

**New Key changes to University Regulations 2019/20 - April 2020 Addendum**

1. Executive Board approved and confirmed a policy statement on the University’s approach to assessment given the Covid-19 emergency situation, which was within the scope of Emergency Guidance approved by Senate in November 2019.
2. There has now been further policy changes relating to assessment. These are driven by the need to respond to the unprecedented circumstances our staff and students now face and to support all members of our academic community through these, while still endeavouring to provide our students with the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement and potential through their degree programmes and maintaining the value and credibility of Newcastle awards.
3. There are two key areas where revised and new policy and regulations have been approved: the introduction of a Safety Net for all taught students in respect of their assessments, progression, awards and classifications; and amendments to the shape of the 2019-20 academic year to provide a structure more appropriate to the current circumstances.

**The following are specific changes of principle to note as a result of the Covid-19 Emergency Situation and have been approved by chairs action on behalf of UEC:-**

**I General Regulations for Taught and Research Programmes**

The expected attendance requirement for students has been removed (I A.4) and there will be no attendance monitoring. If there are specific requirements for individual professional programmes these should be published in the programme handbook and highlighted to the students concerned.

**The following are specific changes of principle to note as a result of the Covid-19 Emergency Situation and have been approved by Senate via circulation and chairs action on behalf of UEC:-**

**III Regulations for Taught Programmes – Progress Regulations**

Students on Postgraduate Taught Programmes are not required to satisfy the taught modules of their programme before progressing to the dissertation element

*C. Preconditions for an Award*

*8. Before being eligible for an award from the University, you must:*

*a) Register for, and satisfactorily complete, each stage and its constituent modules;*

*b) Satisfy the examiners as required under the Assessment Regulations and the degree programme regulations.*

*~~c) Satisfy any conditions in the relevant programme regulations which define progress to the dissertation element of the programme (postgraduate taught only).~~*

*Note:  While Boards of Examiners should not meet to make progression decisions, interim meetings of Boards of Examiners are permitted to confirm provisional marks and those students who are required to undergo reassessment having failed to achieve a pass or better at first attempt.*

**IV Regulations for Taught Programmes – Assessment Regulations**

**Due to the necessity of having to introduce remote teaching, learning and assessment, both the Semester 2 examinations and the August (re)assessment period will be carried** out via an alternative assessment approach which can be carried out remotely**. These changes will be prescribed by the School/Board of Studies and students will be informed by either the Examinations Office or School for each individual component assessment**

****E. Marking Procedures****

13. All examiners should carry out assessments in accordance with the assessment criteria for the alternative assessment. ~~criteria available in degree programme handbooks~~.

***J Postgraduate Taught Programmes***

*32. If you fail modules on a taught postgraduate programme you are entitled to one reassessment for each taught module failed at the first attempt ~~provided that:~~*

1. *~~No more than 40 credits of the taught element is failed at the first attempt on a 180 credit master’s programme or a postgraduate diploma programme;~~*
2. *~~No more than 20 credits of a postgraduate certificate is failed at the first attempt.~~*

*~~33. On a postgraduate taught programme the deeming of a first attempt failure on a module as a 'condoned fail' in line with convention V F. 89 does not remove the right to reassessment. If you have one or more modules deemed to be condoned fails, you may still undertake reassessment in those modules either for the purpose of improving your transcript or for the purpose of improving your overall average.~~*

*~~34. A Master’s programme with more than 180 credits may set a higher number of credits that may be resat in its programme regulations, but the proportion of credits available for resit should be in proportion to those on a 180 credit programme.~~*

*~~35. If you are a Master’s or Postgraduate Diploma student who fails more than 40 credits, or a Postgraduate Certificate student who fails more than 20 credits, at the first attempt of the taught element of the programme, you will not be permitted to continue without explicit consent of the Board of Examiners (see also Regulation V F 88 (d)).~~*

*~~36. If you are a Postgraduate Diploma student taking further credit to ‘top-up’ a previously awarded Postgraduate Certificate (entry award), you can only be reassessed in 20 credits of the additional 60 credits taken to gain the higher award.~~*

**K. Resubmission of Dissertation – Postgraduate Taught**

*42. As a Master’s student, you are entitled to one resubmission of your dissertation provided you have failed no more than 40 credits of the taught element of the programme at the first attempt. If you fail more than 40 credits of the taught element of the programme at the first attempt, you will not normally be permitted to resubmit your dissertation without explicit agreement of the Board of Examiners. Resubmission should be within a defined period agreed by the Board of Examiners, normally within three months of the Board of Examiners’ decision*.

**Additionally Senate has approved the following:**

**VI RULES FOR BOARDS OF EXAMINERS**

**Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Committee**

In addition to the Safety Nets outlined above, it is agreed that the University take the following actions as additional ways to help mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on students:

1. Allow all taught students the opportunity to defer their first attempts at assessment due for Semester 2 2019-20 to the next normal assessment period (August 2020 resit period) without the need to provide any supporting evidence, or for PEC approval. All requests will be automatically approved and progressed.
2. Operate a simplified version of the Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) form/process, with no requirement for the submission of supporting evidence, to allow students to identify personal circumstances relating to them that have affected their academic performance.
3. Introduce a Covid-19 Impact Form, to allow students to flag specific situations where there have been issues with the delivery of teaching or assessments, for all students on the module or for a subset of students within a module. .

**Research Degree Programmes**

**The following are specific changes of principle to note as a result of the Covid-19 Emergency Situation and have been approved by chairs action on behalf of UEC:-**

**Research Degree Regulations**

**VIII MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRESS REGULATIONS: Regulations 29 - 31**

**X DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRESS REGULATIONS: Regulations 33-35**

**XII DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (INTEGRATED) REGULATIONS: Regulations 33-35**

**Change of Circumstances: Interruptions of Study**

*The regulations for Interruptions of Studies currently state the following in relation to the timing of an interruption request:*

* *A request for a period of interruption should be submitted by the student via ePortfolio prior to the time of occurrence, where possible, or as soon as possible thereafter.*
* *Retrospective (backdated) interruptions will not be considered, unless there are exceptional circumstances.*
* *Retrospective (backdated) interruptions are not permitted for a student who is a Tier 4 visa holder*

Due to the current Covid-19 disruption and uncertainty of the duration and impact of the disruption, it has been agreed that the University will be more supportive of requests for interruptions that are retrospective. This will give a student time to determine the real impact of the current situation on their progress.

**XI DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY EXAMINATION CONVENTIONS: Regulation 51**

**IX MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY EXAMINATION CONVENTIONS : Regulation 43**

 *Provision for an Oral Examination to be Conducted Outside the University*

*51. It is expected that all oral examinations will take place within the University unless specifically requested otherwise and that all expected attendees are present at the University. With the approval of the dean of postgraduate studies (or nominee), the oral examination for a candidate may be held elsewhere than at Newcastle. Both examiners should be present at any oral examination and only in very exceptional circumstances may the dean of postgraduate studies (or nominee) permit other arrangements to be made.*

It has been agreed that due to the Covid-19 disruption that all MPhil and PhD oral examinations will take place via video link, subject to Dean of Postgraduate Study receiving confirmation that the viva is conducted via a professional Zoom link.

**The following are specific changes of principle to note as a result of the Covid-19 Emergency Situation and have been approved by UEB:-**

**Changes to Fee Schedule**

**Extensions to Minimum Candidature**

All research students have a period of minimum candidature during which tuition fees are paid. This is normally the period when they are expected to conduct and complete their primary research (e.g. FT PhD students have a 3-year period of minimum candidature, PT PhD students have a 6-year period of minimum candidature). If a student requires additional time for primary research beyond this minimum candidature period, further tuition fees are normally required for this additional period.

It has been agreed that if a student finds that their primary research has been disrupted due to the Covid-19 situation, the University will support a tuition-fee-free extension beyond the normal end of minimum candidature. This will enable a student to complete the primary research that they were unable to during the disrupted period.

**Extensions to Latest Thesis Submission Deadline**

It has been agreed that for students due to submit their research degree thesis between the 23rd March 2020 and 30th June 2020 that the University will support a fee-free extension of up to 3 months, if the extension is required due to Covid-19 disruption.