

**CODE OF PRACTICE FOR
POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENTS,
PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATORS, HEADS
OF SCHOOL, HEADS OF GRADUATE
SCHOOL AND COLLEGE POSTGRADUATE
OFFICERS**

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1. Introduction

The intention of this Code is to provide guidance and practical advice for students studying on a postgraduate taught programme of study and co-ordinators of postgraduate taught programmes, as well as Heads of School, Heads of Graduate School and College Postgraduate Officers. Suggestions for improvements are most welcome: these should be sent to the Registry.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the postgraduate regulations set out in the University's Calendar (www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar). It should also be read in conjunction with individual programme handbooks issued by Schools at the start of the programme. Programme Handbooks give guidelines that are specific to particular postgraduate taught degree programmes and will inform students of the exact requirements of the programme.

2. The University of Aberdeen

The University of Aberdeen comprises three Colleges:

- College of Arts & Social Sciences
- College of Life Sciences & Medicine
- College of Physical Sciences

Each College has a Graduate School that oversees all postgraduate provision within the College.

2.1 College of Arts & Social Sciences

Comprising six Schools:

- School of Divinity, History and Philosophy
- School of Education
- School of Language and Literature
- School of Law
- School of Social Science
- University of Aberdeen Business School

Further information about the College can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/cass

2.2 College of Life Sciences & Medicine

Comprising five Schools:

- School of Biological Sciences
- School of Medicine & Dentistry
- School of Medical Sciences
- School of Psychology
- Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health

Further information about the College can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/clsm

2.3 College of Physical Sciences

Comprising three Schools:

- School of Engineering
- School of Geosciences
- School of Natural & Computing Sciences

Further information about the College can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/cops

2.4 Registry

The Registry is responsible for a range of student and academic administrative functions that include the following in regard to postgraduate students:

- Registration of all postgraduate students
- Maintenance of student registration data in manual form and on the computerised student record
- Monitoring of student progress, including changes to terms of study
- Dealing with many aspects of postgraduate tuition fee collection and invoices
- Publication of all postgraduate assessment results
- Preparation of student transcripts when requested
- Certification of eligibility to graduate with higher degrees or to receive other postgraduate awards
- Interpretation and advice on postgraduate regulatory issues

The Registry is located in the Hub, and the Infohub, situated on the Ground Floor of the Hub, operates a counter service for students seeking to make enquiries to the Registry. The Infohub operates between 9.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. Monday – Thursday during term-time (10.00am to 5.00pm on Fridays), with slightly reduced hours during vacation periods. The Registry can be contacted by telephone between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday – Friday on 01224 273505. For e-mail enquiries please contact postgraduate@abdn.ac.uk

Further information about the Registry can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/

2.5 Senate/Quality Assurance Committee

The Quality Assurance Committee has been delegated responsibility from Senate for the assurance of quality and maintenance of standards across all undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate taught elements of research provision. QAC reports directly to the University Committee on Teaching and Learning. Where regulations and procedures refer to Senate, it is the QAC that is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of these procedures

Specifically, the Quality Assurance Committee shall:

- in consultation with College Teaching & Learning Committees, Graduate Schools or College Postgraduate Committees, as appropriate, review proposals for (a) the introduction of new courses and programmes of study (b) amendments to existing courses and programmes, and (c) the withdrawal of existing courses and programmes, and make appropriate recommendations;
- recommend to the UCTL changes in the General and Supplementary Regulations;
- oversee the quality control of taught courses and programmes through scrutiny of reports from the Student Course Evaluation Exercise, External Examiner Reports, Internal Teaching Review Reports and Reports from Professional & Statutory Bodies, as applicable; and refer policy issues to the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, as appropriate;
- be responsible, on behalf of the UCTL, for co-ordinating a regular programme of Internal Teaching Reviews for monitoring and reviewing courses and programmes of study and consider and recommend to UCTL revisions to the procedures for Internal Teaching Review, as necessary;

- be responsible, on behalf of the UCTL, for regularly reviewing alignment of University policies with the QAA Codes of Practice, the wider Academic Infrastructure and external reference points and for recommending revisions to policies, as appropriate.
- monitor the quality of provision provided by collaborative partners through the scrutiny of annual reports and recommend to UCTL revisions to the procedures for the approval and oversight of collaborative provision, as necessary;
- oversee issues relating to student progress, including the establishment of Student Progress Committees and Fitness to Practise Committees, as appropriate, and make recommendations to the Senate for the discontinuation of attendance, as appropriate.
- undertake such other functions as may be referred to the Committee by the UCTL.

2.6 College Postgraduate Officers

College Postgraduate Officers have extensive delegated authority to undertake specific duties on behalf of the Quality Assurance Committee. College Postgraduate Officers have been appointed to represent each area of study of the University. Through the Registry they deal with all administrative matters relating to the admission, progress and examination of individual students. College Postgraduate Officers can be contacted through the Registry (email: postgraduate@abdn.ac.uk)

3. The Application Process

A full list of the postgraduate taught programmes currently available can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/pgrad/study/taughtlist.php

Entry requirements for each degree programme and each individual programme prescription can be found on the web at www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar/info/postgraduateB.doc

3.1 The Admission of Postgraduate Taught Students

Admission to the University is in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy which is available at www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix4x1.pdf

Full details of how to apply, including how the application is processed, can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/postgraduate/apply.php

Information about the costs of studying for a research degree and about living costs in Aberdeen is available at www.abdn.ac.uk/postgraduate/finance.php

3.2 English Language Requirements for international students

To study successfully in Aberdeen students will need to speak and write English fluently.

Full details of our English Language requirements can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/international/english-requirements.php

Applicants who do not satisfy the 'direct entry' criteria may be offered entry on the condition that they either (a) achieve the minimum entry requirement by themselves, or (b) successfully complete one of the Language Centre's 6-week or 12-week Summer School Programmes, depending on their IELTS score, at the University of Aberdeen, before the commencement of their degree. Further details can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/languagecentre/index.php?id=3

Students studying on taught programmes will be required to submit written course work and may be required to sit written examinations very early in their programme of study. It is therefore essential that students have a good grasp of written and spoken English.

Information about Language courses and support available at the University can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/international/english-requirements.php

4. Registration

At the start of their studies and at the start of each subsequent academic year in which they are studying, students are required to register with the University and to contact their Programme Co-ordinator to agree the courses they will be taking. As part of the eRegistration process students are required to make arrangements to pay their tuition fees. Thereafter they can obtain a student ID card. Full details of how postgraduate taught students can register can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/newstudents/registration/

Those students who are studying part-time or those students studying full-time but who begin their programme in January must register not only at the beginning of their studies but also at the start of each subsequent academic year of study (i.e. in September).

4.1 Use of E-mail

Through the eRegistration process students will receive a University e-mail account when they register with the University Computing Centre (see Section 17.2). The University will normally use e-mail to communicate with students during term-time and messages will be sent to their University e-mail account.

It is the student's responsibility to **check e-mail on a regular basis** (at least weekly) and to **keep their mailbox tidy** to avoid going over quota. Failure to check e-mail, or non-receipt of e-mail because the mailbox is over quota or due to non-delivery of a message to a non-University account, cannot be used as grounds for an academic appeal (see Section 16.2)

4.2 Student Portals

A student's University Computer ID and password also gives them access to their [Student Portal](http://studportal.abdn.ac.uk/portal/page?_pageid=36,1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL) which can be viewed at http://studportal.abdn.ac.uk/portal/page?_pageid=36,1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Through their Portal students can view and, where appropriate, update the information, including home and term-time addresses, held in their student record. The Portal also provides students with a personalised gateway to the on-line learning resources associated with the courses on which they are enrolled. Data in the Student Portal is updated nightly from the live student record system.

Students can also download applications to graduate from their Portal. See Section 15.

Please note that the eRegistration Portal process must be complete before access to the Student Portal is permitted.

5. Induction

Before classes start, a programme of induction sessions is run, by the School. In addition to welcoming students, the induction programme provides an overview of the University and of the support services available to students. School induction programmes will introduce students to the academic staff who will be teaching them, introduce students to the learning environment and will allow students the opportunity to ask questions about the programme

Details of induction will be sent to students by the School in which they are studying before the start of their studies. Students who are studying off-campus will be inducted to similar information by the most appropriate means available. Also see www.abdn.ac.uk/newstudents/registration/

6. Programme Co-ordinator

Each programme will have a Programme Co-ordinator who oversees the programme and reports to the relevant Head of School.

Advice on academic matters is provided by the Programme Co-ordinator. Students should feel free to contact their Programme Co-ordinator if they wish to discuss any academic queries or problems. The Programme Co-ordinator can also help students with any other concerns that they may have, including personal matters, and will be able to suggest where students might obtain specialist advice or information, as appropriate.

7. Degree Regulations and Changes in Terms of Study

The Regulations for Postgraduate Study are available on the web at the following address; www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar/postgraduate.php

(Please note that Regulations are continually reviewed and may be revised due to changes in policies and procedures. Any changes that are made that apply to students during their period of registration at the University are clearly indicated on the above website).

If any change in the conditions of study notified in a student's letter of admission becomes necessary, e.g. change from full-time to part-time study, the student should discuss the matter with his/her Programme Co-ordinator who will submit an application to the Registry for consideration by one of the College's Postgraduate Officers. Such applications should be made as far as possible in advance of the date when the change is to take effect. Official permission is necessary for all changes in conditions of study including suspension of study, and change from full-time to part-time. Application forms to request any of the above can be printed from: www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/documents/download/PgForms.shtml

Please note that, as many changes to the period of study (suspension, move to part-time etc.) affect the tuition fees charged, it is very important to keep the Registry informed.

7.1 Suspension of studies

If a student is unable to make progress with their studies due to medical reasons or other good cause, they may apply to the Senate to suspend their studies for a fixed period. This request should only be made after having first discussed and agreed the suspension with their Programme Co-ordinator.

If the student is sponsored, it is the responsibility of the student to keep any sponsor informed of the reasons for requesting a suspension of studies.

During the period of suspension, tuition fees are not payable although the student is liable for Council Tax. If all fees have already been paid to the University (including tuition, accommodation and library), students, or their sponsors where appropriate, may receive a refund for any periods of suspension in that academic year.

Students who suspend their studies are eligible to apply for registration as an Associate Student. Registration as an Associate Student costs £100 per academic year (or part year) and allows students to keep in touch with the University while their studies are suspended and have an ID card, access to the Library and borrowing rights, access to the Computing Centre and an e-mail

account and access to student welfare/support facilities. Students should inform the Registry if they wish to have Associate Student Status whilst suspended from study.

An application form to suspend study is available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/documents/download/PgForms.shtml

Applications for suspension must be supported by both the Programme Co-ordinator and the Head of School and approved by a College Postgraduate Officer. If the suspension is requested on medical grounds, medical certificates will be required. In all cases an application for suspension should be made prior to the period for which suspension is to commence. Suspensions will not normally be approved retrospectively.

Any suspension requested should take into account the timing of examinations and other assessment for the programme, and the timing of when courses are run.

International students studying at the University on a visa should refer to the terms of their visa when requesting a suspension of studies.

7.2 Extension to submission of a dissertation

Regulation 13 for Taught Postgraduate Awards states that "Dissertations must be submitted at a date and time determined by the Head of the relevant School, normally not later than the end of the final calendar month of a candidate's registration. They may be submitted later in individual cases, specifically approved by the Head of the relevant School: but in no case may the date of submission be later than the end of the ninth month following the end of a candidate's registration". **International students studying at the University on a visa should refer to the terms of their visa when requesting an extension to their dissertation.**

Students who have been granted an extension to submit their dissertation can choose to register as an Associate Student in the next academic year. Associate Student status gives access to University library and computing facilities and should be requested from the Registry. The current cost is £100.

7.3 Withdrawal from study

Where possible students should discuss their intention to withdraw with their Programme Co-ordinator, Graduate School, Student Support staff or Registry staff member, the latter will advise the student when he or she complete a Withdrawal form, which can be downloaded from www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/documents/download/PgForms.shtml

Students withdrawing prematurely from study may or may not be entitled to a partial rebate of tuition fees paid, depending on the point in the academic year when they withdraw and also whether they have paid all accommodation, library, phone bills etc. to the University, where applicable. The Registry will assess whether any refund of fees is due.

Students must complete a withdrawal form and submit to the Registry shortly after the decision has been made to withdraw from study. The date of withdrawal will normally be the date that the form is received by the Registry and will not normally be applied retrospectively. Tuition fees will be charged up until the point of withdrawal.

8. Study Off-Campus

If a postgraduate taught student wants to undertake any study away from Aberdeen they must first seek approval to do so.

Application forms can be found on the web at www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/download.shtml. This application should be agreed and signed by the student and the Programme Co-ordinator. If

approved, confirmation will be emailed to the student by the School and a copy retained in the School or Graduate School office. If the student holds a Tier 4 visa a copy of the signed revision of this form should also be sent to the Registry to hold on file.

Postgraduate taught students who want to study away from Aberdeen but remain in the UK, must agreed to meet the attendance requirements by reporting back to Aberdeen in person. Failure to meet these requirements could lead to the student being reported as At Risk for non-attendance (see section 9.2.3). Students holding a Tier 4 visa could ultimately be reported to the UKBA.

9. Assessment

General information about assessment and examination policies and practices for taught courses and programmes can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section7.shtml

All courses are marked according to a Common Assessment Scale (CAS), full details of which can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix7x3.pdf

Students on taught programmes of study will be issued with a Programme Handbook at the start of their programme that will inform students of the exact requirements of assessment.

9.1 Procedures for determining progression and award in modularised postgraduate taught programmes of study (*Grade Spectrum*)

The *Grade Spectrum* is used to determine progression and award in all modularised postgraduate taught programmes of study. The details below were approved by the Senate on 15 June 2005, with further revisions approved on 10 February 2010. The revised version given below applies to all postgraduate taught students who began study in or after the 2010/11 academic year, and to part-time students or students who started in January 2010 and who are completing the standard period for their degree programme in the 2010/11 academic year. Please note that the revised *Grade Spectrum* applies only to the part of their degree programme from 2010/11 onwards and is not applied retrospectively to studies already undertaken. For all other postgraduate taught students who began a modularised programme of study before 2010/11 academic year, please consult the appropriate previous version of the *Grade Spectrum* (available on request from the Registry).

1. The University Calendar entry will specify the constituent courses of each Postgraduate Taught Programme. The parent School for each course will specify the precise assessment details and the weighting given to each component of summative assessment in determining the overall CAS mark for a course. The parent School for each Programme will specify any additional assessment details for the Programme (e.g. summative written examinations which are not related to a single course but which relate to a group of courses or to the Programme as a whole) and the weighting given to each in regard to the *Grade Spectrum* (see below).

Where a course is a compulsory part of a Programme but does not contribute to the resultant Programme award, this should be stated (e.g. a zero credit-rated field course). Progression and award should be based on performance across the Programme as a whole.

2. The **criteria** for the following must be made explicit to students at the outset of their Programme:
 - narrative description of the requirements of each CAS band;
 - definition of “element” in regard to the Programme’s constituent courses and, where applicable, summative assessments if applicable, for progression to the next stage of the Programme;

- the constitution of each Stage of the programme (N.B. a stage may consist of taught courses or a research dissertation/project or a continuation of both taught and research, which typically will cover learning outcomes associated with at least 60 credit points at Level 5 (SCQF Level 11);
 - for the award of Pg Cert, PgDip and Masters Degree (i.e. see point 3);
 - for the award of the PgDip with Commendation or Distinction;
 - for the award of a Master's Degree with Commendation or Distinction
3. All students will be required to meet the following credit requirements: Postgraduate Master's Degree – 180 credit points, including at least 150 credit points at Level 5; Postgraduate Diploma – 120 credit points, including at least 90 at Level 5; Postgraduate Certificate – 60 credit points, including at least 40 at Level 5.
 4. Where a Programme consists of courses delivered by more than one School CAS marks for each course which contributes towards the Programme must be agreed by the relevant external examiner(s) for the course before being considered by the Examiners (including the external examiner) for the Programme. CAS marks for courses that form part of Stage 1, or Stage 2 or Stage 3 must be conveyed to the parent School for the Programme as soon as possible after the end of the relevant Stage examination results have been published and in sufficient time to consider progression to the next stage of the Programme.
 5. The University's Guidance Note on Academic Appeals shall apply to the consideration of medical or personal circumstances which may have affected a student's performance in an element of prescribed assessment. Where medical or other personal evidence is considered relevant by Examiners it should normally be taken into account in deciding the marks for individual courses and summative assessments rather than in the process of reaching a decision on a final award. However it is recognised that in some cases the evidence may be better assessed at the time of deciding progression or final award.
 6. When an oral examination is used as part of the assessment for an individual course the result should be employed to inform the overall CAS mark for the relevant course. When an oral examination is a separately identifiable and separately-weighted summative examination taken by all candidates and is a stated element of the Programme, the parent School shall inform students of the weighting given to the oral examining in regard to its contribution (to the course CAS mark in courses, or overall result in Programmes) to the *Grade Spectrum* (see below).
 7. Where candidates are unable to complete an element of prescribed assessment on account of illness or other good cause, General Regulation 10 for Taught Postgraduate Awards shall apply. Where an element is returned as "No Paper" (NP) without such good cause, a mark of zero will be used in the process of determining progression or award. [See Note 1]
 8. If the candidate has completed an element of prescribed assessment but been awarded a mark on CAS between 6 and 8 inclusive, and if they would otherwise be permitted to progress to the next stage of the programme, they shall be awarded the same amount of unnamed specific credit, not exceeding 30 credit points in total, at level 3 for a Postgraduate Diploma or for a Master's Degree and not exceeding 20 credit points in total, at level 3 for a Postgraduate Certificate. Such level 3 credits will count towards achieving the overall credit requirement of the award in question. If the mark awarded on CAS is less than 6, the candidate shall not be permitted to progress to the next stage of the programme.
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| 9.1 | It is emphasised that Examiners retain the final discretion in deciding progression and the Programme award. However, progression and award for all Programmes will normally be |
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based on performance on the following *Grade Spectrum*. [See Note 4] To allow for different practices between disciplines, the spectrum is expressed in terms of the proportion each element of assessment constitutes as part of the overall total after it has been appropriately weighted. The parent School for the Programme shall be responsible for informing students, at the start of their Programme, of the definition of “element” in regard to the Programme’s constituent courses and, where applicable, summative assessments.

9.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRESSION FOR MODULARISED POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Progression from Stage 1 to Stage 2, and then from Stage 2 to Stage 3 of the Programme, should normally be based on marks at **9 or higher** in all elements for each of the respective stages.

9.3 DETERMINATION OF AWARD FOR MODULARISED POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

AWARD OF POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE OR POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA

Normally marks at **9 or better** in 60 credit points, for a Certificate, or 120 for a Diploma .

AWARD OF POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA WITH COMMENDATION

120 credit points, and marks at **15 or better** in elements constituting half of the assessment; **and**

Normally marks at **12 or better** in all elements.

AWARD OF POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA WITH DISTINCTION

120 credit points, and marks at **18 or better** in elements constituting half of the total assessment; **and**

Marks at **15 or better** in elements constituting three quarters of the total assessment; **and**

Normally marks at **12 or better** in all elements.

AWARD OF MASTER’S DEGREE

Normally marks at **9 or better** in 180 credit points, inclusive of the project/dissertation.

AWARD OF MASTER’S DEGREE WITH COMMENDATION

180 credit points, and marks at **15 or better** in all elements constituting half of the total assessment, inclusive of the project/dissertation (**which must also be graded at 15 or better**); **and**

Normally marks at **12 or better** in all elements.



AWARD OF MASTER'S DEGREE WITH DISTINCTION

180 credit points, and marks at **18 or better** in elements constituting half of the total assessment, inclusive of the project/dissertation (**which must also be graded at 18 or better**); and

Marks at **15 or better** in elements constituting three quarters of the total assessment; and

Normally marks at **12 or better** in all elements.

- 9.2 The *Grade Spectrum* defines the threshold standards against which progression and award decisions are made. The Examiners, however, have discretion (in the circumstances defined in Note 3 below) to depart from this norm. Discretion may take account of actual marks within bands. Where discretion is exercised, clear reasons must be identified for doing so and a record kept.
- 9.3 CAS marks for courses that constitute part of a Postgraduate Taught Programme are provisional- they can be raised or lowered at the Final Examiners' meeting later in the academic year (with one exception). The exception is that CAS 8 (Not Achieved) may be changed at the Final Examiners' meeting to CAS 9 or above (Achieved), but CAS 9 can NOT be changed to CAS 8 or lower. Departments must inform the Registry, on an exception basis, of those marks that have been altered by External Examiners.
- 10.1 General Regulation 11 for Taught Postgraduate Awards states that "unless exemption is approved by Senate on application, candidates who do not complete satisfactorily a prescribed element of assessment for any course at level 5 may be re-assessed in that element only in exceptional circumstances, and on the unanimous recommendation of the Examiners. In no circumstances shall any candidate be permitted to submit themselves for assessment in any element more than twice."
- 10.2 Candidates on postgraduate 'conversion' programmes, approved as such by the Senate and where exemption from Regulation 11 has been specifically approved by Senate, are permitted to count no more than 60 credit points gained through resits towards a Postgraduate Diploma or Master's award, with no more than 30 credit points being re-taken in Stage 1 of the Programme. This permission excludes the project/dissertation where the project/dissertation is a compulsory element of assessment. The maximum resit mark which can be recorded is CAS 9; the result of any resit will count in determining progression and award. In no circumstances shall any candidate be permitted to submit themselves for assessment in any element more than twice.
- 10.3 A candidate who is registered for, but fails to satisfy the requirements of a Master's Degree, or of a Postgraduate Diploma, or who elects not to proceed to further study, may, if otherwise qualified, be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate, suitably designated, as appropriate."
11. If students appeal against the Programme award which is recommended by the Examiners the Policy on Academic Appeals in force at that time will apply.

Notes

- 1 General Regulation 12 for Taught Postgraduate Awards shall apply where candidates have been unable to complete an element of assessment at the prescribed time on account of illness (which must be certified by a medical practitioner) or other good cause. [Good cause is defined as any reason outwith a

candidate's control e.g. compassionate or unavoidable circumstances and does not include, for example, misreading of the examination timetable in regard to the date, time or venue of an examination].

2 Where candidates fail to complete an element of assessment at the prescribed time without good cause (see Note 1), they shall be awarded a No Paper (NP) for each such element: for the purposes of the grade spectrum, this shall be interpreted as candidates having been awarded a mark of 0 for these elements. Candidates in this position cannot expect to be awarded a Distinction unless the Examiners choose to use their discretion to depart from the Award indicated by the grade spectrum.

3 There can be no undertaking that the Examiners will choose to use discretion to depart from that indicated by the grade spectrum. Where the Examiners choose to use their discretion to depart, in an upward direction, from that indicated by the *Grade Spectrum*, it shall normally be as a consequence of (a) a candidate's overall performance and (b) the particular circumstances which have resulted in a candidate not satisfying the normal grade spectrum requirement.

4. Where the Examiners choose to use their discretion and allow progression notwithstanding the requirements of the *Grade Spectrum*, a mark of CAS 9 in the project/dissertation is required for the award of the Master's Degree. A higher mark cannot be required.

9.2 Guidelines to be followed when dealing with postgraduate taught students making unsatisfactory progress

Schools should ensure that they have followed Section 1. This section stipulates that teaching staff are responsible for providing students with, amongst other things, clear information on:

- Methods of assessment, deadlines for submitting assessments, penalties for late submission of assessments and marking criteria;
- Criteria for progression from Stage 1 to Stage 2, or from Stage 2 to Stage 3 of a taught postgraduate programme, where applicable;
- The implications of unsatisfactory progress, or failure to achieve a required standard for progression to the next stage of the programme.

Teaching staff are also responsible for providing appropriate assistance to help students progress in learning by, amongst other things:

- Being accessible to students at reasonable times to provide assistance in dealing with academic difficulties arising in the course;
- Identifying inadequate progress and initiating appropriate remedial advice or action;
- Recommending remedial language tuition (where appropriate);

9.2.1 Non-progression

At the end of each stage of the programme, the Examiners' will determine whether a student has met the criteria for progression as outlined in Section 9.1 and should be permitted to progress to the next stage. If the student has not met the criteria for progression, the School will notify the student formally in writing that their studies have been terminated. A copy of this communication will also be sent to the Registry, who will then withdraw the student on the University's Student Record System and, if the student is studying on a Tier 4 visa, report to the student to the UK Borders Agency as no longer studying at the University.

9.2.2 Unsatisfactory performance during a stage

Where a School has decided that a postgraduate student's performance during the teaching of a stage, i.e. prior to end of a stage and therefore prior to a decision on progression to the next stage in line with Section 9.1, has given rise to anxiety and the Course Co-ordinator has followed the guidelines set out in Section 9.3, the Course Co-ordinator should report the matter to the Programme Co-ordinator. The student should then be warned formally that his/her performance and/or attendance is such that if it is not improved he/she may be asked to discontinue study. This

should be done by the Programme Co-ordinator and/or Head of School and will normally take the form of an interview. The warning should immediately be followed by a letter to the student. The letter should indicate the requirements for improvement and the implications if these are not met.

A copy of the letter should be sent to the Registry. The letter will be shown to the relevant College Postgraduate Officer but the Registry will not at this stage take any action other than to place the warning letter in the student's personal file.

If the student wishes to meet with a College Postgraduate Officer this can be arranged through the Registry.

Should the student's performance/attendance not improve, the Programme Co-ordinator, via the Head of School should formally notify the relevant College Postgraduate Officer in writing, through the Registry.

General Regulation 8 for Taught Postgraduate Awards states that "Senatus Academicus shall have the power to terminate at any time a person's candidature, whether on the recommendation of the relevant Head of School or Programme Co-ordinator or otherwise, on being satisfied that there is sufficient reason to do so."

If, on behalf of Senate, the relevant College Postgraduate Officer upholds the School's recommendation to discontinue study the student will be informed in writing by the Registry and advised of the right to submit an appeal against the decision (see section 16.2).

9.2.3 Attendance monitoring procedures

In order to be eligible to undertake the initial or subsequent end-of-course assessments or to receive credit for a course, students must have a Class Certificate for the course in question. A Class Certificate is confirmation that a candidate has attended and duly performed the work prescribed for a course. There is no actual physical certificate. A student who has been validly registered by their programme coordinator for a course, and who has not withdrawn from the course before the last day of teaching (or been deemed to have withdrawn, in accordance with Regulation 6 of Schedule B General Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards below, or to have had their class certificate refused), is regarded as having obtained a Class Certificate for that course automatically.

The University operates a monitoring system for all taught postgraduate students to identify students who may be experiencing difficulties with their studies. If a coordinator for one of a student's courses is concerned about his/her performance or attendance they will inform the Registry who will then contact him/her directly by e-mail to seek an explanation regarding the absence. Failure to meet the attendance requirements for a course may result in the Class Certificate for that course being refused. Full details of the University's monitoring procedures can be found here: www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/monitoring.shtml.

Except with the permission of the Senate, candidates shall not be permitted to present themselves for an end-of-course assessment in any course unless they have obtained a Class Certificate. Unless good cause is demonstrated, students absent who have not duly performed the work prescribed for the course (e.g. absent from classes for periods of time that the School has determined) will not be able to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes for the courses concerned. Such students will be refused a Class Certificate. Students not granted a Class Certificate under these circumstances will be barred from appearing for the initial or subsequent end-of-course assessments or receiving credit for the course. It shall be for the Senate to determine what constitutes good cause for absence.

Please see below for procedures regarding absences from classes and the requirements for notifying the School of medical reasons or other Good Cause.

9.3 Absence from classes: certification of absence for medical reasons or other good cause

For the purposes of this Guidance Note, a medical certificate is defined as either a pro-forma or a note on the Medical Practice's headed paper signed by a medical practitioner.

Where absence has occurred for good cause of a non-medical nature, students should supply appropriate corroborating evidence in place of a medical certificate, where required below. Students should not request a medical certificate from their medical practitioner to cover absences of a non-medical nature.

Students should note that, in accordance with guidance from the Scottish Executive Health Department, medical practitioners may charge a fee for the provision of medical certificates. In such cases, the medical practitioner should make clear at the start that a fee will be charged and the amount of that fee. Students should note that the University will not reimburse any such costs incurred.

1. **Students must submit** either a certificate from a medical practitioner or a self-certificate where illness has necessitated a period of absence from classes of between six and eleven weekdays.
2. **Student must submit** a certificate from a medical practitioner where illness has necessitated a period of absence from classes of over eleven weekdays.
3. **Students are strongly advised to submit** a certificate from a medical practitioner in the following cases:-
 - (a) where illness has prevented students from attending an end-of-course examination (otherwise their result may be recorded as "No Paper", which will be interpreted as zero for the purposes of determining an award)
 - (b) where students believe that their performance in an element of prescribed degree assessment has been affected by illness (see also paragraph 4 below)
 - (c) where illness has prevented students from submitting a piece of in-course assessment by the required deadline
 - (d) where illness has prevented students from attending a specified teaching session [e.g. a tutorial or a practical class] to which an assessment is directly attached
 - (e) if, under exceptional circumstances, a School requires certification by a medical practitioner.
4. Where it is impossible for a doctor to verify that students had been ill on the relevant date [defined as the date of an examination, the submission deadline for an in-course assignment, or the date of a teaching session] students should not request a backdated Medical Certificate. **It is essential, therefore, in these specific circumstances, that students arrange a consultation with their medical practitioner as soon as possible following onset of illness while the signs of an illness are still evident AND within seven days of the relevant date as defined above** (paragraph 5 below also refers).
5. Details of illness (which must be certified by a medical practitioner) and/or other personal circumstances which either has prevented students from taking an assessment or from meeting a deadline for submission of assessed work, or which students believe may have affected their performance in an element of prescribed degree assessment will be accepted as grounds for appeal only if notified in writing to the Head of the relevant School

no later than one week after the date on which a student submitted, or was due to submit, an assessment or on which a student appeared, or was due to appear, for the assessment concerned, together with supporting evidence of their medical condition or personal circumstance. Where a student believes their medical condition or personal circumstance to be of a particularly sensitive nature, the information should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked 'sensitive information'.

6. Where there are good reasons why students were unable to notify the Head of School within the one week period defined in 5 above, they must write to the Head of School as soon as practicable and give details of the illness (which must be certified by a medical practitioner) and/or other personal circumstances and the events which prevented them from notifying the Head of School within the defined period.
7. **Details reported after the 7-day period in 5 above will be accepted as grounds of appeal only in exceptional circumstances.** Claims that academic performance was adversely affected by ill health and/or other personal circumstances for which there is no contemporaneous, independent, medical or other supporting evidence will not be accepted as competent grounds for an academic appeal. Students should refer to the University's *Policy on Academic Appeals*: www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/appeals
8. 'Sensitive information' in 5 above will be opened by the Head of the relevant School where the deadline for submission of assessed work has been missed or by a sub-committee of the Examiners consisting of the Head of the relevant School (or his/her nominated representative) and the External Examiner(s) where performance in assessed work is concerned. The sensitive information will be considered by the Sub-Committee of Examiners prior to determining the final mark for the assessment concerned.

10. Tier 4 Visa Monitoring Requirements

As well as adhering to the attendance requirements outlined in Section 9.2.3, the requirements of the UK Borders Agency mean that the University is obliged to carry out visa checks of Tier 4 students four times during an academic year. The first check will be done when the student registers at the start of the academic year, and the remaining checks will be done during the course of the academic year. The checks are only for students who have a Tier 4 visa. Tier 4 students will be emailed with dates and times of the checks that are performed during the academic year, so must ensure that they regularly check their University email account. Failure to report for these checks could mean that students are de-registered from their studies and reported to the UK Borders Agency. This could lead to their Tier 4 visa being curtailed or cancelled.

11. Responsibilities of Senate, Heads of Graduate School, Heads of School, Course and Programme Co-ordinators and Postgraduate Taught Students

11.1 Senate and the Quality Assurance Committee

Senate has ultimate responsibility for degrees and academic standards, but the powers prescribed under the various higher degree regulations are exercised on its behalf by the Quality Assurance Committee. The Committee approves all new courses and programmes of study, and requires to be satisfied about entrance requirements; course and programme aims, objectives and content; teaching and learning arrangements; and modes of assessment. It also receives reports and assessments on courses from evaluation forms completed by students, from Heads of School and from external examiners.

11.2 Heads of Graduate School

Heads of Graduate School oversee all aspects of the administration of the Graduate School. They are responsible for oversight of the delivery of training and the maintenance of standards and for representing the interests of postgraduate students in the senior committees of the College and the University.

Heads of Graduate School or their representatives are responsible for: -

- Promoting excellence in postgraduate teaching and research
- Acting as a central repository of information, maintaining important databases including courses, dissertation/project areas, postgraduate student details, studentships and other sources of funding
- Providing facilities and support for postgraduate students
- Overseeing new course and programme proposals
- Overseeing review of course content and mode of delivery including core generic skills training and sharing of modules
- Overseeing marketing and recruitment in consultation with the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service.

11.3 Heads of School and Course/Programme Co-ordinators

Heads of School are in charge of all matters pertaining to the running of their Schools, but they may delegate their powers in respect of each course or programme of study to a course or programme co-ordinator.

Course/Programme Coordinators are responsible for:-

(a) *provision of information to students*, and in particular giving clear information on:-

- aims and objectives of the courses/programmes
- the relationship between the programme and degree regulations
- teaching methods to be used and availability of materials on WebCT
- attendance expected and course work required
- methods of assessment and marking criteria
- tutorial arrangements
- criteria for transfer from Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma to a Master's programme, where applicable (with reference to the University's Postgraduate *Grade Spectrum*)
- reading matter both required and recommended
- use of course evaluation forms and other methods of seeking student feedback
- avenues for seeking help and advice
- laboratory, field and other practical activities, including the project and dissertation, where applicable
- safety in laboratory, field and other forms of practical work
- the University's definition of plagiarism (www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x15.pdf)

(b) *course and programme content*, in particular ensuring that the content of the course/programme is:-

- relevant to the stated aims and objectives
- adequately covered
- where appropriate, a reflection of current professional practice
- as interesting and stimulating as possible
- appropriate to the prerequisites and level of study of the course/programme

(c) providing appropriate assistance to help students progress in learning by:-

- being accessible to students at reasonable times to provide assistance in dealing with academic difficulties arising in the course
- identifying inadequate progress and initiating appropriate remedial advice or action
- returning written course work with constructive criticism in reasonable time
- providing appropriate training in safety and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of students in laboratory, field, and other practical activities

(d) ensuring that quality in teaching and assessment is maintained and extended by:-

- taking appropriate opportunities offered for development in teaching skills and educational innovations
- using, where appropriate, available aids to learning
- developing transferable skills
- using the University's Common Assessment Scale
- using student evaluation and external examiner feedback
- reviewing course/programme design and assessment techniques

(e) additionally staff who are required to supervise projects/dissertations should:-

- advise the student on the choice of research topic in the light of what is appropriate for the degree and the present state of knowledge
- advise on a topic which can be satisfactorily completed within the specified time and within the specified word limit
- give guidance about planning the research programme, about literature and sources, and about requisite skills
- determine what training in research methods and skills and further education in the subject are required by the student, and seek approval from the Head of School or Head of Graduate School for proposals to obtain the necessary training and support
- advise the Head of School of any lack of resources outwith the set limits to the funding of projects which may prevent the student from completing his or her study within the period of study
- ensure that the student is acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures, and that s/he receives appropriate training and supervision when following any course of action or using any technique which might be deemed hazardous or dangerous
- advise on ethical issues relating to the conduct of the research (including how to obtain the approval of relevant ethics committees if appropriate)
- request written work on a regular basis, as appropriate
- arrange as appropriate for the student to present papers to graduate seminars, staff seminars and conferences
- consult with the student on the appropriate recognition of the student's contribution to research publications
- try to ensure by advice and encouragement that the dissertation is submitted within the specified time and within the specified word limit

11.4 Postgraduate students on taught courses

While teaching staff have the responsibilities listed above, postgraduate students on taught programmes are ultimately responsible for their own learning and development, and for promoting good conditions for study and learning through their own behaviour and attitudes.

Students should take full advantage of the teaching provided by:-

- attending regularly at lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory, field and other practical or on-line classes as required by Schools
- coming prepared for every class as necessary or required
- participating actively in tutorials, seminars, and group activities
- completing and submitting course work punctually
- trying to attain the highest intellectual standards possible
- ensuring that they are thoroughly acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures, and have received training before following any course of action or using any technique which might be deemed hazardous or dangerous
- contributing to the improvement of courses through co-operation in the completing of student course evaluation forms and other methods of seeking student feedback
- co-operating in the development of a learning environment
- using the opportunities offered to seek advice on difficulties encountered in a course
- maintaining a standard of behaviour during teaching sessions which allows all class members to take full advantage of the teaching
- informing Schools and Course Co-ordinators at the earliest possible opportunity of any disability, illness or extenuating circumstances which may affect academic performance
- communicating suggestions for the improvement of courses, and contributing to staff-student consultative committees.

Additionally, those students who undertake projects/dissertations should:-

- define the area of their research in consultation with their supervisor
- define their training and educational needs and discuss them with their supervisor
- ensure that they are thoroughly acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures, and have received training before following any course of action or using any technique which might be deemed hazardous or dangerous
- agree a schedule of meetings with their supervisor
- agree a research topic with their supervisor as soon as practicable
- agree a timetable for the conduct of the research
- seek approval for their research topic via their supervisor or Head of School
- obtain approval of their research from ethics committees where appropriate
- discuss work and progress with the supervisor
- submit written work as and when required by the supervisor
- maintain progress in accordance with the plan agreed with the supervisor
- agree with the supervisor a plan and timetable for the writing of the dissertation
- take the initiative with their supervisor in defining and raising problems or difficulties
- consult with their supervisor on the appropriate recognition of their contribution to research publications.

12. Student Guidance and Learner Support

General information about student guidance and learner support is available on the web at www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section5.shtml

13. Policy and Guidelines on Good Research Conduct and Statement on the Handling of Allegations of Unacceptable Research Conduct

Most postgraduate taught programmes have a substantial research component towards the end of the programme that takes the form of a research dissertation or project.

The University of Aberdeen expects the highest standards of integrity to be adhered to by its researchers. Good research practice will be promoted and promulgated throughout the University with the aim of creating a culture in which the following general points will be understood and observed:

- Integrity in research;
- Openness in research;
- Role of professional bodies;
- Leadership and supervision in research;
- Ownership of research;
- Ethical practice in research;
- Risk of research misuse;
- Publication practice.

The full policy and guidelines can be viewed on the web at

www.abdn.ac.uk/ppg/uploads/files/69/Policy%20on%20Good%20Res%20Conduct_July2010.docx

13.1 Guidelines on the keeping of research records

The University of Aberdeen Policy and Guidelines on Good Research Practice requires that all researchers keep clear and accurate records of the procedures followed, and approvals granted during a research process, including records of the interim results obtained as well as of the final research outcomes. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practices, but also in case questions are asked subsequently about either the conduct or output of the research. The maintenance of accurate records is also important for potential subsequent commercialisation of research.

Full guidelines can be viewed at www.abdn.ac.uk/sfre/goodpractice/research-records/

14. Student feedback and representation

14.1 Student Course Evaluation Forms

University-wide Student Course Evaluation Forms (SCEF) are used in all Schools to seek students' views on each of their course modules. Your comments are collated and reported to the School Staff-Student Liaison Committee. Heads of School are required to submit reports on the outcome of the SCEF each half-session to the Senate. The University takes students' views very seriously and students are urged to complete the evaluation forms when asked to do so.

14.2 Class representatives

The University values student's opinions in regard to enhancing the quality of teaching and its delivery; therefore in conjunction with the Students Association the University supports the operation of a Class representative system.

The students within each course, year, or programme elect representatives by the end of the fourth week of teaching within each half-session. Any students registered within a course, year or programme that wishes to represent a given group of students can stand for election as a class representative. Students will be informed when the elections for class representative will take place. Generally one class representative is identified for each course at undergraduate level and one for each programme at postgraduate level.

What will it involve?

It will involve speaking to fellow students about the course/year/programme that the class representative represents. This can include any comments that they may have. The Class Representative will attend a Staff Student Liaison Committee and should represent the views and concerns of the students within this meeting. The representative will also be able to contribute to the agenda, and then feedbacks to the students after this meeting with any actions that are being taken.

Training

Training for class representatives will be run by the Students Association in conjunction with SPARQS (Student Participation in Quality Scotland). Training will take place in the fourth or fifth week of teaching each semester. For more information about the Class representative system visit www.ausa.org.uk or email the President for Education & Employability: pres.education@abdn.ac.uk. For further information on class representation and student involvement in Quality visit <http://www.sparqs.ac.uk/>

15. Graduation

In-person graduation ceremonies normally take place in the first week of July and at the end of November. Posters are circulated to Schools in March with details of the ceremonies, and graduation application forms can be downloaded from the Student Portal or, if that is not possible, on request by emailing graduation@abdn.ac.uk. Students should check the graduation website to find out the exact deadline for returning their application to graduate. The deadline for summer ceremonies is usually late April and for winter ceremonies is mid-October. A fee is payable by all graduands who decided to appear "*in person*" at the graduation ceremony (currently £40). A late fee is payable by students who apply to graduate after the deadline. Students should not wait until they have been examined to apply to graduate.

It is the **responsibility of each student** to complete an Application to Graduate Form and to decide whether to graduate *in absentia* or wait until the next in-person graduation ceremony. The degree will not be awarded until such time as the student formally graduates, i.e. if a student completes the requirements of their degree programme in October but decides not to graduate until the following July (or if the student is not permitted to graduate due to a financial debt to the University), the degree certificate will state the latter date.

In absentia graduations take place at meetings of the Senate between October and August and application forms are available from the Student Reception. There is no fee for graduating *in absentia*. Certificate and Diploma students can only go through for their award in absentia, but they must still complete an application to graduate.

If a student owes the University money for any reason (fees, rent, library fines for unreturned books, etc) the student will not be permitted to graduate or receive an award, so they should ensure all debts are cleared.

Further details on Graduations, including the schedule of Graduation Ceremonies, in absentia dates, procedures on the day of in-person Graduation Ceremonies, gown hire and Graduation photographs are available on the following website:

www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/graduation

Students should note that they will not be permitted to graduate if they owe any money to the University or if they have not returned all books to the Library.

Any enquiries regarding graduations should be directed to the Registry:

Telephone: +44 (0)1224 273505; Fax: +44 (0)1224 273386; E-mail: graduation@abdn.ac.uk

16. If things go wrong

16.1 Problems and difficulties

The University aims to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for its postgraduate students. However, from time to time students will encounter academic problems and difficulties. In the first instance any problems/difficulties should be raised with the Programme Co-ordinator. If

this is not appropriate, students should see their Head of Discipline/School or Head of Graduate School. If problems continue, students may wish to contact the relevant College Postgraduate Officer (via the Registry).

16.2 Appeals and Complaints

The University's *Policy on Appeals and Complaints* can be accessed at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/appeals>

In regard to appeals, the policy indicates that appeals will only be considered where:

- i) it is believed that the University's procedures were not followed;
- or**
- ii) it is believed that the person or body making the decision did not have the authority to do so;
- or**
- iii) it is believed that the person or body making the decision did not act impartially;
- and**
- iv) a student considers that they have suffered, or could suffer, material disadvantage

Those involved in considering academic appeals will not review the question of academic judgement, which is a matter solely for the person or committee that has made the academic judgement.

In particular, students' attention is drawn to section 3 of the *Policy on Appeals and Complaints*:

If a student believes that a medical condition or other personal circumstances have affected their performance in an assessment or prevented them from taking an examination or meeting a deadline for submission of coursework they must notify the Head of the relevant School(s). This must be done in writing, not more than seven days after the date of submission of the assessment or the exam concerned. The University's Policy on Certification of Absence for Medical Reasons or Other Good Cause provides further information.

Where a student has not given notice of such extenuating or mitigating circumstances (see Glossary of Terms) within the seven day timescale, they cannot be accepted as evidence in support of an appeal or complaint unless a satisfactory explanation for the delay in providing the information can be given. If those circumstances are raised for the first time at the Initial Stage (i.e. with the Head of School or Service) the Head of School or Service (or their nominee) will decide whether it is appropriate to take them into account.

The effect of this paragraph is that appeals which are based on illness (which must be certified by a medical practitioner) and/or other personal circumstances normally will not be considered unless notified to the Head of the relevant School within one week after the date on which a student submitted or appeared for the assessment concerned. This is to ensure that the examiners, including the External Examiner(s), have all information available to them at the time of confirming a course result or recommending an award.

In regard to Complaints, the *Policy on Appeals and Complaints* states that:

A complaint is where a student feels that the level of service or treatment that they have received from the University has fallen short of what might reasonably be expected. For a complaint to be considered to have Grounds to Proceed (see Glossary of Terms) a student must show that they have suffered (or could suffer) a material disadvantage as a result. Any claims made must be substantiated with evidence.

The first stage of either an Appeal or Complaint is for the student to raise their concern as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff within the related School or Service. The University anticipates that by ensuring that all matters are considered informally at an early stage, problems

can and will be resolved quickly and effectively at a local level. Please see the *Policy on Appeals and Complaints* for details of the timeframes for raising concerns and subsequent steps if the matter cannot be resolved informally.

16.3 Plagiarism and the Code of Practice on Student Discipline

The University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline is available at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x15.pdf>

This Code outlines such issues as examination offences, including cheating in prescribed degree assessments. ***For the purposes of this Code "cheating" includes plagiarism and colluding with another person in the preparation or submission of work which is to be assessed.***

The Senate approved definition of plagiarism is "the use, without adequate acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of another person in work submitted for assessment. A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where it can be shown that the student has taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as his/her own".

17. Information Systems and Services

17.1 Library services

The University Library is one of the largest and best equipped in Scotland and employs the latest technology for both staff and student use. It has well over a million volumes, ranging from ancient papyri to the latest electronic resources on a wide range of subjects. Most of the books and journals can be freely borrowed and there are ample reading areas where you can study.

Information about library services can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/

Information for distance learning students can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/distance.shtml

17.2 Computing services

The Directorate of Information Technology (DIT) provides central computing facilities and services. Further information about computing services can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/dit/

18. Students' Association

The Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) exists to promote the interests of all matriculated students and to communicate on their behalf with the University authorities on matters affecting students. The AUSA also provides a wide range of services. Full details can be found at www.ausa.org.uk

19. Student Support Services

Student Support Services is the umbrella organisation for various areas: University Counselling Service; University Chaplaincy; Wardenial staff; and the Student Advice and Support Centre. The latter office provides advice and support for international students and students with disabilities, and advice for all students on welfare matters.

Further details about Student Support Services can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/students

20. Students with Disabilities

The University of Aberdeen welcomes disabled students and is committed to improving access to courses, facilities, buildings and social life.

If you are a disabled student or have a particular impairment or medical condition, you may have specific queries relating to the accessibility of the University and its courses. You are welcome to contact a Student Support Officer/Disability Adviser for general discussion or with specific queries relating to your personal circumstances.

The University's Student Support Officers/Disability Advisers provide general support to all students and specifically to disabled students. In addition to general issues, they can help answer queries when students are considering applying to the University, discuss specific arrangements with students once they have accepted a place and liaise with academic and non-academic departments to ensure that, where possible, these requirements are met. They can also advise students regarding applications for a Disabled Students' Allowance. They also advise members of University staff on disability-related matters.

Further information can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/disability/ or by contacting student.disability@abdn.ac.uk or telephone (01224) 273935.

21. Data Protection and Freedom of Information

21.1 Data protection

The University requires a certain amount of personal information for the administration of students' studies and to ensure the proper completion of their chosen courses or degree programme. All personal information provided by students will be treated strictly in terms of the Data Protection Act 1998: their confidentiality will be respected and all appropriate measures will be taken to prevent unauthorised disclosure. The data students provide will be used for stated purposes only and they would be advised about any further uses.

The University does all it can to ensure that all data remains up-to-date and accurate, but there are some areas in which we must emphasise our reliance on students to inform us of changes which occur between updates. It is therefore extremely important that students keep us informed of any such changes, to avoid situations where (for example) we might send vital mail to the wrong address. Students have access to the personal information held about them on the Student Record system via their Student Portal. **Students must use their Portal to check the information held on them and change anything that is incorrect or is missing.**

Students who require to process personal data as part of their studies must also ensure that they abide by the Data Protection Act. Further information on the Act can be accessed at www.abdn.ac.uk/hr/uploads/files/data%20protection.pdf

Information regarding Freedom of Information and the University's Publication scheme can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/foi/

21.2 HESA student collection notice

We will send some of the information we hold about you to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). This forms your HESA record, which contains details of your ethnic group and any disabilities you have. HESA will pass your record, or parts of it, to any of the following organisations that need it to carry out their statutory functions connected with higher education:

- Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)
- Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)

- Scottish Executive (SE) [Scottish Government (SG)]
- Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DEL(NI))
- Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC)
- Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)
- Research Council (RCs)
- Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

HESA and the organisations listed above will use the information mainly to produce statistics. This may result in information being published and released to other approved users, including academic researchers and commercial organisations. Your record will not be used in a way that could affect you personally and the organisations will take precautions to reduce the risk of you being identified from the information once it is published and released.

While you are a student, we will need to keep your contact details. These do not form part of your HESA record, so HESA and the organisations listed above cannot use this record to contact you.

Your contact details may be passed to survey contractors to carry out the National Student Survey and surveys of student finances, on behalf of the education organisations listed above. These organisations and their contractors will use your details only for that purpose, and will then delete them.

About six months after you graduate, we will contact you to ask you to fill in the HESA 'Destinations of leavers from HE' survey. We will not give your contact details to HESA. You might be included in a sample of leavers who are surveyed again a few years after they graduate. If so, we will pass your contact details to the organisation that has been contracted to carry out that survey. That organisation will use your details only for that purpose, and will then delete them. (If you do not want to take part in this second survey, please let us know.)

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, you have the right to a copy of the information HESA holds about you. You will have to pay a small fee for this. If you have any concerns about your information being used for these purposes, please contact HESA.

HESA
95 Promenade
Cheltenham
GL50 1HZ

Website: www.hesa.ac.uk

APPENDIX 1 : University Codes and Policies

Code/Practice	Web address
Race Equality Policy	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/racepolicy/hti
Data Protection	www.abdn.ac.uk/dataprotection/
Policy Statements /Student Discipline	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section5.shtml
Making Your Opinions Known	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section5.shtml
Information for Students with Disabilities and Medical Conditions (Disability Statement)	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x5.pdf
Policy on Permitting Disabled Students to Tape-Record Lectures	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x6.pdf
Flow Chart on Procedures for Students with Disabilities and Medical Conditions	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x7.hti
Procedures for Students with Disabilities	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x8.pdf
Recommendations Concerning Students with Dyslexia	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x9.pdf
Equal Opportunities Policy Statement	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x10.pdf
Policy Against Sexual Harassment	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x11.pdf
Procedure for Dealing with Sexual Harassment	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x12.pdf
Anti-Racist Policy	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x13.pdf
Procedure for Dealing with Complaints of Racial Discrimination	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x14.pdf
Code of Practice on Student Discipline	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x15.pdf
Monitoring Students' Progress	http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/monitoring.shtml
Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Plagiarism Against Graduates of the University	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x16.pdf
Guidance Notes for Students whose Studies are being considered for Suspension or Termination on the Grounds that they are not "Fit to Practise"	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x17c.pdf
Policy on Appeals and Complaints	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/appeals
The Payment of Expenses Incurred by a Successful Appellant or Complainant: Guidance Note	www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x21.pdf