

STUDENT EXAMINATION HANDBOOK 2019-2020

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this document is to explain the chief features of the University's assessment system. It should be read in conjunction with the Academic Quality Handbook, Section 4 Examination Conventions, *the Regulations for Modular Initial Degrees*, *the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards and the Regulations for Foundation Degrees*. **In the case of any dispute over the information in this document the information as set out in the Examination Conventions and *Regulations for Modular Initial and Foundation Degrees and Module Taught Postgraduate Awards* shall take precedence.**
2. The more students understand about the assessment system, the more opportunities they have to get the best out of their studies and to perform to the best of their ability. Assessments take many forms, including coursework and examinations. Ignorance of any type of assessment requirements will not be accepted as an excuse for poor or incomplete performance. Students must make sure they familiarise themselves with this information and, if in doubt, **please seek advice from their academic department(s)**. Sources of additional information are listed in the Appendix.
3. Departments are required to have assessment criteria in place which:
 - reflect the aims and objectives of individual study schemes and learning outcomes of modules;
 - make clear the standards necessary to attain particular grades in all pieces of assessed and examined work.

Assessment criteria will vary according to the knowledge and skills being assessed and the format of the assessment itself.

EXAMINATIONS

4. Formal examinations form a significant part of the overall assessment of student performance. Academic Departments and Student Support Services can advise on examination technique where students have concerns about their performance in examinations, and feedback on examination performance can be requested by all students.

TIMING OF EXAMINATIONS

5. Examinations are scheduled as follows:
 - Semester 1 (January)
 - Semester 2 (May/June)
 - Resit Examinations (August)
 - Submission of Masters Dissertations (September)**NB.** *The resit period includes all coursework and examination assessments.*

EXAMINATION TIMETABLES

6. Provisional and Final Examination Timetables are made available on the Web before the Semester 1 and 2 examinations. Students must check the Provisional Timetables for clashes and report any to the Timetable Officer at attstaff@aber.ac.uk immediately. Failure to do so is likely to cause problems as special arrangements will be need to be made, adding to the pressures at an already pressurised time.

Students must **always check the Final Timetable to see if any examinations have been moved.**
MISREADING OF THE TIMETABLE IS NOT A VALID REASON FOR ABSENCE OR LATE ARRIVAL.

7. The Semester 1 and Semester 2 Examination Timetables are worked out on the basis of the modules students are registered for at the start of session, and will take into account any approved changes of module. When students wish to change a module they must use the Change of Registration facility via their on-line student record. Further information on how to do so is available here <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/ug-issues/registration/>. Alternatively, students can complete a Change of Registration Form, available on the web at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/students/ug-issues/registration> , from the academic department or the Academic Registry. All changes must be approved by the appropriate staff in Departments, and students are responsible for gaining the necessary approval before submitting any changes. Module changes must be reported within the first four weeks of each semester. Failure to register correctly may result in timetable clashes and problems when students fail to turn up to examinations in modules they are no longer taking as they will only receive marks for modules on which they are formally registered. Students should therefore check their registration on their Student Record after they have requested a change to their registration and it is imperative that they keep the Academic Registry informed of any further changes.
8. The August Resit Examination Timetable is published on the web for those students who have to take resits in August, whether this is due to failure in some of their modules or because they have missed the Semester assessments because of illness or other special circumstances (students cannot resit a module they have already passed). Students will only receive marks for those modules on which they have registered. They must seek advice from their department if they are unsure of any of their module resit requirements, and to ascertain which assessments they must resit.

EXAMINATION VENUES

9. Seating arrangements for the examinations, which include the examination venue and seat numbers for every paper, will be posted on the Web shortly before the examinations. Students must make sure they turn up at the right place at the right time and occupy a correct seat. Failure to do so will only cause problems and lose them time in the examination room.
10. The August Resit examinations are normally held in Aberystwyth. Exceptionally and by special arrangement they may be held in designated centres overseas, subject to all costs being met by the students concerned. **Holiday or employment commitments over the summer will not be considered justification for absence or a reason for special arrangements to be made on their behalf.** Further information can be found at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/exams//overseas-exams/>.

ABSENCE FROM EXAMINATIONS

11. If students are absent from an examination they must inform their **department(s)** of the reasons for their absence as soon as possible by completing a Special Circumstances form which can be printed

from their Student Record or the web <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/taught-schemes/name-193260-en.html>. This must be submitted to their department, along with original copies of corroborating evidence, at the time they experience problems and before the meetings of examination boards (examination boards are normally held approximately one or two weeks after the examinations have ended, so it is imperative students arrange to submit special circumstances and evidence to their departments as soon as possible – please check with departments to ensure information is submitted in time). If students do not do this, or if the examination board does not accept their explanation, a mark of 0 (zero) for that element will be carried forward to the final mark for that module.

12. Late Arrival at Examinations

If students miss the start of an examination they should proceed to the examination venue as soon as possible. Staff at the venue will advise them on whether they can still sit the paper (if they arrive up to 30 minutes late) or whether they should follow another course of action.

COURSEWORK ASSESSMENT

13. Details of examination and assessment requirements for modules appear on the Module Information page on the Web (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/modules/>). More detail is provided in Departmental Handbooks and on Blackboard. Students should make sure they know what they have to do and keep to deadlines for the submission of assessed work. Failure to do so without special circumstances may result in a mark of zero being given for that piece of assessed work.
14. Deadlines for written work are taken very seriously by the University. Work submitted after the deadline will be awarded a zero. Further details are published in Section 3.3 of the Academic Quality Handbook: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/taught-schemes/>
15. Assessed coursework should be presented in the correct format and by the specified date and time to the designated department. Most coursework will now be submitted electronically, but where this is not possible, departments should advise on the submission requirements. Please allow some extra time to cover last minute problems (for example, problems with computers or minor illnesses such as colds, headaches, etc.) which may result in missing a deadline. Students should ensure that they are familiar with the submission requirements of particular departments and modules, which may differ from department to department, including the requirements for electronic submission. Students will be issued with a formal receipt which should be retained in case of any dispute with the submission.
16. As many students use their coursework for revision purposes, it is advisable they retain a copy in case the work is still being marked at the time they want to revise. In Part Two, all coursework, which contributes towards the final degree assessment, must be made available to the external examiners under arrangements operating in each department.

MARKING

17. In all written examinations students must have their student reference number: this is the nine or ten digit number which appears on their Aber Card. This is so that examinations can be marked anonymously. Students must make sure that they have their number to hand in the examinations. Their name will be linked to their examination scripts only after all marking has been completed, in order to allow for special circumstances (e.g. medical or compassionate grounds) to be taken into account, and to correctly match assessments to the correct student. In case of problems (e.g. failure

to write their examination number on the answer book) they are also asked to write their name on the answer book but to obscure it as instructed.

18. Except where it is impractical to do so, coursework submitted will be marked anonymously. Each department will notify students of the precise arrangements it uses for this.
19. To ensure fairness and consistency all examinations and assessed work are marked in accordance with the University's guidance on marking and moderation.
<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/taught-schemes/name-193247-en.html>.
20. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that answers provided in examination scripts are legible for marking. Where a marker finds a substantial part of an examination script to be illegible, i.e. where reading the text takes an unreasonable amount of time and prevents the opportunity for appropriate consideration, the work will be assessed on the basis of the legible parts only and a mark awarded accordingly. Further information can be found in Section 3.7 of the Academic Quality Handbook:
<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/taught-schemes/>.
21. All work which counts towards a final assessment is monitored by external examiners whose job it is to appraise examination papers and coursework, monitor marking standards, participate in oral examinations (where relevant) and ensure fair treatment for all students. Student work will therefore be examined by a number of staff both internal and external to the University, avoiding the possibility of marker subjectivity or prejudice. Students should not contact external examiners, but seek clarification on assessments via their academic departments, or, if eligible to do so, through the University's appeal procedures after the confirmation of the final module mark.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

22. If students believe that any part of their performance in some or all of their modules may be affected by special circumstances (medical, personal or other compassionate grounds) they must complete a Special Circumstances Form <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/taught-schemes/name-193260-en.html> and forward it to the specified staff in departments along with all relevant supporting evidence at the time they are affected or before the meetings of examination boards (please note that examination boards are normally held approximately one or two weeks after the examinations have ended, so it is imperative students arrange to submit special circumstances and evidence as soon as possible – students must check with their department to ensure they submit information in time). This will ensure that circumstances can be taken into consideration at the appropriate time. The information will be treated confidentially and released only on a 'need to know basis'. Please carefully check your departmental handbook for further detail on submitting special circumstances.

RULES FOR PROGRESSION AND CALCULATION OF DEGREE RESULTS

23. The rules for progression from one year to another and the conventions used to determine degree classes at the end of Honours degree schemes can be found in the Examination Conventions:
<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/exam-conventions/>.

RESULTS

24. Details of the dates on which results will be issued are e-mailed to all students and are published at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/students/ug-issues/>. All results are issued via the on-line 'Student Record' which can be accessed at: <https://studentrecord.aber.ac.uk/en/login.php>. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they access their results immediately after they are released and to take any action that may be necessary. It is also important that students check their University e-mail accounts regularly to ensure receipt of important information relating to their results or studies. If undergraduate students are in any doubt, they should contact the Academic Registry (ugfstaff@aber.ac.uk) or their academic department, but note that results will not be released over the telephone. Postgraduate students should contact pgsstaff@aber.ac.uk.
25. Once results are confirmed by an Examining Board they remain on the student record. **Students cannot resit a module they have already passed in order to achieve a higher mark.** Further information can be found at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/regulations/#regulations>.
26. Students may of course ask their department for more information about their performance in their modules and staff should be able to offer advice, for instance, on the strengths and weaknesses of performance. The University's Principles of Effective Feedback to students are published in Section 3.2.17 of the Academic Quality Handbook: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/taught-schemes/>

RESITS

27. The following guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Examination Conventions, which are published in Section 4 of the Academic Quality Handbook: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/exam-conventions/>
28. The following indicators are used for module marks of less than 40% (50% for M Level modules and postgraduate marks):

R	Resit for full mark (Part One only)
M	Resit for full mark (No fee at Part One)
F	Resit for capped mark (Part Two only, except Year One Foundation Degrees)
H	Resit for full mark (No fee at Part Two only, except Year One Foundation Degrees)
S	Resit for capped mark (No fee at Part Two only, except Year One Foundation Degrees)
T	Resit for capped mark (no fee at Part Two – Level M only and postgraduate marks)
N	No resit allowed (for cases of Unacceptable Academic Practice only)
P	Resit for capped mark (Part One only for cases of Unacceptable Academic Practice)
29. Students may not resit a module for which a pass mark has already been attained.
30. For new undergraduate students starting from September 2018 (Part One 2018/19 and Part Two 2019/20), August resit registration will be automatic. Students who have failed up to 80 credits will resit in August; those failing more than 80 credits will repeat the year.
31. Students starting a full-time Masters Degree or Postgraduate Award FROM September 2018 will register for a 12 month period. They will have a maximum time limit of 3 years from their start date to complete the degree. They may resit a maximum of 60 credits of failed taught modules in the

summer resit assessment period in August in the first year, but may decide to postpone resits of taught modules. These must, however, be taken the following year, either in the semester and/or summer resit assessments in August period. Full Time Masters students who have not passed, or not submitted, the dissertation within the 12 month registration period may submit or resubmit it at any point up to the end of the second year. They would then have a final resit opportunity in the third year.

32. If students do not take resit assessments without good reason they will forfeit an opportunity to redeem their failure.
33. Students repeating the year will normally retain any Unacceptable Academic Practice penalties associated with any credits completed on previous attempts.
34. Where a resit assessment takes place in the following session, arrangements will be made with the Department concerned, however, it is expected that modules will be resat in the semester they were last taught in.
35. There will be no restriction on the number of credits that Foundation Degree students may resit in August.
36. Undergraduate students who started their studies before September 2018 and postgraduate students who started their studies from September 2018 will see from their on-line Student Record whether they are eligible to resit a module during August when they view their results following Semester Two. They will be asked to register on-line for the resits and it is important they indicate their intentions (Yes or No) for all modules which they are eligible to resit. If they fail to register and retake one or more modules any marks obtained will not count. If students are eligible to take one or more resits during the session (normally only final year undergraduate degree students) they will receive an email shortly after the start of session asking them to indicate their intentions from their Student Record. It is important that students ensure they resit sufficient credits, so if they are unsure of anything, they must seek advice from their department(s). If students fail to complete a resit, either in August or during the session, after registering for it, they will forfeit one of their resit opportunities.
37. Note that there are resit fees, but these will normally be waived in the case of students who have M, H, S or T resit indicators. Further information on resits and resit charges can be found at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/students/ug-issues/resits/>. If you fail to complete a resit for which you are registered, either in August or during the session, you will forfeit one of your resit opportunities, and will still be liable to pay any resit fees.

UNACCEPTABLE ACADEMIC PRACTICE

38. Each year some students engage in Unacceptable Academic Practice <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/regulations/uap/>. This is defined by the University as an act whereby a student may obtain an unpermitted advantage, regardless of the intention and the outcome. Any actions that occur in relation to the assessment process may be considered to be unacceptable academic practice, whether occurring in relation to formal examinations, coursework, other forms of assessments, or the presentation of special circumstances to examination boards. **Examples of unacceptable academic practice include plagiarism, collusion in submitted assignments, fabrication of evidence or data, and the introduction of unauthorised materials into formal examinations.** Students who commit unacceptable academic practice will face penalties which reflect the extent and nature of the act.

Further information on unacceptable academic practice in examinations can be found at:
<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/academicregistry/ugissues/Unacceptable-Academic-Practice-in-University-Examinations.pdf>

ACADEMIC APPEALS

39. The University has an appeals procedure for students wishing to appeal against the decision of an examination board. This procedure can be found at:
<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/appeals/>.

Please note that all appeals must be made within 10 working days from the date of the publication of results. Students cannot appeal against their Semester 1 results at the end of the session.

NB: Appeals will only be considered if a student can provide good reasons why the grounds for appeal were not made known to the relevant Examining Board before it made its decision.

INDIVIDUAL EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

40. Students with individual requirements should read the guidance entitled “Exams & Assessments” which can be found at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support/current-students/exams-assessments/>.
41. Students who are unable to take examinations due to special circumstances such as temporary injuries/short term ill health are usually expected to resit in August. Other arrangements will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances, subject to the provision of appropriate medical evidence. Where requests are received five term time weeks before the student’s examination the University will endeavour to make adjustments subject to the nature of the request and the practical considerations of implementation. Adjustments must be both reasonable and practical to implement within the time available. It will not normally be possible for the University to implement requests received fewer than seven working days before the examination. For further guidance please e-mail disability@aber.ac.uk.

PAST PAPERS

42. Past examination papers are available at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/past-papers/> . These should give students an idea of the type of question set in the past. Students are advised not to attempt to ‘question spot’. Students need to be prepared for any question asked and are unlikely to be able to identify the particular questions they will face. Many departments run special examination seminars to address student concerns and clarify departmental requirements. Please attend them where they are offered.
43. Please remember: we want students to perform to the best of their ability, but we expect them to be responsible for their studies and to keep their department informed. If students have problems, they will find staff approachable, but in fairness to everybody, their success lies ultimately in their own hands and depends on the way they work and respond to the challenges laid before them.

Appendix

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

Academic Registry – deals with Exclusions, Appeals, Unfair Practice and central University requirements.
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-quality-records-office/>

Module Database – www.aber.ac.uk/modules (see also Blackboard)

Scheme Database – www.aber.ac.uk/en/study-schemes/

Programme Specification Database - www.aber.ac.uk/en/programme-specs/

Departmental Handbooks – <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/departments/> - see departmental web pages

Academic Regulation on Academic Progress

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/regulations/academic-progress/>

Appeals Procedure for Taught Schemes

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/regulations/appeals/>

Unacceptable Academic Practice

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/regulations/uap/>

Special Circumstances Form

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/handbook/taught-schemes/name-193260-en.html>

Change of Registration

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/agro/students/ug-issues/registration>

Withdrawal Procedure

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/ug-issues/other-info/withdrawal/>

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