

Academic Regulations 2011/12 – Summary of changes

The following summary sets down the changes incorporated into the Academic Regulations 2011/12, approved by the University's Academic Board to take effect from September 2011 for both new and current students. For 2011/12, the Academic Board resolved that given the introduction of a new Undergraduate Framework and associated Regulations in 2012/13, amendments would be limited to minor clarifications. The highlighted sections below set down the updated regulations for 2011/12.

1.1 University nomenclature

The Academic Regulations 2011/12 have been updated to reflect changes to University structures and senior staff positions.

1.2 Entry Requirements for International Applicants (Section 2.2 and Section 5.2)

Changes by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) to the requirements for international students came into force on 21 April 2011 and consequently were mandatory for international student admission in 2011/12.

In summary, amendments relate to the following:

- Undergraduate - an IELTS score of 5.5 in all components;
- increase of required TOEFL score. In addition, the requirements are mapped to the preferred Internet Based Test (IBT) test as opposed to the written based test (a score of 87 in the IBT compares to a score of 569 in the paper based test cited in the 2010/11 Regulations);
- the University's English Language test (i) is no longer accepted by the UKBA and therefore is no longer available to international students and, (ii) (for EU students only) the test has been renamed the 'Password Test'.

The Academic Board resolved that changes would also apply to EU students for 2012/13 entry and thus common requirements for both international and EU students would be maintained.

Changes are as follows:

Certificated minimum entry requirements – undergraduate

- 12 Unless studying a course both taught and assessed entirely in a language other than English, students shall provide evidence of English language skills demonstrated by:
- a pass in English Language at GCSE at grade C or above, *or*
 - level 3 communications key skills unit, *or*
 - IELTS test at band 5.5 or above with a minimum score of 5.5* in each component, *or*
 - TOEFL (IBT) with a score of 87* or above, with at least 21 in Reading, 22 in Listening, 23 in Speaking and 21 in Writing, *or*
 - **for EU students only** - a pass in the University's English language test (Password Test), *or*
 - equivalent as judged by the authorised admitting officer in accordance with the advice of the University's International Office.

***Note:** *For a transitional year (i.e., 2011/12 entry) EU students **only** may be admitted on the minimum IELTS and TOEFL requirements as set down in the University's Academic Regulations 2010/11.*

Certificated minimum entry requirements – postgraduate taught courses

- 19 Unless studying a course both taught and assessed entirely in a language other than English, students shall provide evidence of English language skills demonstrated by:
- a pass in English Language at GCSE at grade C or above, *or*
 - level 3 communications key skills unit, *or*
 - IELTS test at band 6.0 or above with a minimum score of 5.5 in each component, *or*
 - TOEFL (IBT) with a score of 87 or above, with at least 21 in Reading, 22 in Listening, 23 in Speaking and 21 in Writing, *or*
 - **for EU students only** - a pass in the University's English language test (the Password Test) *or*
 - equivalent as judged by the authorised admitting officer in accordance with the advice of the University's International Office.

***Note:** *For a transitional year (i.e., 2011/12 entry) EU students **only** may be admitted on the minimum TOEFL requirements as set down in the University's Academic Regulations 2010/11.*

Certificated minimum entry requirements – research degree

- 12 Applicants for MPhil, MPhil with possibility of transfer to PhD, and PhD, whose first language is not English, shall provide as a University minimum requirement, evidence of English language skills demonstrated by:
- IELTS test at band 6.0 or above with a minimum score of 5.5 in each component, *or*
 - TOEFL (IBT) with a score of 87 or above, with at least 21 in Reading, 22 in Listening, 23 in Speaking and 21 in Writing, *or*
 - **for EU students only** - a pass in the University's English language test (the Password Test) *or*
 - equivalent as judged by the authorised admitting officer in accordance with the advice of the University's International Office.

1.3 Completion and Progression at Preparatory Level (Section 3.2)

The regulation related to progression from Preparatory level has been amended to make explicit that Conditional Progression does not apply at the Preparatory level and that a student must complete the requirements in full before progressing to the Certificate level (refer Section 3.2 Regulation 20).

1.4 Postgraduate Taught – Registration of the Dissertation

The Postgraduate Regulations now makes explicit that **‘a student who is required to retake the dissertation shall be required to complete a new task, i.e. a new dissertation subject and title.’**

The addition is in response to a representation by an academic member of staff who questioned the equity of the principle which allows a student failing a postgraduate dissertation, to retake it in the same dissertation subject and also be eligible for an uncapped mark. An example provided related to a student who did not submit at first assessment, but submitted and failed the reassessment. On re-registering the dissertation, the student continued with the same dissertation subject gaining a final mark of 67%.

In approving this amendment, the Academic Board deemed the addition to be (i) consistent with other taught modules which require a student to retake all assessment components *ab initio*; and, (ii) feasible and reasonable for a student to undertake a new dissertation title within a distinct subject area or with a significantly different emphasis.

1.5 Classification of Masters Awards (Academic Regulations Section 4.2)

Following a review by the University Awards Board, the Academic Board has for 2011/12 awards, approved an amendment to the upgrade criteria for MA/MSc/LLM/MBA.

This decision was based on 2009/10 data where only 32 students out of 2294 met the eligibility criteria (an average within 0.5% of the classification boundary and at least 2/3 of the module results in the higher classification range).

Changes for 2011/12 awards are as follows (highlighted in bold):

38. A Masters degree with Merit shall be awarded to a student who has achieved:
- an average mark of at least 60% and less than 70% across their approved programme of study, including the dissertation or equivalent, where one is required; *or*,
 - **an average mark of at least 58% and less than 60% across their approved programme and a mark of greater than or equal to 60% in their dissertation or equivalent.**
39. A Masters degree with Distinction shall be awarded to a student who has achieved:
- an average mark of at least 70% across their approved programme of study, including the dissertation or equivalent, where one is required; *or*,
 - **an average mark of at least 68% and less than 70% across their approved programme and a mark of greater than or equal to 70% in their dissertation or equivalent.**

Where a Masters programme does not include a 60 credit dissertation the course specification shall identify the module(s) that may count towards an upgrade of classification.

1.6 Research Degrees and Professional Doctorates (Section 5.1, 5.2, 5.3)

A number of clarifications have been progressed in response to changes to the Academic Board sub-committee structure (refer para 1.8 below) and to remove duplication in the previous regulations. The maximum periods of registration for MPhils and PhD have been clarified to make clear that the registration period 'includes the period following enrolment' and likewise for Professional Doctorates, which includes any taught elements.

1.7 Withdrawal by the University based upon non-attendance (Section 9.1)

A number of requests were received from Module and Course Leaders to allow students to be withdrawn from modules where it was clear that they were not actively engaging with the module concerned, or where they have withdrawn very early in the semester. It was felt by academic staff that such students distort module completion figures and that such a change in regulations would, in addition, clarify and improve the business process. Module withdrawal for non engagement was not previously permissible, as it was clear that changes to registrations after the start of term would not meet HEFCE's definition relating to funding completion. However, as the University has alternative mechanisms in place to secure such information the Academic Board endorsed the following changes (highlighted in bold).

6 Every student enrolled on a taught course shall attend tuition (classes) specified for his or her programme of study. The Academic Registrar shall be responsible for establishing procedures to monitor attendance and shall terminate a student's status where it is established to the Academic Registrar's satisfaction that the student is not attending tuition (refer to Regulation 44). **Where it is apparent that a student is not attending a module on a regular basis and their absence has not been agreed by the Module Leader, the student may, at the request of the Module Leader, be withdrawn from that module. Such requests should be made in writing to the Academic Registrar before the end of week 6 of the semester in which the module runs.**

39 A student may withdraw from the University at any point during their studies. Students who wish to withdraw from the University have a formal responsibility to inform the Academic Registrar in writing of their decision to withdraw prior to the date of withdrawal (failure to do so may affect any decision in relation to any refund/waiving of the fee). The date of withdrawal shall be taken as the date on which the student's written notification of withdrawal is received by the Academic Registrar. The last date of attendance shall normally be calculated from the student's last recorded access to the University. On withdrawal a student must return their ID card to the Academic Registry (refer also Regulation 12 above). **Where a student withdraws before the end of week 6 of the semester, all module registrations for that semester shall be cancelled and the relevant modules removed from the student's record. This shall apply in cases where the student may have already submitted work.**

44 If the Academic Registrar determines to his or her satisfaction that a student is not attending tuition, the student's status shall be terminated. Where a student's status

is terminated for this reason they will not normally be allowed to enrol again with the University. **Where a student's status is terminated before the end of week 6 of the semester, all module registrations for that semester shall be cancelled and the relevant modules removed from the student's record. This shall apply in cases where the student may have already submitted work.** If, in exceptional circumstances, enrolment is permitted it will normally be subject to additional conditions, for example, prior payment of all or part of the tuition fees, as deemed appropriate by the Director of Finance or the Academic Registrar.

In addition, a definition of withdrawal has been included into Section 1.3, Regulatory Definitions:

'withdrawal' means a decision by a student to leave their course before they have completed the programme which they are enrolled, without intending to return. A student who withdraws may return at a later date to the same, or a different course, providing they meet the requirements for admission and enrolment in place at the point of their return;

1.8 Terms of Reference of the University Awards Board

The relevant terms of reference required amendment in response to the rationalisation of the Academic Board sub-committee structure which included the incorporation of the former Research Degrees Committee into the University Awards Board. For 2011/12 awards, the University Awards Board will confer all University awards within the University awards frameworks.

As a result, the Research Degree Regulations and those for Professional Doctorates have been amended to incorporate the separation of the oversight of the examination process and resultant recommendations via a Research Degrees Sub-Committee of the Awards Board and the conferral of awards by the full University Awards Board.

1.9 Mitigating Circumstances

During 2010/11 improvements to the Mitigating Circumstances process have been made to ensure:

- that we offer students as much opportunity as possible to engage with the process;
- to remove (as far as possible) the need for subsequent appeals on grounds of mitigating circumstances;
- to be proactive in our approach to rejected claims and respond to students at a time that they are more likely to be able to secure the necessary evidence;
- the availability of more accessible guidance to students, working with the Students' Union

The improvements were well received by students, the Students' Union and Mitigating Circumstances Panel members. The most significant change is that after each Panel meeting a student is informed of the decision of the Panel and provided with details as to why their claim was rejected and what they would need to provide for the claim to be accepted.

The following minor clarifications have been approved for 2011/12:

18 Mitigating Circumstance outcomes shall be published via Evision as soon as

practicable following the decision of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel and prior to publication of the relevant module results. Students will be notified by email when the outcome is available.

Rejected claims and appeals

19 In the case of a rejected claim, a student will be given the opportunity to submit further relevant evidence within five working days if they wish the claim to be further considered by the Panel.

1.10 Student Academic Misconduct (Section 10.5)

Following confirmation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor that changes for 2011/12 would be limited in scope, covering the following areas:

- Some minor amendments recommended by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA);
- Alignment of some penalties to enable the smooth transition to the proposed year long module structure in 2012/13;
- Recognition that a current penalty appears to be out-of-step with sector practice;
- Amendments to improve response times to the submissions of allegations;
- Acknowledgement of the move to a single Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

When the Academic Board approved the Academic Regulations last year, it was noted that the penalties for academic misconduct would be reviewed against sector practice. As a result, it was clear that suspending students for one semester was out of step with the sector. In addition, change for 2011/12 was required as one semester suspensions could not be sustained for allegations considered during semester 2 2011/12, as this penalty would not accord with the 2012/13 academic structure and calendar.

The introduction of capping into the penalty tariff, supported by a number of academics, has two advantages: it provides a graduated level of deterrent and it addresses the previous anomaly whereby a module result was capped as a result of penalty 2, whereas a re-registration as a result of penalty 3 was not.

The previous penalty 4, failure in the module and a one semester suspension, has been replaced in the new tariff by penalty 3; with the exception of the category that relates to possession of crib sheets, revision notes (category 7.1.6) , which will remain as penalty 4.

Students with previously proven allegations:

The streamlining and amendment of the penalty tariff requires a rewording of the regulation governing students with previously proven allegations of academic misconduct. However, where students respond to the allegation against them and engage with the process, the final decision on the appropriate level of any penalty to be imposed will rest with an academic misconduct panel, as is currently the case.

2011/12 Table of Penalties

This applies to first offences of academic misconduct. Students who have a previous proven allegation against them should note that the penalty for a second or subsequent substantiated allegation of academic misconduct will normally be one penalty level higher than that suggested in Regulation 7 below, or one level higher than the previously imposed penalty, whichever is higher.

Penalty 1:	Reprimand, a formally recorded warning kept on the student's record.
Penalty 2:	Failure in the item of assessment, with reassessment right where permissible. The module result will be capped at a bare pass.
Penalty 3:	Failure in the module: the student must re-register for the same module at the next opportunity where the re-registered module result will be capped at a bare pass. Where a re-registration of the same module is not permissible the student will not be able to continue on the course*.
Penalty 4:	Failure in the module, the student must re-register for the same module and the re-registered module will be capped at a bare pass. The student will also be suspended for one academic year. Where a re-registration of the same module is not permissible the student will not be able to continue on the course*.
Penalty 5:	Expulsion.

*Although consideration could be given to transferring to another course

Categories of Academic Misconduct

The following category (7.1.1/7.2.1) has been deleted as it is not used; however, it will still be possible for Panels to reduce a penalty in light of appropriate mitigation being presented:

A reprimand will be issued where the Panel substantiates academic misconduct and the seriousness of the mitigating factors justifies a reduction in the penalty from Penalty level 2 to Penalty 1.

The following categories are amended as shown to reflect the availability of the technology concerned (changes highlighted in bold):

Communicating with another student, with any third party other than the invigilator/examiner, **or accessing the internet without permission**, during an examination or test.

Possession of crib sheets, revision notes, **digital media devices**, etc. at any time during an examination or test.

Given the new penalty tariff, the following category (7.1.11/7.2.13) has been deleted, with multiple allegations in a semester being treated on their individual merits:

A penalty of expulsion shall be applied where a student has previously received a penalty under these Procedures where the previous or current penalty is Penalty 5 (refer to Appendix 10.5.2 - 3) or where multiple allegations are made within one semester that individually equate to Penalty 5

Reporting Allegations of Academic Misconduct

Coursework based assessment (Paragraph 9, Section 10.5)

The previous deadline for submitting allegations of academic misconduct was "as soon as possible prior to the publication of the result(s) concerned". It had become apparent that there on occasion have been considerable delays in submitting allegations regarding coursework to the Student Casework Office. By tying the deadline for submitting allegations to the deadline for submitting the work it is hoped that such delays can be avoided. It is hoped that this will improve the student experience and will help to alleviate

the current bottleneck of allegations being submitted to the Student Casework Office immediately prior to the publication of results. It should be noted that the proposed deadline takes account of the two week late coursework period.

Where an internal examiner establishes that there is, in her/his view, sufficient evidence of academic misconduct, s/he shall provide a written report, including relevant evidence, to the Student Casework Office as soon as practicable, but no later than six weeks from the standard submission deadline for the work concerned. Exceptionally, a written report, including relevant evidence, may be submitted no later than two weeks after this period, but only with the prior agreement of the Student Casework Office.

Consideration of Allegations of Academic Misconduct

In light of OIA suggestions the University has undertaken to make the following change (paragraph 15 of the current procedures):

In cases where there is sufficient evidence for an allegation to be progressed, the Student Casework Office shall determine if the nature of the academic misconduct clearly falls under one of the categories listed in 7 above. In such cases **the student will be informed that the allegation will be substantiated and the associated penalty will be imposed unless the student submits a valid request to review the decision.**

Procedures for Appeals Against Student Academic Misconduct Decisions

With the introduction of a single Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Regulations have been amended so that appeals other than those relating to expulsion will be considered by a Dean. This allows for a final right of appeal to the Vice-Chancellor, should compelling new evidence come to light.

Amendments (highlighted in bold):

- 31 Where the Student Casework Office deems a request valid under grounds 28.1, 28.2 or 28.3, the appeal shall be considered by a **Dean of a Faculty, acting in her/his capacity as the Vice Chancellor's nominee. The Dean will be from a different faculty than that of the student. Valid appeals under ground 28.4 shall be considered by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor acting in her/his capacity as the Vice-Chancellor's nominee.**
- 32 Valid appeals under any of grounds 28.1, 28.2 and 28.3, shall proceed by way of written representations, unless the **Dean** considers that an appeal by way of written representations would not be in the interests of fairness, then the **Dean** shall request that the student is invited to attend an oral appeal hearing.
- 33 A student with a valid appeal based solely on 28.4, shall have the opportunity to present their appeal either orally or by way of written representations. However, where a student does not state a preference for the manner in which the appeal is to be considered, the appeal shall proceed by way of written representations. Where the **Deputy Vice-Chancellor** considers that an appeal by way of written representations would not be in the interests of fairness, then the **Deputy Vice-Chancellor** shall request that the student is invited to attend an oral appeal hearing.
- 34 For appeals deemed valid solely on grounds 28.3 or 28.4, the **Dean/Deputy Vice-Chancellor** shall consider representations only against the penalty imposed.

In cases of expulsion:

The previous Regulations stated that a decision to expel a student must be confirmed by the Vice-Chancellor after he has received a report from the Student Casework Office summarising the evidence and other relevant material. In practice the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, acting as the Vice-Chancellor's nominee, has confirmed expulsions. To bring this requirement in line with a single Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the following amendment has been incorporated **'a Dean, from a different faculty to that of the student and with no previous involvement in the case, will be responsible for confirming expulsions.'**

**Academic Registry
October 2011**