

Summary of academic policy decisions, 2020-21

This summary includes decisions made at the following meetings:

Senate (4 November 2020)
Senate (27 January 2021)

Education Committee (29 March 2021) - *Awaiting Senate approval*

As decisions are being made in response to changing circumstances, please make sure to refer to current communications and information on webpages, and check with the relevant team if you have any questions.

Approved variations to the Rules of Assessment for specific courses are not included in this summary. Departments will be notified of approved variations directly following their approval.

Name of New or Amended Policy	Category	Applies to	Key contact(s)	Summary of change or new policy approved	Date that change or new policy takes effect	Link to source paper/committee minutes
Student Engagement Policy	Progress and appeals	All taught provision	Rebecca Funnell, Senior Student Progress Manager	The new policy (appendix A of linked paper) and associated Regulation amendments (appendix B of linked paper) have been approved for implementation from 2020-21 onwards to replace the Progress Procedures for Taught Programmes of Study.	From 2020-21	Senate 04/11/20, Paper S/20/80

<p>Extenuating Circumstances Policy</p>	<p>Progress and appeals</p>	<p>All taught provision</p>	<p>Jodie Field, Senior Assessment Manager</p>	<p>That on the recommendation of the Chair of Education Committee, the Chair of Senate has approved the following addition to the list of recommendations available to a Board of Examiners, as set out in the section 23 of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, with immediate effect</p> <p>In circumstances when a student is repeating a year and is prevented from undertaking further reassessment due to their serious extenuating circumstances, the change enables the Board of Examiners to instate marks/credits from the previous year where this would enable the student to satisfy the requirements for an award, including an appropriate exit award.</p> <p>The following addition has been made to the list of recommendations available to a Board of Examiners, as set out in the section 23 of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, with immediate effect:</p> <p><u>Exceptionally, where a student is repeating a year, in the case of serious extenuating circumstances that mean that a student is unable to undertake further reassessment, instate the marks/credits for a module(s) taken previously where the credits would make the difference between a student being eligible for an award, including an appropriate exit award, and otherwise having insufficient credits.</u></p>	<p>Immediate effect</p>	<p>Senate 04/11/2020, Paper S/20/64, Section 5</p>
<p>Late Submission of Coursework Policy</p>	<p>Academic offences</p>	<p>All taught provision</p>	<p>Jodie Field, Senior Assessment Manager</p>	<p>That on the recommendation of the Chair of Education Committee, the Chair of Senate has approved a set of amendments to the Late Submission of Coursework Policy to incorporate reference to take-home exams, to apply with immediate effect. Full details are set out in Appendix A of the linked paper.</p>	<p>Immediate effect</p>	<p>Senate 04/11/2020, Paper S/20/64, Appendix A</p>

Decolonising the Curriculum	Curriculum	All taught provision	Hannah Gibson, Co-Chair of the Race Equality Self Assessment Team	<p>The following actions to support the University's work in decolonising the curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All departments to have an action plan to decolonise their curriculum with a timescale for completion. Plans to be submitted to the Deputy Dean (Education) by June 2021. - A series of resources be developed to support departments to decolonise their curricula. - A series of events to support departments in decolonising their curricula be held. 	By June 2021	Senate 04/11/2020, Paper S/20/86, Item for Decision 1
Award and Conferment of Degrees and Posthumous Degrees	Assessment	Postgraduate research provision	Laura Ruddick, Senior PGRE Manager	<p>That the following changes to current regulation for the Award and Conferment of Degrees and Posthumous Degrees be approved with immediate effect:</p> <p>6.29. (a) For a taught award, in the event of a candidate's death, the Board of Examiners may <u>confer</u> the award of a degree, diploma or certificate post obitum provided that it is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that the candidate would have successfully completed the intended award and that the candidate had successfully completed at least two-thirds of the programme of study.</p> <p><u>(b) For a research award, in the event of a candidate's death, the Chair of the relevant Faculty Education Committee or nominee may confer the award of a research degree listed in the Principal Regulations for Research Degrees post obitum provided that, following the report from the examiners, they are satisfied that; the work submitted is the candidate's own; that the standard, quantity and originality of the research work completed has been judged to be that normally required to submit for examination for the proposed award; and that enough of the research has been completed and written-up to allow a proper assessment to be made of the thesis.</u></p>	Immediate effect	Senate 04/11/2020, Paper S/20/86, Appendix A

Rules of Assessment	Assessment	Postgraduate taught provision	Aron Hugh, Project Officer	That the Rules of Assessment for Full-Time Taught Masters Degrees with a January Start (Models 1 and 2), as set out in Appendix B of the linked paper, be approved with effect from 2020-21.	From 2020-21	Senate 04/11/2020, Paper S/20/86, Appendix B
Alternative Assessment	Assessment	All taught provision	Jodie Field, Senior Assessment Manager Wendy Clifton-Sprigg, Deputy Director (Student Administration and Policy)	That for 2020-21, departments should ensure that where exams are replaced with online assessment, the format of the assessment is reviewed to take advantage of the open-book format to create a robust and authentic assessment instrument. That departments should ensure that students know about the format of the online assessment in 2020-21 and what is expected of them, and are supported in their preparations for online exams.	From 2020-21	Senate 27/01/2021, Paper S/21/10
Alternative Assessment	Assessment	All taught provision	Jodie Field, Senior Assessment Manager Wendy Clifton-Sprigg, Deputy Director (Student Administration and Policy)	That Section 2a of the Assessment Policies be amended as follows, with immediate effect. The original text is available in the linked paper. iii. Departments are required to inform students in writing of the purpose of each form of assessment used. Normally this will be done through the introductory information for the module concerned. iv. Except in the case of formal examinations, Departments are expected to provide students with formative practice in each mode of assessment. That departments using Moodle for MCQs are required with immediate effect to adopt procedures to use the question bank and randomisation features to reduce the potential for academic misconduct, including use of randomisation features, and consideration of use of the question bank, with due regard to safeguarding fairness for students.	Immediate effect	Senate 27/01/2021, Paper S/21/10

Alternative Assessment	Assessment	All taught provision	Jodie Field, Senior Assessment Manager Wendy Clifton-Sprigg, Deputy Director (Student Administration and Policy)	<p>That from 2021-22, open-book exams replace closed-book exams except where there is a good case for retaining closed-book exams, for example PSRB requirements.</p> <p>This decision was made at the Senate held on 27 January 2021. Departments should refer to subsequent communications regarding Alternative Assessment in order to ensure that they have the most up-to-date information.</p>	From 2021-22	Senate 27/01/2021, Paper S/21/10
Alternative Assessment	Assessment	All taught provision	Jodie Field, Senior Assessment Manager Wendy Clifton-Sprigg, Deputy Director (Student Administration and Policy)	<p>That departments review the role of closed-book exams in module assessment to be completed as part of the Annual Update for 2022-23 and agree with the Deputy Dean (Education) where there is a good case to retain a closed-book exam. Exceptions should be approved by the Deputy Dean (Education), in consultation with the Academic Registrar and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education).</p> <p>That departments review module and course assessment strategies to ensure that the assessment requirements are proportionate and meaningful, taking into account the need to meet learning outcomes and the credit size of the module. Departments should pay particular attention to modules where it was agreed that the learning outcomes had already been met before exams. The review to be completed by the Annual Update for 2022-23.</p> <p>This decision was made at the Senate held on 27 January 2021. Departments should refer to subsequent communications regarding Alternative Assessment in order to ensure that they have the most up-to-date information.</p>	For 2022-23	Senate 27/01/2021, Paper S/21/10
Rules of Assessment	Assessment	All taught provision	Deanna Walker, Assessment Manager	That changes to the Rules of Assessment be implemented with effect from 2020-21, as set out in Senate paper S/21/18 Appendix A.	From 2020-21	Senate 27/01/2021, Paper S/21/18, Appendix A

No Detriment	Assessment	All taught provision	Jodie Field, Senior Assessment Manager	<p>That a temporary Force Majeure provision be approved to permit reassessment in more than 60 credits for undergraduate students and to remove the requirement to pass more than 60 credits at the first attempt for taught postgraduate students, with effect until the end of September 2021 and extending to September 2022 for students whose assessment or learning opportunities were impacted by Covid-19 during 2020-21 but whose outcomes are being considered by a Board of Examiners in 2021-22.</p> <p>That for all taught students who fail a module, Boards of Examiners will automatically offer uncapped reassessment, with no requirement to submit an extenuating circumstances claim.</p> <p>In applying the Extenuating Circumstances Policy for all taught students in 2020-21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students can self-certify in support of all extenuating circumstances claims b. Where a student submits an extenuating circumstances claim for a module that has been passed, the Board of Examiners will offer an uncapped voluntary attempt at reassessment. <p>That in 2020-21, Boards of Examiners will review all module cohort marks.</p>	Immediate effect	Senate 27/01/2021, Paper S/21/11
Assessment in 2021-22	Assessment	All taught provision	Jodie Field, Senior Assessment Manager	<p>This paper was sent to Education Committee 29/03/2021 and has not received full approval. A final decision on this policy will be made by Senate 28/04/2021.</p> <p>That the default position for assessment 2021-22 should be remote assessment by default, with exceptions where in-person assessment is essential, to be agreed by the Deputy Deans (Education) in consultation with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Academic Registrar as appropriate.</p> <p>Where in-person assessment is required, clear communications are led by the relevant</p>	For 2021-22	Education Committee 29/03/2021, Paper EC/21/16

				Departments and Schools to applicants and returning students to ensure full understanding for those students of the implications for dual delivery.		
Reading lists	Library	All taught provision	Clare French, Assistant Director - Content and Digital Systems Hannah Groom, Content Delivery Librarian	<p>This paper was sent to Education Committee 29/03/2021 and has not received full approval. A final decision on this policy will be made by Senate 28/04/2021.</p> <p>That the following definition of what essential means in the context of a reading list item is proposed: <i>All students must read or watch this resource to be able to complete the module or engage with the teaching for that week</i></p> <p>That all “essential” resources should be available online (with academic staff choosing alternative resources where this is not possible, with Library support)</p> <p>That the following timeline is adopted to ensure that all “essential” resources are available online to students by the start of the academic year:</p> <p>Rollover of reading lists on Talis <u>by end of first week in April</u> Module leaders to have updated reading lists <u>by 1 July</u> Library to have let module leaders know if essential items are not available <u>by 1 September</u> Resources to be available to students <u>by 1 October</u></p>	For 2021-22	Education Committee 29/03/2021, Paper EC/21/17

<p>Alternative Assessment</p>	<p>Assessment</p>	<p>Undergraduate provision</p>	<p>Jodie Field, Senior Assessment Manager Aron Hugh, Project Officer Claire Watts, Assessment Manager Kimberley Wright, Assessment Manager</p>	<p>This paper was sent to Education Committee 29/03/2021 and has not received full approval. A final decision on this policy will be made by Senate 28/04/2021.</p> <p>Ordinary Degrees</p> <p>a. To incorporate an Ordinary Degree as an exit award into the Undergraduate Rules of Assessment with immediate effect.</p> <p>b. That only Essex modules (including modules taken at Partner Institutions) and modules achieved during a term abroad should be included in the eligibility criteria and not credits attained on a year abroad/placement year.</p> <p>c. That the text outlined in recommendation 1.c. of the linked document is added to the 3-year Rules of Assessment (and equivalent in the 4-year Rules of Assessment).</p> <p>f. That the award title for an Ordinary Degree should be Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science, without the word Honours, and that Ordinary Degree should be used in place of the degree classification.</p> <p>g. That degrees with a protected title should continue to use an alternative title for exit awards, where necessary, as set by the relevant professional body.</p> <p>h. That degrees without a protected title should use the same title for the Ordinary Degree as for the original Honours degree with the addition of the following explanatory text on the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR): <i>Where an Ordinary Degree is awarded as an exit award, the degree title is based on the original degree aimed for, unless the title is protected. The HEAR shows all modules and subject areas studied, including modules that have been passed and the credits awarded, as well as modules that have not been passed and the credits have not been awarded.</i></p>	<p>Immediate effect</p>	<p>Education Committee 29/03/2021, Paper EC/21/21</p>
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<p>Alternative Assessment</p>	<p>Assessment</p>	<p>Undergraduate provision</p>	<p>Jodie Field, Senior Assessment Manager Aron Hugh, Project Officer Claire Watts, Assessment Manager Kimberley Wright, Assessment Manager</p>	<p>This paper was sent to Education Committee 29/03/2021 and has not received full approval. A final decision on this policy will be made by Senate 28/04/2021.</p> <p>That September 2021 Reassessment Exam Boards offer trailing as part of the No Detriment Policy in 2020/21, which should be for a maximum of 30 non-core credits which includes any failed credits being carried from previous years of study.</p> <p>That reassessment over the summer in 2020-21 is limited to a total of 120 credits including reassessment in trailed credits from 2019/20.</p> <p>That students cannot progress to the next year of study in 2021-22 if they have not passed trailed credits from 2019-20 and these failed credits cannot be condoned.</p> <p>That as part of the No Detriment policy in 2020-21, students who achieve a year mark below 20 be offered 'Repeat Year at First Attempt' and 'Resit' as an outcome at the summer exam boards and 'Repeat Year at First Attempt' only at the September exam boards.</p>	<p>Immediate effect</p>	<p>Education Committee 29/03/2021, Paper EC/21/21</p>
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The Summary of Academic Policy Decisions is circulated to:
Heads and Directors of Departments, Schools and Centres
Directors of Education
Heads of Academic Section Teams
Academic Services Senior Management Group
Department Managers/Administrators
Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Executive Deans
Deputy Deans (Education)
Academic Registrar
Faculty Managers
Quality and Academic Development Managers
Progress Managers
Assessment Managers
Students' Union
Governance Office
Partnerships Team
If a role holder should be added to this list, please email quad@essex.ac.uk