

From: Joanne Tallentire, Senior Assistant Registrar

07 February 2003

SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC POLICY DECISIONS – AUTUMN 2002

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

ASC – 20 November 2002
Senate – 11 December 2002

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.

Summaries of academic policy decisions are available online at:
<http://www2.essex.ac.uk/academic/calendar/restricted/academic-policy-summary.html>

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SECTION A – FOR ACTION BY HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND CENTRES

1. Central Information in Departmental Student Handbooks (ASC.MM.271-274/02)

‘RESOLVED:

- (i) that the central information for handbooks be provided as an online resource from October 2003;
- (ii) that departments be required to include links to the central information in online versions of their student handbooks with effect from 2003-04;
- (iii) that the requirement to include standard items of central information in printed copies of departmental student handbooks be withdrawn with effect from 2003-04;
- (iv) that if departments wished to include any topics covered by the central information in printed student handbooks, they must use relevant extracts from the central text as published in the online resource.’

The Systems Management Office is co-ordinating the development of the central online resource and will inform departments of the URL in due course.

2. Submission of Departmental Minutes to Deans (ASC.MM.282-283/02)

‘Given the development of Annual Monitoring as a key quality assurance and enhancement mechanism within the University, which included the requirement for student feedback to be evaluated under the heading of *‘Maintenance and Enhancement of Quality and Standards’*, [Academic Standards Committee]:

RESOLVED:

that Departments no longer be required to send copies of the minutes of Staff/Student Liaison Committees and the unreserved minutes of Departmental Meetings to Deans.’

3. Online Course Catalogue (S.M.263/02)

‘RESOLVED:

that departments be required to maintain up-to-date and complete entries of their courses in the On-line Course Catalogue.’

SECTION B – FOR INFORMATION

1. Follow-up to Student Assessment of Courses (SAC) (ASC.MM.265-269/02)

‘Amendments to the reporting requirements within the Procedure for Student Assessment of Courses (SAC) were proposed, to create a link between this exercise and Annual Monitoring. It was proposed to cease to require each Head of Department to report to ASC annually on the process and outcomes of SAC within his/her department. Instead the outcomes of SAC would be considered by departments as part of the Annual Monitoring cycle. Consideration of student feedback was already a requirement of annual monitoring. Such amendments would lighten the reporting load on departments whilst ensuring that the mechanisms for considering student feedback on the quality of their courses were both robust and appropriate.

Although SAC was course-based, whereas Annual Monitoring was scheme based, as the majority of courses related clearly to one or more particular degree schemes within a department the Head of Department would need to ensure that the outcomes of SAC for individual courses were directed towards the most appropriate Annual Monitoring forum.’

‘RESOLVED:

(a) that follow-up to Student Assessment of Courses should take place as part of the Annual Monitoring process;’

The Deans are discussing the detailed implementation of this change and further guidance will be provided in due course.

2. Policy and Procedure for Examinations at a Distant Venue (ASC.M.246/02)

Academic Standards Committee approved the Policy and Procedure for Examinations at a Distant Venue, as set out in Appendix A.

3. Re-definition of Undergraduate Credits (S.MM.258-259/02)

'RESOLVED:

- a) that University credits at undergraduate level should be renamed *workload credits* with effect from October 2002;
- b) that a revised definition of the University's credit system at undergraduate level should be introduced from October 2002, as follows (new wording underlined, old wording in square brackets):
 - a. 'Each undergraduate course is assigned a number of workload credits, which indicate the proportion of the academic year's work that is devoted to the course. Courses are normally assigned either 30 credits (full-years courses) or 15 credits (half-year courses). For undergraduate students the academic year consists of 120 [-135] credits (except where ASC has approved a specific variation). Thus a standard three-year undergraduate degree consists of 360 [-450] credits and a standard four-year degree consists of 480 [-540] credits. [For taught Masters students a full-time academic year consists of 180-210 credits.] To calculate the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits, the University of Essex credit for each course should be divided by two.'

4. Sub-Degree Framework (S.M.284/02)

The Senate resolved that the Sub-Degree Framework recommended by the Board of Studies for Collaborative Education, and endorsed by Academic Standards Committee, be adopted, as set out in Appendix B.

FOR ACTION:

Heads of Department

Directors of

Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies

Centre for Theatre Studies

Human Rights Centre

Pan-European Institute

Centre for Theoretical Studies

FOR INFORMATION:

Vice-Chancellor

Pro-Vice-Chancellors

Deans

Academic Registrar

Academic Section Administrators

Departmental Administrators (including Centres listed above)

Executive Officer, Socrates Office

EXAMINATIONS SAT IN DISTANT VENUES

1. All candidates are required to sit examinations at the University of Essex or the relevant partner institution except when

EITHER
 - (i) there are exceptional circumstances, supported by appropriate documentary evidence, such as incapacity to travel for medical reasons, or the death of a close family member. (This applies to resit examinations only.)OR
 - (ii) a student is required for academic reasons to be in residence outside the UK at the time of the examination, and arrangements can be made by the relevant department for the examinations to be simultaneous with those in the UK and subject to appropriate invigilation. (This will normally occur when the University of Essex requires residence outside the UK during the resit period, or when a student visiting the University on a SOCRATES or other international exchange programme is required to return to his/her home institution before the normal Essex examination period.)
2. Requests under (i) above will only be considered from students who are domiciled outside of the UK.
3. Requests must be submitted in writing to the Examinations Officer in the Academic Section. The student shall detail in his/her application the reason why s/he is not able to sit the examination in the specified venue. In all cases supporting documentary evidence shall be supplied by the student.
4. Requests based solely on financial grounds will not be granted.
5. Approval to sit an examination at a distant venue is conditional upon:
 - (a) the University securing a suitable alternative venue which is approved by the Examinations Officer, for example a British Council Office or an educational establishment with university status, where equivalent standards of accommodation and supervision to those provided by the University in the specified venue can reasonably be assured;
 - (b) the examination being able to be scheduled concurrently with the same examination being held at the specified venue.
6. A Distant Venue Fee of £100 is payable where a request is approved, in addition to the standard resit fees payable by all students resitting examinations at the specified venue. The Distant Venue Fee may be waived by the Dean of School in exceptional circumstances. The student is liable for any costs incurred at the distant venue, such as invigilation and postage.
7. The deadlines for receipt of applications by the Examinations Officer for sitting examinations in places other than specified examination venues are:

Summer Examination Period

28 days prior to

Resit Examination Period Ten days before the start of the resit examination period.

8. Requests will be given preliminary consideration by the Exams Officer, who shall investigate the feasibility of securing appropriate arrangements (see para 5) and forward the request to the relevant Dean of School with a recommendation whether the request should be granted or disallowed. The final decision shall rest with the Dean.
9. The Exams Administrator shall inform the student in writing of the Dean's decision and shall provide the student with details of the arrangements for the examination, including exam time, venue and local costs payable, if any.
10. Once the Examinations Office has notified the student in writing that s/he is permitted to sit the examination(s) at a distant venue, the student will be liable for payment of the Distant Venue Fee, which if not paid will result in the student being in debt to the University and being unable to register for the next academic year or being ineligible to receive a degree until the debt is paid.

Nicola Jackson
Examinations Officer
October 2002

Certificate (C) Level (former HE Level 1)

Un-named Certificate of Continuing Education
60 credits at Level C

Note: offered by the Centre for Lifelong Learning

Un-named Certificate of Higher Education
Normally 120 credits at Level C
May include 30 credits at Level FE3/HE0

Named Higher Certificate
Normally 120 credits at Level C, from coherent study programme
May include 30 credits at Level FE3/HE0

Intermediate (I) Level (former HE Level 2)

Un-named Diploma of Higher Education
Normally 240 credits, minimum 60 credits at Level I

Named Higher Diploma
Normally 240 credits, minimum of 60 at Level I

Named Foundation Degree
Normally 240 credits, minimum of 120 at Level I
Must include work-based learning

Named Ordinary Degree
Normally 300 credits, minimum of 60 at Level H

Honours (H) Level (former HE Level 3)

Named Honours degree
Normally 360 credits, minimum 120 at Level H
Note: included here for purposes of comparison