

## COMPREHENSIVE MEASURES FOR FAIR AND CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

The University recognises that, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, this may be a difficult and anxious time for you. The University is, however, committed to supporting you and to ensuring that **you will be protected from disadvantage as you continue with your studies.**

Here you are provided with the information that you will need about our 'Comprehensive Measures for Fair and Consistent Assessment in the Context of Covid-19'. These Comprehensive Measures take account of the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and provide you with reassurance that **you will be protected from disadvantage in your assessment due to Covid-19**, whilst also **ensuring that the integrity of the Aberdeen award is maintained.**

This webpage has been laid out to take you through the overall teaching, learning and assessment journey for the remainder of the 2020/21 academic year. It identifies both the current measures and adjusted measures that are in place and provides you with links to resources so that you have everything that you need in one place. If you still have any questions, you can contact us at [coronavirus@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:coronavirus@abdn.ac.uk).

### WHO DOES THIS APPLY TO?

These 'Comprehensive Measures' apply to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students **undertaking their studies on 18 March 2021**. They apply regardless of where you normally study (e.g. Aberdeen campus, Qatar campus, fully online), however, the extent to which they apply will be dependent on the level of study you are currently in.

The 'Measures' do **not** apply to dental students as their particular circumstances are being addressed separately. For healthcare programmes (i.e. MBChB, Physicians' Associate and Non-medical Prescribing Qualification) and professionally accredited programmes in Counselling and Initial Teacher Training (including the BMusEd), some of the 'Measures' will not apply due to the importance of professionalism and patient safety and / or the requirements of the relevant Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies. Where this is the case, these are highlighted below.

The 'Measures' do **not** apply to students who completed their studies prior to their introduction. Students graduating prior to 18 March 2021, whose studies were impacted by Covid-19, had their degree outcomes calculated under the April 2020 [No Detriment Procedures](#).

### GENERAL COVID-19 IMPACT

The overarching lens through which these 'Comprehensive Measures' should be seen is termed '**general Covid-19 impact**'. What is meant by this is the overall impact that the pandemic has had on **all students** such that most students have continued to access their teaching, undertake their learning, and complete assessment, but that the general Covid-19 impact could have impaired your ability to produce your best work.

These 'Comprehensive Measures' have the 'general Covid-19 impact' embedded in the consideration of your progression and award such that **you do not need to do anything proactive** to highlight any concerns that you have about that general impact.

General impact relates to the overall disruption such as impact on travel and living arrangements, adjusting to an alternative mode of teaching delivery (e.g. blended / online) associated with Covid-19.

For example, general Covid-19 impact has been embedded in the extended borderline and how this is managed, the flexible approaches to reporting absence and requests for extensions, as well as the way in which teaching, learning and assessment has been put in place for delivery in the context of Covid-19.

It is important, however, that you still make sure that you notify your School of particular issues that affect you **beyond that general impact** so that you can be offered support and to ensure the right measures are put in place for you, to ensure you are not disadvantaged.

## **MEASURES FOR STUDENTS IN ALL PROGRAMME YEARS:**

### **STUDENT SUPPORT**

We want to support you and to ensure the right measures are in place for you. It is therefore vital that if you need to, you actively engage with all the University's [student support](#) processes to ensure that we are fully aware of any difficulties that you are experiencing and can help you.

### **ADJUSTED TEACHING AND LEARNING IS IN PLACE**

Teaching and learning approaches, enabling you to access your learning no matter what your circumstances are, are in place and will continue for the remainder of the 2020/21 academic year. This has comprised a blended approach to learning and included:

- Some on-campus learning for students who were able to return to Aberdeen (when permitted by national guidelines);
- Online learning for students who, for whatever reason, were not able to come to Aberdeen or access on-campus teaching;
- Fully online learning, when required by national guidelines. (Teaching has continued on campus where it has been identified as critical to the achievement of the requirements for graduation. There are also a number of exceptions who have been able to access on-campus teaching, including degree programmes such as the MBChB and MSc in PA Studies.)

### **ADJUSTED ASSESSMENT IS IN PLACE**

Assessment (examination or any other outstanding assessment) is in place and will, where possible, continue throughout the remainder of 2020/21, for the purposes of ensuring that you can continue with and complete your courses, and, if appropriate, graduate.

There may be some instances in which assessment cannot continue, as a consequence of its nature (e.g. on some healthcare programmes). The School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition will further advise.

### **EXTENSIONS FOR ASSESSMENT**

Each School has in place processes for the consideration of and, where appropriate, granting of extensions for pieces of assessment. The School's processes have previously been communicated to you. If you would like to request an extension, please contact your School directly.

In recognition of the general impact of Covid-19 on our students, each School has in place the following:

- a. Schools recognise the challenges facing you at the moment and will work with you to ensure that where extensions can be granted, they will be. Requests for extensions must normally be made in advance of the assessment submission date. [NB please note (c) for exceptions]
- b. Schools will offer maximum flexibility in their approval of an extension taking account of the individual student circumstances and aiming to ensure that the extension does not impact negatively on other assessment or on graduation or progression.
- c. In some instances, extensions cannot be offered (e.g. some weekly assessment, timed assessment, exams). In these cases, students can make their circumstances known to the School through their absence reporting processes as per the [university policy](#), and those circumstances will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

- d. Where you are struggling to submit assessment on time, please talk to your School (e.g. your course coordinator) so that they can offer support and guidance. We want to help.

## ABSENCE REPORTING

The University has in place a [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#), which provides detailed information on the steps you must take if you are absent and/or where you are **unable to take assessment(s)** as a consequence of ill health or other mitigating circumstances (e.g. caring responsibilities, key worker status, disruption to IT access (e.g., internet access, equipment)). **You are required to inform your School(s)** via the [Student Hub](#) and to **do so within published timelines**. Only in exceptional circumstances will late submissions be considered. You are **not required to submit evidence** for your absence unless the programme for which you are registered specifically requires it for accreditation purposes (e.g., the MBChB). Once you have reported your absence, Examiners can:

- Advise you of any remedial work required to allow you to get back on track and continue with your course(s);
- In acknowledging the impact of Covid-19, in instances where you have achieved all the Learning Outcomes for your courses(s) and have completed at least 70% of the assessment and where MC or GC has been awarded for the missing component of assessment, calculate an overall mark for the course(s) concerned on the basis of work completed ;
- Where the impact is such that the situation cannot be recovered, award you with an 'MC' or 'GC', allowing you to undertake a resit **as a first sitting**.

## RESITS

If you fail a course or courses(s) you will be required to [apply to resit](#). Resits will normally be held during the summer resit diet, however, your School may, in some instances, offer you the opportunity to undertake a resit at an earlier opportunity. Registration for a resit is not an automatic process and you need to let us know of your intentions. At levels 3 and above, unless you have been awarded an MC or GC, resit results are capped at a D3. In these extraordinary circumstances, there will be **no charge for resits** undertaken during the remainder of the 2020/21 academic year.

## CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

To maintain the integrity of the Aberdeen award, in order to complete your studies or to progress within a degree programme, you must continue to achieve a minimum number of credits, as defined in our [Degree Regulations \(General and Supplementary Regulations\)](#) or the [Minimum Requirements for Degree Awards](#).

## COMPENSATORY CREDITS

If you are in your final year, you *may* be entitled to compensatory credits if you fail a course. Specific criteria apply and there may be some exceptions related to Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements and Schools will inform you where this is relevant. Further information is available in the University's [Degree Regulations \(General and Supplementary Regulations\)](#).

For healthcare programmes and professionally accredited programmes in Counselling and Initial Teacher Training (including the BMusEd) this measure does not apply in this format. The Schools of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition and Education will advise students on what will apply to these programmes.

For example:

- a final year MA honours student who has achieved 90 credit points at level 4 and has completed the assessment but been awarded a mark of E1, E2 or E3, can be awarded the same amount of unnamed specific credit, not exceeding 30 credit points in total, at level one;

- a Postgraduate Master's student, who has achieved 150 credit points at level 5 (with a grade point average of at least C3) can be awarded unnamed specific credit, not exceeding 30 credit points in total, at level three, provided the following additional criteria apply;
  - they were awarded an MC or GC in their first opportunity to sit the course and marginally failed (E1, E2 or E3) the resit first attempt **or**;
  - they marginally failed their first attempt at the course (E1, E2 or E3) and have an MC or GC for the resit diet **and**;
  - The next available opportunity for them to resit the course is not until the next academic year following completion of the programme.

## PROGRESSION

**Please note:** The SPC will not consider progression for students registered for the MBChB, MSc in PA Studies, programmes in Counselling or Initial Teacher Training (including the BMusEd). Students registered for these programmes will not be permitted to progress with a shortfall of credits.

If you are an *undergraduate* student and fail to achieve the required number of credits, following the resit diet, to progress to the next programme year, your case (i.e., your grade profile) will be considered by the Students' Progress Committee (SPC).

There will be **no requirement for you to apply** to the SPC for consideration, however, you may submit supporting statements and/or evidence in support of your case if you wish to do so. The SPC will review your case (including any evidence provided) and determine the appropriateness of your progression to the next programme year.

If you are a *postgraduate taught* student, seeking to progress to the next stage of your programme, the progression rules as laid out in the Policy and Procedure on Postgraduate Taught Awards apply.

## MEASURES FOR STUDENTS IN PROGRAMME YEARS 3, 4 OR 5 (UG or PGT) ONLY:

### CALCULATING DEGREE OUTCOME

**Please note:** For healthcare programmes and professionally accredited programmes in Counselling and Initial Teacher Training (including the BMusEd), this measure does not apply in this format. The Schools of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition and Education will advise students on what will apply to these programmes.

The University's existing policies and procedures on assessment and degree award will ensure that **you will be protected from disadvantage as you continue with your studies**. Exactly how your degree outcome will be calculated will be dependent on whether you are an undergraduate or postgraduate taught student and, in the case of undergraduate students, the year in which you will graduate. Further information, including worked examples if available for [undergraduate students](#) and [postgraduate taught students](#) on our webpages.

### EXAMINERS' MEETINGS

Before their release to you, degree outcomes (and the course results which impact on them) are considered and approved by Examiners' Meetings. Comprised of highly trained internal members of staff and at least one External Examiner (appointed by the University to ensure that standards are maintained on a comparable level with universities throughout the UK), Examiners' Meetings:

- make recommendations in regard to degree outcome;
- finalise the first half-session grades for courses for Honours and postgraduate taught candidates;
- finalise the grades to be awarded for all second half-session courses and those first half-session courses that are assessed at the end of the second half-session
- finalise the grades to be awarded for all work undertaken over the summer and the associated degree award for postgraduate taught students.

Examiners' Meetings have a specific role in regard to *borderline* cases (see below).

Examiners' Meetings are required to **clearly record** how all decisions regarding degree outcome have been calculated.

## BORDERLINE CASES

**Please note:** For healthcare programmes and professionally accredited programmes in Counselling and Initial Teacher Training (including the BMusEd), this measure does not apply in this format. The Schools of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition and Education will advise students on what will apply to these programmes.

At the point of calculating degree outcome, Examiners' Meetings **consider every student** classed as *borderline*. The borderlines in use for students who were in level 3 or above during the 2020/21 academic year, have, in response to the impact of Covid-19, been **widened**, as demonstrated in the table below. This approach directly allows any student who might be eligible for an increase in classification to be considered at Examiners' Meetings.

Grade Point Average	Undergraduate Degree Classification	Postgraduate Award
18.00-22.00	First Class	MSc with Distinction*
<b>greater than 17.00, less than 18.00</b>	<i>Borderline 2.1/1st</i>	<i>MSc Commendation Borderline Distinction</i>
15.00 – 17.00	Upper Second Class	MSc with Commendation#
<b>greater than 14.00, less than 15.00</b>	<i>Borderline 2.2/2.1</i>	<i>MSc Borderline Commendation</i>
12.00 – 14.00	Lower Second Class	MSc
<b>greater than 11.00, less than 12.00</b>	<i>Borderline 3rd/2.2</i>	MSc
9.00 – 11.00	Third Class	MSc
<b>greater than 8.00, less than 9.00</b>	<i>Borderline Fail/3rd</i>	<i>Borderline Fail/MSc</i>
0.00 – 8.00	Fail	Fail

\*The award of Distinction normally requires a Project grade of A5 or above

# The award of Commendation normally requires a Project grade of B3 or above

If your degree outcome falls within published borderlines, Examiners' Meetings will use discretion to determine whether it would be appropriate to award you the higher degree outcome.

As a consequence of the general impact of Covid-19, Examiners Meetings will, without further consideration, award students in the following borderline categories, the higher degree outcome as outlined below.

Grade Point Average	Undergraduate Degree Classification	Postgraduate Award
<b>greater than 17.49, less than 18.00</b>	First Class	MSc with Distinction*
<b>greater than 14.49, less than 15.00</b>	Upper Second Class	MSc with Commendation#
<b>greater than 11.49, less than 12.00</b>	Lower Second Class	MSc

\*The award of Distinction normally requires a Project grade of A5 or above

# The award of Commendation normally requires a Project grade of B3 or above

If your degree outcome falls within published borderlines, but you are not eligible for the automatic award of the higher degree classification/award, Examiner's will consider your **individual circumstances, on a case by case basis**, to determine the degree outcome you should receive. In doing so, Examiners' meetings will consider:

- Your grade profile across your courses (for example, if you have the majority of your grades in the higher classification, the examiners may consider this as grounds for upgrading);
- Exit velocity (NB: At *undergraduate* level, this can only be considered if equal weighting is adopted for your programme of study (e.g. programme year 3 counts for 50% and programme year 4 for

50%). Exit velocity does not apply where a programme has unequal weighting (e.g. programme year 3 counts for 30% and programme year 4 for 70%) as it is already built into that weighting. You may be considered for upgrading to the higher classification if your GPA for level 4 courses (not courses taken in programme year 4) is higher than your GPA for your level 3 courses. At *postgraduate taught* level, this can only be considered if it is relevant to your programme. If there is evidence that you have performed better in later parts of your PGT programme this could be considered equivalent to exit velocity);

- Mitigating circumstances: You are, through published procedures for doing so, invited to submit supporting statements and/or evidence to provide Examiners with information on the mitigating circumstances you have experienced which go beyond the 'general Covid-19 impact.

## **ACADEMIC APPEALS**

The University has in place a [Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals](#) which provides a framework under which you can raise any concerns you may have regarding issues such as assessment and degree outcome. Specific criteria around where an appeal will be heard apply. Further information on academic appeals can be found [here](#).