



Writtle
University
College

Exceptional Regulations 2020/21 (COVID-19)

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Access Public (website) or Internal (MyWi)	Website and Moodle Quality Office areas
Access Staff and Student or Staff Only	Staff and Student
Application to Collaborative	Mandatory

1. Scope

1.1 In the Academic Year 2019/20 Writtle University College (WUC) implemented a 'No Disadvantage' approach in response to the coronavirus pandemic. For Academic Year 2020/21 this approach has been approved as a set of Exceptional Regulations that apply to the following:

1.1.1 [Exam Assessment](#)

1.1.2 [Extenuating Circumstances](#)

1.1.3 [Board of Examiners](#) (Achievement, progression and award)

1.2 The Exceptional Regulations embed the following principles:

- No student will be disadvantaged in terms of assessed outcomes as a result of the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the University College's response.
- Students will not be assessed on material that they have not been taught.
- Students' achievement of threshold learning outcomes will be protected.
- Students remain responsible for completing the self-directed study hours associated with their modules.
- A record will be kept of all adjustments made to delivery and assessment, and all subsequent actions and mitigations.

1.3 These regulations should be read in conjunction with all existing regulations; and reviewed by Academic Board throughout the academic year to ensure currency and relevance.

2. Exam Assessment

2.1 Subject to the principles stated at para 1.2 of these regulations; written assignments/coursework will continue as planned.

2.2 Practical assessments that are deemed necessary may proceed provided an appropriate risk assessment has been undertaken. Practical assessments for students completing awards should be prioritised.

2.3 On-site timed, closed-book examinations can no longer proceed as restrictions implemented in response to COVID-19 prevent usual organisation and invigilation. Permitted alternatives to on-site timed exams that allow for any reasonable disruption students might face at home, including as a result of issues with technology or internet access are:

2.3.1 An online 'normal' exam, released at a specific time that is twice the length of that stated in the module specification; **or**

2.3.2 An exam that is the same length as that stated on the module specification, but with a reduced set of questions; **or**

2.3.3 A replacement piece of coursework.

2.4 The duration of Multiple Choice Question exams online will remain as stated in the module specification

2.5 Any revision to the format of assessment will be agreed with the relevant External Examiner and ratified by Academic Board.

2.6 The module leader is responsible for formally communicating to students the revised format of the exam.

- 2.7 Exam papers must be published via the relevant module Moodle page for students to access at the allocated time. In all cases, if a student accesses an exam paper online, they have deemed themselves 'fit to sit'.
- 2.8 Written assignments/coursework should be submitted as normally via Turnitin unless otherwise set out in the assignment brief.
- 2.9 Online exams must be submitted via a Turnitin submission point set up on the module Moodle page for each exam. Additional submission point(s) must be set up for students who require extra time; or where extenuating circumstances or refer exams occur. Exam papers must be submitted with an examination cover sheet to comply with WUC anonymous marking policy.
- 2.10 Students with agreed exam arrangements are expected to use their normal way of working. Students who would ordinarily have an approved Scribe and/or Reader, will be expected to use assistive software such as speech-to-text or text-to-speech software.
- 2.11 Exam papers submitted after the deadline will be deemed to be 'not sat' and recorded as a fail unless the student can provide demonstrable evidence that disruption to Moodle or Internet connectivity occurred at the point of submission i.e. coincides with the published submission deadline. (See paras 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 below). Late Work applications are not applicable.
- 2.12 In the event of sustained issues with technology and/or internet access throughout the exam timeframe, an application for Extenuating Circumstances may be submitted with evidence of the issue (See para 3.1.3).

3. Extenuating Circumstances

- 3.1 The Extenuating Circumstances procedure will continue to be administered as normal with the following exceptions:
 - 3.1.1 Students will be able to self-certify for illness or other circumstances relating to coronavirus, to allow for possible limitations in obtaining medical evidence. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - 3.1.2 If disruption to Moodle or Internet connectivity occurred at the point of submitting an exam paper; the exam paper, cover sheet and demonstrable evidence of the disruption must be emailed as soon as possible after the submission deadline to exams@writtle.ac.uk.
 - 3.1.3 Technical issues experienced during engagement with online examinations will be considered provided that demonstrable evidence of sustained issues with technology and/or Internet access is submitted with the application. A date and time stamped photograph or video will be considered as evidence.

4. Boards of Examiners

- 4.1 It is important that academic standards continue to be maintained by ensuring that students have met threshold learning outcomes for their course and level of study. However, in order to reduce the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and to enable the Boards to take place, these regulations in conjunction with the existing regulations apply.

Board Arrangements and Quoracy

- 4.2 All Boards, including Preliminary (internal) Boards, may be held virtually via the Teams platform; Terms of Reference continue to apply particularly in relation to confidentiality and quoracy.

- 4.3 Heads of School should identify appropriately senior academic colleagues who can act as Chair in their absence.
- 4.4 The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the Teams Board meeting is restricted to appropriate stakeholders; the participant list should be checked before commencement of the meeting and any unanticipated participants removed.
- 4.5 In the event of sustained or serious breakdown in technology or connectivity, i.e. of more than 20 minutes, during a formal Board, the meeting should cease. The Chair should then consult with the Quality Office and External Examiner (EE) via an alternative method (e.g. telephone) to determine whether there is a need to reconvene at another date or whether sufficient discussion had taken place. If it is agreed that the Board needs to be re-scheduled this should be at a mutually agreed time for all stakeholders.
- 4.6 In making the decision whether or not the Board must reconvene, the Chair should consider whether or not the EE had been able to confirm that overall standards have been met. If the EE had been able to do so, the Chair may judge that the EEs input has been sufficient.
- 4.7 In the event that the decision is taken not to reconvene a Board all Chair's actions must be fully documented and recorded.

No Disadvantage Consideration

- 4.8 Systematic scrutiny must be applied at individual and cohort level, in the Preliminary Board process and formal Board meetings. Systematic scrutiny, in this instance, refers to scrutiny over and above the routine quality assurance measures applied for accuracy and rigour; it requires the Boards to consider the potential impact of COVID-19 on the achievement/outcomes of students presented to them.
- 4.9 Preliminary Boards:
 - 4.9.1 Should consider, where possible, an averaged mark profile for three previous years (pre-pandemic i.e. prior to Semester B in academic year 2019/20); module mark profiles across the current year – this is particularly important for consideration of modules being delivered for the first time during academic year 2020/21; and, where possible, students previous whole year achievement profile.
 - 4.9.2 Give careful consideration to any borderline marks.
 - 4.9.3 If significant anomalies in marks are evident then the Preliminary Board can recommend an adjustment to a whole cohort mark profile; the recommendation must be ratified by the External Examiner at the Formal Board.
 - 4.9.4 Individual student issues, flagged either through a Preliminary Board or individual student through the Extenuating Circumstance procedure; must be brought to the attention of the Formal Board
- 4.10 Formal Boards (Achievement, Progression and Award)
 - 4.10.1 Should follow the same process of systematic scrutiny as the Preliminary Boards;
 - 4.10.2 Must consider any recommendations made by the Preliminary Boards.
 - 4.10.3 Must consider any individual student issues raised through the Preliminary Board process; and note the outcomes of Extenuating Circumstance applications approved by Extenuating Circumstance Panels.

- 4.10.4 In exceptional circumstance the Board has the discretion to consider adjustments to an individual's stage profile. Exceptional circumstances would apply where a student has not submitted an application for Extenuating Circumstances but it is clear from scrutiny of his/her profile that an anomalous mark (or marks) has been recorded.
- 4.10.5 If 'no disadvantage' adjustments have been made, the Board must formally minute how the impact of COVID-19 has been considered and dealt with in terms of marks for award and progression.