

**ASSESSMENT AT LEVELS 3, 4 AND 5:
NO DETRIMENT PROCEDURES FOR COVID-19¹**

NO DETRIMENT, NO EXCEPTIONS

1. THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT: NO DETRIMENT, NO EXCEPTIONS

Assessment undertaken during Covid-19 will not have a detrimental impact upon undergraduate degree classification or postgraduate taught degree award

- 1.1 The University recognises that this is an anxious time for students and that some students may have difficulties, for a variety of reasons, in completing further assessment at this time. In recognition of the difficult and unprecedented circumstances in the context of COVID-19, the University is working to support students so that they can continue with their studies in as supportive an environment as possible. In line with the guidance set out by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)² the University has put in place a number of procedures which aim to mitigate the circumstances. This document provides information on the assessment of levels 3, 4 and 5. It explains the existing University Regulations and procedures that support no detriment, and the additional mitigations that have been put in place in light of COVID-19. The information provided here is supported by a set of [Frequently Asked Questions](#). The University is committed to encouraging and supporting students to continue with their studies and to complete their best work.
- 1.2 The University ceased face to face teaching on the 13 March 2020 and therefore the following procedures apply to the period between 16 March 2020 and the end of the 2019/20 academic year, hereafter referred to as the context or impact of COVID-19.
- 1.3 As part of this commitment to support students in the context of COVID-19, the University's intention is to minimise disruption as far as possible so that students can complete or progress with their studies within normal timescales. In recognition of the fact that students may not be able to perform to the best of their ability during this time, the University's existing policies will be applied and, where appropriate, **extended or relaxed to ensure that student performance during the impact of COVID-19, will not detrimentally impact upon degree outcome**. It is important to note that transcripts, however, will detail the course grades awarded.
- 1.4 The University has a series of policies and procedures in place to enable and support student achievement. These include:
- Undergraduate progression rules as laid out in the [General Regulations for First Degrees \(regulation 16 applies\)](#)
 - [General Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards](#)

¹ The University ceased face to face teaching on the 13 March 2020 and therefore the no detriment procedures apply to the period between 16 March 2020 and the end of the 2019/20 academic year.

² The guidance published by the QAA is available here: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/covid-19-thematic-guidance-academic-standards.pdf?sfvrsn=cbcccd81_6

- [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#) for reasons of ill health or other extenuating circumstances
- Rules as laid out in the [General Regulations for First Degrees](#) (*regulation 21 applies*) regarding the award of Compensatory Credit
- Policy and Procedures on Undergraduate Degree Classification and Postgraduate Taught Award, including the Codes of Practice on Assessment
- Consideration of applications to progress to the next stage of study, notwithstanding a shortfall of credits by the Students' Progress Committee (SPC).

1.4 Where it is not possible for programmes that are accredited by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) to adhere to some or all of the principles which comprise the University's no detriment procedures, students will be made aware by Schools of this and of the requirements of the PSRBs which regulate the degree programme for which they are registered.

2. ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Assessment (examination or any other outstanding assessment) **will continue** at Levels 3, 4 and 5 (*and where required at levels 1 and 2³*) for the purposes of ensuring that students can continue with and complete their courses. Overall course grades at levels 3, 4 and 5 may directly inform degree outcome and therefore it is important that assessments are in place so that courses can be completed, and appropriate degree outcomes can be awarded.

2.2 In order to complete their studies or to progress within a degree programme, students must achieve a minimum number of credits. Further details on the credit totals required for graduation are available within the [Minimum Credit Requirements for Awards](#), while further details on the credit totals required for progression are available within the University's Degree Regulations. Detailed scenarios regarding progression requirements are available in the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) associated with these procedures. As stated, the intention of the University is to minimise disruption for students and to ensure that they can complete or progress with their studies within normal timescales.

2.3 Schools are working on the development of suitable **alternative assessments** to replace in-person examinations or assessments, where these are required. While it is important that assessment goes ahead, the University is working to ensure that assessment allows reasonable and appropriate flexibility and that as much support as possible is provided to students. In some cases, Schools have provided appropriate **extensions** for assessment. Where an individual student is unable to meet published deadlines, they should request an individual extension.

3. WHERE STUDENTS CANNOT UNDERTAKE ASSESSMENTS

3.1 In order to complete their studies or progress within a degree programme, students must achieve a minimum number of credits (*section 2.2 above further refers*). The University recognises, however, that students, for reasons of ill health or other extenuating circumstances, may not be able to undertake assessment at this time. The University's Policy and Procedures on Student Absence provide detail on the processes to be adhered to in such

³ Students at Levels 3, 4 and 5 registered for Level 1 or 2 courses will not be required to take any further assessment for these courses, provided they are not professionally accredited. Students will be awarded credit without the need to take any further action. Students at Levels 3, 4 and 5 intending to undertake resits for Level 1 or 2 courses will still be required to do so.

circumstances. These procedures have been supplemented to provide **further flexibility** as described below.

- 3.2 If a student had resits pending *prior* to the impact of COVID-19, **existing rules regarding reassessment apply**. Further, more detailed, information for students in this scenario is available in the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) associated with these procedures.
- 3.3 If a student is unable to take assessment(s) as a consequence of **ill health** (whether this is directly related to COVID-19 or not) **they must notify their School** through the absence reporting in [Student Hub](#) and **no supporting evidence is required**. Where it is not possible to inform the School within the usual timescales, students should contact the appropriate School Office directly, as soon as possible. Where ill health is reported, students will be recorded as having an MC (Medical Certificate) for the course(s) concerned and will be eligible to undertake the required assessment as a **first attempt** at the next available opportunity.
- 3.4 If a student is not suffering with ill health but is impacted by **other extenuating circumstances** (*e.g. bereavement, family illness or classed as a critical worker*) **they must notify their School** through the absence reporting in the [Student Hub](#) and **no evidence will be required**. Where it is not possible to inform the School within the usual timescales, students should contact the appropriate School Office directly, as soon as possible. Where extenuating circumstances are reported, students will be recorded as having a GC (Good Cause) for the course(s) concerned and will be eligible to undertake the required assessment as a **first attempt** at the next available opportunity.

4. FAILURE TO ACHIEVE A COURSE PASS GRADE

- 4.1 Where a student has failed to achieve a pass grade for a course or courses, they will be eligible to undertake the required assessment at the next available opportunity. In normal circumstances, students would have their resit results capped, however, for students undertaking resits as a consequence of the impact of COVID-19, reassessment marks **will not be capped**.
- 4.2 For students at levels 3 or 4, seeking to progress to the next programme year, the progression rules as laid out in the General Regulations for First Degrees apply. However, in instances where a student has failed to pass a course or courses or has not achieved the required credit point total for progression these students will **automatically be considered by the Students' Progress Committee (SPC)**. The SPC will consider each student individually and determine the appropriateness of progression to the next programme year despite a shortfall of credits or despite not having achieved a pass in a course compulsory for their degree programme.
- 4.3 For students in postgraduate taught programmes, seeking to progress to the next stage of their programme, the progression rules as laid out in the Policy and Procedure on Postgraduate Taught Awards apply.
- 4.4 Final year undergraduate students, who fail to achieve a pass grade (CGS D3 or above) in one or more of their courses may be eligible to receive **compensatory credit**. Students who have achieved a Grade of E1, E2 or E3 in courses at Level 4 or above taken as part of an Honours programme may be eligible for the award of an equivalent amount of compensatory Level 1 credit to a maximum of 30 credit points. Such compensatory credit can only be awarded where students have already achieved 90 Credit points at Level 4. Students may not receive compensatory credit for courses defined as compulsory for a degree programme. Further

information on the award of compensatory credit can be found within the General Regulations for First Degrees.

- 4.5 Postgraduate taught students, who fail to achieve a pass grade (CGS D3 or above) in one or more of their courses may be eligible to receive **compensatory credit**. The General Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Awards provide further information on the circumstances in which compensation may be awarded.

5. HOW WILL THE UNIVERSITY ENSURE NO DETRIMENT WHEN DEGREE OUTCOMES ARE CALCULATED?

Assessment undertaken during COVID-19 will not have a detrimental impact upon undergraduate degree classification or postgraduate taught degree award

- 5.1 In recognition of the fact that course grades achieved at Levels 3, 4 and 5 normally have a direct impact on degree outcomes, the University has carefully considered the options available to achieve an appropriate balance between supporting its students while maintaining the fairness and integrity of a University of Aberdeen award. As previously stated, the University is committed to encouraging and supporting students to continue with their studies and to complete their best work
- 5.2 The University has a series of policies and procedures in place to enable and support student achievement (*section 1.4 above further refers*). These will be used, extended and/or relaxed to ensure that student performance during this time, will not detrimentally impact upon degree outcome calculation.

5.3 THE GRADE POINT AVERAGE SYSTEM AND THE GRADE SPECTRUM

- 5.3.1 Information on how the University calculates undergraduate degrees is available in the *Code of Practice on Assessment*. In summary, students who began their Honours programme (i.e. level 3) in 2019/20 or earlier will have their degree classification calculated via both the **Grade Point Average** system and the **Grade Spectrum**. Students will receive the higher of the two classifications should differences occur. The use of the *Grade Point Average* and the *Grade Spectrum* will be maintained for the calculation of undergraduate degrees at this time.
- 5.3.2 Information on how the University calculates postgraduate taught (PGT) degrees is available in the *Code of Practice on Assessment*. In summary, PGT awards are determined by credit accumulation. PGT Degree and PGT Diploma classification will be determined via both the **Grade Point Average** system and, as a consequence of the impact of COVID-19, by the **Grade Spectrum**. Students will receive the higher of the two classifications should differences occur.

5.4 BORDERLINE STUDENTS

- 5.4.1 At the point of calculating degree outcome, the University requires Examiners' Meetings to consider *every student* classed as **borderline**. The borderlines that are currently used are provided in figure 1 overleaf:

Figure 1:

Grade Point Average	Undergraduate Degree Classification	Postgraduate Award
18.0-22.0	First Class	MSc with Distinction*
greater than 17.49, less than 18.0	<i>Borderline 2.1/1st</i>	<i>MSc Commendation Borderline Distinction</i>
15.0 – 17.49	Upper Second Class	MSc with Commendation#
greater than 14.49, less than 15.0	<i>Borderline 2.2/2.1</i>	<i>MSc Borderline Commendation</i>
12.0 – 14.49	Lower Second Class	MSc
greater than 11.49, less than 12.0	<i>Borderline 3rd/2.2</i>	MSc
9.0 – 11.49	Third Class	MSc
greater than 8.49, less than 9.0	<i>Borderline Fail/3rd</i>	<i>Borderline Fail/MSc</i>
0 – 8.49	Fail	Fail

*The award of Distinction requires a Project grade of A5 or above

The award of Commendation requires a Project grade of B3 or above

- 5.4.2 In line with the University's commitment to ensuring that student performance at this time does not detrimentally impact upon degree outcome, the University has agreed to **widen the borderlines**, as demonstrated in figure 2 below. As a direct consequence, more students will be considered as borderline at Examiners' Meetings. Operational guidance on how Schools should determine degree classification or award for those students who fall within the borderline will be provided to Schools.

Figure 2:

Grade Point Average	Undergraduate Degree Classification	Postgraduate Award
18.0-22.0	First Class	MSc with Distinction*
greater than 17.0, less than 18.0	<i>Borderline 2.1/1st</i>	<i>MSc Commendation Borderline Distinction</i>
15.0 – 17.0	Upper Second Class	MSc with Commendation#
greater than 14.0, less than 15.0	<i>Borderline 2.2/2.1</i>	<i>MSc Borderline Commendation</i>
12.0 – 14.0	Lower Second Class	MSc
greater than 11.0, less than 12.0	<i>Borderline 3rd/2.2</i>	MSc
9.0 – 11.0	Third Class	MSc
greater than 8.0, less than 9.0	<i>Borderline Fail/3rd</i>	<i>Borderline Fail/MSc</i>
0 – 8.0	Fail	Fail

*The award of Distinction allows requires a Project grade of A5 or above

The award of Commendation allows requires a Project grade of B3 or above

5.5 OVERALL GRADE PROFILE CONSIDERATION

- 5.5.1 In addition to the use of the *Grade Point Average*, *Grade Spectrum* and the *widening of the borderline*, each final year student's overall grade profile (i.e. all course results together) will be considered in advance of examiners' meetings. Any student whose grade profile indicates a negative impact of COVID-19 will be presented for the examiners to consider at their meeting *in addition* to borderline students.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 In summary, **assessment undertaken during Covid-19 will not have a detrimental impact upon undergraduate degree classification or postgraduate taught degree award, for any student.**

The University remains committed to supporting our students at this time and enabling them to continue with their studies. The University is working to minimise disruption as far as possible to ensure that students can complete or progress with their studies within normal timescales. The University has existing policies and procedures in place to enable and support student achievement. Where possible, these have been amended or relaxed to allow for increased flexibility at this difficult time. Changes include:

- Increased flexibility in the setting of alternative assessments;
- Appropriate extensions for the submission of outstanding work;
- No requirement for evidence to be submitted for the award of MC or GC;
- No capping of resit grades in the context of COVID-19;
- Automatic consideration of undergraduate students by the SPC where they fail to meet the requirements for progression;
- Increased borderline zone to enable greater number of students to be considered at examiners' meetings;
- For undergraduate students, the calculation of degrees on the basis of the **Grade Spectrum** and the **Grade Point Average** system.
- For postgraduate taught students, the reintroduction of the calculation of degrees on the basis of the **Grade Spectrum** and the **Grade Point Average** system.
- Any student whose grade profile indicates a negative impact of COVID-19 will be presented for the examiners to consider at their meeting *in addition* to borderline students.

6.2 Further information on the University's No Detriment procedures is available in the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) . If you have any questions regarding the procedures, please contact coronavirus@abdn.ac.uk.