

## Regulations and Policies Update – 2019/20

The following are the regulations and policies that have been updated this year and come into force from academic year 2019/20.

College Regulations and Policies are available on the College webpages:

- [Policies](#)
- [Regulations](#)

For any policy related query please raise a query via ASK: [www.bbk.ac.uk/ask](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/ask)

Updated Regulations and Policies 2019/20:

- Common Awards Scheme Regulations
- Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure
- Wellness Review Policy (formerly Fitness to Study Policy)
- Break in Study Policy
- Marking and Moderation Policy
- Dissertation Supervision Policy
- Assessment Offences
- Peer Review of Teaching Policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedure / Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Criminal Convictions Policy
- College Policy and Guidance on the Role of External Examiners for taught degrees
- College Policy on the Operation of Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners

## Summary Details of Updates

- **Common Awards Scheme Regulations**

- Update to text including;
  - removing instances of 'normally' from the regulations to remove ambiguities.
  - addition of 'Exam Only' and 'Break in Study' for clarity.
  - updated terminology – e.g. University of London International Programmes has been updated to University of London Worldwide.
- Reassessment - Amendment to reassessment clauses (22.1 and 22.3), to clarify that the opportunity to be reassessed is not discretionary and that students who undertake reassessment for an element and fail the reassessment, will retain the higher mark from either the original assessment or reassessment for the purposes of determining the overall module result
- Compensated Fail – change to specify that no compensated fails may be awarded for any modules studied in the Foundation Year (year 0) of a BA/BSc (CAS 24.5).
- Borderline Classifications – removal of the possibility of any consideration of borderline discretion decisions where the weighted average is more than 2.00% from the borderline.
- Classification of Postgraduate Taught Awards – the requirement for Master's students to '*normally achieve a distinction mark in the dissertation in order to be awarded a distinction*' has been removed altogether.

- **Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure**

- The guidance has been removed from the policy and developed as a standalone document with additional information and case studies now incorporated to improve understanding of the policy & support consistency in decision-making.

- **Wellness Review Policy (formerly Fitness to Study Policy)**

- Change to the title of the policy from Fitness to Study to Wellness Review
- Changes in language to ensure that it is clear that the policy is not punitive
- Detail has been added around how temporary breaks of study due to a wellness situation are managed.

- **Break in Study Policy**

- General formatting with headers to aid students and staff to understand the principles of the policy.
- Requirement that all approved breaks in study for longer than 1 term should have an agreed review date for a conversation between the student and member of department staff to discuss their plans to return to study.
- Stipulation that students cannot be registered with another Higher Education institution whilst on a break in study.
- Reference added to ability to slow down intensity of study rather than take a break.

- Amendment to text to provide clarity on fee charging for breaks in study (note: Fees Policy also updated).
- Amendments to provide clarity on the length of breaks in study including;
  - returns from breaks are normally expected at the start of the academic year.
  - breaks are a minimum of 1 term for both taught and research student
  - 1 term breaks are not permitted for taught students where that term has no scheduled teaching.
  - amendment to the current terminology to define the maximum break in study as 6 terms rather than 2 years.
- **Marking and Moderation Policy**
  - Clarification at what level assessment criteria must be formally approved
  - Clarification that anonymous marking is mandatory, except where it is not practically possible and any approval to not mark anonymously must be granted by the relevant sub-board.
  - Clarification that all dissertations will be second marked.
  - Added a definition of the process for the reconciliation of marks where there are difference between markers.
  - Added a definition of an appropriate moderation sample.
  - Removing the example grading criteria from appendix 1 and 2.
- **Dissertation Supervision Policy**
  - Clarification that the expectation that a student is entitled to a minimum of three meetings with their supervisor.
  - Clarification that the student and supervisor should agree, prior to their first meeting, what format supervision meetings will take place.
  - Stating that responsibility for oversight of supervisory support lies with programme directors.
  - Clarification that the parameters for consideration of drafts to be set and made clear to students based on local (programme or departmental) frameworks.
- **Assessment Offences**
  - Policy has been updated to remain in line with Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework;
    - the College's approach to the question of intent have been clarified
    - a definition of contract cheating (essay mills) has been added
    - making it explicit that the diversity of assessment offence panels will be considered when a panel is convened
    - adding scope for companions at Panel Hearings to be professional legal representatives only in exceptional circumstances
  - Joint Programmes and Shared modules – clarification on how assessment offences in the case of Joint Programmes and Shared Modules should be managed.

- Reporting of offences - amendment made in the interest of students so that students will not be disadvantaged unless there is evidence to substantiate an offence with an associated outcome and boards of examiners will not defer any decision on progression or classification.
- Table of Assessment Offences Penalties – an indicative table of assessment offences penalties has been added with types of assessment offence categorised by examination and coursework, and details of associated penalties that should be imposed.
- **Peer Review of Teaching Policy**
  - The frequency of peer observation was updated as follows:
    - Any academic staff may request a peer observation session to support personal development;
    - All new teaching staff to be reviewed in their first year of employment at Birkbeck;
    - Selective auditing should take place at the discretion of the staff in Schools at departmental level.
  - Clarification that module evaluation should be treated as a separate quality assurance process from peer observation.
  - Clarification that reviews should be flexible and not adopt an audit approach.
  - Confirmation that good practise should be shared with the wider academic committees at Birkbeck.
- **Complaints Policy and Procedure / Appeals Policy and Procedure**
  - Minor revisions made to include information regarding confidentiality of data, and data retention.
- **Criminal Convictions Policy**
  - The requirement that students disclose on application a relevant criminal conviction or bind-over that is not spent has been removed. The emphasis is now on liaising with a student or applicant's probation officer or care team, where a student is under probation conditions or a community treatment order, to identify any perceived risk and to assess whether the College can manage that risk.
- **College Policy and Guidance on the Role of External Examiners for taught degrees**
  - Removing the requirement for any assessment constituting 50% or more of the module to be approved by an external examiner, but to retain this requirement for examination papers.
  - Update to the definition of an appropriate external sample by removing the requirement for the sample to include all borderline classifications and all first or distinctions.
- **College Policy on the Operation of Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners**
  - Update to text to reflect current practices and terminology, including;

- Removal of clauses referring to intercollegiate examiners and intercollegiate boards which are no longer required as part of University of London regulations.
- Removal of clauses relating to assessors and assistant examiners, as they are now obsolete role titles and work is carried out by markers.
- Reducing amount of text to outline duties of Secretary and Clerk roles,
- Removal of points 44 and 45 on Joint Sub-boards which do not reflect current/necessary practice.
- Removal of text indicating that Sub-boards and College Boards are annually appointed by College Board and Academic Board respectively
- Reduction of quoracy requirement from two-thirds to half of membership.
- Removal of point 9 on discretion, as this was duplication of borderline regulation in the CAS Regulations

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