

NOTES FOR CANDIDATES TAKING ASSESSMENTS/EXAMINATIONS IN 2011/12

Candidates should ensure that they are familiar with the Regulations for their programme and with the current Regulations governing Examinations in Programmes of Study. The Examination Regulations can be found on the Student Portal at portal.ulster.ac.uk, select My Studies tab followed by Examinations and Assessment channel. (Please note that all documents and forms referred to in these notes can be found at this location on the Student Portal).

The following matters in particular are drawn to the attention of candidates:

1 Attendance at Oral or Viva Voce Examinations

Students enrolled on a programme which includes an oral or viva voce as one of the examination components are required to be in attendance at the University when such examinations are being conducted. It is the responsibility of candidates to find out the date, time and place of the examination.

Even if an oral or viva voce is not one of the examination components of a programme, the examination board may wish to interview candidates (note: references in this document to examination board(s) may apply to Boards of Examiners and Campus Progress and Award Boards. They also include Course/Subject Committees and Faculty Boards convened to consider student academic performance in Semester One). It is therefore in candidates' interests to be available should the Board/Committee wish to see them. Candidates may find out from their Course/Subject Director the date, time and place of the examination board meeting for their programme.

2 Department of Student Support

The Department of Student Support (Counselling Services) is available to advise and assist students who are under examination stress. In certain circumstances students may be permitted to sit examinations in other than scheduled locations and the Department can advise on procedures by which such requests may be made.

The Department will also provide reports for consideration by examination boards/Appeals Panels as supporting evidence of factors which candidates wish to be taken into account when their academic performance is being considered (see 4 and 6 below).

3 Absence from Examinations

Students who fail to attend for examination, whether or not this is due to authenticated medical or compassionate circumstances (see 4 below), must notify the Course/Subject Director of their absence not later than five working days following the examination.

4 Presentation of Evidence of Extenuating Circumstances

Candidates should ensure that:

- i) written medical evidence or evidence of compassionate circumstances relevant to their performance in an examination is presented to their Course/Subject Director not later than five working days following the examination;
- ii) written medical evidence or evidence of compassionate circumstances relevant to their performance in coursework is presented to their Course/Subject Director not later than five working days following the due submission date.

Candidates should also note that it is their responsibility to submit all relevant evidence of extenuating circumstances which affected their performance in coursework or examinations in accordance with the deadlines in i) and ii) above. Information should be submitted on form EC1 which may be found on the student portal. The form may also be obtained from the School or Faculty Office.

5 **Publication of Marks and Decisions of Examination Boards**

A schedule of publication of marks for all assessment periods is available on the student portal.

Candidates should note that marks and grades are subject to a process of moderation, which ensures their validity and reliability, and that no result is finalized until confirmed by the Board of Examiners.

Decisions of examination boards will be published on the portal, normally within two working days of each board. For the majority of candidates a decision will not be published on the portal following Semester One examinations, as most students will proceed to Semester Two under the University's rule for automatic progression. However, a decision will be published for candidates required to withdraw from the programme at the end of Semester One, and those permitted at the end of Semester One to take first sittings of examination and/or coursework in Semester Two. These candidates will also receive a Communication of Progress Decision form from the Course/Subject Director setting out the details of the decision.

A schedule of publication of decisions of examination boards will be available through the student portal from the commencement of the examination period for the Semester Two, Supplementary and Semester Three examinations.

Unsuccessful candidates should ensure that following the board they receive a Communication of Results form from their Course/Subject Director, setting out the details of the board's decision.

Candidates should ensure that they have notified the Registry Office/Student Services Centre at their campus of any change of home address.

NB It is the responsibility of candidates to find out their results. Results will not be disclosed over the telephone.

6 **Appeals**

A candidate may appeal against the decision on his/her academic performance and/or progress:

- a) on the basis of evidence of extenuating circumstances relevant to his/her progress which in his/her view was not in the possession of the examination board when it made its decision; or
- b) on the basis of procedural or other irregularities associated with the decision.

An appeal on the grounds of extenuating circumstances will be rejected if:

- (i) it is determined that no new information has been submitted or that a satisfactory explanation has not been provided for failure to supply the information by the date(s) prescribed in the Regulations. If this is the case the original decision of the Board will be confirmed;
- (ii) there is no contemporaneous, independent medical or other evidence to support the appeal.

Candidates should note that the academic judgement of the examiners is not open to appeal. **Therefore an appeal submitted on the grounds that a candidate is dissatisfied with the marks awarded will not be allowed.** However, there is entitlement to appeal where a candidate considers that there was an irregularity in the examination procedures of such a nature that the examiners might have reached a different conclusion had the irregularity not occurred. An irregularity in the procedures is normally regarded as a deviation from published examination arrangements, which has not been notified in advance to students or which has been applied to some but not other students in the programme/module.

Appeals will not be allowed on the grounds of complaint about the delivery or management of a programme after students have presented themselves for examination. Such concerns should be raised through the University's complaints procedure at an early stage as soon as they arise.

A candidate who wishes to appeal should obtain the appropriate form (SA1 for the submission of new information or SA2 for the submission of evidence of procedural or other irregularities) from the Examinations Office (Coleraine, Jordanstown, or Magee) or the Student Services Centre (Belfast). The completed form should be returned to the office from which it was obtained not later than:

Semester One:	Thursday 23 February 2012
Semester Two:	Within seven working days of the publication date of the Board of Examiners' decision through the Portal.
Supplementary Examinations:	Thursday 13 September 2012
Semester Three:	Thursday 4 October 2012

SA1 and SA2 forms, together with an explanatory leaflet on appeals, may be downloaded from the student portal. **You must read the leaflet to ascertain whether or not you have grounds for an appeal. If you decide you have grounds you should complete the relevant appeal form.**

All information will be treated confidentially. However, if candidates have information about highly sensitive or personal circumstances which they do not wish to present to the Appeals Panel, they may lodge it in a sealed envelope in the Examinations Office (Student Services Centre, Belfast) with their name, programme, 'For the attention of the Chairperson of the Appeals Panel' and 'Strictly Confidential' marked on the outside.

If you have successfully completed your course and your appeal is considered at the end of Semester Two you may choose to attend the graduation ceremony and have the award against which you are appealing conferred. If your appeal is subsequently upheld your award will be rescinded and you will be required to return your certificate before recommencing studies arising from the outcome of your appeal.

The completed SA1 form will be considered by a Faculty Appeals Panel on behalf of the body which made the original decision.

The completed SA2 form will be considered by members of staff of the University who were not associated with the original decision. If it is established that there is a prima facie case, a panel may meet to consider the appeal. However, if the Senior Officer responsible for considering the appeal agrees with the faculty that a prima facie case has been established and both parties are agreed on the amendment to be made to the original decision, it will not be necessary to convene a panel.

7 Offences in connection with Examinations and Other Forms of Assessment

It is an offence for a candidate to infringe, or attempt to infringe, the Regulations governing the Conduct of Examinations or to engage, or attempt to engage, in conduct for the purpose of gaining for himself or herself, or for another candidate, an unfair advantage with a view to obtaining a better result than he or she would otherwise achieve.

Examples of such conduct are:

- (a) copying from the examination script or other work undertaken for assessment by another candidate;
- (b) personation of others;
- (c) fabrication of results;
- (d) plagiarism, that is, the presentation by a candidate of work, including ideas and theories, of another person as if it were the candidate's own work;
- (e) collusion;
- (f) use of inadmissible material.

Reports of alleged offences shall be considered under procedures approved by the Council, in consultation with the Senate, in accordance with the Ordinance on Student Discipline.

Candidates should note that there are severe penalties for such offences. The following action is typical of the penalties imposed upon a student who is found guilty of a first offence:

- (a) a reprimand;
- (b) a warning;
- (c) a fine – up to a maximum of £250;
- (d) no credit for the coursework or examination concerned;
- (e) postponement for a year of the repeat of the coursework or examination, and withholding of permission to gain further credit towards a qualification in the interim.