

Temporary Covid-19 amendments to B&FC HE Taught Regulations 2019-20

B&FC Scaling: Temporary amendment to Section B7 4.1.2 of the [HE Taught Award Regulations: Part B7 Board of Examiners Procedures](#)

Section B7 4.1.2 stipulates: 'Although an unusual distribution of grades/marks is not of itself a sufficient reason for scaling to be applied, it may be an indication that something has gone wrong. For this reason, if, after application of all other methods of moderation, the overall mean aggregation score for any module lies outside the range 13.5-17.0 (or 55% to 66.7% for percentage marks) then examiners must consider whether or not there is a case for the marks to be scaled.'

In line with Lancaster University temporary adjustments to Exam Board Scaling in recognition of adjustments to assessment in Summer 2019/20 submitted to Academic Standards and Quality Committee on 15 May 2020 the scaling range at B&FC shall be increased from 13.5-17.0 to 13.5-17.5. Where marks fall outside of this range, the Board of Examiners must justify any decisions made for/against scaling. It is considered appropriate to review previous years' data to provide reassurance that students are not being disadvantaged nor given unfair advantage over previous cohorts. Therefore, Boards of Examiners should compare the average module aggregation scores from the previous three academic years, for each module where scaling is being considered, wherever possible.

B&FC Condonation: Exceptional Arrangements Covid-19 (March – August 2020) - applicable to all Lancaster University and B&FC awards. Temporary amendment to Section A4.4.6 of the [HE Taught Award Regulations: Part A](#)

Section A4.4.6 of the HE Taught Award Regulations: Part A regulations stipulates: On the completion of a stage and whether a student is being considered for progression or for an award, where a student has failed one or more modules within the stage the relevant Programme Board of Examiners shall consider condonation of the failed module(s). Condonation will normally only be considered where a student has exhausted all reassessment opportunities except where a student is on the final year of their study. A Programme Board of Examiners may, at their absolute discretion, condone failed modules totalling not more than 20 credits for the stage providing that the aggregate score for each/any module condoned is 7.0 or higher.

For the 2019/20 academic year following approved PMCs, a progressing student will normally be considered for condonation automatically in the event that all reassessment opportunities have not been exhausted. Where a student wishes to undertake reassessment in one or more failed modules, they may do so provided they apply within five working days of results being made available.

B&FC Personal Mitigating Circumstances (PMCs): Exceptional Arrangements Covid-19 (March – August 2020) – applicable to all Lancaster University and B&FC awards. These amendments will apply to academic year 2019-20 only and will apply to the B&FC Higher Education Taught Award Regulations [Part B1 Personal Mitigating Circumstances and Interruption of Study Procedure](#).

Currently Personal Mitigating Circumstances panels at B&FC are limited in their powers to only being able to approve, partially approve, defer or reject. Approval will initiate extensions to deadlines which teaching staff negotiate with students in the form of an action plan.

The following amendments would normally only be implemented, where students feel they have exhausted all Covid-19 assessment adjustments including authorised extensions to assessment deadlines provided through the Personal Mitigating Circumstances process and where scaling and condonation have been considered by Boards of Examiners. Students may wish to apply for PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements, in instances where all other interventions have been exhausted.

'PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements' will mean appropriate, independently evidenced claims from students that demonstrate good cause as to why their performance and achievements have been adversely affected by means which have not been fully addressed through extension and other available assessment procedures.

'Good cause' will mean illness or other relevant personal circumstances affecting a student and resulting in either the student's failure to undertake or submit an assessment at or by the due time, or otherwise satisfy the requirements of the scheme of assessment appropriate to his or her programme of studies; or, the student's performance in assessment being manifestly prejudiced. Normally, only students who have applied for and had Personal Mitigating Circumstances granted will be eligible to apply for 'PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements'.

An extraordinary meeting of the College's PMC panel will have responsibility to consider PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements claims of good cause. Any such recommendations would be subject to confirmation by the Reassessment Board of Examiners.

Applications for PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements

Submitting an application for PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements, provision of evidence and their effects is the responsibility of the student. To be considered for PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements a student must submit a B&FC PMCs application form, clearly identifying claim for PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements with supporting evidence.

The College will convene an extraordinary meeting of the PMC panel to consider PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements. The PMC Panel is responsible to HE Academic Standard and Development Committee and its Terms of Reference are detailed in the B&FC Higher Education Taught Award Regulations B1. For the academic year 2019-20 the PMC panel convened to consider PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements shall be guided by the principles outlined within Lancaster University's Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures: General Regulations for Assessment and Award 2019-20 (Applicable from October 2019) Section GR2.6 Exceptional Circumstances Committee as follows:

In this instance, the primary responsibility of the PMC panel convened to consider PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements will be to consider claims of good cause. The PMC panel will produce a report based the minutes of its meetings to be submitted to the Reassessment

Board of Examiners. Any such claims would be subject to confirmation by the Reassessment Board.

PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements can be considered as such actions or events outside the control of the student which result in any circumstances which are thought reasonably to have caused an individual student:

- a) to fail to complete all the required assessment for a programme or contributing module by a stipulated deadline
- b) to complete assessed work to a lesser standard of academic performance than might reasonably have been expected on the basis of performance elsewhere during their study (where the same circumstances have not applied).

Type of Evidence

All applications for individual PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements need to be supported by independent documentary evidence. The College will give reasonable consideration to the form of documentary evidence that can be provided in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. We accept that some usual sources of independent evidence in the UK may not be available, e.g. a letter from a General Practitioner (GP). Medical records should however be available from hospitals and General Practitioners on request. Third party evidence from someone in a professional capacity, who can verify the circumstances and who is in a position to provide objective and *impartial* evidence will also be considered. Electronic evidence will be accepted from verifiable addresses. All evidence must be provided in English.

The following list details examples of the types of evidence that would normally be accepted to support an application for PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements. This list should not be considered definitive, and the College will always give reasonable consideration to other forms of documentary evidence provided. The College may request additional evidence to help to clarify a set of circumstances.

Examples of Evidence:

In all instances the student will be required to explain how individual circumstances have affected their ability to complete/submit specific assessments or, how the student's performance in these specific assessments was manifestly prejudiced.

- Illness of student
 - Where students have contracted coronavirus and have been admitted to hospital for treatment, evidence to include medical notes which demonstrate that hospital medical treatment was received including length of time spent in hospital.
- Illness of 'someone close', usually a close family, who has contracted coronavirus
 - Medical evidence relating to the illness (clearly indicating dates of illness) plus evidence of the students connection to the person who is ill, or has been ill and corroborating evidence to demonstrate the impact on the student (e.g. a member of College staff/other relevant third party, which can include family members).

“Someone close” can mean parents or guardians, children, siblings, a spouse or partner.

- Bereavement of ‘someone close’
 - “Someone close” can mean parents or guardians, children, siblings, a spouse or partner. Evidence of bereavement can take several forms, for example:
 - A letter from funeral director or minister conducting the service.
 - An Order of Service showing date, or other relevant documentation.
 - A statement from a doctor or other qualified professional, or member of College staff (e.g. personal tutor) confirming you had disclosed a bereavement.
 - A corroborating statement from a family member. A death certificate is also an acceptable form of evidence but is not a requirement.
- Other acute/severe circumstances (including prolonged financial or accommodation difficulties associated with Covid-19)
 - Statement must provide clear details, including dates which link to the assessment(s) affected. Students must provide evidence of how they were affected and why this prevented them from completing/submitting specific assessment(s) within the agreed timescales or, how their performance in these specific assessments was manifestly prejudiced. This should include supporting independent evidence from a relevant professional person, i.e. landlord/agent or associated agency.

These circumstances might need to be mitigated in order to arrive at a fair and correct judgement of the student’s academic performance.

The PMC panel will undertake the following activity;

- a) Review reported circumstances, for which due written evidence has been provided, in order to reach a judgement on whether those circumstances have been detrimental to a student’s academic performance. Where circumstances are agreed to have applied in such a case, the PMC panel will propose a remedy for consideration by the Reassessment Examination Board.
- b) Where Personal Mitigating Circumstances have previously been addressed in the conduct of assessment – e.g. extended coursework deadline – the PMC panel must consider whether circumstances were sufficiently compensated by that earlier response.
- c) Preparation of information on decisions which will be brought forward to the Reassessment Examination board to inform final academic judgement. Formal minutes will record cases discussed; the PMC panels judgement on applicability of PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements; and proposed remedy per each case. Minutes will contain such details of particular circumstances as is appropriate, but detailed discussion of circumstances will not be undertaken at the Examination board or other meetings of examiners.

By these means the College must be able to demonstrate its fair and careful approach in advising examination boards upon their final academic judgement.

Where it is determined that the evidence presented supports the student's claim that they were prevented by good cause from completing work for assessment on or by the due time and where no means of alternative assessment may be found, the assessment(s) in question may be excluded (without penalty) from the calculation of the module aggregation score(s) and the following regulations will apply:

- a.) The extent to which the student's total assessment, at that level, has been completed will be determined as a percentage, taking into account the relative weights attributed to those assessments as published in the relevant approved assessment scheme.
- b.) Boards of Examiners will make an overall judgement of the student's work submitted for assessment, using as far as possible the standards and criteria applied in respect of the work of other students.
- c.) At module level where the student has:
 - (i) completed 33% or more of the total summative assessment required, the examining bodies can recommend an overall module result on the basis of work completed so long as that work is deemed to demonstrate attainment against substantial elements of the module's learning outcomes;
 - (ii) completed less than 33% of the work required for assessment, the student will be regarded as not having completed sufficient assessment to be awarded a grade in the module. In such cases students should be given an opportunity to complete the missing work as a first attempt.
- d.) At programme level where the student has:
 - (i) completed 75% or more of the total work required for assessment, within a programme of study, the Boards of Examiners will recommend an award or other outcome, including progression on the basis of the work completed;
 - (ii) If a student has completed less than 75% of the work required for assessment, within a programme of study or completed less than 30% of programme assessment for an honours degree*, the student will be regarded as not having completed sufficient assessment to progress or be awarded a degree.
 - (iii) *If a student has completed at least 30% but less than 75% of the work required for assessment on a three year honours degree, an Aegrotat (unclassified honours) degree may be recommended if the completed portion is of honours standard, or, if the completed portion is not of honours standard, no award will be made; this opportunity is not available for Foundation degrees or top up Honours degrees. In these instances he or she will be regarded as not having completed sufficient assessment to be awarded a degree.

Where Boards of Examiners decide to recommend an Aegrotat (unclassified honours) degree, and this recommendation is approved by the University Committee of Senate via the Classification and Assessment Review Board then the Aegrotat degree will be awarded forthwith and the student will be invited to attempt, within two years, to qualify for the award of a classified honours degree by completing examinations and/or other work, under conditions and at times specified by the Boards of Examiners, and approved by the University Committee of Senate via the Classification and Assessment Review Board.

Students who:

- undertake the further assessment specified, and who achieve the required level of attainment, will subsequently be awarded an appropriate classified honours degree;
- attempt further assessment, but who fail to achieve the required level of attainment for the award of a classified honours degree, will retain the Aegrotat degree already awarded;
- decline the invitation to attempt further assessment within two years, will retain the Aegrotat degree already awarded.

Approval of PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements by Boards of Examiners

The Reassessment Board of Examiners will receive the report provided by the PMC panel and consider the case of each student who has presented PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements.

Information about a student circumstance should not be introduced to a Reassessment Board of Examiners, unless in exceptional circumstances.

The Reassessment Board of Examiners will ensure:

- that students are being treated consistently across the College;
- that decisions are consistent with respect to the Regulations;
- that a fair outcome is achieved, particularly with respect to complex cases.

Boards of Examiners must keep a written record of the decisions made with respect to PMCs: Exceptional Arrangements and the basis on which they were made. The relevant record must be made available to a student to which it applies on request.

The determination of final results and the classification of Lancaster University awards are subject always to ratification by the University Committee of Senate and will be regarded as provisional until ratified.

With the exception of special cases recommended to the Lancaster University Committee of Senate via the Classification and Assessment Review Board, the college may notify students of their provisional results following the college board, but these results are not final until ratified by the Committee of Senate.