

# New and Revised General Regulations 2022/23

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Detailing all significant changes to University Regulations  
for the 2022/23 academic year

## Summary

This document provides a summary of all significant changes to the University's General Regulations for the 2022/23 academic year, and should be read as an overview in conjunction with the regulatory documents available on the Quality Team webpages.

## Related Regulations, Policies, and Guidance

For full versions of regulatory documents for the 2022/23 academic year, please see the following:

- [General Regulations](#)
- [Examinations and Assessment](#)
- [Discipline of Students](#)

For changes to the General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis and Research Degrees for the 2022/23 academic year, please access the following [link](#).

## NEW REGULATIONS

- The **General Regulations for Apprenticeships and Work-Based Programmes** have been introduced for 2022/23, covering all apprenticeships and work-based learning programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. A list of programmes falling under the remit of these general regulations is included in the document. If relevant to your programme, please review the full regulations [here](#).

## ALL REGULATIONS

- An addition has been made to the definition of assessment, clarifying that all assessments fall within one of three assessment types as defined in the Assessment Regulations; fixed-time, fixed-window, or coursework.
  - o *An **Assessment** is the measurement of a student's performance in a module. This may comprise a number of elements, including written papers, oral tests, essays, continuously assessed work, laboratory or field studies or reports, or other forms of evaluation. Assessments will be one of (i) fixed-time assessments, (ii) fixed-window assessments or (iii) coursework, each as defined in the [Assessment Regulations](#).*
- The definition of exceptional circumstances has been amended to remove references to coursework performance as potential grounds for exceptional circumstances, matching amendments to Fit to Sit/Submit regulations:
  - o **Exceptional Circumstances** are circumstances which cause the student to:
    - a ~~perform less well in coursework than might have been expected on the basis of other work,~~
    - a fail to meet submission deadlines, and/or

- b *fail to attend a fixed-time assessment or engage with a fixed-window assessment, and/or*
- c *be adversely affected by an incident or issue occurring during a fixed-time or fixed-window assessment.*

*In general, exceptional circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature significantly affecting the student at or during a relevant period of time and/or during the assessment period and which can normally be corroborated by independent evidence.*

- All references and regulations governing unspent exceptional circumstances have been removed, as consistent implementation of Fit to Sit/Submit regulations mean they are no longer required. Any exceptional cases going forward will be dealt with via waiver.
- Section 7.4 & 7.5, on Fit to Sit/Submit – Amendments and additions to existing regulations to clarify usage of Fit to Sit/Submit for fixed-window and coursework assessments.

*Subject to consideration of Factors affecting the ability of students to attempt/complete an assessment which arise subsequent to the beginning a fixed-time or fixed-window assessment must be notified to the Board of Examiners by the student. Any factors affecting performance that result in a student leaving an invigilated/proctored fixed-timed assessment must be raised with the Chief Invigilator/proctor and, for invigilated assessments, must be recorded in the Chief Invigilator's Report. Where a student has deemed themselves fit to sit, the Board of Examiners will normally consider the student to have made a valid attempt at the assessment.*

*By submitting a coursework assessment students will be regarded as having deemed themselves fit to have been able to undertake the assessment in question and accept the outcome of the assessment as valid. Where a student has deemed themselves fit to submit, the Board of Examiners will normally consider the student to have made a valid attempt at the assessment.*

*~~A student who is prevented from taking all or part of an assessment, or whose performance has been significantly affected, by illness or other sufficient cause may, where none of the options available in Section 7 is deemed sufficient or appropriate, be allowed to sit the assessment at the next normal occasion as if for the first time. Sufficient cause should be taken as to circumstances genuinely beyond the student's control.~~*

- A minor amendment has been made to the regulations for the Publication of Results, clarifying that only modules with marks are given in a percentage format on student transcripts.
- References to the Director of Student & Academic Services have been amended to the Associate PVC Students throughout.

## **CREDIT & QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK**

- Minor amendment to Section 5.9, defining Levels of Credit, rebranding Foundation Year credit from Level 3 to Level FY credit. Aston no longer makes a defined award for the completion of Foundation Years, allowing Foundation Year credit to have the same status as Stage P, placement credit rather than Level 3 credit.

## GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR UNDERGRADUATE & INTEGRATED MASTER'S PROGRAMMES

- Section 1.8, definition of Period Exam Boards – Added clarification to make the Period Exam Boards ability to allow in-Stage referral explicit within the definition.
  - ***Period Examination Boards*** (for Part-time and Flexible-time programmes) are held between Periods of Study within a Stage. Period Examination Boards may allow in-period referral to take place where appropriate.
- Section 4.3.5 – New regulation to specify the latest point a student may opt out of placement study on programmes with an optional Placement Stage.
  - *Students studying a programme with an optional placement element who have chosen to undertake a placement, cannot normally return to the non-placement pathway after the commencement of the placement. Where a placement ceases prematurely through no fault of the student, and no other viable placement options exists as set out in Regulation 4.3 Placement Shortfall, the student may be transferred to the non-placement pathway.*
- Section 6.1.3 – Reduction of the maximum volume of allowable virtuous credit from 20 credits to 15 credits to match the University's 15 credit module structure.

## GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

- Section 1.10, definition of the Dissertation Module – Minor rewording to dissertation/project to reflect growing numbers of project-based dissertations. All references to the dissertation stage have been amended to dissertation/project throughout the regulations.
- An amendment has been made to Section 10.7 to specify that a student achieving 180 credits through completion of the Taught and Professional Practice Stages, having failed their Dissertation/Project, should be awarded a PgDip with Professional Practice, rather than a Master's as previously stated.
  - *Where a student has failed the dissertation/project stage, but achieves a total of 180 credits through completion of the Professional Practice Stage, a Postgraduate Diploma with Professional Practice ~~Master's degree~~ may be awarded, subject to any PSRB requirements for the programme.*

~~A Master's degree composed of credit from the Taught and Professional Practice Stages may be awarded 'with Distinction' or 'with Merit' where the following criteria are met:~~

~~To achieve the award of distinction students must achieve an average mark of at least 70% over 180 credits. A minimum average unrounded mark of 67.50% is required for both the Taught and Professional Practice Stages of the programme.~~

~~To achieve the award of merit students must achieve an average mark of at least 60% over the 180 credits. A minimum average unrounded mark of 57.50% is required for both the Taught and Professional Practice Stages of the programme.~~

## GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR GRADUATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES AND FOUNDATION DEGREE PROGRAMMES

- The regulations on condonement have been amended to state that condonement can be granted 'up to 5% below the pass mark' to match wording in other general regulations.
- Addition to Section 6, on Options in the Case of Failure, clarifying that module substitution is at Exam Board discretion and dependent upon achievement of programme learning outcomes, matching other sets of general regulations.
  - *The Board of Examiners may allow a student to be assessed in a new module(s) as a substitute for a failed module(s). A substitute module(s) will be treated as a referred or repeat module(s) and the minimum pass mark for the module shall be recorded for modules passed. Substitution is at the discretion of the Examination Board and consideration needs to be given to the Level of the substituted credit and the relevance of the failed credit to the programme learning outcomes.*
- Further additions to Section 6 to allow virtuous credit to be used by Graduate Diploma and Foundation Degree programmes where appropriate.
  - *If a student fails restart assessments, where these constitute the second attempt, and virtuous credit is not available or appropriate, the Stage Examination Board will require the student to withdraw from the programme of study.*
  - *If a candidate has failed 15 credits or fewer at a final attempt, the Board of Examiners may substitute concurrently achieved virtuous credit from a pre-determined list approved by University Learning and Teaching Committee.*

## GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR THE CONDUCT OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- Several minor amendments to Section 2.6, on External Examiner access to submitted assessment materials, clarifying what externals have a right to review within the context of the three newly-defined assessment types of fixed-time, fixed-window, and coursework:

2.6.1 *All draft fixed-time and fixed-window assessments should be sent to the External Examiner(s) for approval well in advance of the assessment. In appropriate cases External Examiners may be invited to set some*

questions or complete papers. In some subjects it may be essential for model answers to be prepared and scrutinised.

- 2.6.2 *Programme Directors, or another appropriate member of academic staff, should agree with External Examiner(s) at the outset of their tenure which coursework assessments are sent to them for approval. Details of identified coursework assessments must be sent to the External Examiner(s) for approval in advance of the assessment being set.*
- 2.6.3 *An External Examiner has the right to see all submitted fixed-time, fixed-window assessment, and coursework material. In those cases where it has been agreed that the College makes a selection of submitted material to be sent to an External Examiner, the principles for such selection must be agreed with the External Examiner in advance.*

## ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

- New definitions added to clarify key University assessment types and practices:
  - **Fixed-time Assessment:** *A fixed-time assessment is one where candidates are required to complete an assessment within a fixed period of time, either where all the time is allocated for the completion and submission of the assessment or where candidates undertake a timed assessment within a larger overarching time period. Fixed-time assessments may be on-campus<sup>1</sup> (written or online), or remotely online. Fixed-time assessments include written examinations and practical assessments such as Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs). Assessments must be completed/submitted by the deadline; work submitted after the deadline will be recorded with a mark of zero.*
  - **Fixed-window Assessment:** *A fixed-window assessment is one where candidates are given a defined time period (for example, twenty-four hours) which is greater than the time required for the completion and submission of the assessment. Candidates decide when within the time period they complete and submit the assessment. Assessments must be completed/submitted by the deadline; work submitted after the deadline will be recorded with a mark of zero.*
  - **Coursework:** *A coursework assessment is one where candidates are given a defined period of time in which to complete the assessment, but when they undertake the activity within that period is not specified. Assessments should be submitted by the deadline, but late submissions will be accepted, and marks reduced as detailed within these Regulations.*



- **Deadline:** *The deadline is the published date and time by which any assessments need to be submitted by students. Staff need to give consideration as to the timing of any deadlines and the availability of staff to assist students in the event of submission difficulties. It is normal that submission deadlines to be within usual University working hours.*
- **Standard Setting:** *Standard setting techniques are used in some areas of the University to determine the minimum requirements for a 'minimally competent' student to pass an assessment. These techniques are often used for subjects and/or assessment types where it is vital for a student to demonstrate a certain level of baseline knowledge or skill in order to be considered minimally competent, such as within many healthcare programmes. In standard setting, the passing mark cannot be arbitrarily determined; it must be empirically justified using one of a number of evidence-informed methods that determines the score or mark required to differentiate between competency and failure. Examples of evidence-informed techniques include the Angoff Method, Modified Angoff Method, Bookmark Method, or the Borderline Groups Method.*

Significant wording amendments have been made throughout to reflect the use of fixed-time and fixed-window assessment instead of examination throughout.

- Addition to the section on Changes to Assessment, clarifying that changes to assessment can be made within the Stage if they are as a result of a PSRB requirement.
  - *Changes to published assessments which have a retrospective effect on current students must not be introduced without full consultation with all students affected unless mandated by professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) accreditation requirements.*
- Maintaining Standards – Additions to the section to define when and how standards of written English are assessed, and that this should be clearly defined in the assessment brief.
  - *It is essential that Programmes are clear on the expectations of work presentation in the marking of examination scripts and written assignments assessments, and communicate this clearly in assessment briefs and marking schemes. High standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar accuracy is not expected in fixed-time assessment scripts produced under timed conditions unless this is deemed a core competence to be demonstrated under these circumstances. Minor errors in fixed-time/fixed-window assessment presentation should not be penalised if the meaning of the student's response is clear. This excludes critical spellings such as drug names and other safety-critical terminology and medical terminology. Assessments must however be legible to be assessed.*

*Higher standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar are expected in coursework assessments, and may be directly assessed through the marking scheme. Assessment of spelling, punctuation, and grammar should be communicated clearly through the assessment brief and marking scheme.*

*Where accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar is being assessed in ~~written assignments~~, assessment briefs should direct students to the inclusive 'Tools for Learning' resource.*

- Additional section on viva voce and its use as a confirmatory process for remote fixed-time assessments.
  - 1 *Remote fixed-time assessments (proctored and non-proctored) and fixed-window assessments may include confirmatory viva voce assessments as part of their assessment methodology.*
  - 2 *The methodology for the selection of candidates for a confirmatory viva voce assessment must be made clear within the initial assessment information.*
  - 3 *The purpose of a confirmatory viva voce is to confirm the authenticity of the originally submitted assessment material. The outcome of the confirmatory viva voce is either that the original mark is confirmed or that the submitted material is referred for investigation for potential academic malpractice.*
  - 4 *The confirmatory viva voce may not be used to amend the original mark.*
- Confirmatory additions to note that all significant assessments contributing to the award classification should be moderated.
  - *A minimum of 20% of assessments that contribute to the award classification, and which contribute a significant percentage of marks to the overall module mark (i.e. 30% or more), or which assess a crucial aspect of the module, should be moderated.*
- Additions to the sections on Blind and Informed Double Marking, noting that discrepancies between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> markers that span grade boundaries should be mediated and acted upon, even if they are below the normal 6% discrepancy threshold.
- Pass/Fail Assessments – Added to sections on Lateness Penalties and Recycling of Assessment Content to clarify how they interact with these regulations.
  - *For assessments graded as pass/fail, where the passing status is dependent on an underlying mark, any late submissions penalties apply to the underlying mark and then the passing status derived from this revised mark.*
  - *For assessments graded as pass/fail where there is no underlying mark, it is a matter of academic judgement as to whether the candidate has been unfairly advantaged by submitting the work late. Consideration should be given to how late the work was submitted and whether the additional time may have enabled a piece of work which would have failed obtaining a passing mark. The mark for*



pass/fail assessments submitted more than five working days after the deadline will be zero.

- Lateness Penalties – New section added to clarify how lateness penalties operate for Fixed-Time and Fixed-window assessments.
  - This section of the Regulations applies to all assessments detailed in Module Specifications for which there is a formal deadline and would be classified as fixed-time assessments or fixed-window assessments.
  - On-campus fixed-time assessments will have a defined deadline and candidates will be required to observe any stated deadlines as outlined within the Fixed-Time Assessment Regulations for Candidates.
  - For online fixed-time assessments and fixed-window assessments:
    - the submission deadline will be made clear to candidates in advance of the start of the assessment;
    - deadlines must take into consideration any actions candidates will need to take to make a valid submission, allowing additional time in advance of the deadline, if necessary, for work to be prepared for submission and/or for submission to take place; and
    - candidates need to ensure that they have submitted any material which they wish to be assessed by the published deadline.
  - Work submitted after the deadline will be accepted by the College but will be recorded with a mark of zero (0-PN). Such work will require evidence of exceptional circumstances which meet the regulations before an academic mark for the work will be considered at the Module Board. Exceptional circumstances for late submission will normally only be accepted if the actual submission occurred within ten minutes of the deadline; Boards need to give careful consideration to accepting submissions later than 10 minutes after the deadline.
  - Any submissions made after the published deadline may be passed to markers in order for candidates to receive feedback, at the discretion of the College. Where this practice is adopted, the mark formally recorded will be zero (0-PN).
- Recycling of Assessment Content – Addition of a new situations in which recycling is valid, where specific reflection on a previous assessment is required, or the inclusion of contextual content that may have formed a part of a previously submitted assessment.
  - The only allowed exceptions in relation to recycling are:
    - where specific reflection on a previous piece of assessment was required; or,
    - where the assessment brief requires or allows the inclusion of contextual content that may form a part of a previously submitted assessment.

## FIXED TIME ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- Significant wording amendments throughout the regulations to reflect the three new definitions for assessment:
  - Fixed-time
  - Fixed-window
  - Coursework

New sections have been added on invigilation and remote proctoring of fixed-time assessments. Please review the full document available on the [Exams & Assessment](#) page for full details.

- Removal of Section F Examinations Other than Written Papers and Section H Class Tests. These sections were too specific and did not fully reflect online assessment.

## INVIGILATION PROCEDURES FOR FIXED-TIME ASSESSMENTS

- Significant wording amendments throughout the regulations to reflect the three new definitions for assessment:
  - Fixed-time
  - Fixed-window
  - Coursework
- Minor additional clarification to Section D, on Late Arrival, specifying that for some fixed-time assessments, such as OSCEs, late arrival may not be permitted.
  - *Candidates will not be permitted to enter the assessment room later than 30 minutes after the commencement of the assessment. For certain fixed-time assessments (for example, OSCEs), owing to the nature of the assessment, later arrival may not be permitted.*

## GUIDANCE TO COLLEGES ON THE ABANDONMENT OF ASSESSMENTS & LOST ASSESSMENT MATERIAL

- Amendments to wording throughout the regulations to reflect the three new definitions for assessment:
  - Fixed-time
  - Fixed-window
  - Coursework
- New Sections 1 & 2, clarifying how the guidance applies to the abandonment of invigilated fixed-time assessments, and proctored online assessments.

- 1 Abandoned assessments include the termination of in-person invigilated fixed-time assessments (for example, owing to building evacuation), and the termination of in-person proctored assessments (for example, owing to widespread technical problems or a systems failure). The nature of the cause may mean that not all candidates within an assessment cohort are affected.

2 For certain online assessments, additional actions other than the termination of the assessment for affected students in the case of technical issues may be available (for example, the clearing of an attempt allowing students to start anew). Staff responsible for overseeing online assessments are advised to speak to the Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) Team within the Education Team in advance of any assessment to discuss possible options should an issue arise.

- Section 5: Minor clarifications to specify that, where it is an option, students must choose whether to take a passing mark or a deferred assessment prior to marking taking place.

Secondly, for students who were taking the assessment for the first time (i.e. those who would receive an uncapped mark) if the assessment was abandoned near to its completion (75% or more of the time through the assessment): these students could be offered the option to take a passing mark instead of taking a reassessment (i.e. as outlined under b. c. or d. below). Students should be given the choice as to whether they would like to take a passing mark or have their assessment deferred. Depending on timings and numbers of students involved, students may need to make this decision in advance of any marking taking place.

- Students who chose to take a passing mark but whose marks are subsequently recorded below the pass level will need to be given the opportunity to take a deferred reassessment at a subsequent date.
- Students who chose to take a reassessment in the first instance, if this choice is made before the assessments have been marked, would not have their original assessment marked.

## REGULATIONS ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE

- Note added to the Regulation Summary section, clarifying that in the rare case that a disciplinary case spans academic years, the case will follow the procedures in the regulations for the academic year in which the investigation started.
- New Regulation B1.4c – Addition of the recording of staff or students without permission as a breach of discipline, in line with the Policy for Students and Staff on the Recording of Lectures & Other Teaching Sessions.
  - *The following list gives examples of breaches of discipline; it does not prevent the University considering and adjudicating on any other conduct or action which may be a breach of discipline, whether on University premises or elsewhere. A student may be deemed in breach of discipline who:*
    - c records University staff or students without prior permission, including contravention of the Policy for Students and Staff on the Recording of Lectures, Webinars and Other Teaching Sessions.

- References to the staff role responsible for receiving cases referred to the Disciplinary Board have been changed from the University Discipline Officer with the Secretary of the Disciplinary Board.
- Regulation C2.13di) – Minor amendment to align with previous changes to the Tariff of Penalties, clarifying that some second offences may be dealt with by the College Academic Offences Officer where appropriate.
  - *The case may be referred to the Secretary of the Disciplinary Board if one or more of the following statements are true:*
    - i) The offence constitutes a repeat offence, or a second offence the Academic Offences Officer does not feel able or appropriate to investigate;
- New Regulation D1.9, clarifying that where there is reason to do so, cases against students that voluntarily withdraw or are excluded during the disciplinary process will be investigated to their conclusion in the student's absence and the results recorded.
  - At the Disciplinary Board's discretion, it may proceed to deal with cases and, if necessary, make decisions in the student's absence even if the student has voluntarily withdrawn from the University, so long as they were a registered student at the point of referral to the Disciplinary Board.

## TARIFF OF PENALTIES FOR ACADEMIC OFFENCES

- Amendments to wording throughout the regulations to reflect the three new definitions for assessment:
  - Fixed-time
  - Fixed-window
  - Coursework
- Process for second offences clarified to provide guidance where a student resubmits an assessment with material previously identified as plagiarised or obtained via collusion.
  - *A second offence is one that occurs in an assessment submitted after the penalty for a preceding offence has been notified to the student. Second offences, where denied, will be automatically referred to the Disciplinary Board. In cases where an offence has been admitted, the Academic Offences Officer has the discretion to apply an appropriate penalty from the tariff in line with the offence committed, and taking into account any mitigation. The Academic Offences Officer may still refer an admitted second offence to the University Disciplinary Board if deemed appropriate; this is likely to be the appropriate course of action in the event a student resubmits an assessment with any material identified via a previous academic offences case as plagiarised or obtained through collusion. The Academic Offences Officer will not be the same Officer that considered the first offence, but will be made aware of the details of the previous case.*

- Addition to specify that all academic malpractice at PhD & Professional Doctorate Level should be referred to the University Disciplinary Board.
  - **Offences at PhD & Professional Doctorate Level**  
Academic malpractice at this level of study is a serious offence and should always be referred to the University Disciplinary Board.

## DISCIPLINARY BOARD PROCEDURES

- Minor revision to Section 2.1, regarding summoning students to the Disciplinary Board, revising the time allowed for the provision of a written summons to the Disciplinary Board from 21 days to 15 working days, to match the use of working days throughout the rest of the document.

## GUIDE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- Amendments to wording throughout the regulations to reflect the three new definitions for assessment:
  - Fixed-time
  - Fixed-window
  - Coursework
- An addition has been made regarding University Sanctions, clarifying if and when the effect of sanction on a student's ability to complete assessments may be deemed an exceptional circumstance.
  - If you are placed under sanctions due to significant debt to the University, your access to both learning materials and the submission of some online assessments may be limited. By sitting or submitting an assessment, you are declaring yourself fit and prepared to sit that assessment (i.e. it is a valid attempt), and therefore University sanctions would not be considered an appropriate reason for reduced performance or failure within an assessment, and so would not form suitable evidence for any subsequent appeal. However, if you feel unable to sit or submit an assessment due to the effect University sanctions have had on your academic study, an exceptional circumstances submission should be submitted, and will be considered through the standard process for exceptional circumstances.
- Addition on technical issues effecting online assessments, clarifying what may qualify as an exceptional circumstance, evidence required, and expectations on students in terms of giving sufficient time for submission.
  - Failure to submit any form of assessment by the deadline because of a technical issue:  
  
Screenshot(s) of the submission process clearly indicating the issue being experienced.

**It is important that students allow sufficient time within the time period allocated for assessments to enable submission of any assessment material by the deadline.**

For fixed-time and fixed-window assessments, assessments must be completed/submitted by the deadline; work submitted after the deadline will be recorded with a mark of zero. Submissions after the deadline will not normally be accepted. Wherever possible, students experiencing technical issues in relation to assignment submission should contact the relevant member of staff by e-mail with details of the issue being experienced and include a copy of the material for submission. In most situations, this correspondence should take place before the submission deadline.

Coursework assessments should be submitted by the deadline, but late submissions will be accepted, and marks reduced as detailed within the Assessment Regulations. Students requesting the removal of any late submission penalties should complete an exceptional circumstances submission.

## **REGULATIONS ON FITNESS TO PRACTISE**

- Addition of several programmes from the School of Optometry and Audiology Department to the list of programmes coming under the remit of Fitness to Practise regulations.
- Minor clarifying amendment to Section E1a, on warnings, specifying that warnings issued by the AMS Concerns Group may be appealed against in the same way as any other warning.