' Union to help him/her in presenting his/her case to the Committee.
- A11 The Committee shall consider the written evidence submitted by the Dean and any statement or evidence provided by the student. It shall have the power to seek such other evidence as it deems necessary.

- A12 The Committee shall have the power to:
- a) permit the student to recommence training
 - b) discontinue the placement and institute arrangements for locating an alternative placement
 - c) preclude the student from further study on the scheme through the termination of training
 - d) impose such other penalty as it considers appropriate, provided that no such penalty requires or implies a concession or exemption under the Regulations governing the award of degrees.
- A13 When the Committee has reached its decision, the Secretary shall inform the student and the Dean of the School concerned in writing. The student shall be informed of the right to appeal against the decision in accordance with Section B (below).
- A14 If the student is found guilty of professional misconduct or professional unsuitability, the Dean and the Academic Registrar shall decide whether a report should be made to the relevant professional or statutory body.

B Procedure for Appeals against Decisions of the Professional Misconduct Committee

- B1 Written notice of appeal by the student must be lodged with the Academic Registrar within five working days of the student being informed of the decision by the Professional Misconduct Committee.
- B2 In the event of an appeal, the Academic Registrar and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Standards) shall decide whether the grounds for the appeal are covered by the provisions of paragraph B5 below and warrant further consideration by a Professional Misconduct Appeals Committee. If they agree that there are no grounds for further consideration of the appeal, the Academic Registrar shall inform the student in writing giving the reasons for that decision.
- B3 If the Academic Registrar and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Standards) decide that the appeal does warrant further consideration, the Academic Registrar shall refer the case to a Professional Misconduct Appeals Committee which shall be appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Standards) and which shall normally comprise:
- a) a Chairman who shall be from a different School from that relevant to the scheme
 - b) one member of staff from the relevant subject discipline within the School concerned who shall not be the Dean or the Investigating Officer or a member of the Professional Misconduct Committee
 - c) one senior practising member of the relevant profession who is from outside the University and who has not been associated with the teaching of the appellant.
- B4 The Secretary of the Committee shall be the Academic Registrar or his/her representative.
- B5 The grounds for the appeal shall be one or more of the following:
- a) that the Professional Misconduct Committee did not make reasonable efforts to acquire all relevant information
 - b) that new evidence had become available that could materially affect the Professional Misconduct Committee's decision
 - c) that there was evidence of procedural irregularity or prejudice or bias in the conduct of the hearing by the Professional Misconduct Committee.

- B6 The Committee shall have before it all documents relating to the original hearing, together with a written statement submitted by the student setting out the grounds for the appeal. The Committee shall not proceed by way of a re-hearing, but shall have power to require the presentation of such further evidence as it deems necessary.
- B7 The Committee shall have the same powers as the Professional Misconduct Committee and may confirm the decision of the Professional Misconduct Committee or substitute such other decision as it considers appropriate.
- B8 When the Committee has reached its decision, the Secretary shall inform the student and the Dean of the School concerned in writing.
- B9 If any action had been taken under paragraph A14 above to inform the relevant professional or statutory bodies, the Dean and the Academic Registrar shall decide whether any further report should be made to the professional or statutory bodies concerned in the light of the decision of the Committee.
- B10 The decision of the Professional Misconduct Appeals Committee shall be final.
- B11 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints or appeals. When the University's internal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals have been exhausted, the University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter. Students wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity of an independent review by the OIA must submit their application to the OIA within three months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. Full details of the scheme are available on request and will be enclosed with the Completion of Procedures.

Appendix C

Academic Standards Committee
23rd November 2005
Agenda item: 17
Paper: ASC/05/82

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX TAUGHT AWARDS

In recent years, the University has adopted a number of new awards to add to the longer-standing degrees and diplomas which have traditionally formed the bulk of academic provision:

- i) In June 2004, Senate approved the recommendations of the Sub-Degree Framework Working Group, which was concerned with awards below the level of an Honours Degree. These awards are in operation in several academic departments in Colchester, Learning Partnerships, Insearch Essex, University of Essex Southend and at partner institutions.
- ii) At the postgraduate level, the introduction of Programme Specifications and the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)* led to the creation of separate Graduate or Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates. (Whether the award is Graduate or Postgraduate depends on the level of study; whether it is a Certificate or a Diploma depends on the volume of study.)

As the new awards have been introduced, decisions have been made in respect of relevant administrative tasks, such as admissions, graduation and certification. Work is now under way to develop a University fees framework based on this awards framework. In some areas, there are articulated progression opportunities for students within awards at the sub-Honours level and stakeholders would benefit from a clearer statement of all the University's taught awards.

Academic Standards Committee is invited to approve the following statement encompassing all the University's taught awards.

Nicola Jackson
Systems Administration

Award	Minimum Requirements for Award ¹		Exit Level in <i>FHEQ</i>	Essex level equivalent	Graduation Format	Certification
	Credits	Study Period Equivalents				
Certificate of Continuing Education	60 credits	Half an academic year	C (Certificate)	1	Award Ceremony	Crested Parchment
Certificate in Higher Education and Higher Certificate of Education (Insearch)	120 credits	One academic year	C	1	Award Ceremony ²	Crested Parchment
Diploma in Higher Education	240 credits	Two academic years	I (Intermediate)	2	Graduation Ceremony	Crested Parchment
Foundation Degree	240 credits	Two academic years	I	2	Graduation Ceremony	Crested Parchment
Ordinary Degree	300 credits	Three academic years	I	3	Graduation Ceremony	Crested Parchment
Honours Degree	360 credits	Three undergraduate years	H (Honours)	3	Graduation Ceremony	Crested Parchment
Graduate Certificate	60 credits	Half an academic year	H	3	Graduation Ceremony	Crested Parchment
Graduate Diploma	120 credits	One academic year	H	3	Graduation Ceremony	Crested Parchment
Postgraduate Certificate	60 credits	Half an academic year	M (Masters)	G	Graduation Ceremony	Crested Parchment
Postgraduate Diploma	120 credits	One academic year	M	G	Graduation Ceremony	Crested Parchment
Masters	180 credits	One academic year plus dissertation (12 months)	M	G	Graduation Ceremony	Crested Parchment
Professional Doctorate	540 credits	Three years.	D (Doctorate level)	D	Graduation Ceremony	Crested Parchment

¹ In some areas of the University, awards are obtained by credit accumulation and are described in terms of the credits that must be achieved by successful completion of individual modules. In other areas, credits describe only the workload contribution to the scheme and achievement is determined by volume of study and rules of assessment which specify the requirements for progression and the achievement of an award. In further areas, credits are not used at all.

² Except the Certificate in Theatre Arts Foundation (East 15), which is invited to attend Graduation in July.