
Senate Regulation 13: Emergency Regulation

Introduction

- 13.1 This Regulation explains the measures the University can take when its academic activities suffer significant disruption due to serious and unexpected events outside of its control.
- 13.2 During periods in which this Regulation is in force the University's regulatory obligations to the Office for Students and the Quality Assurance Agency remain in force unless otherwise notified by those bodies.
- 13.3 This Regulation will only be in force if invoked by the Senate on the recommendation of the Education Committee in instances where the University's academic business, including learning and teaching activity, assessment, progression, award, classification and postgraduate research supervision and examination, is impacted significantly.
- 13.4 The University will invoke this Regulation where it is necessary to take action to protect the interest of students with respect to the delivery of teaching and assessment to enable them to progress and achieve the awards for which they have worked.
- 13.5 In such circumstances, this Regulation takes precedence over other regulations (or parts thereof) relating to admissions requirements, assessment, progression, Panels and Boards of Examiners, award and classification of certificates, diplomas and degrees.
- 13.6 Except where specified otherwise at the appropriate time all other Regulations including those relating to student conduct, discipline and academic appeals remain in force during such periods.
- 13.7 Regulations relating to student complaints remain in force during such periods, but the University may modify procedures underpinning them to meet the needs of the particular circumstances.

Invoking the Regulation

- 13.8 Where the University's academic business suffers significant disruption, the Senate, on the recommendation of the Education Committee, will act to invoke the Regulation.
- 13.9 Following invocation of this Regulation, the Education Committee or its Chair, supported by a sub-group acting on its behalf, will approve appropriate policies to underpin action taken in response to the particular circumstances and students will be advised of any changes to relevant regulations and policies.

Maintaining a Record of Disruption to Learning and Teaching Activities

- 13.10 The University will maintain a record of all learning and teaching activity disrupted for which this Regulation is invoked. This may be through academic schools or the collection of data at University level or a combination of both. A report will be made to Ordinary meetings of Senate and Council after the event.
- 13.11 Where campus-based or distance learning teaching and research degree supervision is disrupted the University will aim to offer alternative forms of learning and teaching activity and supervision, which are deemed appropriate for the type of activity.

Assessment

- 13.12 Heads of School may extend deadlines for assessments such as coursework, projects, dissertations, presentations etc. where there has been significant disruption to enable students to access appropriate expertise or resources, including where these are offered online, consulting appropriate colleagues where joint degree provision is affected.

- 13.13 Schools may vary the method and timing of assessments in accordance with guidance issued by the Education Committee, with approval of the relevant College Dean of Education. In exceptional circumstances, this may include an overall reduction in assessment when appropriately justified.
- 13.14 In some cases, varying methods of assessment may include the replacement of examinations with alternative assessments, including those examinations scheduled to take place on campus.
- 13.15 In circumstances where it is necessary for the University to change the timing or methods of assessment the normal expectation is that students will complete assessments within the expected timescale. The option to request that assessments are rescheduled to a later assessment period or suspend studies will normally only be approved where a student's individual circumstances are impacted to such an extent that deferral of assessments or suspension is the only reasonable course of action.
- 13.16 In making revisions to any assessment (including examination question papers) Schools should ensure that PSRB requirements continue to be met, consulting the appropriate bodies as required.
- 13.17 The University may vary the prescribed marking turnaround times for assessment (excluding examinations or alternatives to such examinations). These will not normally exceed 20 working days and will be set to comply with timings of Panels and Boards of Examiners where appropriate.

Examinations

- 13.18 Heads of School should ensure that revisions are made to examination question papers to ensure that students are not examined on material not taught, whilst ensuring that programme Intended Learning Outcomes can be met.
- 13.19 Where revisions are required, Schools should request approval from external examiners, where possible. If for any reason this is not possible, Heads of Schools may approve revisions. Schools should report the revisions to the External Examiner as appropriate, including through Boards of Examiners processes.

Progression

- 13.20 The University may vary the normal progression requirements for students, including the number of credits that must be completed and passed, taking account of the circumstances but with due regard to maintaining academic standards and ensuring consistency of approach.
- 13.21 Any variance to progression requirements will take account of the year and level of study, including whether it contributes to final award and classification.
- 13.22 Where the level of study contributes to the final degree classification the University will normally operate a 'safety net' policy to ensure that students are not disadvantaged. The 'safety net' will involve the calculation of a 'benchmark grade' used to inform progression decisions and award/classification decisions in subsequent years. The benchmark may vary by programme or level of study.

Award and Classification

- 13.23 Whenever possible, the University will maintain the overall requirements with respect to credits and degree class boundaries, but will take action as required to ensure that students are not disadvantaged and the integrity and consistency of its awards are maintained.
- 13.24 Where appropriate, the University may operate a 'safety net' policy to ensure that students receive the award and classification for which they were on track prior to disruption. The operation of the safety net involves the calculation of a 'benchmark grade' that will be used in the degree classification calculation where this is of benefit to students.

- 13.25 The calculation of the benchmark grade will be determined by the structure and level of the programme and the number of credits completed, with due regard to PSRB requirements.

Degrees with a Year Abroad, Year in Industry or Placement

- 13.26 The University may vary the requirements for placements, the award of a degree with a year abroad, year in industry or other variant where circumstances prevent students from completing the prescribed period.
- 13.27 Such provisions will vary depending on the degree and whether the year abroad or in industry forms part of an integrated degree or is an optional component.

Fieldwork

- 13.28 The University may vary the requirements for fieldwork and offer alternative arrangements where circumstances prevent students from undertaking periods of fieldwork.

Ethical Approval for students

- 13.29 The University may amend or cancel ethical approval previously granted to students undertaking research as part of their studies where the circumstances require such action.

Progression, Extension and Examination for Research Degrees

- 13.30 The University may extend a research student's period of registration where appropriate to take account of the particular circumstances causing the invocation of this Regulation.
- 13.31 Normal progression requirements for research students will apply but students' probation review meetings will take place through remote means where it is not practical for them to be conducted face-to-face.
- 13.32 The University may vary the requirements relating to submission for a research degree, including where appropriate, waiving the requirement for submission of a hard copy of a thesis.
- 13.33 The appointment of examiners for research degrees will follow the standard process in accordance with Senate Regulation 9.
- 13.34 Viva Voce examinations will take place through remote means where it is not practical for them to be face-face examinations.

Mitigating Circumstances

- 13.35 The University may vary its mitigating circumstances policy as appropriate, including the requirement to provide evidence.
- 13.36 Students are not required to submit mitigating circumstances claims for the circumstances that have caused the invocation of this Regulation and that apply to all students.
- 13.37 The University may offer the option for students to reschedule their assessments to a later assessment period where circumstances have had an impact on individual students to such an extent that this is the most reasonable course of action.

Panels and Boards of Examiners

- 13.38 The University may vary the timing of Panels and Boards of Examiners and the way in which such meetings take place to in response to particular circumstances.
- 13.39 The University may vary the quoracy requirements for Panels and Boards of Examiners, whilst ensuring that there are sufficient members to enable appropriate decision-making.

- 13.40 The University will ensure whenever possible, that External Examiners are present (including through remote attendance) for awarding Boards of Examiners but Boards may go ahead where this is not possible, providing there are sufficient members and an Academic Registrar's Representative present. In such cases, there will be a requirement for External Examiners to confirm the attainment of appropriate academic standards in their written reports.

Reassessment

- 13.41 The University may vary reassessment periods and methods of reassessment whilst maintaining consistency and academic standards.
- 13.42 Where possible, methods of reassessment will be the same as the original assessment, unless circumstances mean that this is no longer appropriate, in which case alternative methods may be used, providing these ensure students meet the relevant Intended Learning Outcomes and are a reasonable alternative.

Conferral of Degrees and other Awards

- 13.43 In circumstances where it is not possible for there to be timely conferral of awards at a physical degree congregation there is provision for the conferral of awards at a meeting of Senate, which under Senate's Standing Orders can be convened, if necessary, as 'an Urgency Committee' to ensure degrees are conferred at the appropriate time.