

22 April 2020

Dear External Examiner,

The ongoing Coronavirus pandemic is causing all of us in the Higher Education sector to modify our practices so that we can continue to deliver high-quality education to our students and to mitigate any impact on students' learning, on our ability to assess that learning and to award degrees. At the University of Aberdeen, the University's Coronavirus steering group and our Coronavirus Academic working group is leading and overseeing our response to the developing situation. The Academic group aims to ensure that we have a consistent and coherent approach to the academic requirements across the University.

As External Examiner, you play a vital role in assuring the academic quality of our programmes and it is important that you are aware of the measures we are taking to support student learning, manage the assessment process and ensure the integrity of the University's awards in these challenging times.

We have taken the following actions:

1. All face to face teaching was suspended from 13th March and replaced with online teaching where possible. Some teaching events, such as field trips and some lab classes have either been replaced by virtual labs/field trips with analysis of given data or will be delayed until the next academic year where that approach has not been possible.
2. For most levels 1 and 2 students, all examinations and any assessments still due to be submitted have been cancelled, except in some cases where PSRBs have particular requirements. Students will receive an ungraded pass if they remained active on the course up until the end of February, as evidenced by the retention of their class certificate.
3. For Levels 3, 4 and 5, all in-person assessments and examinations will be replaced by online alternative assessments. Equality of access and inclusion issues are being considered when devising alternative assessments. Whilst we would normally ask you to approve all assessments, considering the pressure that the Coronavirus pandemic is causing us all, we will not ask you to review and approve these alternative assessments before they are taken. The University's Quality Assurance Committee have reviewed and approved all alternative assessments and Schools will inform you of their nature prior to the Examiners' Meeting (if they have not already done so).
4. We are aiming to enable you to review a sample of students' work online through MyAberdeen, but are keeping this under review due to the developing situation. Please inform the relevant School or email extexam@abdn.ac.uk if you are unable to access MyAberdeen.

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5. We have undertaken a review of the timelines for the submission of results and the timing of examiners' meetings and Schools will communicate these to you as soon as possible, if they have not already done so. Examiners' meetings will take place virtually, via Microsoft Teams, and you will receive further advice on this as due course.
6. We have developed no detriment procedures to ensure that assessment undertaken during Covid-19 will not have a detrimental impact upon undergraduate degree classification or postgraduate taught degree award. These procedures are attached and more detail on how they will be implemented will be provided by the School.

I hope this finds you well and I appreciate your patience as we respond to the ongoing crisis.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Shennan', written in a cursive style.

Kath Shennan
(Dean of Quality Enhancement and Assurance)