

**Queen's University Belfast
Supplementary Regulations**

1. Introduction

The Supplementary Regulations are derived from the framework of the University Study Regulations within which decisions relating to the award of credit, academic progression, degree classification and award of postgraduate qualification to students are governed. They provide explicit authority to Boards of Examiners in the event that examinations and assessments do not progress normally, as a result of an emergency or an event, e.g. a natural disaster, civil unrest, industrial action or other major incident. The Supplementary Regulations are designed, where possible, to enable student progression and completion, in an emergency situation, whilst maintaining academic standards.

The Supplementary Regulations may not be applicable for professional courses with specified accreditation requirements. Schools should agree with the accrediting body, in advance, the application of the Supplementary Regulations in case of an emergency and advise students accordingly.

The Supplementary Regulations carry the full status of University regulations and may be implemented under Statute V. Emergency Procedures for Boards of Examiners is attached as Annex 1.

Once invoked, Boards of Examiners must comply with the Supplementary Regulations, in addition to the University Study Regulations. In the event that a Board of Examiners requires to deviate from the Supplementary Regulations, this will be treated as a concession to the Regulations and will require the approval of the Chair of the Education Committee.

2. Alternative Assessments

In an emergency situation, it may be necessary to implement alternative assessment arrangements. The following regulations shall apply:

2.1 Setting Alternative Assessments

Where there is a major disruption to scheduled summative assessments, either by examination or coursework, a School may determine the form of an alternative assessment which will replace the scheduled form of assessment. The alternative assessments will require appropriate input from external examiners.

When determining the alternative assessments, Schools should ensure that the most recent University guidance is followed. The alternative assessment arrangements must be communicated to the affected students by the date specified. A record of the alternative arrangements should be maintained by the School and reported to Academic Affairs.

2.2 Options Available to Students

The two options available to students are as follows, which are designed to ensure that student progression is not negatively impacted or delayed by the emergency:

- (i) Students will be encouraged to undertake the alternative form of assessment to ensure that their academic record remains complete for the academic year. Students who undertake all forms of alternative assessment will receive final module marks determined under Regulation 3 of the Supplementary Regulations which will be used to determine their award outcome or progression. If a student is dissatisfied with their performance in the alternative assessment, including if they have passed the module, they will be offered the opportunity to take a further

assessment as a first attempt, under normal conditions, at the next available opportunity (see Regulation 4.2).

- (ii) A student who is unable or who does not wish to undertake the alternative assessment must inform the School, in writing, in advance of the alternative assessment. The student will receive an assigned mark for the module determined under Regulation 3 of the Supplementary Regulations which will be used to determine their award outcome or progression. If a student is dissatisfied with their assigned mark, they will be offered the opportunity to take an assessment, in lieu of the alternative assessment, as a first attempt, under normal conditions, at the next available opportunity (see Regulation 4.2).

2.3 Issues Arising During an Alternative Assessment

In the event that unforeseen issues arise during the alternative assessment, e.g. technical issues in an online examination, students should inform their School immediately. Subject Boards of Examiners will take account of the reported issues when determining assessment marks.

In exceptional circumstances, if the issues were widespread, the Subject Board of Examiners may declare the assessment null and void and students will receive an assigned module mark determined under Regulation 3 of the Supplementary Regulations. If a student is dissatisfied with their assigned mark, they will be offered the opportunity to take an assessment, in lieu of the alternative assessment, as a first attempt, under normal conditions, at the next available opportunity (see Regulation 4.2).

2.4 Marking and Moderation of Alternative Assessments

Marking of alternative assessments should be carried out in line with normal procedures, however, this may need to proceed remotely. All

alternative assessment marks should be moderated to take account of the general impact of the emergency.

In the event that, due to staff unavailability arising from the emergency, the alternative assessment marks are not available by the scheduled Subject Board of Examiners, students will receive an assigned module mark determined under Regulation 3 of the Supplementary Regulations. Once the mark for the completed alternative assessment is available, Regulation 4.1 will apply.

3. Boards of Examiners

3.1 Subject Boards of Examiners

The Subject Boards of Examiners will determine module marks as follows:

- (i) The Board will take full account of the student's performance in all summative and other assessments or partial assessments to arrive at the module mark.
- (ii) Where all assessment outcomes are available, this will be the final module mark. This includes marks for alternative assessments implemented as a result of the emergency.
- (iii) Where full assessment outcomes are not available, the Board will adopt a flexible, yet robust, approach to determine an assigned module mark. Where the Board is unable to determine an assigned mark on the basis of available assessments, the student will be expected to undertake an appropriate assessment at the next available opportunity.
- (iv) Students will be informed of the module marks agreed by the Subject Board of Examiners for all modules, including assigned module marks, by the agreed deadline.

- (v) The Board will consider assigned module marks in order to determine students' degree classification and progression (see regulation 3.2).

3.2 Programme Boards of Examiners

Decisions on student progression, degree classification and postgraduate awards should be made, as per the University Study Regulations, on the basis of the module marks, including the assigned module marks, agreed by the Subject Board of Examiners.

Where an assigned module mark is replaced by an improved final module mark (under Regulation 4), this will be considered by a subsequent meeting of the Programme Board of Examiners to determine if an amendment is required to the progression decision or degree classification. Students will not suffer any detriment and will benefit from any performance assessment which results in a higher classification to that already awarded.

4. Altering Module Marks

4.1 Where marks for completed assessments were unavailable to the Board of Examiners, once the mark is known, the following will apply:

- (i) If the outcome results in a higher module mark, this will replace the assigned module mark. A revised final module mark will be updated on the student's transcript.
- (ii) If the outcome results in a lower module mark, the assigned module mark will be confirmed as the final module mark.
- (iii) Marks for completed assessments should be confirmed within three weeks of the end of the emergency.

4.2 Where the assessment in question has been demonstrably disrupted by the emergency, including where a student undertakes an alternative

assessment, implemented as a result of the emergency, or when a student receives an assigned module mark, the following will apply:

- (i) The student will be offered the opportunity to take an appropriate assessment, in lieu of the disrupted assessment, at the next available opportunity.
- (ii) Students wishing to exercise this option must apply to their School. The application must be received no later than five working days after the publication of the result. In exercising this option students should identify clearly the module(s) and assessment(s) involved.
- (iii) Students will be informed of the venue(s), date(s) and time(s) and the associated timetable as early as possible. If the institution has been subject to significant disruption, assessments may have to be operationally prioritised and, in some circumstances, may need to be postponed until the following academic year.
- (iv) These assessments will be marked and moderated in line with normal procedures. Students who fail one or more of the assessments undertaken will be provided with a resit opportunity, where appropriate.
- (v) If the outcome results in a higher module mark, this will replace the original module mark (either final or assigned). A revised final module mark will be updated on the student's transcript.
- (vi) If the outcome results in a lower module mark, the original module mark will be confirmed as the final module mark.
- (vii) Where a student does not avail of this assessment opportunity and accepts their module mark (either final or assigned), this will be confirmed as the final module mark.

In all cases, students will not suffer any detriment and will benefit where the additional assessment outcome results in an improved module mark. In any case, where a module mark is replaced by an improved final module mark which may impact on a progression decision or degree classification awarded, this will be referred to the Programme Board of Examiners for ratification.

5. Exceptional Circumstances

Boards of Examiners should consider School Exceptional Circumstances Committee recommendations in accordance with normal procedures, where the assessment was not impacted by the emergency.

All students who undertake alternative forms of assessment, implemented as a result of the emergency, will be offered the opportunity to take a further assessment as a first attempt, under normal conditions, at the next available opportunity. Therefore, there will be no requirement for students to submit a request for exceptional circumstances on this basis.

Where a student is unable to undertake the alternative assessment, they must inform their School in writing, in advance of the assessment. No medical evidence will be required. The student will receive an assigned mark and will be offered the opportunity to take an assessment, in lieu of the alternative assessment, as a first attempt, under normal conditions, at the next available opportunity (see Regulation 4.2).

6. International and Exchange Students

Boards of Examiners should consider international students and exchange students in accordance with the normal procedures, and, where appropriate, the Supplementary Regulations. Exceptionally, the Chair of the Education Committee may approve separate alternative arrangements for assessments where students opting to take assessments under the Supplementary Regulations are prevented from doing so by, for example, visa restrictions.

7. Postgraduate Research Students

In the event that a student's progress has been demonstrably disrupted by the emergency, this should be recorded as a temporary withdrawal which shall not count as part of the time allowed by the University for submission or completion.

In the event that a student's annual progress review or viva examination has been demonstrably disrupted by the emergency, this should be rescheduled to the next available date, in agreement with the student.



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR HEADS OF SCHOOLS, AND BOARDS OF
EXAMINERS**

1. Introduction

Chairs of Boards of Examiners will have authority to apply the Supplementary Regulations taking full account of the procedures outlined in this document in respect of any alteration to normal regulation or quality assurance requirements. Four key principles underpin these emergency procedures:

- (i) The academic judgement of the Board of Examiners remains paramount.
- (ii) Students should not be disadvantaged by the invocation of the supplementary regulations.
- (iii) All students should be treated fairly and as consistently as possible.
- (iv) Academic standards and quality should not be compromised.

2. Management of Examinations *(Not applicable to 2019-20 Semester 2 assessment arrangements)*

- 2.1 Where feasible, all examinations should proceed as scheduled.
- 2.2 The Examinations Office will work with Schools regarding the availability of staff to answer any queries at the beginning of each examination. If no staff are available to answer any queries which arise, the senior invigilator will note this. The Examinations Office will

maintain a central record and this information will be made available to Chairs of Boards of Examiners.

- 2.3 Heads of School must ensure that the designated member(s) of staff (notified to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs) takes full responsibility for the collection of all examination scripts from the Examinations Office relevant to the School. It will not be permissible for any other member of staff to collect examination scripts from the Examinations Office.
- 2.4 Heads of School must also ensure that members of staff who receive examination scripts sign an undertaking that they will mark the scripts and return the marks at a date specified by the Head of School for the Board of Examiners.
- 2.5 If an examination is taken or an assessment is submitted for marking, it is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure not only that the scripts are stored safely but also marked as soon as possible after the emergency situation has ended.
- 2.6 Once an emergency has ended, it will be necessary to recover the situation as quickly as possible. This will require:
 - 2.6.1 the submission of an examination paper to the Examinations Office, for students opting to take the missed examination, in accordance with normal procedures. If an external examiner is not available to moderate question papers, or if to do so would further delay arrangements for assessment, the Head of School will proceed without the approval of the external examiner and will apply an additional internal review process to ensure quality of the examination paper. In these circumstances, a Dean from the relevant Faculty will be responsible for the final approval of the examination paper;

- 2.6.2 the marking of all scripts, assignments and projects which have been unmarked;
- 2.6.3 the recording of actual marks for all scripts, assignments and projects which have been marked but the marks withheld on the Queen's Student Information System (Qsis);
- 2.6.4 arrangements for the Board of Examiners to be put in place in order to meet the scheduled deadline for publishing marks (see paragraph 5).

3. External Examiners

- 3.1 In the event of an External Examiner being unavailable for the scheduled Board of Examiners, all reasonable efforts to find a replacement should be made by the Head of School in consultation with the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. If an External Examiner(s) is not present at the Board of Examiners, a Dean or Pro-Vice-Chancellor from the relevant Faculty should be a member of the Board of Examiners.
- 3.2 In accordance with normal procedures, External Examiners should be consulted through normal channels in moderating the results of examinations taken by students under the Supplementary Regulations.

4. Boards of Examiners

4.1 Meetings

Unless prevented from doing so by the emergency, Boards of Examiners should continue to meet at the identified scheduled times. Depending on the impact of the emergency, Boards of Examiners may need to meet virtually. The membership and role of the Board of Examiners will remain the same in a virtual environment.

4.2 Membership of Boards of Examiners

Boards of Examiners must still be chaired by the Head of School or a Director of Education/PGT/Graduate Studies or equivalent, as per the University Study Regulations, to ensure appropriate authority and oversight of the decisions taken under the Supplementary Regulations. A quorum of one third of the membership of the Board is required, and a Secretary must also be in attendance to record the decisions taken and the reasoning behind them. In the event that it is not possible to secure a quorum from the normal membership of the Board, the Chair may exceptionally invite academic colleagues from an aligned field to attend the meeting, to allow it to proceed as scheduled.

4.3 Boards of Examiners' Role

Boards of Examiners retain their roles as outlined within the University Study Regulations. Subject Boards of Examiners are responsible for determining module marks and awarding credit. Programme Boards of Examiners are responsible for deciding upon student progress, award and degree classification. It is the collective responsibility of the members of each Board of Examiners to do all they reasonably can to ensure that the performance of all students is properly and fully assessed in accordance with the Supplementary Regulations.

5. Further Advice

The Quality Assurance and Regulations Team in Academic Affairs should be contacted as appropriate, for any further advice or clarification at gar@gub.ac.uk.