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**Emergency Academic and Student Regulations – Overview Paper**

Emergency Academic and Student Regulations

Following discussion at Senate on 25 March 2020, comments on the Academic and Student Regulations have been received. A revised set of Regulations have been produced and can be found [here](https://mynorthamptonac-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/kathryn_kendon_northampton_ac_uk/EaiWHB0X2m5BihaB9ZE5GNIBRHCYsRKLixaoshVU5WZkPw). These were approved on 31 March 2020 and enacted from 1April 2020 until they are revoked by Senate.

Key themes

Key themes discussed were:

1. Concerns were raised regarding the impact of the Emergency Regulations on staff workload (particularly impact on timing of certain required tasks), potentially exacerbated by the fact that many staff are also juggling childcare and work at present. Mitigations for this are currently being considered, including:
   1. Revised Module and Award Board processes and timings. Further information will follow on this.
   2. Understanding that marking deadlines may need to be extended as long as students are kept informed.
2. Some colleagues expressed concern that there was a risk that the Emergency Regulations penalised students who submitted but failed more than those who did not submit [under the Emergency Regulations, non submission will not lead to a capped grade at the next submission point, but a failed submission would].

The logic for the approach taken is:

* The Mitigating Circumstances process has been suspended temporarily because it is not fit for purpose in the current circumstances. This means that it would be unfair to penalise students who do not submit.
* Students are being offered additional assessment opportunities and will be able to choose at which point they wish to submit work. If a student feels ready to submit but still fails then this needs to be captured in any subsequent resit grade.
* Resits are re-workings of previously submitted work, with students using the feedback given to improve their work. If a non-capped resit mark was allowed, students would be using feedback from the marker to improve their grade substantially. It could also lead to students choosing to submit as a way of gaining additional feedback.
* Allowing uncapped resits for students who have previously failed may put them in a stronger position than a student who passes with a bare pass at the first attempt.

There is no easy answer for this question. The approach documented in the Emergency Regulations (continuing to cap resits) aims to retain our current assessment principles as closely as we are able.

1. Students have requested that the University adopts a ‘no detriment’ approach to its Emergency Regulations.

Our own Emergency Regulations are predicated on the requirement to ensure students are not academically disadvantaged by Covid-19, and the changes made to the Regulations have been made for that reason. Our approach is not exactly the same as that taken elsewhere (e.g. we have not stated that the marks for any items of assessment completed after the middle of March will not contribute to the overall module mark, if they cause the module mark to be lower). This is because every institution’s assessment regulations are different and so our Emergency Regulations will also be different.

It is worth noting that our standard Academic and Student Regulations already:

* allow students to pass modules on aggregate;
* discount the worst 40 credits from Levels 5 and 6 (maximum of 20 at Level 6) from the overall classification;
* provide students the best classification from two algorithms (mean and median).

Thus, we are clearly supporting students to achieve the best they can in the circumstances.

Having considered any additional measures that could be taken to ensure the ‘no detriment’ approach is clear for students, it has been agreed that we will investigate the potential to run additional algorithms or to use indicative classifications from Level 5 in some way. More information will follow on this once conversations with IT have been held.

1. Colleagues requested further clarity on the operationalisation of the three assessment opportunities. A table of scenarios can be found [here](https://mynorthamptonac-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/alexandra_hardwick_northampton_ac_uk/ER9qKeMD2ptDm9CWH6H8sBwBZ-feMIWhgnxqcrjEaHmOfQ?e=kymkrB).
2. Further information has been produced regarding:
   1. Exceptional circumstances process (see Appendix 1)
   2. Covid-19 related Study break (see Appendix 2)
   3. Post-emergency retrieval process (see Appendix 3)
3. It has been clarified that any Supplementary Regulations adjustments for specific programmes will be documented as part of the FORM A process.
4. Following discussion, it has been agreed that the date of 20 March 2020 rather than 3 April 2020 will be used for the regulatory revisions being made. Whilst it is noted that students with assessments up to 3 April 2020 were given a 14 day extension it is likely that students might still be impacted by challenges caused by Covid-19 during this time period.
5. Following discussion, it has been agreed that the regulation limiting the volume of split level study that students can undertake will also be suspended temporarily. This has been added to the Emergency Regulations table.
6. It has been agreed that students who need to repeat failed modules in the 2020/21 academic year will be charged at 50% of the module fee. More information will be available on this shortly.

Support and information for staff

A guidance document on marking, moderation and academic misconduct matters whilst face to face activity is suspended can be found [here](https://mynorthamptonac.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/ilt1/EWUcE55o5SpOpCrwID4qfsABl9OM8cDb6GTTNDfdHPJUJQ?e=IFoj6U).

An FAQ document on these Emergency Regulations is under production and will available shortly.

It is noted that students with additional needs and approved reasonable adjustments may be in a more challenging position than other students. [Guidance](https://mynorthamptonac-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/kathryn_kendon_northampton_ac_uk/ERG3nLuZNqZFsBAEl0WGvo8Bl6-6UhRNkiUFBvSJPduoQA) has been produced to support academic staff to ensure that assessment types can be completed by students with additional needs, particularly where these have been adjusted to reflect current remote working arrangements.

Where necessary, and if it is not possible to adjust the assessment for the whole cohort, the guidance should be used to provide an adjusted assessment approach for individual students; this should ensure that they are able to complete the assessment. Colleagues should contact the ASSIST Team for further guidance on this.

A mechanism to allow staff to ask questions or request clarification on these regulations will be available shortly.

Support and information for students

An FAQ document on these Emergency Regulations is under production and will available shortly.

A flowchart documenting the different pathways for students over the coming months can be found [here](https://mynorthamptonac.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/ilt1/EcFjC-blOQdJhleWaeZU95oBRC9LHiir0sGfkolUlrBYHg?e=J6unsM).

A mechanism to allow students to ask questions or request clarification on these regulations will be available shortly.

**Appendix 1: Exceptional Circumstances Process**

* This is where a student still feels unable to attempt assessments due to their specific circumstances, despite the Emergency Regulations put in place and the FORM A/ FORM B adjustments that have been approved.
* Examples may be:
  + Severe health issues caused by Covid-19
  + Disability exacerbated by Covid-19
  + Lack of access to resources
  + Change of circumstances e.g. currently working for the NHS
* Outcome for the student will depend on the student’s circumstances and the volume of Exceptional Circumstances Forms received.
* Will firstly consider whether the exceptional circumstances process is the correct process to be using OR whether:
  + the Emergency Regulations and related documentation (FORM A/FORM B) do in fact deal with the circumstances;
  + a standard study break fits the circumstances (e.g. long term health issues).
* If Exceptional Circumstances is relevant, options could include:
  + Individual study plan
  + Covid-19 Study Break
  + Restart
  + Repeat modules without academic penalty (e.g. no accumulated failure count)
* Students will be asked to submit these by a certain deadline:
  + 31 May for those immediately related to the Covid-19 pandemic.
  + 14 August for those related to other matters
* The form for this can be found [here](https://mynorthamptonac-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/kathryn_kendon_northampton_ac_uk/EXQRqkpApxhMi1A_LKppWKMBAWLzkbsPyipBZvQnUQ3JvA).

**Appendix 2: Covid-19 Study Break**

* Relevant on either a cohort or an individual basis where:
  + Students are working in healthcare settings and their programme/module has been paused due to the pandemic.
  + Students cannot complete the programme/module at present because of the nature of the subject matter and so a cohort pause is the only option.
  + Individual students are still unable to complete due to the impact of Covid-19 on them, after engagement in the Exceptional Circumstances process (see exceptional circumstances process).
  + Individual students are volunteering for the NHS.
* New code will be used (ICALC)
* Regulations around this ICALC Study Break:
  + Time does not count towards the maximum period of registration for a student
  + Does not have to be 12 months long – length to be determined by the circumstances [*NB this is in some part reliant on how SFE plan to adapt their policies and requirements to reflect the pandemic and its impact*]
  + Does not count as a student’s single study break
  + Can be taken whatever stage of study the student is at (e.g. including in the middle of a principal module)
* A process chart has been produced to document this new Study Break code and is available [here](https://mynorthamptonac-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/kathryn_kendon_northampton_ac_uk/EbCwyUoDKgVErLHP-zkS4OoBqWQtXEJKeqXX2nS5cYgMQA).

**Appendix 3: Post-emergency retrieval process**

* For students who progress provisionally subject to completion of outstanding modules. This is only relevant for students where the subject matter of the module was such that it could not be completed this academic year, or where PSRB requirements mean that the Emergency Regulations could not be used to facilitate completion.
* This is not relevant for students who have failed a module. Where this is the case students will be undergoing repeats using the standard approach to repeats (maximum of 140 credits per year).
* For modules in this position, the deadline for retrieval is provisionally set at 18 December 2020 [*NB this is subject to change depending on the ongoing impact of Covid-19*]. This deadline is not applicable where it is placement activity that is outstanding. In such circumstances, individual deadlines will be devised, documented and communicated.
* Module leaders will need to devise a plan for all students in this position in a way that ensures Learning Outcomes can be demonstrated effectively.
* These modules will be considered using the Emergency Regulations, with the exception that the Mitigating Circumstances and Extensions Policies will be re-instigated and we will therefore revert back to two assessment opportunities.
* If a student fails the module after this retrieval period the possibilities for repeating the module would need to be considered – whether students could work to repeat the module in an intensive manner between January and July 2021 or whether a repeat in the 2021/22 academic year would be required (the decision here would depend on how many modules a student had failed and the nature of the subject matter of the module).