Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Examinations and Assessment: Arrangements that apply to UG and PGT Assessment Procedures

This document outlines arrangements that apply to undergraduate and postgraduate assessment procedures and specifically in relation to semester 2, 2020 assessments and examinations. These arrangements are in light of the ongoing pandemic of 'coronavirus disease' and the requirement to cancel all face-to-face teaching and in person examinations (from Wednesday 18 March 2020).

The document should be used in conjunction with the standard suite of Examination Board Guidelines and Assessment Procedures (UG and PG), to ensure all COVID-19 arrangements are applied.

1. Undergraduate Students: Years 1 and 2 (Year 1 in Malaysia)\(^1\)

1.1. Grades

1.1.1. With exception to paragraph 1.1.3 below, ‘P’ grades should be awarded for all Semester 2 Level 7/8 courses irrespective of the student’s registered year of study (eg, a year 3 student should receive a ‘P’ grade for a Level 7/8 course). This means a Pass is given and credits will be allocated to the course.

1.1.2. P grades can be entered immediately, ie before Boards.

1.1.3. Exceptions to paragraph 1.1.1 above are permitted in the case of the following programmes of study, where it has been agreed that alpha/HAPS grades can be applied: Academic English; Foundation Programme (Malaysia); Degree Entry Programme.

1.2. Decisions on Courses

1.2.1. The decision-making process for Course Boards should be the same as in normal circumstances. It is a formal requirement for Course Boards to ratify all grades, including the allocation of the semester 2 ‘P’ Grades. This should be done as a formality to comply with University Regulation 31, Authority of Heads of Schools and Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances. The Head of School and either the Director of Learning and Teaching or the Director of Academic Quality should formally meet as the Year 1 and Year 2 Course Board and then confirm, in writing, to the Academic Registrar, that the Board approved the allocation of a ‘P’ Grade to all applicable students on the relevant School’s courses.

1.3. Progression

1.3.1. Year 1 and 2 students who have pass alpha grades from Semester 1 can be automatically progressed due to having ‘P’ grades for Semester 2. Refer to Document C: Guidance Note on Year 1 and Year 2 Progression Boards

For other students, the decision-making process for Progression Boards should be the same as in normal circumstances. The Board of Examiners will meet as normal, albeit virtually, and take into consideration the impact of the Coronavirus on learning, teaching and assessment/examination in making decisions about progression. The Board will look at

\(^1\) Student Guides are available at [https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/examinations.htm](https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/studies/examinations.htm)
performance over the whole year, including Semester 1 results, as well as the impact of external circumstances and will take one of the standard decisions (refer to Document 2: Decisions and Decision Codes – Spring/Autumn 2020). Schools have the option of combining, and thereby reducing the number of, Year 1 and Year 2 Progression Boards (refer to Document C: Guidance Note on Year 1 and Year 2 Progression Boards).

2. **Undergraduate Students: Years 3, 4 and 5 (Years 2, 3 and 4 in Malaysia)**

2.1. **Grades and Decisions on Courses**

2.1.1. For all Semester 2 Level 7/8 courses, ‘P’ grades should be awarded, irrespective of the student’s registered year of study (eg a Yr3 student should receive a “P” grade for a Level 7/8 course). This means a Pass is given and credits will be allocated to the course.

2.1.2. For all Semester 2 Level 9/10/11 courses, the following guidance should be followed:

2.1.2.1. The applicable course team should confirm at the start of the Course Board, when referring to their applicable course, whether the assessment(s) that have been completed meet the learning outcomes of the course. If the academic judgement is that there is insufficient evidence and/or learning outcomes covered by the assessments, then the Board is to be guided under paragraph 2.1.2.3 below.

2.1.2.2. Where students have completed assessments (for Levels 9/10/11 courses) as required, standard decision making still takes place, in terms of allocating a Grade of A-F. If full assessment results are available for Semester 2, Boards of Examiners should continue to operate as normally, albeit taking into consideration the impact of COVID-19 in relation to making decisions.

2.1.2.3. If there is no assessment information in relation to Semester 2 (Levels 9/10/11), then University Regulation 31, Authority of Heads of Schools and Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances, is invoked and Boards of Examiners can take decisions to allocate a Grade P, as appropriate, and as guided under paragraph 2.1.2.5 below.

2.1.2.4. If there is incomplete assessment information in relation to Semester 2 (Levels 9/10/11), including courses which have had some element of coursework already submitted, then University Regulation 31, Authority of Heads of Schools and Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances, is invoked. Boards of Examiners can take decisions to allocate a Grade A-F or a Grade P, as appropriate, and as guided under paragraph 2.1.2.5 below.

2.1.2.5. If there is no or incomplete assessment information in relation to Semester 2 and Regulation 31 has been invoked, Boards of Examiners can take the following decisions:

i. A grade A-F should be assigned to Semester 2 Level 9/10/11 courses where the Board determines that there is sufficient information to enable the normal grading scheme to be used (this can include grades allocated following a process of moderation).

ii. A ‘P’ grade (pass and credit is allocated) should be assigned to Semester 2 Level 9/10/11 courses where the Board determines that there is insufficient or no information available and the normal grading scheme cannot be used even with moderation.

2.1.2.6. The decision-making process for Course Boards should be the same as in normal circumstances. It is a formal requirement for Course Boards to ratify all grades, including the allocation of semester 2 ‘P’ Grades. This should be done as a formality to comply with University Regulation 31, Authority of Heads of Schools and Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances, if invoked.
2.1.2.7. If students are, for whatever reason, unable to complete the semester 2 take home examination, they should submit a case for mitigating circumstances (under no circumstances should students then be asked to submit a medical certificate as supporting evidence).

2.2. Award (Graduating Students)

2.2.1. The decision-making process will be the same as for any assessment or examination in normal circumstances. A Board of Examiners will meet as normal and will take into consideration the impact of the Coronavirus on learning, teaching and assessment/examination in making decisions about award.

2.2.2. The Board may consider the student's overall performance in preceding years of study and the student's performance to date in the current year of study, as well as the impact of external circumstances, to reach a decision about the student's award, and will make one of the standard decisions.

2.3. Progression (Continuing Students)

2.3.1. The decision-making process will be the same as for any assessment or examination in normal circumstances. A Board of Examiners will meet as normal and will take into consideration the impact of the disruption on learning, teaching and assessment/examination in making decisions about progression.

2.3.2. The Board may consider the student's overall performance in preceding years of study and the student's performance to date in the current year of study, as well as the impact of external circumstances, to reach a decision about the student's progression, and will make one of the standard decisions.

3. Postgraduate Taught Students

3.1. Examination Deferral

3.1.1. Semester 2 Examinations have been deferred for ALL Postgraduate Taught Students. All deferred examinations will be held in August 2020.

3.2. Progression (Immediate)

3.2.1. As a consequence of Semester 2 Examinations being deferred, all PGT students will now be allowed to directly progress to their dissertation/project.

3.3. Re-assessment Semester 1

3.3.1. If a student has a resit from Semester 1 courses (including courses which have been carried from previous years of study) they will be entitled to take their reassessment at the August diet of examinations.

3.4. Grades and Decisions on Courses

3.4.1. The applicable course team should confirm at the start of the Course Board, when referring to their applicable course, whether the assessment(s) that have been completed meet the learning outcomes of the course. If the academic judgement is that there is insufficient evidence and/or learning outcomes covered by the assessments, then the Board is to be guided under paragraph 3.4.3 below.

3.4.2. Where students have completed assessments as required, standard decision making still takes place, in terms of allocating a Grade of A-F. If full assessment results are available from the August diet, Boards of Examiners should continue to operate as normally, albeit taking into consideration the impact of COVID-19 in relation to making decisions.
3.4.3. If there is no assessment information in relation to the August diet then University Regulation 31, Authority of Heads of Schools and Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances, is invoked and Boards of Examiners can take decisions to allocate a Grade P, as appropriate, and as guided under paragraph 3.4.5 below.

3.4.4. If there is incomplete assessment information in relation to the August diet, including courses which have had some element of coursework already submitted, then University Regulation 31, Authority of Heads of Schools and Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances, is invoked. Boards of Examiners can take decisions to allocate a Grade A-F or a Grade P, as appropriate, and as guided under paragraph 3.4.5 below.

3.4.5. If there is no or incomplete assessment information in relation to the August diet and Regulation 31 has been invoked, Boards of Examiners can take the following decisions:

i. A grade A-F should be assigned to the August diet of courses where the Board determines that there is sufficient information to enable the normal grading scheme to be used (this can include grades allocated following a process of moderation).

ii. A ‘P’ grade (pass and credit is allocated) should be assigned to the August diet of courses where the Board determines that there is insufficient or no information available and the normal grading scheme cannot be used even with moderation.

3.4.6. The decision-making process for Course Boards should be the same as in normal circumstances. It is a formal requirement for Course Boards to ratify all grades, including the allocation of August diet ‘P’ Grades. This should be done as a formality to comply with University Regulation 31, Authority of Heads of Schools and Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances, if invoked.

3.4.7. If students are, for whatever reason, unable to complete the semester 2 take home examination, they should submit a case for mitigating circumstances (under no circumstances should students then be asked to submit a medical certificate as supporting evidence).

3.5. Decisions on Courses and Award (August Diet of Examinations)

3.5.1. The decision-making process will be as in normal circumstances. A Board of Examiners will meet as normal after the August diet of examinations and will take into consideration the impact of the disruption on learning, teaching and assessment/examination in making decisions about award. The Board will look at performance over the whole programme and also take into account the external circumstances to reach a decision about the degree award.

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