

Assessment Regulations for the Management of Assessment in Emergency Scenario(s)

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 In extreme circumstances including 'force majeure'¹ scenarios it may be appropriate to invoke exceptions to standard assessment regulations, policies and procedures to account for emergency scenarios impacting upon the University and students. Emergencies may apply to individual cohorts, for example, if there is an emergency that affects a particular partner organisation. There is not a definitive set of circumstances in which these emergency regulations may be applied, however it is expected that the application of these regulations will be rare and reserved for extreme occasions.
- 1.2 In an emergency, in the first instance some delay in normal processes may be necessary. If the emergency results in a protracted delay and/or there is limited prospect of resuming normal processes, the provisions in these regulations may be invoked.
- 1.3 These regulations aim to enable students to achieve recognition for the learning that has taken place whilst taking into account the potential for negative impact on student achievement due to disruption caused by emergency situations and necessary changes to assessment, in a way that is equitable and fair to all students.
- 1.4 Bournemouth University is committed to upholding the quality of the student experience and academic standards. In an emergency scenario where assessment is affected, the University will ensure that academic standards are upheld and maintained. As a result, it may be necessary, exceptionally, to vary normal academic policies and procedures.
- 1.5 There are a small number of programmes with exceptions to standard assessment regulations, including professionally regulated programmes, and programmes with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. In these cases the application of these emergency regulations will apply wherever possible, and where this does not conflict with PSRB or other regulated requirements.
- 1.6 There may be other scenarios arising from an emergency situation which are not explicitly covered within these regulations. In such cases, approval will be sought from the Chair of Senate under Chair's Action prior to any action being taken.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 **Senate:** to approve the emergency assessment regulations and any amendments to these and consider any further action necessary through Chair's Action as required. To approve and oversee the invocation of the emergency regulations.

¹ An extraordinary event or circumstance beyond the control of the parties, such as a war, riot, natural disaster such as hurricane, flood, earthquake etc.

- 2.2 **Academic Standards and Education Committee (ASEC):** to conduct an annual review of the emergency assessment regulations, and to write a report to Senate on any circumstances in which the regulations have been invoked.
- 2.3 **Assessment Boards:** to implement the emergency assessment regulations. The Assessment Board derives its authority from the University Senate.

3. LINKS TO OTHER BU DOCUMENTS

[6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Foundation Degree Programmes](#)
[6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma Programmes](#)
[6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Higher National Programmes](#)
[6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Integrated Masters Programmes](#)
[6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Postgraduate Taught Programmes](#)
[6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Undergraduate Programmes](#)
[6J - Exceptional Circumstances including Extensions: Policy and Procedure](#)
[11A - Academic Appeals: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards](#)

Regulations

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The principles below will apply to the application of emergency assessment regulations for all taught (UG and PG) programmes, and the operation of Assessment Boards:
- Wherever possible normal assessment policies and procedures (i.e. assessment regulations, assignment release, assignment submission, moderation, Exceptional Circumstances) should be followed.
 - Assessment Boards should make full use of the range of existing regulations, policies and procedures to support student progression and achievement.
 - Adjustments to assessment policies and procedures must be carefully considered and continue to protect standards whilst ensuring that students are treated fairly and equitably and are not unduly affected by the impact of an emergency scenario.
 - Wherever possible, students should be able to graduate or progress from one stage of their degree programme to the next.
 - Where there is no doubt about a student's level of attainment, either because all or sufficient marks exist for a sound academic judgment to be made about the student's overall level of attainment, then the standard assessment regulations apply as normal and specific exceptional provisions within these regulations may not apply.
 - Where marks are not available, and adjustments are considered essential, there must be consistency and fairness in the application of these emergency regulations to student cohorts.
 - The University will liaise with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) in relation to the application of these principles as appropriate.

Application of Principles to Assessment Regulation and Assessment Boards

- 4.2 The University may apply a 'no detriment' approach to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by emergency scenarios impacting upon them and/or the University, whilst also assuring quality and standards and consistency of decisions for University awards.
- 4.3 By invoking a 'no detriment' approach in emergency circumstances the University may consider student achievement and progression based on assessment completed up to the date that the emergency scenario impacted upon the University and/or the students. This date will be determined when these regulations are invoked. Assessment attempted after the defined date will only contribute to the overall level mark where this is advantageous to the student, i.e. the final level/stage average mark will be the same or higher than the average attained up to the defined date.

5. UNIT ASSESSMENT AND AWARD OF CREDIT

- 5.1 These regulations cover situations in which students are unable to complete unit assessment, and/or the University is unable to conduct assessment or complete assessment processes including marking and moderation. Where assessments have been completed as normal and are unaffected by the situation, standard regulations policies and procedures will apply.
- 5.2 Where assessment for a unit has been partially completed, and students have demonstrated that they have met the unit Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), the unit total may be calculated on the basis of known marks, with the unit assessment weighting adjusted accordingly. For example, where a unit is assessed on the basis of two elements each weighted at 50%, and only one element has been completed, 100% of the unit mark would be based on the one completed element of assessment.
- 5.3 Where assessment for a unit has been partially completed, and students have demonstrated that they have met the unit ILOs (e.g. through formative assessment, engagement in teaching and learning activities) but where there is insufficient evidence to award a mark, the Assessment Board may award credit on the basis of a 'Pass' outcome with no mark awarded.
- 5.4 Where unit marks are not available or unit assessment is incomplete such that students cannot demonstrate they have met unit ILOs, consideration may be given to the achievement of programme or level ILOs and where this can be assessed based on work completed and marks available up until the emergency scenario. In this case, 'general' credit may be awarded on a Pass basis, see 6.2 for thresholds.
- 5.5 In such cases Assessment Boards must satisfy themselves that there is sufficient evidence to underpin a decision that students have achieved the learning outcomes at the appropriate level and/or are capable of achieving the learning outcomes. The dissertation or final year project may be used to inform decision-making around student attainment at award level.
- 5.6 In addition, where assessment for a unit has not been completed and unit credit cannot be awarded, students may be given the opportunity to complete the outstanding assessment/credit at the next available assessment period, as determined by the University, or in the following academic year.
- 5.7 Students who have failed a unit(s) following the decision of an Assessment Board and are therefore required to be reassessed in a unit(s) will be permitted to re-sit/resubmit assessment(s) affected by the emergency scenario uncapped (as if for the first time). This will be at the next available assessment period, as determined by the University. This may be in the following academic year. Normal limits regarding the volume of credit that can be reassessed may not apply.
- 5.8 Where unit marks become available after the emergency scenario or the Assessment Board, or require correction due to error, then results will be reviewed and recalculated via Chair's Action, wherever possible. Students will be awarded the higher mark/degree outcome from the prior and re-calculated result.

6. PROGRESSION

- 6.1 Following consideration of the scenarios in section 5 the normal range of measures are available to Assessment Boards to support progression decisions (e.g. compensation, carrying credit, reassessment limits). For example, for Undergraduate programmes, students may be able to progress with a combination of credit awarded on a Pass basis and credit with known marks which is less than 120 credits in total.

- 6.2 If credit (including 'general' credit, as per section 5.4) is awarded on a Pass basis the following thresholds apply:
- Level 4 – there is no maximum level of credit that may be awarded on a Pass basis.
 - Level 5 and 6 - normally up to a maximum of 60 credits may be awarded on a Pass basis.
 - Level 7 – normally up to a maximum of 60 credits may be awarded on a Pass basis, excluding the final project/dissertation.

7. EXCEPTIONAL ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- 7.1 Students on the final year or stage of the award on which they are enrolled, may be given the opportunity to be assessed at the next assessment opportunity in units where Pass credit has been awarded in order to achieve a mark for that credit. The University will publish a deadline by which students should advise the University if they intend to undertake assessment in units that have been awarded credit on a Pass basis.
- 7.2 Academic staff will provide advice, guidance and support to students who choose to be assessed in units where credit has been awarded on a Pass basis. Students will be informed of the marks they will need to achieve to be awarded a higher classification based on the assessments to be undertaken.

8. AWARDS

- 8.1 Standard assessment regulations apply to the number of credits required at each level/stage for progression and final awards.
- 8.2 In cases where unit credit has been awarded on a Pass basis (see sections 5.3 and 5.4), and students have chosen to undertake assessment and have advised the University by the required deadline (see section 7.1), the final degree outcome will be re-calculated based on any new assessment marks available. The outcome most advantageous to the students will apply.
- 8.3 Units with a Pass outcome will be excluded from the calculation of the final award outcome. For example, where 20 of 120 Level 6 credits were awarded on the basis of a Pass outcome, the Level 6 calculation would be based on the average of 100 level 6 credits. The weighting of the award calculation remains unchanged.
- 8.4 The University's standard degree algorithm calculations will apply, wherever possible.
- 8.5 Where known assessment marks are available for a minimum of 60 credits, the mark profile rule will be applied on the basis of a minimum of two thirds of the credit being in the higher classification. This approach is based on the same proportions applied to the mark profile rule in standard Undergraduate and Postgraduate assessment regulations (80/120, or 120/180).
- 8.6 The University will maintain oversight of the award profile and the range of results being considered for progression and degree outcomes. The University will seek to ensure the consistency of degree outcomes decisions in accordance with robust academic principles.
- 8.7 The award of degree outcomes is aligned with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), which sets out 'typical credit' for awards:
- Bachelors with Honours award is 360 credits, with a minimum of 90 credits at level 6.
 - Integrated Masters is 480 credits with minimum 120 credits at level 7.
 - Taught Masters is 180 credits with minimum 150 credits at level 7.
- The FHEQ does not specify any expectations with regard to the credits that contribute towards the calculation of a classification.
- 8.8 Where student results are impacted by the emergency scenario, e.g. recording of Pass rather than a known mark, the emergency scenario will be recorded on transcripts and an explanatory note provided, as appropriate.

9. MANAGEMENT OF EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 9.1 Adjustments may be made to the Exceptional Circumstances Policy and Procedure to capture relevant information and in order to better support students with mitigation.
- 9.2 Where circumstances have a direct impact on a high proportion of the student population it may be necessary to employ a University-wide approach to Exceptional Circumstances Boards to ensure consistency in decision-making.

10. STUDENT APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

- 10.1 The students' right to appeal or complain remains unchanged. The University may take action, where reasonable, to mitigate against the situation and mitigate the impact on students who are disadvantaged by the emergency scenario, but this does not replace students' right to submit a complaint or appeal.

11. MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT BOARDS

- 11.1 The University will ensure that Assessment Boards continue to operate in a way which maintains academic quality and standards, but also ensures that all students are treated fairly, that achievement is reliably assessed and that qualifications are awarded securely.
- 11.2 In situations where these regulations are invoked it may become necessary to adapt the policy and procedure, relating to the operation of Assessment Boards to further support consistency and fair decision-making, for example, consideration of borderline candidates. Revised rules around quorum requirements and the minimum constitution of Boards may be adopted to enable effective decision-making if normal levels of staffing cannot be maintained.

12. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 12.1 External Examiner arrangements should continue to operate according to standard regulations, policies and procedures as far as possible during any disrupted period. It may be necessary to make some operational adjustments to practice, for example, the sharing of revised assessment for review may take place following re-issue to students where this has to be actioned urgently in the best interests of students.

General

13. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- 13.1 The UK Quality Code and QAA's Advice and Guidance (incorporating the Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ).
- 13.2 QAA guidance *COVID-19: Initial Guidance for Higher Education providers on Standards and Quality* published in March 2020 to support HE providers managing emergency scenarios and the OfS' published expectations in relation to *Regulatory Requirements during the coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic* (March 2020), and *Guidance for providers about quality and standards during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic* (April 2020).