

Academic Regulations 2008-09– Summary of major changes

The following summary sets down the main changes incorporated in the Academic Regulations 2008-09, approved by the University's Academic Board/Chair of the Academic Board to take effect from September 2008.

1 Assessment issues

This section of the paper details a number of linked changes designed to improve student engagement.

1.1 Capping of reassessment for all taught modules

From 2008/09, modules passed after reassessment will be capped at a bare pass level (40% for undergraduate modules and 50% for postgraduate modules).

This change will apply to all modules registered in 2008/09 and thereafter; where mitigating circumstances have been accepted for the first attempt students will continue to have an entitlement to an uncapped mark at the reassessment point.

(Sections 3.2, paragraph 22 and 4.2, paragraph 20 contain the revised regulations for Undergraduate and Postgraduate students respectively)

A further consequence of the decision to cap reassessments at the pass mark for the module is that the requirement for coursework reassessment to be conducted on the basis of new tasks has been removed and for these assessments a student will normally be able to rework and improve the original submission. However, reassessment examinations will continue to require a different paper to the original version.

Section 3.2, paragraph 19 and Section 4.2, paragraph 16 have the newly approved regulation for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

1.2 Late Submission of Coursework

Where a student submits coursework late but within 10 working days of the due date the work will be marked and a mark recorded for the student. If the student does not have valid mitigating circumstances but the mark awarded would lead to an overall pass in the module, the assessment will be accepted and a capped mark for the module will be recorded.

Section 3.2, paragraph 5 and Section 4.2, paragraph 6 are the relevant sections of the undergraduate and postgraduate regulations.

Since publication of the hard copy Regulations, a clarifying addition to the relevant regulations has been added; the online version of the Academic Regulations incorporates the addition. The clarifying addition is shown in *italics* below:

Where a first assessment is submitted within the late coursework period it shall be marked. If the student does not have valid mitigating circumstances but the mark awarded would lead to an overall pass in the module, the assessment shall be accepted and a capped mark for the module will be recorded; *except, where the student has achieved sufficient marks for an overall pass in the module excluding the mark for any late work, in which case a mark of zero will be recorded for the item of late work but the overall mark for the module will not be capped, but will instead be based solely on the work submitted by the deadline.*

1.3 Undergraduate Honours level classification formula

In order to help counterbalance the impact of capping on degree outcomes, the Honours Degree classification formula has been amended on the basis of double weighting the 90 credits Honours level (i.e. the minimum Honours level credit requirement for a Degree with Honours).

Except where a student enters the Honours level of an undergraduate degree with advanced standing the classification average will be calculated as set out in Section 3.2 paragraph 69a.

The average of the marks for the best 90 credits (6 modules) at Honours level shall contribute two thirds of the classification average; the average of the marks for the next best 135 credits (9 modules) at Intermediate or Honours level shall contribute one third of the classification average.

1.4 Completion of an undergraduate module

The Academic Regulations permit a student to obtain an undergraduate award without having to pass every module. Where failed modules are permitted to contribute towards an award they will have to be *complete* as defined below:

An undergraduate module is deemed to be complete where:

- i) the student has passed the module on aggregate;

or

- ii) the student has obtained a mark of at least 25% in the module and submitted the final component of assessment for the module.

1.5 (Postgraduate) Dissertation deferrals

At postgraduate level, non or slow completion of the dissertation continues to constitute the central challenge in relation to improving retention, progression and achievement. As such from 2008/09 the former provision in the Academic Regulations for a student to request a deferral on **one occasion only**, subject to academic approval, has been removed. From 2008/09, a student who is unable to submit their dissertation for the due deadline should be advised to submit a claim under the Mitigating Circumstances Procedure.

1.6 Mitigating Circumstances (Section 10.3)

The Mitigating Circumstances procedure has been refocused to encourage the late submission of coursework as opposed to non submission of coursework.

In addition the Procedure attempts to make more explicit the University's expectations in relation to the evidence required, namely:

- Claims in relation to late submission of coursework would normally require evidence to demonstrate mitigating circumstances for the period immediately leading up to the assessment and/or the published coursework deadline.
- Claims in relation to non-attendance at an examination would normally require evidence to demonstrate mitigating circumstances for the period immediately leading up to the examination and/or the date of the examination in question;
- Claims in relation to non submission of coursework would normally require evidence to demonstrate mitigating circumstances for the period immediately leading up to the assessment and/or the published coursework deadline and must in addition demonstrate why it was not possible to submit the work within the late coursework period.

The outcomes for valid claims are as follows:

- If the assessment in question was submitted up to 10 working days later than the published coursework deadline (*NB where the late coursework deadline falls within the University's Christmas and Easter vacation periods a single generic late coursework deadline shall be set and published by the University*), the mark for the assignment will be confirmed.

- If no coursework was submitted for assessment up to 10 working days later than the published coursework deadline (*NB where the late coursework deadline falls within the University's Christmas and Easter vacation periods a single generic late coursework deadline shall be set and published by the University*), or if the student was unable to attend an examination, the student will be given the opportunity to be assessed at the next assessment point for the component(s) concerned. This attempt shall replace the opportunity to which the mitigating circumstances pertained.

The outcomes for rejected claims are as follows:

- Where a rejected claim relates to work submitted up to 10 working days later than the published coursework deadline (*NB where the late coursework deadline falls within the University's Christmas and Easter vacation periods a single generic late coursework deadline shall be set and published by the University*) the outcome will be progressed as follows:

First assessments:

- Where a mark awarded for a first assessment would lead to an overall pass in the module, the assessment shall be accepted and a capped mark for the module will be recorded.
- Where a mark awarded for a first assessment would not lead to an overall pass in the module, a mark of zero shall be awarded for the component(s) in question.

Reassessments:

- For any reassessment, a mark of zero shall be awarded for the component(s) in question.
- Where a rejected claim relates to non submission of coursework or non attendance at an examination, a mark of zero shall be awarded for the component(s) in question.

Scheduling of outstanding assessments/reassessments:

Where a student has a further assessment opportunity following the summer resit period, it must be taken at the earliest assessment point when the module is next offered in the following academic year, regardless of whether it is a first assessment or reassessment.

1.7 Appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards (Section 10.4)

To encourage engagement at the first assessment opportunity (given the introduction of capping) and act as a method for ensuring that students with genuine mitigating circumstances are not penalised for engaging with their first assessment opportunity, students will from 2008/09 be able appeal on the ground of academic performance. As such these appeals will be considered after the publication of results and therefore fall under the appeals process (rather than the mitigating circumstances process). The same 10 working day deadline from the publication of result(s) concerned will apply.

To effectively manage this process and promote the submission of genuine claims:

- The deadline for claims will be post publication of results, so that students can make a true judgement as to whether their performance has been affected; and,
- Claims are submitted on the understanding that, if successful, the original mark will be forfeited.

Should such an appeal be upheld:

- The mark for the work concerned will be removed from the record and the assessment attempt declared 'null and void'
- The student will be granted a first sit (if the appeal related to a first sit) or a resit (if the appeal related to a resit) at the next opportunity

N.B in the case of reassessments, a student will only be able to appeal with regard to a fail, i.e. a grade less than 40% (undergraduate) /50% (postgraduate).

2 Research Degree Issues (Section 5 and Section 10.6)

The Research and Professional Doctorate Regulations include provision for a senior member of staff* to be appointed as Independent Chair for each viva voce, his/her role being to ensure due regulatory process for oral examinations. In addition, new Procedures for the Conduct of the Research Degree Oral Examination now form Section 10.6 of the Academic Regulations 2008/09.

**It is envisaged that a small pool of experienced examiners will be called upon to act as independent chairs (drawn largely from the membership of the Research Degrees Committee). In addition, the pool of examiners will meet annually to discuss issues of practice and ensure consistency.*

3 Amendments to the Awards Frameworks

Undergraduate Awards Framework (Integrated Masters awards)

- Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost) at 480 credits
- Provision has been made for the Master of Engineering (MEng) at 480 credits

Research Degrees Awards Framework: Professional Doctorate

- Other than for the Doctor of Education (EdD), all other Professional Doctorates awards will be abbreviated as '**DProf**'

4 Not for implementation in 2008/09

Late coursework

The Academic Board at its last meeting approved the principle of allowing late work, more specifically 'work of a passing standard submitted up to 2 working days after the published deadline will be marked as if on time; however, the mark for the work will be reduced either by 10% or to 40%* whichever outcome is greater'.

*50% for Postgraduate

The incorporation of this proposal into the Academic Regulations was contingent upon confirmation that the model can be implemented in a consistent, automated way on the SITS system. After confirmation from the SITS system supplier that such an automated approach cannot be implemented for 2008/09, this provision has not been incorporated into the Academic Regulations 2008/09.

The Academic Regulations 2008-09 in full and this summary are available to download online at: www.londonmet.ac.uk/academic-regulations