

## **Academic Policy areas impacted by Covid-19 pandemic [*information released 23 April 2020*]**

### **1. Good cause and incomplete assessment**

For assessments after 15 March 2020 and until further notice, this is now covered in the No Detriment policy. The policy sets a minimum of 65% of assessment to be completed for students to be eligible for an award. However, the Clerk of Senate may be asked to review exceptional cases that have not met that threshold to consider whether there are circumstances justifying the award, or whether special assessment arrangements are required.

Senate Office may be consulted where such a situation comes to light (e.g. a student who, due to illness, has a significant proportion of assessment already missing from an earlier stage of an honours programme).

### **2. Amended delivery of courses and cases of irregular curriculum**

A number of instances have come to light where scheduled delivery of a course has been frustrated by the Covid-19 situation (e.g. a community-based course dependent on external visits). The School should consider if alternative learning/assessment could be offered in the remaining duration of study. With reference to the Aims/ILOs of the programme, proposals for alternatives:

- for courses of up to 20 credits should be approved by the Convener of the School Learning & Teaching Committee
- for courses of up to 40 credits should be approved by the relevant College Dean.<sup>1</sup>

(Normal requirements for processing such changes through PIP and undertaking consultations are waived but decisions should be formally minuted and the record retained by the College.)

Where it is not possible to offer an alternative, the Clerk of Senate may be asked by Schools to consider if an award can be made on the basis of an irregular curriculum. Such requests should be copied to the College Dean.

If an irregular curriculum is agreed, the transcript will reflect the reduced number of credits, that is, the missing credits should not be added in using a 'dummy' course.

### **3. Non-exam assessments**

Some such assessments may be, or have been, completed in an alternative format which still allows for demonstration of the ILOs, e.g. groupwork presentations through the use of Zoom or students submitting PowerPoint slides. Despite such changes of format, the relative weightings of assessment components associated with a course must not be amended. Staff should consult the relevant College Dean where there are any remaining difficulties.

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<sup>1</sup> For most of the issues referred to in this paper the relevant Dean will be the Dean of Learning & Teaching but in some cases the appropriate officer will be an alternative, e.g. Head of the College Graduate School.

Proposed changes to the nature of a taught masters project/dissertation resulting in their not fully complying with the description in the relevant published documentation should be approved by the relevant College Dean in order to ensure that the ILOs are not compromised.

#### 4. Visiting students

Visiting students should be treated in essentially the same way as Glasgow students. Visiting students may have a range of courses on their curriculum: some may be all honours courses, some a mix of L1/L2 and honours. Some students are here for one semester and some for the full session.

**L1/L2 courses:** the standard position applies. Given the reduction in assessment opportunities at Level 1 and Level 2, it is likely that most students will be awarded CA for semester 2 courses. In other words, for such students credit will be awarded but the transcript will not reflect achievement in any completed components of assessment.

**L3/L4/Honours courses:** where 65% of the total assessment as a whole across all such courses is completed, *credit* should be awarded for all of those courses.<sup>2</sup> *Course grades:* grades will be awarded in the same way as for other Glasgow students. Students should complete any remaining coursework and any exams scheduled for the April/May assessment diet.

International Recruitment & Partnerships (External Relations) is liaising with partner institutions. Indications are that in the majority of cases the absence of an overall course grade (and in its place the award of CA) will not cause difficulties for students returning to their home institution. Where the home institution requests more information, Schools may report informally on performance in completed components of assessment. Where any difficulties remain Schools should contact International Recruitment & Partnerships who will lead further discussions with the home institution. Only in very exceptional cases will additional assessment for affected students be considered.

#### 5. Returning study abroad students

All host institutions will have been impacted by the current Covid-19 pandemic. Teaching and/or assessment will have been affected to varying degrees.

Returning students should be advised to be guided in the first instance by their host institution. This means that they should engage with amended teaching provision and complete all assessment so far as is possible in their current circumstances.

The University's standard approach in relation to results reported by host institutions is that credits and grades (subject to agreed translation processes) should be accepted and incorporated into the student's transcript. Such performance will normally<sup>3</sup> contribute to calculation of the final degree classification. This position remains. However, it is recognised that where more extreme disruption has been experienced at the host institution, students may return to Glasgow with an incomplete record: either without fully graded assessment or without full credit having been awarded. The number of students in these circumstances is

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<sup>2</sup> Except where a student has failed to satisfy a requirement for the award of credit, e.g. a mandatory attendance requirement. In that case, Credit Refused should be returned for that course.

<sup>3</sup> In a small number of subject areas study abroad is undertaken pre-honours.

currently unknown as host institutions are in the process of developing their own approach to the current crisis, equivalent to Glasgow's No Detriment policy.

In order to ensure that our students are not unfairly disadvantaged, students returning with an incomplete record should be treated sympathetically:

- Where full credit is awarded and all grades reported by the host institution: these should be accepted in the normal way and considered in calculation of the final award even where the student reports that there has been reduced teaching and/or assessment.
- Full credit awarded by the host institution but some grades incomplete: reported grades should be considered in calculation of the final award but given only the appropriate credit weighting. In the final classification this means that the weighting given to the year/semester abroad will be lower than usual.
- Incomplete credit awarded by the host institution. The circumstances in which such a situation may arise will be very varied. It is hoped that the numbers will be small. Dialogue may be needed with the student and/or with the host institution to clarify the reason for incomplete credit. Where there is reason to believe that teaching was substantially complete and that the award of credit would be consistent with the No Detriment principles in force at the University of Glasgow, the credit requirements for the period abroad may be considered as complete, subject to approval of the College Dean of Learning & Teaching or nominee. Where this is not the case, and teaching was not substantially complete at the host institution, the School should consider if alternative learning and assessment could be offered to the student within the current academic session. This should only be approved where the required learning can be appropriately supported and therefore is only likely to be possible in a small number of cases. With reference to the Aims/ILOs of the programme, proposals for such alternatives:
  - for courses of up to 20 credits should be approved by the Convener of the School Learning and Teaching Committee
  - for courses of up to 40 credits should be approved by the relevant College Dean of Learning & Teaching.

(Normal requirements for processing such proposals through PIP and undertaking consultations are waived but decisions should be formally minuted and the record retained by the College.)

Where it is not possible to offer an alternative, the Clerk of Senate may be asked to consider if the requirements for the award of full credit for the period of study abroad can be considered as complete.

## **6. Honours entry criteria**

The normal credit requirements for entry to honours, as set out in the generic undergraduate regulation 15.1-15.3 apply. The discretion referred to in s. 15.3 allowing Schools to permit entry where the standard requirements have not been met should be exercised reasonably taking account of the assessment opportunities that have been available to students.

- Schools may therefore choose to consider Level 1, as well as Level 2, performance.
- For many areas competition for places in honours is not problematic. For some, entry requirements may still need to be applied with reference to capacity.

- Whatever approach is adopted, all Schools must make a careful record of criteria so that decisions can be explained and defended. It is recommended that the College Dean of Learning & Teaching should take an overview of proposed criteria across the College.
- In exceptional cases, Schools may judge that there is insufficient evidence on which to make the necessary judgments. This might arise in circumstances such as where students have entered directly into second year, or where students, for other reasons, were unable to take assessment opportunities available to the rest of the cohort, e.g. a student with good cause in relation to the full December diet in second year. For these students, Schools may consider setting additional assessment as a diagnostic exercise in relation only to entry to honours. Such assessment would, therefore, not result in any inconsistency with other students in terms of reported course grades.

## **7. External Examiners and Exam Boards**

All external examiners will be written to by the Senate Office with an outline of the University's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including the cancellation of Level 1 and Level 2 assessments and the introduction of the No Detriment policy. Schools should inform external examiners of local changes to assessment arising from Covid-19. While external examiners would normally be consulted in relation to substantive changes, this is not practicable at this time. The external examiner is required to sign off results at the Exam Board and this will require acknowledgement of the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the application of the No Detriment policy.

Initial points to note in relation to Exam Boards:

- May/June exam boards will be conducted remotely and the same arrangements may also be required in the autumn. Any concerns about practical issues arising from this should be raised with the Senate Office in the first instance. E.g. There may be difficulty accessing some assessment materials for external examiner review, such as handwritten exam/class test scripts currently stored in offices on-campus.
- The requirement for external examiners to attend in person at least once a year should be satisfied by remote participation.
- An internal exam board should be held in advance of the external board in order to identify issues in good time.
- Further guidance on the conduct of these boards online will be provided, including appropriate security protocols and contact details in case of queries relating to IT issues, regulatory queries, and problems that had not previously emerged in relation to incomplete assessment.
- Exam Board minutes: these should be the official repository of the information on the extraordinary actions (including revised assessment arrangements and application of No Detriment policy) that have been taken, together with the rationale. Senate Office will make available a standard rationale for part of the narrative on the revised assessment arrangements. Schools must collate a set of Exam Board minutes for each programme to be submitted to Senate Office for reference when there is a period of reflection/reporting to other bodies. Schools may wish to start preparing the relevant information now. Senate Office will provide an enhanced Exam Board minute template.

- Exam Board minutes should explicitly cover decisions such as mapping of percentage marking to Schedule A, particularly where the mapping is required to take account of the non-standard context in which assessments have been taken.
- Given the introduction of the No Detriment policy, Senate Office will provide notes on the application of discretion in borderline decisions.

#### **8. Further advice to follow**

Additional information relating to the No Detriment policy will be released shortly including:

- Reassessment opportunities
- Course grading
- Calculation of grade point average.