

21 April 2020

Dear External Examiner

I am writing to let you know about some changes that we are making to the way in which we organise our assessments and examinations, in light of the coronavirus outbreak, in order to meet the challenges of moving to online assessment. Due to the scale of the changes we will not be asking External Examiners to ratify these changes, as would be our standard practice, however we will be keeping records of all assessment changes. The University's principles and policy for the summer assessment period, have been discussed and agreed among the Education Executive including the Sabbatical Officers of the Students' Guild in Exeter and the Students' Union in Cornwall.

In working out how to organise our summer examination and assessment period this year we have considered several factors and have put the interests of the students first. We want to give them the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned and ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their studies, or graduate with a qualification which they can be proud of, and which will be valued by employers. We aim to be fair to all our students and as flexible as we can, as we wish to take into account the extraordinary and challenging conditions that students are preparing for and taking these assessments in.

All examinations at the University of Exeter will be replaced by open-book remote examinations or coursework assessments, and invigilation will not be possible. *Please note that the assessment arrangements below apply for all colleges apart from the College of Medicine and Health in which clinicians play a part in education, and academic colleagues are now contributing to front-line support of the NHS, and where graduating students may soon be called on to support the fight against Covid-19. All External Examiners involved with these programmes will have been contacted under separate cover by the College of Medicine and Health.*

The University has issued guidelines to departments on how summer examinations and assessments should be organised, but it is up to individual departments and colleges to decide the exact format, taking into account the nature of the modules and the most appropriate way to assess them. They will take one of three forms:

1. An open-book non-invigilated paper that must be completed in a specified 24 hour period in the students' own time. There will be no fixed duration but the expectation is that the paper will take approximately the same length of time as the original planned examination (including adjustment for ILPs).
2. An open-book non-invigilated paper that must be completed in a specified 24 hour period in the students' own time but with a fixed duration. The duration will be adjusted with respect to relevant ILPs.
3. An alternative coursework assessment taken over a number of weeks. The form of coursework will be of a kind with which the student is already familiar, and will be designed so as to be manageable given other time pressures, examinations and assessments.

We also recognise that not everybody will be in a position to take assessments this summer and so are offering all students the chance to defer all of their remaining assessments for this academic year until either

the next assessment window (the late summer referral/deferral period) or to the next academic year, with no evidence required to support this request.

No Detriment Policy

As you may be aware, the University has adopted a no detriment policy that will apply this academic year. Our aim is to ensure the fairness and integrity of the Exeter degree, as well as to support our undergraduate and postgraduate students, through this difficult situation in a way that allows them to progress or be awarded.

We have published the 'no detriment' policy in full online, [here](#). If you have any questions about this policy either before or during the APACs, please let us know and we will ensure these are addressed.

We have set up a series of [FAQs](#) for our students about this policy and our general approach to assessment, which may be useful to review.

Assessment, Progression and Awarding Committees (APACs):

- APACs will still be taking place, but there will be no requirement for physical attendance. All APACs will be completed virtually with further details being conveyed to you once these are arranged.
- The dates of the APACs have changed with these now taking place between 22nd and 30th June. We will be in contact again shortly to confirm specific meeting dates and times.
- If you are unable to attend virtually (for any reason including illness, childcare or own institution commitments) then please let us know as we may be able to provide temporary cover for these APACs.

As I hope you appreciate, this is a fast changing situation and if things change in such a way that we cannot organise the examinations and assessments in this way then we may have to adapt these plans, and we will let you know as soon as possible

We will be in contact again soon with further details of how the APACs will be held but please do not hesitate to contact us at the qualityandstandards@exeter.ac.uk email address if you have any queries or concerns.

I'd like to also take this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for your continued service as External Examiners and the work you do to ensure that the processes for assessment, examination and determination of awards are fairly operated and that we maintain a high-quality academic experience for all our students.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely



Professor Rob Freathy
Academic Dean for Students/ Dean of the Faculty of Taught Programmes