UCQ UNIVERSITY CENTRE QUAYSIDE

The Open University

Regulations for validated awards of The Open University

Effective from 1st September 2025

Revised September 2025

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INTRODUCTION

These Regulations apply to all new student cohorts on approved registerable modules (from 1st September 2024) and programmes leading to an Open University (OU) validated award with effect from 1st September 2015 (or earlier if deemed appropriate by the Partner institution and the OU). The Open University is the awarding body and the credit and qualifications awarded are OU credit and qualifications. However, the programmes of study are developed and delivered by Partner Institutions. The Open University and its Partner Institutions have a formal relationship underpinned by the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024) which sets out expectations for academic standards, academic quality and information about higher education provision, and expectations of The Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration the Universities' primary regulator in England. The OfS publishes their expectations for Higher Education Institutions registered in England, and these expectations extend to any institution working in partnership with the OU.

For students registered before 1st September 2015, the regulations under which they originally registered will continue to apply.

For individual students who are either returning to their programme of study after an approved break from their studies or are transferring to a new or different programme, the regulations of the cohort to which they are returning, will apply.

These Regulations will be referenced in the documentation for each validated programme of study or single registerable module, together with any specific requirements from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies and/or local legislation (for non-UK Partner institutions), as agreed in the validation process for the programme.

In addition to these regulations each programme of study or single registerable module will have a relevant Handbook containing procedures and requirements that are specific to that provision.

GLOSSARY

Terminology	Definition
Apprenticeships students	An apprentice is a student aged 16 or over, who must be in paid employment for the duration of their apprenticeship and will combine working with studying for a work-based, academic or combined qualification.
Assessment component	An individual piece of work or a collection of pieces of work that forms a summative assessment.
Assessment element	An assessment element is a piece of work that contributes to an assessment component.
Award	Open University qualification conferred to a student following the successful completion of an approved programme of study.
Compensation	A means of allowing marginal failure in a limited number of modules, within a programme of study, on the basis of an overall performance which is sufficient to merit the award of the qualification concerned. Compensation can be applied to the results of a student who has failed to attain the required pass mark at undergraduate level. This is not available on single registerable modules.
Co-requisite module	A co-requisite module must be studied simultaneously with, or before, another designated module within a programme of study.
Credit	A means of quantifying and recognising learning, expressed as ‘numbers of credits’ at a specific credit level. Within this document it is assumed that one credit represents 10 notional hours of learning (including individual study).

Terminology	Definition
Credit level	An indicator of the relative complexity, depth and autonomy of learning associated with a particular module (used in credit frameworks).
Degree Apprenticeship/Higher Degree Apprenticeship	Higher and degree apprenticeships are available at levels 4 to 7. They combine work with study and may include a work-based, academic or combined qualification or a professional qualification relevant to the industry. Higher apprenticeships go from level 4 to 7 and are equivalent to a foundation degree and above e.g. a professional qualification. Degree apprenticeships are available at levels 6 and 7 (full bachelor's and Masters).
Direct Entry	Exemption to stage of a programme without award of OU credit). Direct entry via stage exemption allows an applicant into Open University validated awards at level 5 or 6 of an undergraduate qualification on the basis of completion of an appropriate certificated qualification from a recognised UK HE programme of study.
Exit award	A lower award than one for which the student is registered. Such an award may be conferred if a student completes part of, but not all, of the requirements of the programme for which he or she is registered.
Learning outcome	What a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completing a defined element of study. Learning outcomes features within the programme specification must align with module descriptors.
(The) Office for Students	The *Office for Students* (*OfS*) is the independent regulator of higher education in England.

Terminology	Definition
Module	A self-contained, formally structured, credit-bearing unit of study with explicit learning outcomes. (Some institutions use the word 'course' to refer to individual modules.) Modules may combine to make up a full programme of study or may be available for registration as a stand-alone unit of study (see Single Registerable Module below).
Module specification	A document that defines key characteristics of a module, and includes learning outcomes, models of teaching and learning, and assessment schemes.
Partnership Development and Approval Process	The process through which an institution is judged to be a satisfactory environment for the presentation of programmes leading to The Open University validated awards. Approval is conferred for a period of up to five years.
Partner institution	An institution approved by The Open University for the delivery of validated provision that leads to Open University credit or awards.
Partnership Reapproval Process	The process through which an institution is critically reviewed for the purposes of confirming that it continues to meet The Open University's requirements. Reapproval is conferred for a further period of up to five years.
Pre-requisite module	A pre-requisite module is one that must be successfully completed before progressing to another designated module or stage within a programme of study.
Programme	A schedule of academic study and assessment which leads to an Open University award.
Programme specification	A document that defines key characteristics of an award, including learning outcomes, models of teaching and learning,

Terminology	Definition
	assessment schemes, and how individual modules relate to qualification levels and contribute to the classification of awards.
Progression	The advancement (or progress) by a student from one stage of a programme to an adjacent higher stage. Such progression is the subject of regulations of the University and must be confirmed at a meeting of the Board of Examiners.
Qualification level	One of a series of defined points in the Further and Higher Education Qualification Framework (or Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework in Scotland). They are numbered in ascending order. Qualifications at the same qualification level share characteristics and require similar achievement.
Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)	The Quality Assurance Agency is the UK higher education sector's independent expert quality body. The Open University complies with the codes of practice defined by the QAA and utilises a range of their guidance including subject benchmarks statements, degree and Masters characteristics statements etc.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Assessment of prior learning that has occurred in any of a range of contexts including school, college and university, and/or through life and work experiences. Once recognised through this process, prior learning can be used to gain credit or exemption for qualifications and/or personal and career development. RPL includes Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL), Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL).
Resit	To take again part or all failed assessments component in order to pass a module. Resit of the failed component does not require the student to participate in classes.
Retake	To take all assessments components of a module again, having failed a resit attempt. Retake of the failed component may

Terminology	Definition
	require the student to participate in classes to prepare them for the second attempt.
Single Registerable Module	A module (see above) that is available to be studied for credit without registering onto a full programme of study. These must be part of a validated programme. All single registerable modules must be a minimum of 10 credits.
Stage	A stage of an undergraduate programme is a collection of study consisting of a total of 120 credits. In full-time programmes of study, a stage is equivalent to one year of study. Stages are usually commensurate with a credit level.
Validation	The formal process whereby a new programme of study, which may include single registerable module(s), is critically appraised by The Open University, in order to establish that it meets the requirements for approval. Approval of validated provision is for a period of up to five years before a further validation (re-validation) is required. Within this document references to the validation process also include the revalidation process.
Validated Provision	An umbrella term which refers to any programme of study or single registerable modules that are validated by The Open University.

A. FRAMEWORK OF AWARDS

1.0 General

1.1 The Open University validated provision is defined with reference either to the Further and Higher Education Qualification frameworks of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) or to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), but not to both.

1.2 Each national qualifications framework provides a set of learning outcomes and skills expected of the holders of Open University validated provision.

2.0 Credit

2.1 The Open University uses a UK credit-based system for its validated provision, and it defines these awards primarily in terms of the qualification level and volume of credit required for each.

2.2 The main determinant for the volume of UK credit is notional learning time. This is defined as the reasonable measure of time it would take a student to achieve the learning outcomes of the activities. Total notional student learning time includes all activities required to achieve the learning outcomes of a programme, including formal study, assessment, and independent learning.

2.3 Notional learning time for a ‘standard’ full-time academic year is 1200 hours at undergraduate qualification level and 1800 hours at postgraduate qualification level. These are intended as benchmarks only, and the actual time students take to achieve the required outcomes may be shorter or longer depending on the knowledge and skills of students at entry and on their rate of progression through the programme, and the impact of any reasonable adjustments made for students with impairments.

2.4 A UK credit value is twice its European Credit Transfer (ECTS) equivalent (e.g. a 20 UK credit module equates to 10 ECTS credits).

2.5 Each module will be assigned a single designated credit level (module assessment is unique to a given credit level). The volume and level of credit assigned to any one

module is determined and approved by The Open University at the point of validation.

2.6 The assignment of credit to learning should be understood in the following terms:

(a) Credit is allocated to a learning activity on the basis of its stated learning outcomes.

(b) A student will only be assigned credit after demonstration through assessment of the achievement of the stated learning outcomes. Credit cannot be assigned if no assessment has taken place or if the assessment has not been appropriately conducted.

(c) The number of credit points assigned is independent of the standards (grades awarded). Students achieving higher standards will not be allocated more credit points. The higher standard will be reflected in the grade and classification of the pass.

3.0 Validated Awards offered by The Open University

3.1 The Open University confers the following Validated Awards although Partner institutions do not necessarily offer programmes leading to all of these awards.

Award title	FHEQ Qualification level	Overall number of credits required	Levels of credit required
Professional Certificate	4	60	60 at any UG level
Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	4	120	120 at level 4
Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)	5	240	120 at level 5 120 at level 4
Foundation degree (FD)	5	240	120 at level 5 120 at level 4
Ordinary Bachelor's degree (BA, BSc, BEd, BEng) [*Exit Award only*]	6	300	60 at level 6 120 at level 5 120 at level 4

Award title	FHEQ Qualification level	Overall number of credits required	Levels of credit required
Bachelor's degree with honours (BA(Hons), BSc(Hons), BEd, BEng, BBA, LLB (Hons)[1])	6	360	120 at level 6 120 at level 5 120 at level 4
Bachelor of Music (BMus)*	6	480	At least 120 at Level 6 No more than 120 at Level 4 Remaining credits at Levels 5 or 6
Bachelor of Osteopathy (BOst)	6	480	At least 240 at Level 6 No more than 120 at Level 4 Remaining credits at Levels 5 or 6
Graduate Certificate (Grad Cert)	6	60	60 at level 6
Graduate Diploma (Grad Dip)	6	120	120 at level 6

[1] *Bachelor's degree titles of BEd and BEd (Hons) are reserved for programmes of teacher education. Initial or pre-service BEd programmes include a substantial element of teaching practice, and the normal credits of such a BEd programme will be 480. The In-service BEd is designed for students who are already qualified and experienced teachers holding a Certificate in Education or equivalent qualification. Minimum credits: 180*

* *These awards have variance in structure and numbers of credits across the sector, as a result the above acts as a guideline on the number of credits which need to be included within the award.*

Award title	FHEQ Qualification level	Overall number of credits required	Levels of credit required
Professional Graduate Certificate of Education	6	120	A validated PGCE provision may have only 60 credits at FHEQ level 6, with 60 credits at a lower level. This meets the National Qualifications Framework for this type of qualification and validation is therefore permitted by the University for such qualifications.
Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)	7	60	60 at level 7
Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)	7	120	Min 90 at level 7 Max 30 at level 6

Award title	FHEQ Qualification level	Overall number of credits required	Levels of credit required
Masters degree (MA, MSc, MArch, MBA, MTh, MfA[2*] MDes[3*])	7	180	Min 150 at level 7 Max 30 at level 6
Integrated Masters Degree[#] (e.g. MEng)	7	480	See footnote #

3.2 Students must meet all requirements set out in the programme specification approved by The Open University before a qualification is awarded.

Titles and characteristics of Programmes

A title will be given to an approved programme leading to any taught award and will not be changed without reference to The Open University.

The title will accord with the normal expectations of higher education bodies, relevant professional bodies, students and employers about the level of knowledge and skills to be expected from a person holding such a qualification.

The University recognises four types of honours degrees in named subjects:

A. Subject or field of study degree, for example, BA (Hons)/BSc (Hons) or MA/MSc in Psychology.

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[*] *These awards have variance in structure and numbers of credits across the sector, as a result the above acts as a guideline on the number of credits which need to be included within the award.*

[*] *As above*

[#] *These awards have variance in structure and number of credits depending on the award. MEng – min 120 credits at L7, min 120 credits at L6, no more than 120 credits at L4 and the remaining credits at L5 or 6.*

B. Major subject or field of study, with a specialist minor (where the minor subject is part of the broad-based field of study that is the major subject of the degree), for example, BA (Hons)/BSc (Hons) or MA/MSc Humanities (Music).
C. Major subject or field of study with a supplementary minor honours subject (where the minor subject is not part of the field of study which is the major subject of the degree), for example, BA (Hons)/BSc (Hons) or MA/MSc Computing with Psychological Studies.
D. Joint degrees in two approximately equally weighted subjects or fields of study, for example, BSc (Hons)/BA (Hons) or MSc/MA Philosophy and Psychological Studies.

The Open University's recommended practice for the programme titles that will appear on certificates is that simple, single-subject titles should be used whenever possible.

Where students study more than one subject, up to three separate fields of study may be identified in the title with or without the addition of 'combined studies'.

Where awards include named pathways, the University recommends a minimum requirement of 25% subject specific credits.

B. ADMISSIONS

Students registering for programmes leading to awards of The Open University must have satisfied the admissions criteria approved by The Open University at validation.

4.0 Admissions policy and procedure

Policy statement

University Centre Quayside (UCQ) aims to ensure equality of opportunity for applicants and for all students in teaching, learning and assessment. We strive to create and maintain a diverse community of students, employers and staff by encouraging access and participation.

UCQ does not accept admission applications through UCAS.

The initial eligibility benchmarks for Apprenticeship Standards is underpinned by the Department for Education (DfE) apprenticeship funding rules.

UCQ operates a procedure whereby a student can claim academic credit for relevant previous study or learning experiences, known as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The RPL Policy (AD-006) can be found on the UCQ website at https://ucq.ac.uk/policies/

Non-apprenticeship higher education applicants should refer to AD-002 Admissions Policy: Non-apprenticeship HE Programmes, available at https://ucq.ac.uk/policies/

Equality and diversity

UCQ is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, where all members of its community, including those that seek to apply to UCQ, are treated with respect and dignity. UCQ aim to create a culture of diversity within our community, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution and individuality.

UCQ are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of:

- age
- disability
- gender re-assignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race

- religion or belief
- Sex and sexual orientation

UCQ's Equality and Diversity Policy is applicable to all applicants, students and staff, the full policy can be found at https://ucq.ac.uk/policies/

Safeguarding and Prevent
UCQ's safeguarding and Prevent policies, including the Sexual Misconduct Policy, are applicable to all applicants, students and staff. These policies, along with the Equality and Diversity Policy, can be found at https://ucq.ac.uk/policies/

Apprenticeship eligibility criteria
UCQ will at all times seek to operate admissions onto the apprenticeship programme in accordance with the DfE Apprenticeship Funding Rules; this Admissions Policy should be read alongside the full DfE funding rules.

To be eligible, the individual must:

- Start their apprenticeship after the last Friday in June of the school academic year in which they have their 16th birthday;
- Be able to complete the apprenticeship within the time they have available, including end-point assessment;
- Not be asked to contribute financially to the cost of training, on-programme or end-point assessment. This includes both where the individual has completed the apprenticeship successfully and has left the programme early. Costs include any co-investment or additional training and assessment costs, above the funding band, that the employer has paid directly to the main provider where this is part of the agreed apprenticeship;
- Not use a student loan to pay for their apprenticeship. Where an individual transfers to an apprenticeship from a full-time further education or higher education course, and that course has been funded by a student loan, the loan must be terminated by the individual and UCQ must be satisfied that this has occurred;
- Not benefit from funding for any part of their apprenticeship that duplicates training or assessment they have received from any other source.
- Not benefit from funding for any part of their programme that duplicates training or assessment they have received from any other source;

- Spend at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship. This also applies to remote and hybrid working. For working hours to be counted in the 50% limit, they must be regular, planned, and known at the start of the apprenticeship;
- Have the right to work in England;
- Have an eligible residency status (information can be found in the residency eligibility section in Annex A of the DfE funding rules 2025/2026).

For full eligibility criteria please refer to the DfE Apprenticeship Funding Rules .

Employment
Unless the apprentice is on an alternative English apprenticeship, they must be employed and working under a contract of employment that is long enough for the apprentice to complete the apprenticeship, including end-point assessment.

The apprentice must be included in the PAYE scheme of the employer declared in the apprenticeship service account.

If the apprentice has more than one employer at any time (e.g. two part-time job roles), then only one of these employers can be used for the purposes of the apprenticeship. This is so it is clear who is undertaking the role of ‘employer’, as defined by the funding rules.

The minimum duration of each apprenticeship is based on the apprentice working at least 30 hours per week, including any off-the-job training they undertake. Working fewer than 30 hours per week or having a zero-hours contract must not be a barrier to successfully completing an apprenticeship

All full-time apprentices (those that work 30 hours per week or more) must spend, as a minimum, an average of 6 hours per week, over the planned duration of the practical period, on off-the-job training. This training is received during the individual’s normal working hours, for the purpose of achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship.

In all instances, the apprentice must be starting a new job role or in an existing and suitable job role, where they require significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

For full employment eligibility criteria please refer to the DfE Apprenticeship Funding Rules

Prior qualifications

An apprentice can undertake an apprenticeship at the same, or at a higher or lower level than a qualification they already hold, if the apprenticeship will allow the individual to acquire substantive new skills and the content of the training is materially different from any prior qualification or previous apprenticeship.

An assessment of the applicant's prior learning will be undertaken prior to commencement of the programme. Please refer to the UCQ Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy (AD-006) for further information: https://ucq.ac.uk/policies/

For full prior qualification eligibility criteria please refer to the DfE Apprenticeship Funding Rules for the current academic year.

English and maths

Apprentices who began their apprenticeship training when aged 16-18 will be subject to the mandatory requirement to study towards and achieve English and maths. Apprentices who began their apprenticeship training when aged 19+ will no longer be subject to the mandatory requirement to study towards and achieve English and maths.

For apprentices aged 19+, the apprentice or their employer can still choose for the apprentice to study towards an approved level 2 qualification in English and maths where they do not already hold a suitable equivalent qualification and they and their employer choose to complete it as part of the training plan.

Where an apprentice is not required to undertake English and/or maths qualifications, they must engage with UCQ to receive appropriate support where identified through initial assessment.

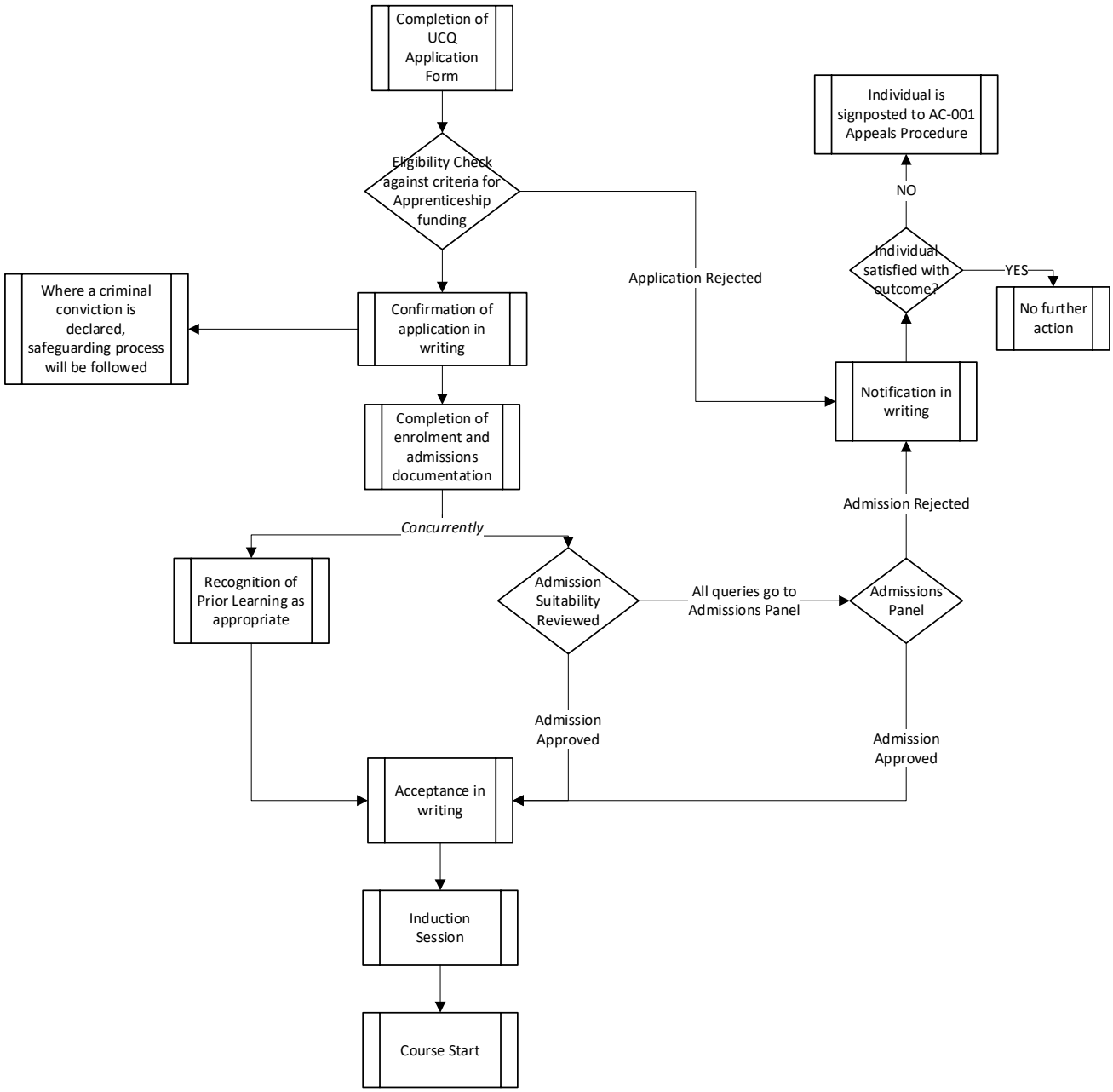
Apprentices who undertake English and maths functional skills during their programme will be given one year to achieve the qualification/s.

Further information

Eligibility for the apprenticeship programme is based upon the DfE apprenticeship funding rules that are in force on the apprenticeship start date. The eligibility rules at the point of start will continue to be in effect for the duration of the apprenticeship even if the rules subsequently change.

For further information or clarity on the eligibility criteria for Apprenticeship Standards please refer to the suite of documents within the DfE Apprenticeship Funding Rules.

Admissions process



Application

There are no opening or closing dates for applications as courses commence throughout the year.

Course start dates:

September - October

January - February

May - June

The applicant must complete an application form (available upon request from admissions@ucq.ac.uk). The applicant will also be required to complete BKSB numeracy and literacy initial assessments. These initial assessments are separate to the English and maths components that form part of the apprenticeship Standard detailed in section 3.4.

To maintain UCQ's safeguarding arrangements, all applicants must declare on their application forms whether they have any unspent criminal convictions. If this is declared, the applicant will receive SA-004 Applicant Letter for Conviction Disclosure and QD OPS 005 Disclosure of Unspent Criminal Offences Form for completion. The completed form will be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for review and subsequent action where required.

The completed and signed documentation must be returned to UCQ and confirmation of receipt will be provided within two working days. The HE Admissions Manager can be contacted on 03330048470 or admissions@ucq.ac.uk for further questions regarding the application process. The application form and tests should be completed in full. If this is not the case these will be returned to the applicant for completion.

The HE Admissions Manager will assess the initial eligibility of the applicant against the DfE apprenticeship funding rules for the relevant academic year.

NB: Applications cannot be processed unless an application form is completed in full and within the timescales provided.

Suitability check

If all initial eligibility criteria has been met, the applicant will be asked to submit suitability information to support their application. The suitability check is designed to:

- Establish a sound understanding of the prior attainment, experience, and existing skills, knowledge and behaviours of the apprentice
- Understand any difficulties or barriers that may challenge full engagement in learning and timely achievement of the target standard, so that relevant support plans can be put in place.
- Establish whether the apprenticeship is an appropriate programme for the individual; and to ensure that the target programme will provide for the development of substantial skills, knowledge and behaviours (i.e. there will be 'distance travelled' in learning)
- Inform the creation of the Individual Learning Plan which ensures that training already undertaken is not repeated
- Inform any related fees for the programme
- Inform the information, advice and guidance provided to individuals (and their employer) where it is found that the target apprenticeship is not appropriate for them.

The assessment may include a review of:

- Career aspirations and suitability
- Functional skills requirements
- Learning difficulties
- Potential barriers to learning
- Personal behaviours and effectiveness
- RPL
- Qualifications and achievements
- Job role, experience and contract
- Employer arrangements and support

Additional work

Where UCQ receives more eligible applications than places they are able to accommodate, all eligible applicants will be asked to carry out an additional piece of work such as a research activity. Prior to commencement of the research activity, the applicant will be provided clear marking criteria. All marking will be undertaken by a member of the Academic Programme Team.

Review and decisions

The Admissions Team will review the application in a way that is consistent with UCQ's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (GP-001). The application will also be reviewed against the DfE Apprenticeship Funding Rules. These strict eligibility criteria must be adhered to and UCQ will be unable to admit applicants that exceed their allocated offer numbers (where provided by the Employer).

Offers

All applicants shall be contacted by UCQ within 20 working days of their finalised application being received; this includes completed suitability checks and RPL documentation where applicable. If successful, a Letter of Acceptance will be sent to the applicant or provided in person by a UCQ representative.

All successful applicants will be required to attend a formal induction session prior to their official start date. A member of the Programme Team will be present at this session to provide all necessary information, advice and guidance (IAG).

Unsuccessful applications

Should an application be unsuccessful the applicant will be notified in writing explaining the outcome in general terms. If the applicant is not satisfied with this response they may appeal the decision through the Appeals Procedure (AC-001). This procedure is available from the UCQ website https://ucq.ac.uk/policies/

Questions and additional feedback

Further information about UCQ can be found at www.ucq.ac.uk

Additional questions or feedback can be emailed to admissions@ucq.ac.uk

4.1 This policy should also be read in conjunction with guidance contained in section 22 covering the Recognition of Prior Learning.

5.0 Appeals and complaints regarding the admissions process

5.1 Appeals against a decision not to admit an applicant to study for Open University validated provision are restricted to those that cite irregularity in the decision-making process (for example, failure to make a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability). The process for arbitrating such appeals is that which has been approved at Partnership Development Approval Process/ Partner Reapproval Process. Such appeals must be initiated within four weeks of the date of the original decision.

Admission appeals

The appeals procedure for admissions is intended to provide a formal means for reviewing a decision made on an applicant's admission into University Centre Quayside. The Academic Council may consider all applications to intervene or alter the admissions decision where it is felt that the workings or procedures contravene the principles of natural justice, reasonableness or fairness, when applied to the specific case referred to in the application.

Principles

The privacy and confidentiality of the applicant will be respected, and the disclosure of information provided by an applicant in the course of an appeal will be restricted to those individual officers directly involved in consideration of the appeal. The appeal will be considered in accordance with UCQ's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Grounds for admission appeals

An applicant may submit an appeal regarding an admission decision to the Academic Council based on at least one of the following grounds:

There has been an irregularity in the conduct of the selection, which was material enough to affect the outcome of the application

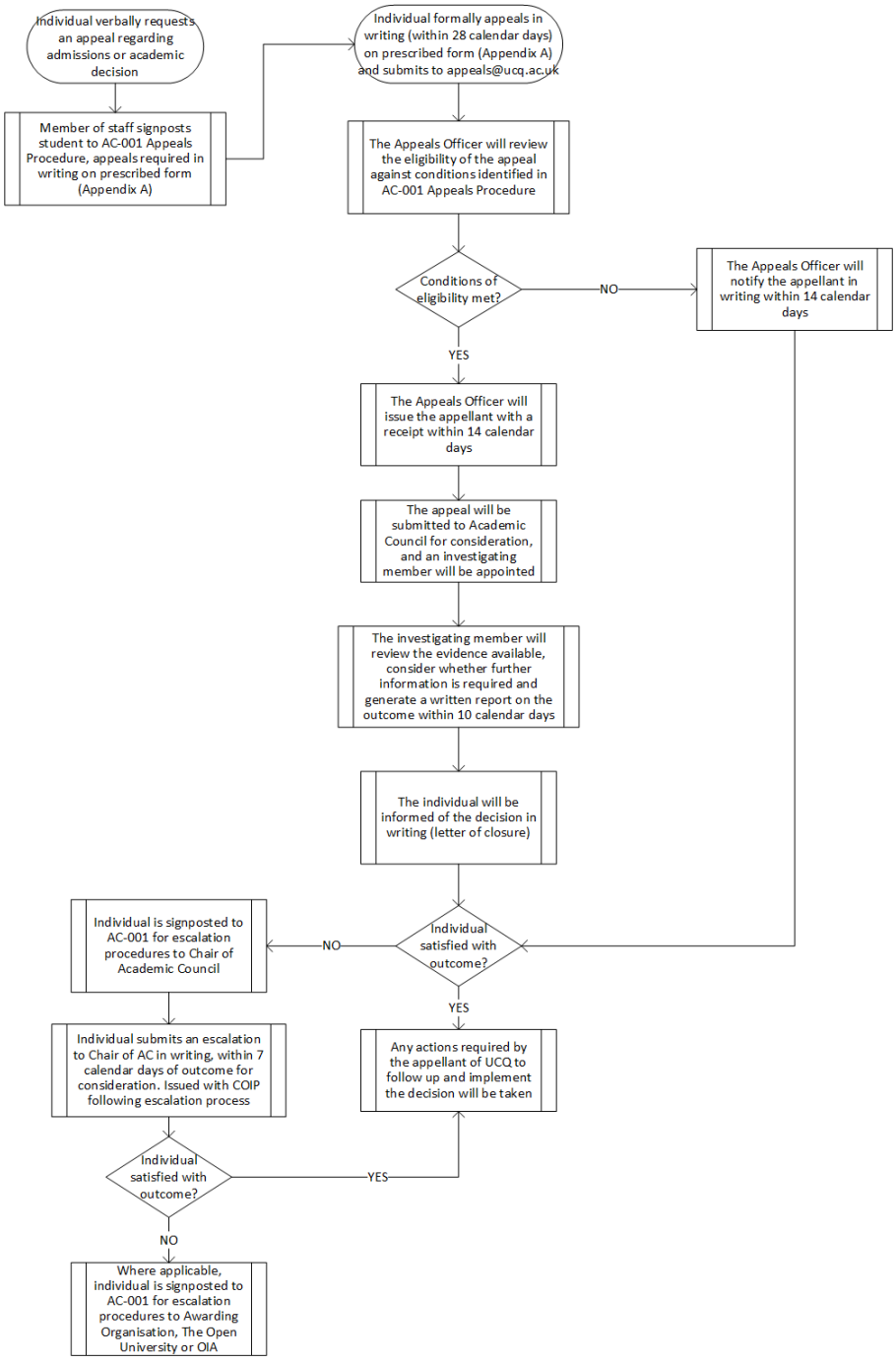
If an applicant believes there was an irregularity in the processing of the admissions application, which may have affected the outcome of the admissions decision

If the decision has been made not to support the application on UKVI academic progression grounds and the applicant believes that the decision would be affected by additional information that was not available at the time of the initial decision

Deadlines for all appeals

An appeal must be lodged within 28 calendar days of the decision of the relevant authoritative body the appeal relates to. An appeal lodged out of time will only be considered where the appellant is able to prove to the satisfaction of the Academic Council that he or she was mentally or physically incapable of lodging an appeal within the prescribed time limit.

Appeals process



Lodging an appeal

Procedure

For an appeal to be formally considered by the Academic Council the appeal must be made, in writing, on the prescribed form (appendix A) and submitted to the Appeals Officer (appeals@ucq.ac.uk). The information provided must include:

- the appellant's full name, student number (where applicable) and signature
- the result or decision for which the appeal is made
- the ground(s) of appeal
- evidence in support of the appeal
- list of any other person(s) who has (have) relevant information

Evidence

It is important that the appellant submits evidence to support their appeal. It is the appellant's responsibility to obtain the required evidence. UCQ will not contact doctors or others on the appellant's behalf. Evidence must be new and not already submitted and considered by the Board of Examiners or other formal body or department. The evidence must be objective and authoritative and if not provided in English, a certified English translation must be provided at the time of submission.

Initial review

The Appeals Officer or nominee from the Academic Council will issue the appellant with a receipt (either electronic or printed) within 14 calendar days of the written application for appeal being submitted by the appellant. Should the appeal not meet the conditions of eligibility as set out below, the appellant will be notified in writing, along with their receipt.

Conditions of appeal eligibility

To meet the threshold conditions for an eligible appeal, the appeal must:

- have been made in writing on the appropriate form, and bear all of the information requested on the form
- identify the grounds of appeal
- have been received within the identified time limit
- have evidence and grounds which are reasonably arguable

Formal consideration of the appeal

Should the appeal meet the conditions of eligibility, and there be grounds for an appeal, it will be submitted to the Academic Council for consideration. The Academic Council will appoint an investigating member, who has no conflict of interest with the appeal, who will review the evidence available, consider whether further information is required and generate a written report of the outcome.

The investigating member must reach a decision within 10 calendar days .

Outcome

The Academic Council member shall find either:

- that the appeal be dismissed, and the consequent action be implemented/processed as normal; or
- uphold the appeal, in whole or in part, and stipulate specific actions to be taken

Action following appeal procedure

The appellant will be sent a letter of closure setting out the decision that has been made and the reasons for reaching that decision, together with any actions required by the appellant or UCQ to follow up and implement that decision. The letter of closure will also include details of any further right of appeal available if they remain dissatisfied with the final outcome of the institution's procedures. This will include, where applicable, the right to appeal to The Open University.

Escalation within UCQ

Should the appellant consider that their appeal has not been properly investigated they may escalate to the Chair of Academic Council to review their appeal. The appellant must submit, in writing, the grounds on which the appeal should be reviewed and the resolution that the appellant seeks. This review will only be considered further by Academic Council where:

- the request for review has been received by the Chair of Academic Council within 7 calendar days of the notification of the outcome of the appeal; and
- there were procedural irregularities in the investigation; or

- new evidence can be presented which could not reasonably have been available to the investigator of the appeal

The appellant will be notified of the outcome in writing within 7 calendar days of escalation. UCQ will issue a Completion of Internal Procedures (COIP) letter to the appellant following the completion of this final internal stage.

This will be the final route of escalation within UCQ. Therefore, if the appellant remains unhappy after following the internal appeals procedure, the appellant must follow the process in sections 13 to 15.

Academic or admissions: Appeals to the Open University

For those studying on the BA (Hons) Professional Management, the Awarding Organisation is The Open University. There shall be a final right of appeal to The Open University against a decision of the Academic Council only if the appeal meets the following criteria:

- the appeal relates only to a programme that has been validated by the Open University;
- all appropriate internal procedures at UCQ have been exhausted;
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that UCQ's internal procedures and regulations for dealing with appeals were not implemented correctly or fairly.

For academic appeals, the final right of appeal to the Open University must also relate to either:

- progression from one stage of the programme to the next; or
- a final award;

After UCQ has issued the COIP letter, the appellant will have 28 calendar days to submit a request for a review at The Open University.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

UCQ subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of higher education student complaints. Once UCQ's internal procedures have been exhausted and the appellant remains dissatisfied after escalating their case to The Open University, they may be able to apply for a review of the appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), providing that the appeal is eligible under its Rules.

This Appeals Procedure aligns to the good practice framework as published by the OIA in December 2022.

Complaints Procedure

Context

This complaints procedure outlines University Centre Quayside's (UCQ) process for investigating and acting upon complaints. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more stakeholders about something UCQ has done or not done, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of UCQ.

Principles

UCQ considers complaints as important feedback and complainants will not suffer any disadvantage as a consequence of lodging a formal complaint. UCQ will seek to act on complaints in a timely manner and do so impartially, confidentially and objectively.

All complaints shall be recorded, together with the actions and timescales taken to resolve the complaint.

Help and advice

Stakeholders can obtain this procedure in alternative formats and seek help, advice and guidance on making a complaint by emailing enquiries@ucq.ac.uk.

Informal complaints

If a stakeholder has cause to complain about any aspect of their experience with UCQ, they should bring notice of their dissatisfaction to the attention of staff working in the area in which the service failure occurred. This should be done as soon as possible and no more than 28 calendar days after the event.

Contact can be made face to face, online or over the telephone.

The complainant should explain their reason(s) for dissatisfaction, providing evidence where appropriate and suggesting what they feel UCQ could do to put the matter right.

UCQ will respond, via email or letter, within 14 calendar days.

If the complainant does not feel that reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the matter, or they have not received a response from UCQ within 14 calendar days of raising their informal complaint, they may invoke the formal stage of this complaints procedure.

Formal complaints

The formal complaints procedure is based on the expectation that all reasonable efforts have already been made to deal with the grievance prior to reaching the stage of a formal complaint. As such, the informal complaints procedure (section 4) should be followed prior to lodging a formal complaint.

Lodging a formal complaint

Formal complaints must be lodged within 28 calendar days of receiving the outcome of the informal complaint.

The complainant must:

- Explain why the outcome of the informal stage has not resolved the complaint
- Set out what they believe UCQ could reasonably be expected to do to resolve the complaint
- Submit any new evidence which has not previously been submitted in support of their complaint

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Complaints Officer (complaints@ucq.ac.uk) who will:

- Acknowledge receipt and log the complaint within 1 working day
- Forward the complaint to the appropriate member of the Academic Council for investigation
- Monitor that the complaint has been responded to within the timeframes set in this procedure

Investigating Academic Council member

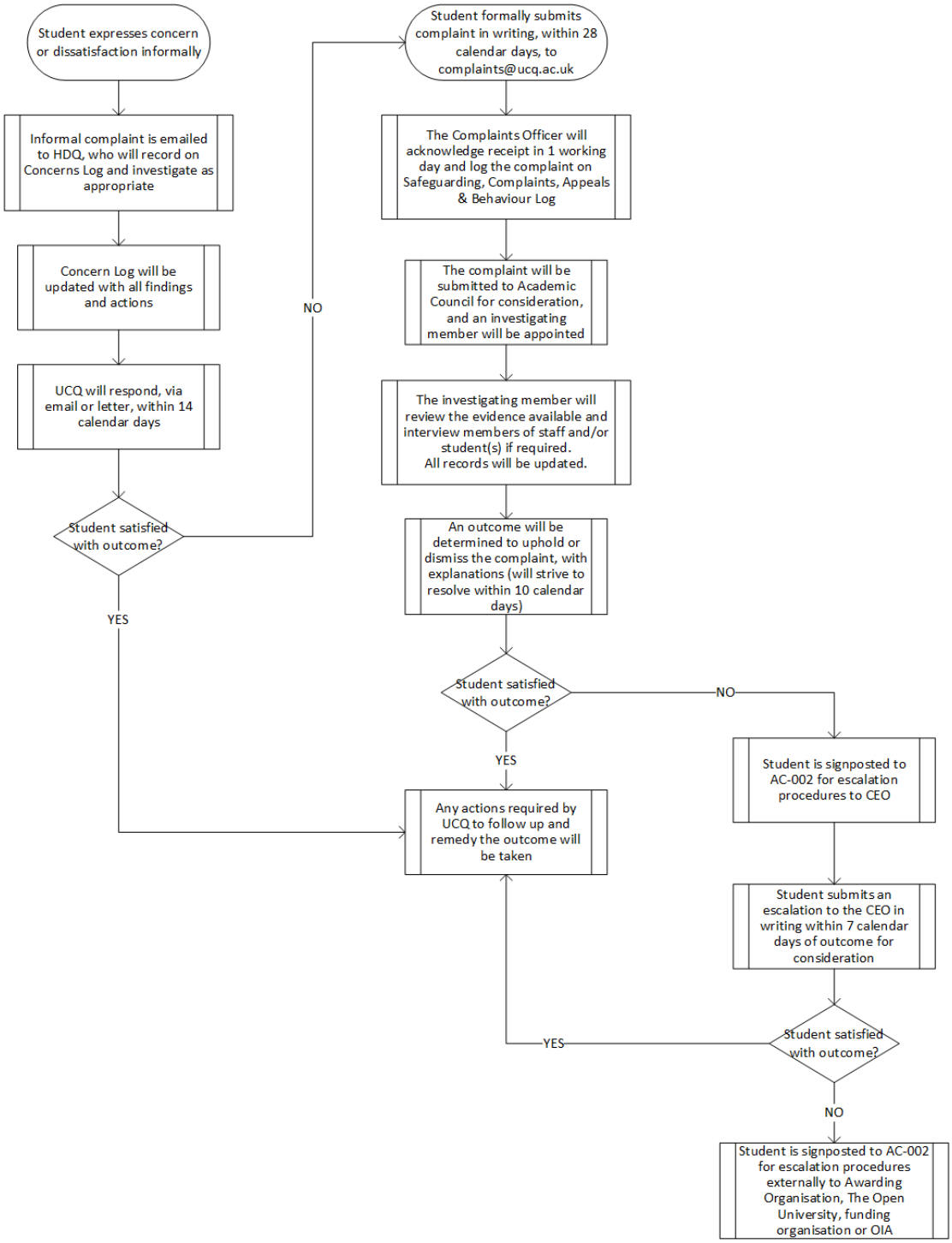
An investigating member of the Academic Council will be appointed for a complaint, based on having no conflict of interest with the complaint.

The investigating member will investigate the complaint through a desk based scrutiny of all the available evidence and through interviews with members of staff and/or students/stakeholders if required. The investigating member will be able to draw upon any member of the Academic Council to assist in the investigation of the complaint, unless a conflict of interest exists. The investigation should not be undertaken by anyone who has had prior involvement with the complaint in question.

The investigation will be carried out in an impartial manner. If in the course of the investigation a member of staff makes a ‘protected disclosure’ this will be dealt with in line with SA-002 Appendix H – Allegations and Whistleblowing.

Where additional evidence is requested, the investigating member of the Academic Council will provide clear and reasonable timeframes for the complainant to respond. Timeframes will depend on the nature and complexity of any additional evidence requested.

Formal complaints flowchart



Outcome

The outcome of a formal complaint (confirmed via letter of closure) may include the complaint being:

- upheld in whole with a statement as to the remedy; or
- upheld in part with a statement as to the remedy and an explanation regarding those parts dismissed; or
- dismissed with a statement as to the reasons

The outcome will also provide information about:

- the complainant's right to take the complaint or appeal to the review stage
- the grounds on which they can do so
- the time limit for taking it to the review stage the appropriate procedure where and how to access support

UCQ will issue a letter of closure within 10 calendar days of receipt of lodgement, unless otherwise agreed with the complainant and contracting authorities.

Appeal via escalation within UCQ

Should the complainant consider that their formal complaint has not been properly investigated they may escalate to the Chair of the Academic Council to review their complaint. The complainant must submit, in writing, the grounds on which the complaint should be reviewed and the resolution that the complainant seeks. This review will only be considered by the Chair of the Academic Council where:

- the request for review has been received by the Chair of the Academic Council within 7 calendar days of the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint; and
- there were procedural irregularities in the investigation; or
- new evidence can be presented which could not reasonably have been available to the investigator of the formal complaint

The complainant will be notified of the outcome in writing within 7 calendar days of escalation. UCQ will issue a Completion of Internal Procedures (COIP) letter to the complainant following the completion of this final internal stage.

This will be the final route of escalation within UCQ. Therefore, if the complainant remains unhappy after following the internal complaints procedure and the complaint refers to services received relating to a course or achieving a qualification, the complainant must contact the Awarding Organisation directly. Contact details of the Awarding Organisation can be found on their website. To confirm who the relevant Awarding Organisation is, please contact the UCQ Student Services Team on 03330048470 or review the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Should the complainant address the complaint to the Awarding Organisation and remain unhappy with the outcome, they may raise the complaint with the relevant qualification regulator. Either a representative of UCQ or the Awarding Organisation will be able to offer guidance on the appropriate qualification regulator in each instance and provide contact details.

For those studying on the BA (Hons) Professional Management, the Awarding Organisation is The Open University. There shall be a final right to escalate the complaint for review to The Open University if it meets the following criteria:

- the complaint relates only to a programme that has been validated by the Open University;
- all appropriate internal procedures at UCQ have been exhausted;
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that UCQ's internal procedures and regulations for dealing with complaints were not implemented correctly or fairly.

After UCQ has issued the COIP letter, the complainant will have 28 calendar days to submit a request for a review at The Open University.

For those studying on an Apprenticeship or a course funded through the Adult Education Budget, they may raise the complaint with the relevant funding organisation should they be unable to reach an outcome they are satisfied with, and where all appropriate internal procedures at UCQ have been exhausted. This may be the Education & Skills Funding Agency or the relevant Devolved Authority. A representative of UCQ will be able to offer guidance on the appropriate funding organisation in each instance and provide contact details.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

UCQ subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of higher education student complaints and appeals. Once UCQ's internal procedures have been exhausted and the complainant remains dissatisfied after escalating their case to The Open University, they may be able to apply for a review of the appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), providing that the complaint is eligible under its Rules. The time limit for bringing a complaint to the OIA is 12 months.

This Complaints Procedure aligns to the good practice framework as published by the OIA, revised in December 2022.

C. MATTERS RELATING TO REGISTRATION

6.0 General

6.1 A student who is admitted for study on OU validated provision must be registered with the partner institution.

6.2 The partner institution will submit student name and contact details to The Open University solely for the purposes of recording student details and progression information. By registering with a Partner leading to an Open University validated award or credit, the student agrees to the sharing of their information with The Open University for this purpose. The Open University will not make any contact with students unless there is a specific need in relation to their studies towards an OU validated award or credit. It is the student's responsibility to keep their personal information up to date with their institution and to notify them of any changes or errors.

7.0 Period of registration for Open University validated provision

7.1 The period of registration will commence on the date the student registers on a single registerable module or programme.

7.2 The minimum and maximum periods within which a student will be expected to complete the single registerable module or programme of study and associated assessment, including the time period for any resit assessments, are stated in the box below.

UCQ has time limits on all its undergraduate qualifications to ensure coherence of academic study, external credibility and that satisfactory academic progress is being made. You must therefore complete your qualification within the time limits set. Subject to any specific requirements of your qualification, UCQ has approved the following time limits for all undergraduate qualifications:

360-credit honours degrees:

- Normal duration: 3-4 years.
- Maximum duration: 6-8 years.

The maximum duration is in place to account for exceptional circumstances which would lead to a break in learning from the apprenticeship

7.3 Subject to paragraph 7.5 below, a student undertaking a programme will remain registered for the maximum period of the award or until they have achieved the award, or the registration has been terminated, whichever comes first.

7.4 The period of registration may be extended if:

(a) the student has had to resit or retake parts of their programme of study, see Section D;
(b) the student has been unable to study or complete a year of study due to extenuating circumstances, see Section F;
(c) the student has been given permission to take a study break as described in Section 8 below.

7.5 A student's registration may be terminated if the student has:

(a) committed a serious disciplinary offence or be deemed as unfit to study;
(b) exhausted all opportunities to remedy failure or has made insufficient progress through their programme of study at the required stage;
(c) formally notified the institution that they wish to discontinue their studies and so discontinue their programme;
(d) failed to comply with their financial commitment to the partner institution.

For more information, please see Section D.

All non-academic disciplinary offences will be dealt with under GP-024 Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

All academic offences, such as plagiarism, will be dealt with under TLA-001 Academic Misconduct Policy.

All cases pertaining to fitness to study will be dealt with under TLA-019 Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure.

All appeals relating to the termination of registration will be dealt with under AC-001 Appeals Procedure

There policies and procedures are available to view at http://ucq.ac.uk/policies/

7.6 The date of termination recognised by The Open University will be taken as the date on which a partner institution records the student's registration as terminated.

8.0 Interruption of studies

8.1 A student on a programme may apply, or be required, to take a study break for a maximum period of twelve consecutive months under the agreed procedure for reasons of ill health or other extenuating circumstances (see Section F). This may be extended in exceptional circumstances as agreed between The Open University and the partner institution.

8.2 A student on a single registerable module may apply, or be required, to take a study break for a maximum period of one third of the duration of the module under the agreed procedures for reasons of ill health or other exceptional circumstances (see Section F). This may be extended in exceptional circumstances as agreed between The Open University and the partner institution.

9.0 Attendance requirement

This attendance policy for students outlines the position and expectations with regards to the attendance and punctuality for all students of UCQ. Students are considered active participants in their learning experiences and must take responsibility for achieving their potential through successful completion of each stage of their programme. Attendance is a key component in student retention, progressions, achievement and employability. Those students who actively participant in their learning are more likely to enjoy a rewarding experience in which knowledge, skills and abilities are developed.

Student expectations

- The student is expected to punctually attend a minimum of 80% of all scheduled sessions and activities of their programme and to maintain regular academic contact with their tutor.
- If a student is unable to attend a scheduled session they must let their tutor know, explaining the circumstances.
- The employer must make the student available to attend all formal assessments at the time given. Failure to attend an assessment or submit coursework by the

deadline without having obtained an extension, deferral or mitigating circumstances may result in failure of the module concerned as per the academic regulations.

- If a student is having difficulties attending sessions due to a personal, financial or academic issue, the student should not hesitate to talk to their relevant support staff.
- Unsatisfactory attendance may affect a student's eligibility for a student loan (where applicable)

Academic staff expectations

- Academic staff are responsible for reminding students of the importance of regular attendance at learning and teaching sessions
- Staff should monitor student attendance to work and study in accordance with this policy
- Staff should signpost students who are 'at risk' and notify the relevant Centre personnel and employer of any potential upcoming issues
- Staff should ensure they take appropriate action as described within this policy

Result of unsatisfactory attendance

Where a student's attendance is unsatisfactory, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

- Students may be invited to discuss with their tutor how their attendance will be improved and any support that may be required
- Students may be issued with a formal written warning about their attendance
- A formal report on a student's attendance may be made to the student's employer
- Students who fail to respond to a warning about their attendance may be required to enter a formal Attendance Agreement with UCQ
- Students may be withdrawn from their course if they fail to respond to a warning or breach the terms of their Attendance Agreement.

D. ASSESSMENT, PROGRESSION, AND AWARD OF CREDIT

10.0 The forms of assessment and its weighting and timing, and the ways in which the learning outcomes are to be demonstrated through assessment, are set out in the module and programme specifications approved by The Open University at the point of validation.

10.1 Each programme handbook contains comprehensive details of the assessment scheme as approved by The Open University in the validation process.

11.0 Minimum requirements for pass

11.1 To obtain an Open University award or credit, students are required to complete all parts of the validated provision's approved assessment and comply with all regulations relating to their study.

11.2 The minimum aggregate pass marks for The Open University validated awards are:

40% for undergraduate programmes
50% for postgraduate programmes.

These minima may apply to assessment elements as stated in the wording of the module specifications, but will apply to modules, stages and qualifications.

12.0 Identification of requirements from professional, statutory and regulatory bodies

12.1 Additional academic regulations required by any professional, statutory or recognised regulatory body will be set out in the relevant programme specification and approved by The Open University in the validation process.

13.0 Submission of assessed work

13.1 Work submitted for a summative assessment component cannot be amended after submission or re-submitted.

13.2 Student requests for extensions to assessment deadlines will not be approved unless made in accordance with published partner institution guidelines as approved by The Open University.

13.3 Where coursework is submitted late and there are no accepted extenuating circumstances it will be penalised in line with the following tariff:

Submission within 6 working days: a 10% reduction deducted from the overall marked score for each working day late, down to the 40% pass mark (for UG) and 50% pass Mark (PG awards) and no further.

Submission that is late by 7 or more working days: submission refused, mark of 0.

A working day is defined by the partner and submission after the deadline will be assumed to be the next working day.

Students who fail to submit work for assessments or attend examinations shall be deemed to have failed the assessments components concerned and will be marked as 0.

14.0 Assessment scores

14.1 All undergraduate assessment will be marked on a percentage scale of 0-100.

% Scale Score	Performance Standard
70+	Excellent pass
60-69	Very Good pass
50-59	Good Pass
40-49	Pass
0-39	Fail

14.2 All postgraduate assessment will be marked on a percentage scale of 0-100. Taught postgraduate awards may include merit and/or distinction classification (see paragraph 18.1).

% Scale Score	Performance Standard
70+	Distinction
60-69	Merit
50-59	Pass
0-49	Fail

14.3 The final grade for an individual assessment component will be determined after completion of a quality assurance process (e.g. moderation, remarking) as detailed in the partner institution's OU approved policy for moderation.

14.4 Where the result of the overall assessment calculation creates a mark of 0.5% or greater, this will be rounded up to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.5% is rounded to 70%; 59.5% to 60%; and so on). Where the calculation creates a mark below 0.5%, this will be rounded down to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.4% is rounded to 69%; 59.4% to 59%; and so on). For the purposes of rounding up or down, only the first decimal place is used.

Marking, Grading and Moderation Procedures

Introduction

This document acts as guidance and a general policy statement for the marking and grading of assessments.

The individual Programme Specifications, Module Specifications and Assessment Guides contain comprehensive details of the assessment scheme for that specific module or stage of learning, and it is those that should be followed for correctly awarding marks and credits.

The information contained here should be read in conjunction with TLA-009 Marking, Grading and Moderation Procedures.

Minimum requirements

UCQ requires that all parts of a programme's assessed elements are completed in order to comply with the regulations set out in the programme and module specifications and guidance. For example; if a module has three assessments, then a student must complete all three. Failure to complete all three would result in a fail for that module, as the required number of credits would not be able to be achieved.

For undergraduate programmes UCQ operates 40% pass mark for all graded assessments, modules and qualifications.

For postgraduate programmes the pass mark is 50%.

Word limits

The word count includes all articulated content within the main body of the text, such as headings, sub-headings, tables, citations, quotes, lists, etc. The contents page, reference list/bibliography, appendices, footnotes, and endnotes are excluded from the word count unless specified otherwise in the Assessment Guide.

Where reflective review templates are used, wording contained within the template itself is excluded from the word count.

Appendices should be minimal and should only contain reference materials that support arguments already made in the main text. Any additional materials in appendices, unless specifically requested in the module guide, will not be evaluated.

Harvard referencing must be used in the citation and references sections unless specified otherwise in the Assessment Guide.

Word limits are established for each graded assessment and are detailed in the Assessment Guides. These limits ensure equitable processes of assessment for all students and promote the need for concise and clear writing. The following penalties apply for exceeding or not meeting the specified word limit:

Up to 10% over or under the specified limit: no penalty.

Between 10-20% over or under the specified limit: 5 marks will be deducted from the final mark.

20% or more over or under the specified limit: the final grade awarded will be capped at 40%.

Presentations

Presentations will be marked and graded in line with the requirements set out in the individual module Assessment Guide.

Presentations must adhere to the allocated time. The rationale for a time allocation is to ensure equality of opportunity for each student and to develop and demonstrate professional presentation skills. Penalties for exceeding the specified time allocation are as follows:

- Up to 10% over the specified time will not incur a penalty;
- Between 10-20% over the specified time will incur a deduction of 5 marks off the final mark for presentation skills with a further 5-mark deduction for each subsequent 10% transgression.

Referrals to Academic Support Tutor/Advisor

Where a first year student requires additional academic support, they will be referred to the Academic Support Tutor/Advisor until their academic standard has been raised. Once raised they will be released from this support system.

Students who achieve 40-50% in Module 1.1 Academic Writing and Study Skills will be referred to the Academic Support Tutor/Advisor.

Students who achieve an average up to 55% across modules 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 will be referred to the Academic Support Tutor/Advisor.

Credit award and progression

Credits will only be awarded upon successful external moderation of a completed module that has been marked as having all elements (both graded and non-graded) passed.

Credits cannot be awarded to a student until the Board of Examiners, followed by The Open University's Qualification and Classification Panel (MRAQCP), have approved and validated the results.

There are three stages of the BA(Hons) degree with each stage worth a total of 120 credits. All 360 credits must be achieved in order to be awarded the final honours award.

The Board of Examiners would normally convene twice per year. There is scope to convene up to four times per year, which will be dictated by the number of cohorts on programme and their respective start and estimated progression dates.

Moderation

Internal moderation process

UCQ operates a transparent and fair process for marking and moderation of marks. We adhere to the requirements of the UK Quality Code and ensure that assessment criteria and marking schemes are clearly defined and that they are key factors in assuring that marking is carried out fairly and consistently.

All assessments, both graded and non-graded (pass/fail), will be moderated in line with these procedures. The specific marking and grading criteria for each assessment is available within the individual Assessment Guides.

Definitions

First marker

In most cases the first marker will be the Module Lead responsible for the delivery of the assessment. The Module Lead will mark the work and produce feedback in preparation for moderation.

Moderator/second marker

The moderator (also known as second marker) looks at the sample* work and the first marker's proposed marks and feedback. If they are in agreement about the mark and feedback, the moderation process ends.

Blind marking

Blind marking is the process whereby a second marker marks the work without the students' names being available to them – helping to ensure equality and fairness. Anonymity will be lifted following the ratification of marks by the Board of Examiners.

Internal moderation: Marked and graded assessments

Applicable to all assessments that are marked and graded, the internal moderation process exists to ensure fair and consistent marking. The use of the moderation process, including all firsts, all fails and a selection of elements from all other categories (the sample*) will ensure that first marking is scrutinised appropriately, and students can be confident of the assessment process. The sample will be a minimum of six items (where possible) and/or 30% of the cohort.

The following principles apply to marking of marked and graded assessments:

- 100% of marked and graded assessments will be 1st marked.
- The Moderator/second marker will consult the marking and feedback from the 1st marker when reviewing the submissions
- The Moderator/second marker will mark the sample*
- The 1st marker and Moderator/second marker will engage in an open moderation process to determine 5) the veracity of marks in the sample

The 1st marker and Moderator will discuss a final mark for each element of the sample* based on the variation tolerance bands below.
The table below shows the recommendations of appropriate action to take based on a range of variations between the first marker and the Moderator. The variation tolerance bands and recommended actions have been notionally set by the Board of Examiners and approved by the Academic Council.

Following moderation there are four outcomes:

Confidence	Action
1st Marker and Moderator / Second Marker agree mark	Issue result
1st Marker and Moderator / Second Marker disagree (within 10 mark variance)	A moderated mark is awarded based on discussion between the 1st Marker and Moderator / Second Marker.
1st Marker and Moderator / Second Marker disagree (between 11 to 20 mark variance)	Where there is between 11-20 mark variance, a moderated mark will be awarded based on discussion between the 1st Marker, Moderator / Second Marker and Academic Programme Lead (APL), or Vice Principal where the APL is one of the original markers.
1st Marker and Moderator / Second Marker disagree – mark is overly generous/severe (21+ mark variance)	A 3rd marker takes responsibility for marking 100% of the cohort, including those not included in the original sample. This ensures learners not included in the original sample are not advantaged or disadvantaged. Moderation is then undertaken by all markers and the Academic Programme Lead before a mark is awarded

Notes:

- Module 3.4 Management Research Project will be a 100% blind 2nd mark. Anonymity will be lifted following the ratification of marks by the Board of Examiners.
- Every student will receive a moderated mark during each academic year
- Cohorts containing any UCQ staff will also be subject to 100% blind 2nd mark. Anonymity will be lifted following the ratification of marks by the Board of Examiners.

Standardisation activities throughout the year will monitor the effectiveness of this process.

Internal moderation: Threshold (pass/fail) assessments

Threshold assessments are marked against the stated criteria in the individual Assessment Guides but are not graded against a percentage scale. They are a pass if the criteria is judged to have been met, and a fail if it is judged not to have been met.

Threshold assessments are not moderated or 2nd marked in the same way as the graded assessments, in that they are 'verified' to ensure standardisation and consistency in the marking. The verification of the threshold assessments is required for 25% per cohort.

New academic staff

All new academic staff will be subject to enhanced moderation until full confidence has been awarded:

- A mentor will be allocated when employment commences – this will be someone who has previously delivered the module;
- For the first two modules delivered by the new member of staff, 100% of students will be moderated;
- Where there are no issues the normal moderation process will be undertaken thereafter
- Where there are still concerns, standardisation activities and additional moderation will be undertaken.

External moderation

Following internal moderation, all assessment that contributes towards an award must be moderated by External Examiners, and the Board of Examiners with advice and feedback provided to internal examiners as appropriate.

The sample size selected for external moderation is defined as:

- All graded at 70% or higher;
- All graded at 39% or lower;
- A 20% sample of grades between 40% and 69%;

- An overall minimum sample size of 25% will apply at all times

In order to ensure consistency and fairness to students, assessment regulations should stipulate that any amendments to the marks of the sample as a result of external moderation must be applied to the rest of the cohort.

Standardisation

Independent of the marking and moderation process, UCQ operates standardisation activities to ensure consistency in the application of levels and credits across our provision and to ensure consistency of practice in assessment and moderation.

It involves academic staff, including Module Leads, Lecturers, Professional Development Assessors and Moderators coming together with samples of learner work that they have assessed and carrying out peer review of one another's assessment to establish whether there is agreement and consistency. The purpose of standardisation activities is to:

- Support consistency and a common understanding of assessment criteria and grading descriptors.
- Monitor the effectiveness, consistency and interpretation of criteria between the 1st marker and Moderator.
- Provide opportunities for staff to share good practice in assessment decisions, including writing assignment briefs, establishing benchmarks, evidencing, providing feedback to learners and recording assessment marking and moderation decisions.

- Provide opportunities for self-assessment and action planning towards ongoing quality improvement and CPD.

This data will be recorded and used by the Academic Council in order to inform and report upon effectiveness of our provision.

Standardisation events will occur no less than twice per academic year. In addition to this, ad-hoc standardisation events are very much encouraged, if appropriate, at the discretion of the applicable academic staff.

Provision of resources for internal and external examiners

It is the responsibility of the Vice Principal to ensure that all internal examiners are provided with appropriate information, instruction or staff development as required, either through UCQ specific provision or through more generic training and staff development. All staff involved in the assessment of students should be competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities. Assessment procedures are routinely quality assured, including measures of reliability. All External Examiners must be provided with course specific guidance on assessment, including marking schemes and assessment criteria.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Academic Council, supported and informed by a variety of committees, is responsible for the periodic review of this policy. The success of this policy can be evaluated by:

- Learner voice, including questionnaire responses, showing high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching, learning & assessment they receive;
- External reports on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment;
- Profiles of marks and grades awarded;
- Staff and student feedback on the quality of support provided by UCQ to enhance competence and skill in teaching and sharing best practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

15.0 Determining module outcomes

15.1 The overall module mark shall be determined as per the assessment strategy detailed in the module specification and published in the relevant Handbook.

15.2 A student who passes a module shall be awarded the credit for that module. The amount of credit for each module shall be set out in the module specification and published in the relevant Handbook.

15.3 In order to pass a module a student must achieve the requirement of the module as set out in the module specification and published in the relevant Handbook.

15.4 Where a student is registered only for a single registerable module the resit provisions set out in 17.3 will apply.

16.0 Provision for viva voce examination

16.1 Exceptionally, viva voce examinations may be required by a Board of Examiners (with the approval of external examiners):

(a) to confirm the progression/result status of a student;
(b) to determine the result status of unusual or borderline cases;
(c) when there is conflicting evidence from the various assessment components;
(d) as an alternative or additional assessment in cases where poor performance in assessment is the result of exceptional circumstances verified through due processes.

17.0 Determining progression and qualification outcomes

17.1 **Module prerequisites and co-requisites**

17.1.1 The paths through which students are required to progress through the programme in order to obtain an award, and the elements identified as compulsory or optional, are set out in the programme specification and approved in the programme validation process.

17.1.2 Progression through any programmes offered by partner institutions may require students to complete prerequisite or co-requisite modules which are set out in the programme specification and approved during the validation process.

17.2 **Stage requirements**

17.2.1 Each of the stages of an undergraduate programme is expected to consist of a total of 120 credits, as set out in the relevant programme specification.

17.2.2 In cases where Programmes are not divided into stages (for example, most postgraduate programmes and undergraduate programmes of 120 credits or less) the provisions below apply to the whole programme.

17.2.3 In order to complete and pass a stage of a programme, a student must normally acquire the total number of credits set out in the programme specification at the

approved qualification level for the award. Exceptions are restricted to those detailed in paragraph 17.5.3 below or have been exempted through advanced standing, or through the implementation of the processes covering extenuating circumstances (see Section F).

17.2.4 The credit value of each module contributing to a stage determines its weighting in the aggregation of credit for a stage.

17.2.5 Where a student fails a module, the following may apply in the first instance:

(i) Resit (see 17.3 below) – a second attempt of an assessment component within a module, following failure at first attempt.

(ii) Compensation (see 17.4 below) – the award of credit by the Board of Examiners for a failed module(s) on account of good performance in other modules at the same credit level where the learning outcomes have been met. (NB compensation is not permitted for single registerable modules).

(iii) Retake – a second attempt of all assessment components within a module following failure at the first or resit attempt. Retake of the failed component may require the student to participate in classes to prepare them for the second attempt. This will be confirmed at the Examination Board.

17.3 Resit provision

The board of examiners may, at its discretion, make such special arrangements as it deems appropriate in cases where it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same elements and by the same methods as at the first attempt. However, where a validated programme or single registerable module is discontinued, provision has to be made to ensure fair assessment opportunities for all students who have been enrolled.

17.3.1 All resit provision is subject to all the following conditions:

(a) A student may resit the failed assessment components of a module only once. Where there are extenuating circumstances, the Board of Examiners has discretion to decide whether a further assessment opportunity shall be permitted, unless explicitly prohibited in the rules for the programme, as approved in the validation process and programme specification.

(b) A student who does not complete the resit by the date specified shall not progress the programme, except in cases where the process for allowing extenuating circumstances has been followed.

(c) Resits can only take place after the meeting of the Board of Examiners or following agreement by the Chair and the External Examiner of the Board.

(d) A student who successfully completes any required resits within a module shall be awarded the credit for the module and the result for the individual assessment component capped at the minimum pass mark for the module.

(e) A student shall not be permitted to be reassessed by resit in any module that has received a pass mark, or in a component that has received a mark of 40% or above at UG level, or 50% at PG level.

(f) The resit will normally be carried out by the same combination of written examination, coursework, etc. as in the first attempt.

17.4 Compensation for marginal failure

17.4.1 Unless otherwise stated in the approved programme specification (as a result of regulatory requirements), compensation will be applied at stage level and agreed during an examination board when the following conditions are met:

(a) No more than 20 credits can be compensated in any one stage of an undergraduate or postgraduate programme.

(b) Compensation is not permitted for modules within awards of less than 120 credits in total and not for single registerable modules where all assessments and learning outcomes must be met.

(c) Examination boards should assure themselves that learning outcomes of the qualification level have been satisfied. The process for evaluating cases will be identified in the programme specification.

(d) A minimum mark of no more than 5 percentage points below the module pass mark has been achieved in the module to be compensated.

(e) Taking the module mark to be compensated into account, an aggregate mark of 40% has been achieved for the qualification level of the undergraduate programme (except in the case of MEng Level 7 where an aggregate mark of 50% has been achieved).

(f) In the case of postgraduate programmes, taking the module mark to be compensated into account, an aggregate mark of 50% has been achieved.

(g) No compensation shall be permitted for any core project/dissertation/capstone module, as defined in the programme specification.

(h) PSRB requirements may exempt certain modules from compensation – this will be articulated in the programme specifications.

A student who receives a compensated pass in a module shall be awarded the credit for the module. The original component mark(s) (i.e. below the pass mark) shall be retained in the record of marks and used in the calculation of the aggregate mark for the stage or qualification.

17.5 **Options for the retake of study**

17.5.1 If, having exhausted all permitted compensation, resit, and retake opportunities, and a student is still unable to pass, the Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, permit one of the following repeat options:

(a) Partial retake as fully registered student:

(i) The student is not permitted to progress to the next stage of the programme but must retake the failed modules and/or components in full during the following academic year,

(ii) The student has full access to all facilities and support for the modules and/or components being retaken,

(iii) The marks that can be achieved for the modules and/or components being retaken will be capped (uncapped if extenuating circumstances have been approved) at the module and/or component pass marks,

(iv) The student retains the marks for the modules and/or components already passed,

(v) No further resit opportunities are permitted.

(b) Partial retake for assessment only:

(i) As in paragraph 17.5.1(a) except that access to facilities and support will be limited to certain learning resources for the module(s) and/or component(s) being retaken. Participation will only be allowed for relevant revision sessions and assessments.

(c) Full retake:

(i) This is only permitted where the student has extenuating circumstances;

(ii) The student does not progress to the next stage of the programme but instead repeats all the modules in the current stage during the following academic year;

(iii) The student has full access to all facilities and support;

(iv) The marks that can be achieved are not capped, and the student is normally entitled to the resit opportunities available. However, a student is not able to carry forward any credit from previous attempts at the stage.

17.5.2 Where compensation, resit, and retake opportunities have been exhausted, a Board of Examiners may recommend a student for an exit award as defined in Section 20 below, providing sufficient credit is accrued.

17.5.3 With the approval of the Board of Examiners students may be eligible to progress to a higher stage of a programme without having completed the requisite 120 points of the lower stage. They may exceptionally be allowed to do so if any of the following conditions are met:

(a) A minimum of 80 credit points at the lower level have been successfully completed including passes in all designated core modules;

(b) All requirements for academic prerequisites for the higher-level modules are met;

(c) The Examination board have approved progression following a successful application for extenuating circumstances, and results are still pending in the student's profile.

17.5.4 Institutions that offer a rolling entry system for qualifications with a high study intensity may find that the timings of examination boards do not coincide with those institutions that offer programmes within the traditional academic year. Under such circumstances, students are provisionally allowed to progress on the programmes, with the recommendation deferred until the next Board of Examiners which must be held within twelve calendar weeks. At which point the student's full profile will be considered and a formal recommendation for progression will be made (if applicable).

18.0 Grading and Classification Awards except Bachelor Honours Degrees

18.1 Validated taught awards, including Masters degrees, consisting of at least 120 credits at FHEQ level 4 (SCQF 7 for Scotland) or above may be awarded with Merit or Distinction with the exception of ordinary and honours degrees where the award of Merit or Distinction will not apply.

18.2 For the award of Distinction, the overall aggregate mark will be 70% or above.

18.3 For the award of Merit, the overall aggregate mark will be 60% - 69%.

18.4 Where the final result of the award classification calculation creates a mark of 0.5% or greater this will be rounded up to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.5% is rounded to 70%; 59.5% to 60%; and so on).

Where the calculation creates a mark below 0.5% this will be rounded down to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.4% is rounded to 69%; 59.4% to 59%; and so on). For the purposes of rounding up or down, only the first decimal place is used:

18.5 Calculation of a Foundation Degree will be based on the average mark across all modules within Stage 2 (usually Credit Level 5) and Stage 1 (usually Credit level 4) unless the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) state otherwise.

18.6 Calculation of a DipHE will be based on the average mark across all modules within Stage 2 (usually Credit Level 5) and Stage 1 (usually Credit level 4) unless the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) state otherwise.

18.6 Calculation of a CertHE will be based on the average mark across all modules within Stage 1 (usually Credit Level 4) unless the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) state otherwise.

18.7 Calculation of Masters Degrees, with the exception of Integrated Masters degrees, will be based on the average mark across all modules within a programme unless the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) state otherwise.

18.8 Calculation of Integrated Masters degrees will be based on the average of all Level 6 and Level 7 modules, weighed 50/50 respectively.

18.9 The award of PgCERT cannot be awarded with Merit.

18.10 Credit from single registerable modules is not issued with a classification but will be graded on the transcript.

19.0 Bachelor Honours Degree Classification

19.1 Classification of bachelor degrees will be based on the average mark across all modules within Stage 3 (usually Credit Level 6) and Stage 2 (usually Credit Level 5) at a ratio of 2:1 respectively unless the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) state otherwise.

19.2 Honours degrees are classified as:

First class	Aggregate mark of 70% or above
Upper Second class	Aggregate mark between 60% and 69%
Lower Second class	Aggregate mark between 50% and 59%
Third class	Aggregate mark between 40% and 49%

19.3 Where students have directly entered a Qualification Level 6 top-up award (e.g. having previously undertaken a Higher National Diploma (HND) or Foundation Degree (FD) award) the calculation for the honours classification will be based solely on all credits at Credit Level 6.

19.4 Performance in work for which an award of credit for prior learning has been made is not taken into account in the calculation of the final award. See section 22 for rules related to credit for prior learning.

19.5 Where the final result of the award classification calculation creates a mark of 0.5% or greater this will be rounded up to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.5% is rounded to 70%; 59.5% to 60%; and so on). Where the calculation creates a mark below 0.5% this will be rounded down to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.4% is rounded to 69%; 59.4% to 59%; and so on). For the purposes of rounding up or down, only the first decimal place is used.

20.0 Provision for exit awards

20.1 Programmes must make provision for exit awards at intermediate stages, for which clear learning outcomes must be stated and laid out in programme specifications approved by The Open University in the validation process.

20.2 Where a student leaves a partner Institution with an exit award they may reapply at a later date to upgrade to a higher award on the same programme if it is still offered by the partner institution.

20.3 A student who has withdrawn from a programme or has exhausted all assessment attempts (as outline in sections 17.3-17.5.2 above) will automatically be considered for an exit award where sufficient credit has been accrued.

21.0 Posthumous and Aegrotat awards

21.1 Should a student be prevented by illness, or other circumstances, from completing the final assessed component of the programme, the board of examiners, having considered the relevant evidence (including medical certification) may make a recommendation that an Aegrotat award be made. Such exceptions are limited to students who are permanently unable to continue their studies and are registered for the final module that would complete a qualification and have been assessed on at least part of the module. The board must be satisfied that the student's prior performance shows beyond reasonable doubt that they would have passed but for the illness, or other circumstances.

21.2 Posthumous awards are permitted for all programmes. The classification for such awards is based on past performance and aligned to the closest exit award (which may include a classification). Recommended to the relevant University authority responsible for conferring validated awards on behalf of The Open University for approval.

22.0 Recognition of prior learning

Introduction

University Centre Quayside recognises the value of learning wherever it occurs, either to meet programme entry requirements or to achieve credit towards specific awards. However, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will only be possible where learning, or experience, appropriate to the outcomes of the relevant entry requirements, module(s) or award level, can be assured to be academically valid. RPL has two widely recognised forms: prior experiential (or informal) learning and prior certificated learning.

Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

This term is used to describe the process whereby applicants of all ages and backgrounds are eligible to receive recognition and formal credit for learning or experience acquired in the past through formal study and through work and other life experiences.

Prior Experiential Learning (PEL)

Prior Experiential Learning denotes learning derived from experience which is uncertificated and not previously assessed. For example, learning from unpaid work or paid work, community activities, leisure pursuits and other informal learning experiences.

Prior Certificated Learning (PCL)

Prior Certificated Learning is a process through which previously assessed and certificated learning is considered, and if appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

RPL conditions

Credit is given for learning and experience, where the level, standard and content are relevant to the particular course. The award of credit is a matter of consistent application of academic judgement and must result from a transparent and demonstrably rigorous and fair decision-making process.

RPL will only be recognised against levels four and five. The level 6 year of a full 360 credit Bachelors degree cannot be claimed as RPL.

RPL has a minimum assessment claim (rather than numerical, based on minimum credits). Students with RPL against the academic aspect of an assessment would be required to do the work-based element (to achieve the module and meet the requirements of the CMDA, if appliable). Those with experiential evidence (meeting the needs of the practical element) would be required to do the academic aspect of the module.

The academic and/or work-based assessment of an eligible module can be claimed as RPL. For work-based assessment, this must include all work-based assessment components within the module.

Performance in work for which an award of credit for prior learning has been made is not taken into account in the calculation of the final award.

Credit will not normally be given for certificated learning that has taken place more than five years previous and will be allocated according to Table 1 below. Credit may not be counted twice for the same award level.

A student may be awarded recognition of prior learning, towards the requirements of a named award up to two-thirds* of the total credit requirements for that award

*two-thirds of RPL is only permitted for full, three-year bachelors degrees (360 credits) or full Masters degrees (a minimum of 180 credits) and not sub-awards, where the usual maximum is 50%.

Table 1

Table 1 Award	Credit required for award	Maximum credit allowed	NQF Level
Certificate of Higher Education	120	60	4
Higher National Certificate	150	75	4/5
Diploma of Higher Education	240	120	4/5
Higher National Diploma	240	120	4/5
Foundation Degree	240	120	4/5
Degree	300	150	4/5
Degree with Honours	360	240	4/5/6
Postgraduate Certificate	60 (M)	30(M)	7
Postgraduate Diploma	120 (M)	60 (M)	7
Master's Degree	180 (M)	120 (M)	7

Direct entry via stage exemption

This RPL policy allows for candidates to enter stage 2 or stage 3 of an undergraduate qualification on the basis of completion of an appropriate certificated qualification from a recognised UK HE programme of study.

With stage exemption of this kind, it will be recorded on the student's transcript that stage exemption was awarded, but credit for the stage(s) from which the student was exempted would not be transferred to the OU validated award.

If the student's prior learning is not certificated, UCQ will assess the student's learning directly through the submission of additional supporting evidence.

RPL that has been accredited by UCQ will be clearly identified on the student's transcript.

It is the responsibility of the student to prepare an application and submit adequate documentation and evidence. Evidence should be included of underpinning knowledge. Applicants should identify in advance whether they wish to apply for RPL prior to programme admission.

Process

Initial application

Applications and information about what is required for credit should be directed to the UCQ Student Services Team.

All applications must normally be submitted at least four working weeks before the student commences the programme of study against which credit is sought. Claims submitted late will not be considered unless there are extenuating circumstances. Please refer to the UCQ's Extenuating Circumstances Policy if this is the case.

Applicants will be required to complete an initial application form detailing the prior learning they wish to accredit. The nominated Advisor will handle queries at this stage and provide support to an individual student in respect of advice and guidance concerning a claim for RPL.

Depending on the applicants prior learning and experience, they may be able to submit a claim under PCL, PEL or a combination of both. This will be determined once the initial application claim form has been reviewed by the nominated Advisor.

Submission of evidence

Students will be fully informed by the Advisor of the range of evidence that would be considered appropriate in a submission. The portfolio of academic/professional evidence presented should be appropriate to the proposed programme, sufficient in length, depth and level, authentic and recent.

Applicants will be asked to submit for assessment:

Claims of Prior Certified Learning (PCL)

1) Relevant certification with full academic transcript

2) Signed job description

Claims of Prior Experiential Learning (PEL)

1) Signed job description

2) Reflective account for each module being claimed for:

- A reflective account outlining your roles, responsibilities and experience relating to the areas you are applying for RPL. This will include referencing theories and core reading as per the module guide. This must meet the module assessment learning outcomes.

3) Witness Testimony from Line/Senior Manager

4) Question and answer session with UCQ Assessor (to cover areas not clearly outlined within the reflective account)

Assessment of documentation

The role of the Advisor, the member of staff who advises a student on the production and submission of an RPL claim, must be separate and distinct from the role of Assessor, the member of staff who exercises academic judgement in assessing the claim. In order to maintain the objectivity and rigour, the Assessor(s) should be subject specialists able to

evaluate the evidence offered and to establish the authenticity of the claim. All staff associated with the support, guidance and assessment of claims for the recognition of prior learning will be expected to undertake appropriate training.

All credit awarded will be relevant to the identified modules or awards. Detailed assessment of credit whether based on certificated or experiential learning, can only be made by subject specialists since the assessment can only be made in the light of detailed subject knowledge. These specialists should ensure that the experience represents the achievement of learning outcomes comparable to those which would have been achieved had the course of study against which credit is claimed been taken. This may be assessed by any method appropriate to what is being assessed and should be verified by another specialist.

Where appropriate, a second assessment of the credit awarded may be undertaken by another suitably qualified Assessor.

Assessors of the documentation should objectively assess claims using the following checklist:

- Validity – That the assessment does identify the knowledge and skills it purports to assess.
- Reliability – That the assessment can be repeated with the same outcome.
- Sufficiency – That the evidence provided is appropriate in terms of quality and quantity.
- Authenticity - That it is the applicant’s own experience and subsequent learning for which accreditation is being sought.
- Relevance – That the learning to be accredited represents up to date knowledge and skills.

Decision-making

Normally, claims will receive a response within three working weeks of lodging of the application. If refused, information regarding why this decision has been made will be provided to the applicant within this timeframe.

Should you have any queries regarding your application you can contact academic registry at registry@ucq.ac.uk

Should an application be unsuccessful the applicant will be notified in writing explaining the outcome in general terms. If the applicant is not satisfied with this response they may appeal the decision through the Appeals Procedure.

All appeals will be dealt with by a member of the Academic Council.

Monitoring

The assessment of learning derived from experience should be open to internal and external scrutiny and monitoring within institutional quality assurance procedures for moderation of assessment. All RPL claims should be internally moderated and a sample presented for external examination.

It is important that the Programme Team monitor the progress of students admitted with RPL, so that information is built up on the suitability of particular qualifications or patterns of experience for the granting of advanced standing or credit exemption.

22.1 Students who are able to demonstrate that they have already fulfilled some of the learning outcomes of the programme by means other than attendance on the planned programme, and will be able, by completing the remaining requirements, to fulfil the learning outcomes of the programme and attain the standard required for the award, may be admitted with advanced standing, thus exempting them from some modules or stages of the programme.

If the student's prior learning is not certificated, the partner institution itself will assess the student's learning directly, either by requiring the applicant to take the normal progression assessments of the programme or by some other appropriate form of assessment. This will be laid out in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

policy and procedure as approved by OU at Partnership development and Approval or the Partnership Reapproval Process.

22.2 A student admitted on the basis of uncertificated learning and experience or through prior certified learning is subject to the same principles of admission as all other students on that programme. Subject to the requirements of any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements the partner institution has discretion to admit a student with exemption from certain elements of the programme or with specific credit.

22.3 A student may be awarded recognition for prior learning (certified, experiential or uncertified), towards the requirements of a named award up two-thirds* of the total credit requirements for that award.

22.4 Recognition for prior learning (certified, experiential or uncertified) is not permitted at level 6 of a Bachelor's Degree or for the thesis/dissertation module, where students are expected to complete 120 credits in order to gain the award.

22.5 Recognition for prior learning (certified, experiential or uncertified) is not permitted for the thesis/dissertation module on a PG programme.

22.6 The Partner Institution will be satisfied that an individual applicant has fulfilled some of the progression and assessment requirements of the programme by means other than attendance on the planned programme and will be able by completing the remaining requirements to fulfil the learning outcomes of the programme and attain the standard required for the award, that student may be admitted to an appropriate point in the programme.

22.7 In relation to programme admission, single registerable modules are not considered to be RPL where they are listed on the relevant programme specification as being part of that programme.

22.8 DIRECT ENTRY VIA STAGE EXEMPTION (exemption to stage of a programme without award of OU credit)

22.8.1 The RPL policy allows for candidates to enter stage 2 or stage 3 of an undergraduate qualification on the basis of completion of an appropriate certificated qualification from a recognised UK HE programme of study.

22.8.2 With stage exemption of this kind, it will be recorded on the student's transcript that stage exemption was awarded, but credit for the stage(s) from which the student was exempted would not be transferred to OU validated awards.

**Two-thirds of RPL is only permitted for full, three-year bachelor's degrees (360 credits) or full Masters degrees (a minimum of 180 credits) and not sub-awards, where the usual maximum is 50%.*

E. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

23.0 Academic misconduct is defined as any improper activity or behaviour by a student which may give that student, or another student, an unpermitted academic advantage in a summative assessment. In investigating and dealing with cases of suspected misconduct, partner institutions will follow the policies and processes approved at Partnership Development and Approval/Partnership Reapproval process. Any penalties arising from academic misconduct will be levied in line with the AMBeR Tariff (see section 23.4 below).

23.1 The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of academic misconduct which will be considered under these Regulations:

23.1.1 Plagiarism: representing another person's work or ideas as one's own, for example by failing to follow convention in acknowledging sources, use of quotation marks, etc. This includes the unauthorised use of one student's work by another student and the commissioning, purchase and submission of a piece of work, in part or whole, as the student's own.

Note: Where a student has an acknowledged learning disability, a proof-reader may be used to ensure that the student's meaning is not misunderstood as a result of the quality and standard of writing, unless a partner institution policy specifically prohibits this. Where permitted, a proof-reader may identify spelling and basic grammatical errors. Inaccuracies in academic content should not be corrected nor should the structure of the piece of work be changed.

23.1.2 Collusion: cooperation in order to gain an unpermitted advantage. This may occur where students have consciously colluded on a piece of work, in part or whole, and passed it off as their own individual efforts or where one student has authorised another to use their work, in part or whole, and to submit it as their own.

Note: Legitimate input from tutors or approved readers or scribes is not considered to be collusion.

23.1.3 Misconduct in examinations (including in-class tests).

23.1.4 Processes for dealing with Academic misconduct and the penalties.

Policy statement

This policy outlines UCQ's approach to addressing academic misconduct. Academic misconduct occurs when a student violates the principles of academic integrity by seeking an unfair academic advantage, including failing to adhere to established academic procedures or assessment protocols. Allegations of academic misconduct will be investigated in accordance with this policy and guided by the principles of academic integrity.

Academic misconduct undermines the quality and standards of UCQ's programmes. UCQ is committed to addressing such misconduct through fair, transparent, and consistently applied policies and procedures. Allegations must be supported by sufficient evidence based on the balance of probability. Investigations involve academic judgment, and UCQ may employ reasonable and fair measures to detect academic misconduct. All related information will be documented to support monitoring and review processes. Records of academic misconduct will be maintained on individual student files for the duration of their studies.

Values of academic integrity

UCQ adopt the International Center for Academic Integrity's (ICAI) fundamental values of academic integrity[4]:

- Honesty – being truthful and giving credit to the owner of the work
- Trust - promoting transparency in values, processes and outcomes
- Fairness – applying rules and policies consistently and engaging with others equitably
- Respect –affirming others and accepting differences
- Responsibility – being accountable for own actions, knowing and following rules and codes of conduct
- Courage – Taking a stand to address a wrongdoing

Principles for academic integrity

UCQ has signed QAA's Academic Integrity Charter as an institutional pledge to protect and promote academic integrity across the organisation. The principles for academic integrity[5] are summarised as follows:

Principle 1: Everyone is responsible as part of a 'whole community approach'
All members of the UCQ community share responsibility for fostering and upholding academic integrity.

[4] ICAI The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity (3rd edn): https://academicintegrity.org/images/pdfs/20019_ICAI-Fundamental-Values_R12.pdf

[5] QAA Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity/charter

Principle 2: A ‘whole community’ approach

Academic misconduct can occur for various reasons, both intentional and unintentional. UCQ employs a comprehensive approach combining education, prevention, detection, and enforcement to promote independent learning and minimise misconduct

Principle 3: Working together as a sector

UCQ collaborates with other higher education institutions to address sector-wide challenges, such as combatting essay mills, sharing best practices, and preserving academic integrity across the UK.

Principle 4: Engage with and empower students

UCQ ensures students understand academic integrity policies through accessible materials, inductions, and ongoing support. Students are accountable for their academic choices, and UCQ provides education on the consequences of misconduct, including impacts on future careers.

Principle 5: Empower and engage with staff

UCQ equips teaching and professional staff with tools, resources, and training to identify and deter academic misconduct. Staff are encouraged to act as champions of academic integrity within the institution.

Principle 6: Consistent and effective institutional policies and practices

UCQ’s policies emphasise education and prevention, define various forms of misconduct, outline proportional penalties, and ensure fair and transparent investigation processes.

Principle 7: Institutional autonomy

As an autonomous institution, UCQ maintains responsibility for promoting academic integrity, safeguarding academic standards, and supporting students in fostering independent learning and ethical practices.

Different forms of academic misconduct

Plagiarism

Representing another's work, ideas, or thoughts—including outputs from generative AI tools—as one's own without proper acknowledgment. This includes complete, partial, self-plagiarism, or collusion.

Falsifying data

Presenting fabricated or unfairly obtained data as genuine in reports, projects, or dissertations.

Impersonation

Pretending to be another person to gain an unfair advantage.

Irregular behaviour relating to examinations

Engaging in unauthorised behaviours during exams, such as using prohibited materials, communicating with others, or copying answers.

Dishonest practice

Examples include bribery, false declarations, submitting work altered by another person, or using purchased assignments.

Breaches in confidentiality and/or unethical practice in coursework

Failing to adhere to protocols regarding confidentiality or anonymity in coursework, such as disclosing privileged information or identifiable data.

Investigative procedure

In all proceedings related to academic misconduct, no action will be taken until an investigation has been concluded. The investigative procedure follows these steps:

1. **Submission of concerns:** Concerns must be submitted in writing via email to the Academic Misconduct and Extenuating Circumstances (AMEC) Sub-Committee at extenuating@ucq.ac.uk, accompanied by supporting evidence. Submissions should be made as soon as possible and no later than 5 working days after the suspected misconduct has been identified.
2. **Initial review:** The AMEC will acknowledge receipt of the concern within 2 working days and conduct an initial review within 5 working days. Additional information may be requested during this stage. Allegations involving multiple students will be investigated collectively, ensuring fairness to all parties.
3. **Notification to the student:** If sufficient grounds exist, the student will be formally notified of the allegations via their UCQ email address. This notification will include:
    - A summary of the allegations.
    - The evidence submitted.
    - The timeframe for responding (normally within 5 working days after the notification to student).
    - Information on support services available.
4. **Student response and investigation:** The student may submit a written response and supporting evidence within the given timeframe. The AMEC may also request further clarification or conduct interviews where necessary. The investigation will typically be completed within 10 working days from the student's response deadline.
5. **Evaluation and decision:** The AMEC evaluates all evidence and determines an outcome, which may include a recommendation for penalties to the Board of Examiners. A report summarising the findings and decision is provided to the Board.
6. **Outcome notification:** The student will be informed of the decision in writing via email. The written notification will include:
    - The final decision.
    - Any penalties applied.
    - Information on the right to appeal under the UCQ Appeals Policy.

7. **Appeals:** Students may appeal the decision in accordance with the UCQ Appeals Policy. The appeal must be submitted within 28 calendar days of receiving the written outcome.

Penalties for plagiarism

UCQ follows the AMBeR Tariff with regards to the award of penalties for plagiarism. In all cases a formal warning is given, and a record made contributing to the student's previous history. Depending on the penalty points accumulated, the Board of Examiners may issue any of the penalties set out within the AMBeR Tariff (available to view in TLA-001 Academic Misconduct Policy).

F. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

24.0 The Open University recognises that students may suffer from a sudden illness, or other serious and unforeseen event or set of circumstances, which adversely affects their ability to complete an assessment, or the results they obtain for an assessment. In such cases the partner institution's extenuating circumstances procedures will be applied, as approved at Partnership Reapproval.

24.1 A student who is prevented from attending or completing a formal assessment component or who feels that their performance would be (or has been) seriously impaired by extenuating circumstances, may submit a deferral request. Further information is available from the partner institution.

Policy statement

This policy serves to address situations where students face unforeseen and exceptional challenges that may impact their academic performance. These circumstances could include serious personal illness or injury, family emergencies, bereavement, or other extraordinary events beyond the student's control. The purpose of this policy is to provide a mechanism for students to request consideration or accommodations when facing these challenging situations. It recognises that life events can significantly affect a student's ability to meet academic responsibilities and complete coursework. The Extenuating Circumstances Policy is designed to ensure fairness and flexibility by allowing students to explain their situations and request adjustments to standard academic policies. For the purposes of this policy, 'extenuating circumstances' includes both extenuating and mitigating circumstances as per the definitions below.

Scope

This policy covers both extenuating and mitigating circumstances and applies to enrolled students who are facing unexpected and significant challenges that may impact their academic performance. Academic staff should signpost to this policy as required.

Definitions

Extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances refer to factors or situations that partially excuse or justify certain actions or outcomes. These circumstances are often unexpected, beyond the individual's control, and may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the situation.

Mitigating circumstances

Mitigating circumstances also refer to factors that may reduce the severity or impact of a particular situation. These factors may not necessarily excuse the behaviour or event but are considered to lessen the overall culpability. Mitigating circumstances focuses on factors that, while not justifying behaviour, may reduce the severity of consequences, particularly in legal or disciplinary situations.

Policy statement

UCQ takes into account extenuating circumstances which can impact on a student's academic progress. A student may encounter significant personal difficulties that are outside their control and impact on their ability to study and/or complete assessments. This policy provides the procedure to follow when dealing with extenuating circumstances for all types of students on all courses.

Responsibilities

All students are responsible for ensuring initial applications for extenuating circumstances are made in line with this Policy. The Academic Misconduct and Extenuating Circumstances (AMEC) Sub-Committee is responsible for the consideration of all applications and recommendations to the Board of Examiners.

Tutor discretionary extensions

Exceptionally, a module tutor is able to offer a short-term extension of up to 5 working days. Tutor discretionary extensions must be requested by the student no later than 24 hours prior to the assessment submission date (at 23:59 GMT). Tutor discretionary extensions do not apply to examinations. Where the request is granted, the tutor must

inform UCQ by emailing extenuating@ucq.ac.uk and providing the details of the tutor 5 working day discretionary extension.

Where the student claims a tutor discretionary extension, they cannot make an additional claim for extension using the self-certification method.

Eligibility criteria

For a difficulty to be considered an extenuating circumstance it must meet the following criteria:

- the difficulty must be out of the student's control and could not have been prevented by the student;
- the difficulty must have had a demonstrably detrimental impact on the student's ability to undertake study, workplace learning or undertake an assessment;
- the timing of the circumstance must be relevant to the claimed impact

Types of circumstances

The following is a non-exhaustive list of circumstances which are **likely** to be considered as extenuating circumstances:

- Bereavement;
- Serious short-term illness/accident/hospitalisation;
- Deterioration or fluctuation of a disability or long-term health condition;
- Significant adverse personal/family circumstances;
- Other significant exceptional factors for which there is evidence of stress caused
- Exceptional unforeseen work commitments (limited to self-certification option only and requires line manager supporting evidence)

The following is a non-exhaustive list of circumstances which are **unlikely** to be considered as extenuating circumstances:

- Failure of the Turnitin submission portal when submitting assessment (under these circumstances students should submit assessment via assignments@ucq.ac.uk instead);
- Medical circumstances without supporting medical documentation/evidence;

- Medical circumstances which do not relate to the assessment period in question;
- Minor illness or ailment, which in a work situation would be unlikely to lead to absences from work;
- If there is a reasonable case that the circumstance was foreseeable and/or preventable;
- Financial issues;
- Religious observance;
- Holiday or family events;
- Transport difficulties ;
- Late disclosure of circumstances;
- Poor time management;
- Missing exams or assessments due to misreading the examination/assessment timetable or oversleeping;
- Loss of computer data/printer problems;
- Submitting the wrong work for the assessment or submitting a draft version in error;
- A long-term condition where treatment or additional support/arrangements are in place to mitigate

Process

If a student is unable to attend an examination or other assessment event because of extenuating circumstances, they must inform their Module Lead and Professional Development Assessor as soon as possible, before the examination date or the assessment deadline, unless prevented to do so by circumstances outside of their control, which they must document.

At the same time, the student must also notify the Academic Misconduct and Extenuating Circumstances (AMEC) Sub-committee of their intention to make a request under the Section 6 eligibility criteria. In an exceptional case, where an assessment deadline has already passed, this notification must be made within 5 working days of the missed deadline. Notification to the AMEC should be made by emailing extenuating@ucq.ac.uk. Once the AMEC has been notified, the student must submit all supporting evidence for their claim within 5 working days. All supporting evidence must be emailed to

extenuating@ucq.ac.uk. Where an application does not meet the eligibility criteria, the application will be rejected and the applicant will be informed in writing.

A student may provide self-certification as supporting evidence for their application. For all exceptional unforeseen work commitments, self-certification applications must be accompanied by the relevant Line Manager's supporting statement, explaining the circumstances and estimating the duration of the extenuating circumstances. Self-certification may only be submitted on up to **two separate** occasions per academic year, and only to request a short extension (15 working days) to an original assessment deadline submission. Applicants must complete Appendix A: Self-Certification Form if they wish to apply for an extension using the self-certification option. A self-certification cannot be used for examinations, repeat attempts, deferrals, extraordinary assessments or where a tutor discretionary extension has already been applied for the same assessment.

Where self-certification is used, no additional evidence will be required at the point of application, unless claiming an exceptional unforeseen work commitment. For claims of exceptional unforeseen work commitments, a statement from the Line Manager is also required. Supporting evidence must be submitted for consideration alongside all other claims. For medical circumstances, medical evidence must be provided by a qualified medical practitioner (e.g. GP). UCQ will verify the authenticity of any evidence submitted. The AMEC may request additional evidence during the process of their consideration.

Outcome for eligible applications

There are two possible outcomes to the Extenuating Circumstances request: acceptance or rejection (see eligibility criteria 3.1). Where the request has been accepted by the AMEC, the AMEC will recommend to the Board of Examiners whether or not to:

- Provide the student with the opportunity to take the affected assessment(s) as if for the first time i.e. a 'sit' or 'submit', allowing them to be given the full marks achieved for the examination or assessment, rather than imposing a cap;
- Waive late submission penalties and provide a new assessment deadline date;
- Determine that there is sufficient evidence of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes from other pieces of assessment in the module(s) for an overall mark to be derived;

- Note the accepted extenuation for the module(s) and recommend that it is taken into account at the point of award and classification.

Where an agreed number of extension days has been recommended by the AMEC (e.g. 15 working days), these will be counted from the original deadline date, not the date that the claim was made, nor the date that any supporting evidence was submitted to the AMEC.

The Board of Examiners, depending on the circumstances, may exercise discretion in deciding on the particular form any reassessment should take. Options include a viva voce examination, additional assessment tasks designed to show whether the student has satisfied the programme learning outcomes, review of previous work, or normal assessment at the next available opportunity. The student will not be put in a position of unfair advantage or disadvantage: the aim will be to enable the student to be assessed on equal terms with their cohort.

The module marks released following the meeting of the Board of Examiners should clearly identify results where extenuation has been considered and applied.

If a student fails, without good cause, to provide the AMEC with sufficient information about extenuating circumstances within the timescales specified in this policy, the AMEC has authority to reject the request on those grounds.

Compliance and enforcement

When considering applications for extenuating circumstances, the AMEC must ensure this policy is followed consistently and fairly. The AMEC must prioritise the confidentiality of students' personal information related to extenuating circumstances. Staff involved in the review process should handle this information with sensitivity and discretion.
The AMEC must maintain accurate records of extenuating circumstances requests, decisions and any accommodations granted.

Training and communication

Members of the AMEC will receive training as required. Ongoing support will be provided by the Board of Examiners.

This Policy will be made available on the UCQ website for all students and staff to access.

24.2 Students are responsible for ensuring that the partner institution is notified of any extenuating circumstances at the time they occur and for supplying supporting documentation by the published deadline.

24.3 If a student is unable to attend an examination or other assessment event because of extenuating circumstances, they must inform the Partner institution as soon as possible and provide supporting evidence before published deadlines or within 7 calendar days, whichever is sooner. If a student cannot submit evidence by published deadlines, they must submit details of the extenuating circumstances with an indication that evidence will be submitted within 7 calendar days.

24.4 Medical evidence submitted in support of a claim for extenuating circumstances should be provided by a qualified medical practitioner.

24.5 The partner institution will verify the authenticity of any evidence submitted.

24.6 Upon receipt of recommendations from the panel or body responsible for investigating extenuating circumstances, the Board of Examiners, or its subsidiary board, will decide whether to:

(a) provide a student with the opportunity to take the affected assessment(s) as if for the first time, allowing them to be given the full marks achieved for the examination or assessment, rather than imposing a cap;

(b) waive late submission penalties;

(c) determine that there is sufficient evidence of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes from other pieces of assessment in the module(s) for an overall mark to be derived;

(d) note the accepted extenuation for the module(s) and recommend that it is taken into account at the point of award and classification.

24.7 The Board of Examiners, depending on the circumstances, may exercise discretion in deciding on the particular form any reassessment should take. Options are a viva voce examination, additional assessment tasks designed to show whether the student has satisfied the programme learning outcomes, review of previous work, or normal assessment at the next available opportunity. The student will not be put in a position of unfair advantage or disadvantage: the aim will be to enable the student to be assessed on equal terms with their cohort.

24.8 If a student fails, without good cause, to provide the responsible body with information about extenuating circumstances within the timescales specified in the partner institution policy, the responsible body has authority to reject the request on those grounds.

G. BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

25.0 Appointment of Boards of Examiners

25.1 For all validated provision of The Open University there will be a Board of Examiners whose constitution (including a note of those members constituting a quorum) and terms of reference as approved at the Partnership Development and Approval Process or the Partnership Reapproval Process.

25.2 In the case of large modular programmes, there may be subsidiary boards with designated responsibility for a cognate group of units or subjects. Where this is the case, the relative responsibilities, powers and terms of reference of the different boards will have been approved by The Open University (as part of the Partnership Development and Approval Process or the Partnership Reapproval Process).

25.3 External Examiners are appointed by, and report to The Open University. The terms under which they engage with the partner institution and the programmes and / or modules to which they are appointed are those determined by The Open University.

26.0 Membership of Boards of Examiners

26.1 The Academic Board (or equivalent body) of the partner institution is required to agree the membership of Boards of Examiners, at the start of each academic year.

26.2 All External Examiner(s) for the programme/subject area will be members of the board. Where institutions operate a tiered board structure/subsidiary boards and have many External Examiners appointed, the Chief External Examiner(s) only will be required to be members of the board where recommendations for awards to the relevant University authority responsible for conferring validated awards on behalf of the Open University are made.

26.3 Under no circumstances may a student of a partner institution of The Open University or student studying for an award of The Open University may be a member of, or attend, a Board of Examiners. A person who is otherwise qualified to be an internal examiner for a programme, for example as a member of academic staff or as an approved External Examiner and is coincidentally registered as a student on another programme either at the same institution or elsewhere, will not be disqualified from carrying out normal examining commitments.

26.4 The Chair of the Board of Examiners will be a senior member of staff, commonly a Head of Department, Dean of Faculty or their nominee, and not directly involved in the delivery of the programme/subject area or the assessment of students in the programme or subject area considered by the Board of Examiners.

26.5 The Registrar (or equivalent) or a nominee at the partner institution – acting with the authority of the Academic Board – should normally be appointed as Secretary to the Board of Examiners.

26.6 A member of The Open University staff must be present at any Examination Board where final decisions on recommendations for an Open University award or completed single registerable modules is made and where decisions about progression are made. Although not normal practice The Open University reserves the right to Chair the Board of Examiners or any subsidiary boards.

Member: Vice Principal (Chair)

Member: A minimum of one External Academic (Vice Chair)

Member: Academic Programme Lead

Member: Student Registry Manager

Member: External Examiner(s)

Member: OU Representative

27.0 Authority of Boards of Examiners

27.1 The Board of Examiners is authorised to determine the progression of students in accordance with these academic regulations and to recommend progression or the conferment of validated awards of The Open University.

27.2 All progression and award recommendations related to validated provision are made to the relevant University authority responsible for conferring validated awards on behalf of the Open University to ratify. The Panel is responsible for approving recommendations for module results and the award and Classification of qualifications (including partner institutions).

27.3 All decisions related to a student's progression, final results, and awards, will be approved by a properly constituted Board of Examiners.

27.4 No other body has authority to recommend conferment of an award or progression, nor to amend the decision of an approved and properly constituted Board of Examiners acting within its terms of reference and in accordance with the regulations for the programme of study. A Board of Examiners may, however, be required to review a decision, or may have that decision annulled under the Appeals procedure.

28.0 Subsidiary Boards of Examiners

28.1 Any subsidiary board of examiners (with designated responsibility for a cognate group of units or subjects) will include all approved subject-based or cognate group External Examiners.

28.2 The rights and duties of External Examiners on subsidiary boards are the same as those of External Examiners on the parent board except that the subsidiary board of examiners only makes recommendations to the parent board.

28.3 Subsidiary boards will exercise responsibility for assessing students' grades but will not make decisions on progression or awards. These will remain the responsibility of the parent Board of Examiners.

28.4 Once a subsidiary board has reviewed marks or grades for a student a recommendation is made to the parent board over these grades. However, the parent board retains the authority to reach its own conclusion on the overall performance and grading of each student. While a subsidiary board will be charged with recommending arrangements for reassessment of a failed student, only the parent board – having reviewed the failed assessment component and determined a student's right to retrieve – can approve the reassessment arrangements.

29.0 Conditions of conferment by The Open University

29.1 The OU may approve conferment of a completed single registerable module or validated award when the following conditions are satisfied:

(a) The student has been a registered student at a partner institution at the time of the assessment for an award / single registerable module and the appropriate fee to The Open University has been paid by the institution.

(b) Details of the student's full name, full postal address, email address, telephone numbers, date of birth, gender, programme of study, award and all required information have been forwarded to The Open University.

(c) The institution at which the student has been registered has confirmed that the student has completed a single registerable module or a programme of study approved by The Open University as leading to the award being recommended.

(d) The award has been recommended by a Board of Examiners convened, constituted, and acting under regulations approved by The Open University and including all members appointed by The Open University as External Examiners for the programme.

(e) The recommendation of the award has been signed by the Chair of the Board of Examiners, the External Examiners and The Open University's representative at the Board of Examiners, confirming that the assessments have been carried out in accordance with the requirements of The Open University and that the recommendations have received the written approval of the External Examiners.

H. ACADEMIC APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

30.0 Grounds for appeal

30.1 There shall be no appeal against an assessment result determined in accordance with paragraph 15.1 above, except on the grounds that the approved policy for moderation has not been followed.

30.2 A student may appeal against a decision of a Board of Examiners made under section G 27 and 28 above, only if one or more of the following grounds apply:

(a) Where the student provides written evidence in support of a claim that performance in the assessment was adversely affected by extenuating circumstances which the student was unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge before the Board of Examiners reached its decision; or

(b) Where there is prima facie evidence, whether provided by the student or otherwise, that:

(i) there has been a material administrative error; or

(ii) the examinations or other assessments were not conducted in accordance with the regulations for the programme and/or special arrangements formally agreed; or

(iii) some other material irregularity relevant to the Board of Examiner's decision has occurred.

30.3 Disagreement with the academic judgement of a Board of Examiners cannot constitute grounds for an appeal.

30.4 An appeal must be made within the time limits and in the manner prescribed in the partner institution's approved appeals procedure set out in paragraph 32 below.

30.5 A formal complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service provided or the lack of a service. It must relate to services that students were led to believe would be provided. Students should refer to procedures set out in paragraph 31 below.

30.6 Where a student raises a matter of concern that does not meet the grounds for appeal highlighted above, the matter may be dealt with as a formal complaint. In the event that a complaint is upheld, where there is no right of appeal, an assessment result or a decision of a Board of Examiners cannot be changed.

31.0 Academic Appeals and Complaints procedures

Academic appeals

The academic appeals procedure is intended to provide a formal means for reviewing a decision made on a student's academic progress or award and resolving the student's concerns in a fair and consistent manner. The Academic Council may consider all applications to intervene or alter the workings or procedures where it is felt that the workings or procedures contravene the principles of natural justice, reasonableness or fairness, when applied to the specific case referred to in the application.

Principles

A student's mark will not be lowered as a consequence of submitting an appeal. Furthermore, the privacy and confidentiality of the student will be respected, and the disclosure of information provided by a student in the course of an appeal will be restricted to those individual officers directly involved in consideration of the appeal. The appeal will be considered in accordance with UCQ's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Grounds for academic appeals

A student may not appeal if their results are not as good as they had hoped or worse than they believe they deserve. Appeals which simply challenge the academic judgement of internal or external examiners or the Board of Examiners are not permitted. Those grounds for academic appeals which are permitted include:

1. Significant mitigating circumstances

   There are circumstances that materially affected the student's performance, for which supporting evidence exists and these were not known to the Board of Examiners or other academic body at the time the decision was taken, and it was not reasonably practicable for the student to make them known prior to the decision being made.

2. Procedural irregularities

   There were procedural irregularities in the conduct of examination or assessment procedures of such a nature as to create a reasonable possibility that the result may have been different if it had not occurred.

NB: Should there be an established case of procedural irregularity the staff involved shall be investigated directly by the Principal & CEO. All subsequent disciplinary procedures will be undertaken by the Principal & CEO in this case.

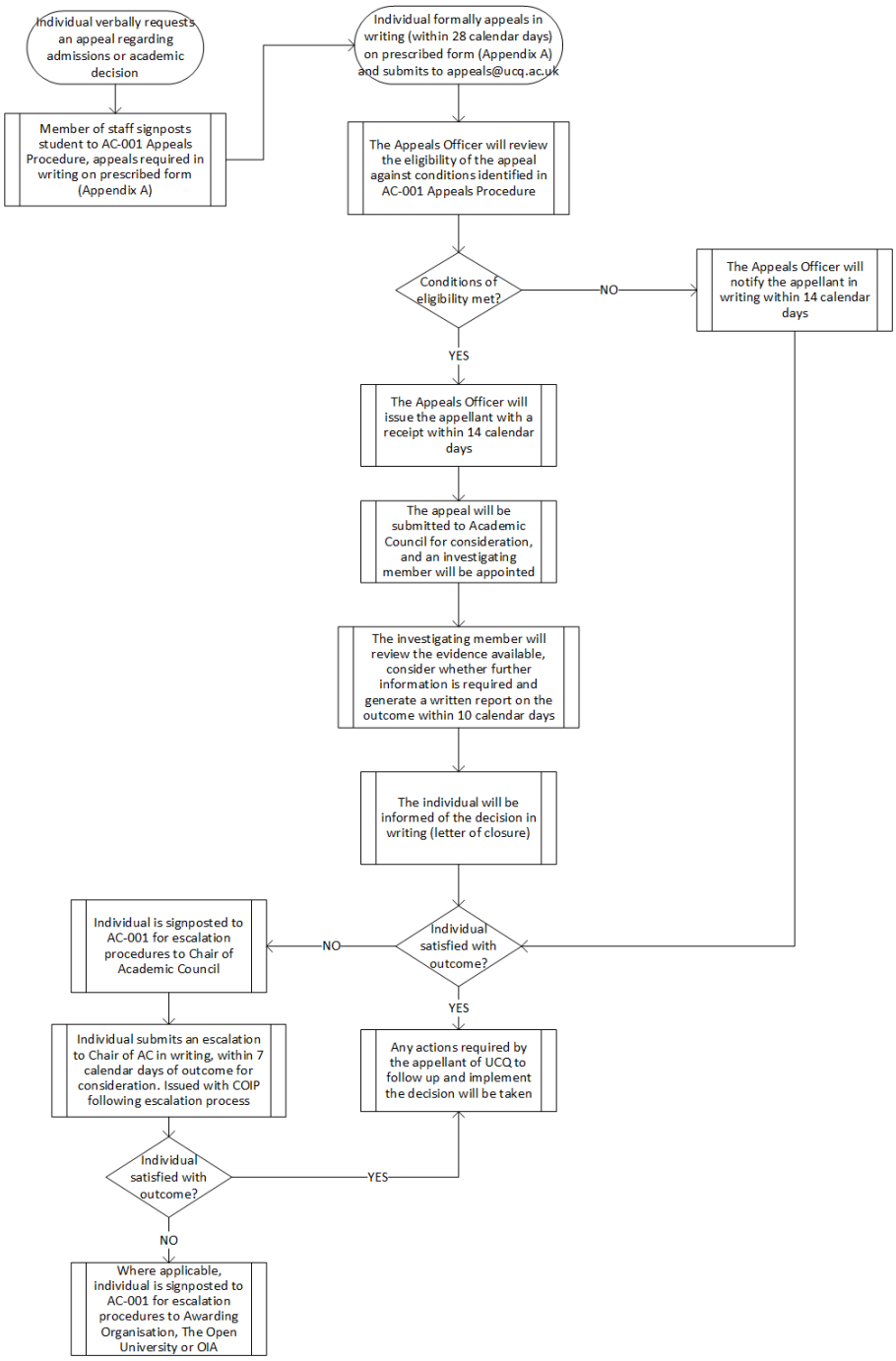
3. Prejudice or bias

There is evidence of prejudice or bias or lack of proper assessment on the part of one or more of the markers.

Deadlines for all appeals

An appeal must be lodged within 28 calendar days of the decision of the relevant authoritative body the appeal relates to. An appeal lodged out of time will only be considered where the appellant is able to prove to the satisfaction of the Academic Council that he or she was mentally or physically incapable of lodging an appeal within the prescribed time limit.

Appeals process



Lodging an appeal

Procedure

For an appeal to be formally considered by the Academic Council the appeal must be made, in writing, on the prescribed form (appendix A) and submitted to the Appeals Officer (appeals@ucq.ac.uk). The information provided must include:

- the appellant's full name, student number (where applicable) and signature
- the result or decision for which the appeal is made
- the ground(s) of appeal
- evidence in support of the appeal
- list of any other person(s) who has (have) relevant information

Evidence

It is important that the appellant submits evidence to support their appeal. It is the appellant's responsibility to obtain the required evidence. UCQ will not contact doctors or others on the appellant's behalf. Evidence must be new and not already submitted and considered by the Board of Examiners or other formal body or department. The evidence must be objective and authoritative and if not provided in English, a certified English translation must be provided at the time of submission.

Initial review

The Appeals Officer or nominee from the Academic Council will issue the appellant with a receipt (either electronic or printed) within 14 calendar days of the written application for appeal being submitted by the appellant. Should the appeal not meet the conditions of eligibility as set out below, the appellant will be notified in writing, along with their receipt.

Conditions of appeal eligibility

To meet the threshold conditions for an eligible appeal, the appeal must:

- have been made in writing on the appropriate form, and bear all of the information requested on the form
- identify the grounds of appeal
- have been received within the identified time limit
- have evidence and grounds which are reasonably arguable

Formal consideration of the appeal

Should the appeal meet the conditions of eligibility, and there be grounds for an appeal, it will be submitted to the Academic Council for consideration. The Academic Council will appoint an investigating member, who has no conflict of interest with the appeal, who will review the evidence available, consider whether further information is required and generate a written report of the outcome.

The investigating member must reach a decision within 10 calendar days .

Outcome

The Academic Council member shall find either:

- that the appeal be dismissed, and the consequent action be implemented/processed as normal; or
- uphold the appeal, in whole or in part, and stipulate specific actions to be taken

Action following appeal procedure

The appellant will be sent a letter of closure setting out the decision that has been made and the reasons for reaching that decision, together with any actions required by the appellant or UCQ to follow up and implement that decision. The letter of closure will also include details of any further right of appeal available if they remain dissatisfied with the final outcome of the institution's procedures. This will include, where applicable, the right to appeal to The Open University.

Escalation within UCQ

Should the appellant consider that their appeal has not been properly investigated they may escalate to the Chair of Academic Council to review their appeal. The appellant must submit, in writing, the grounds on which the appeal should be reviewed and the resolution that the appellant seeks. This review will only be considered further by Academic Council where:

- the request for review has been received by the Chair of Academic Council within 7 calendar days of the notification of the outcome of the appeal; and
- there were procedural irregularities in the investigation; or

- new evidence can be presented which could not reasonably have been available to the investigator of the appeal

The appellant will be notified of the outcome in writing within 7 calendar days of escalation. UCQ will issue a Completion of Internal Procedures (COIP) letter to the appellant following the completion of this final internal stage.

This will be the final route of escalation within UCQ. Therefore, if the appellant remains unhappy after following the internal appeals procedure, the appellant must follow the process in sections 13 to 15.

Academic or admissions: Appeals to the Open University

For those studying on the BA (Hons) Professional Management, the Awarding Organisation is The Open University. There shall be a final right of appeal to The Open University against a decision of the Academic Council only if the appeal meets the following criteria:

- the appeal relates only to a programme that has been validated by the Open University;
- all appropriate internal procedures at UCQ have been exhausted;
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that UCQ's internal procedures and regulations for dealing with appeals were not implemented correctly or fairly.

For academic appeals, the final right of appeal to the Open University must also relate to either:

- progression from one stage of the programme to the next; or
- a final award;

After UCQ has issued the COIP letter, the appellant will have 28 calendar days to submit a request for a review at The Open University.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

UCQ subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of higher education student complaints. Once UCQ's internal procedures have been exhausted and the appellant remains dissatisfied after escalating their case to The Open University, they may be able to apply for a review of the appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), providing that the appeal is eligible under its Rules.

This Appeals Procedure aligns to the good practice framework as published by the OIA in December 2022.

Complaints Procedure

Context

This complaints procedure outlines University Centre Quayside's (UCQ) process for investigating and acting upon complaints. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more stakeholders about something UCQ has done or not done, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of UCQ.

Principles

UCQ considers complaints as important feedback and complainants will not suffer any disadvantage as a consequence of lodging a formal complaint. UCQ will seek to act on complaints in a timely manner and do so impartially, confidentially and objectively.

All complaints shall be recorded, together with the actions and timescales taken to resolve the complaint.

Help and advice

Stakeholders can obtain this procedure in alternative formats and seek help, advice and guidance on making a complaint by emailing enquiries@ucq.ac.uk.

Informal complaints

If a stakeholder has cause to complain about any aspect of their experience with UCQ, they should bring notice of their dissatisfaction to the attention of staff working in the area in which the service failure occurred. This should be done as soon as possible and no more than 28 calendar days after the event.

Contact can be made face to face, online or over the telephone.

The complainant should explain their reason(s) for dissatisfaction, providing evidence where appropriate and suggesting what they feel UCQ could do to put the matter right.

UCQ will respond, via email or letter, within 14 calendar days.

If the complainant does not feel that reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the matter, or they have not received a response from UCQ within 14 calendar days of raising their informal complaint, they may invoke the formal stage of this complaints procedure.

Formal complaints

The formal complaints procedure is based on the expectation that all reasonable efforts have already been made to deal with the grievance prior to reaching the stage of a formal complaint. As such, the informal complaints procedure (section 4) should be followed prior to lodging a formal complaint.

Lodging a formal complaint

Formal complaints must be lodged within 28 calendar days of receiving the outcome of the informal complaint.

The complainant must:

- Explain why the outcome of the informal stage has not resolved the complaint
- Set out what they believe UCQ could reasonably be expected to do to resolve the complaint
- Submit any new evidence which has not previously been submitted in support of their complaint

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Complaints Officer (complaints@ucq.ac.uk) who will:

- Acknowledge receipt and log the complaint within 1 working day
- Forward the complaint to the appropriate member of the Academic Council for investigation
- Monitor that the complaint has been responded to within the timeframes set in this procedure

Investigating Academic Council member

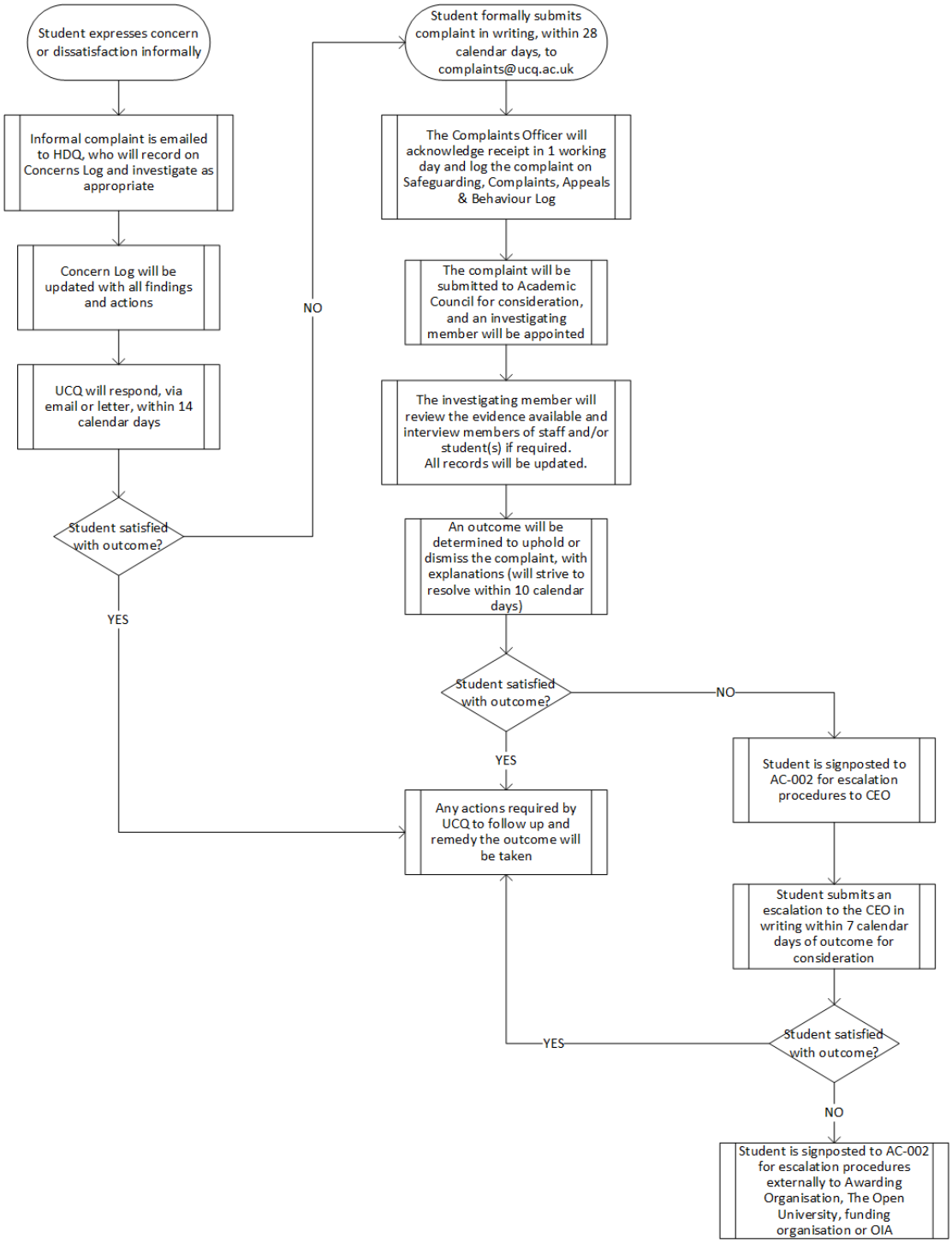
An investigating member of the Academic Council will be appointed for a complaint, based on having no conflict of interest with the complaint.

The investigating member will investigate the complaint through a desk based scrutiny of all the available evidence and through interviews with members of staff and/or students/stakeholders if required. The investigating member will be able to draw upon any member of the Academic Council to assist in the investigation of the complaint, unless a conflict of interest exists. The investigation should not be undertaken by anyone who has had prior involvement with the complaint in question.

The investigation will be carried out in an impartial manner. If in the course of the investigation a member of staff makes a ‘protected disclosure’ this will be dealt with in line with SA-002 Appendix H – Allegations and Whistleblowing.

Where additional evidence is requested, the investigating member of the Academic Council will provide clear and reasonable timeframes for the complainant to respond. Timeframes will depend on the nature and complexity of any additional evidence requested.

Formal complaints flowchart



Outcome

The outcome of a formal complaint (confirmed via letter of closure) may include the complaint being:

- upheld in whole with a statement as to the remedy; or
- upheld in part with a statement as to the remedy and an explanation regarding those parts dismissed; or
- dismissed with a statement as to the reasons

The outcome will also provide information about:

- the complainant's right to take the complaint or appeal to the review stage
- the grounds on which they can do so
- the time limit for taking it to the review stage the appropriate procedure where and how to access support

UCQ will issue a letter of closure within 10 calendar days of receipt of lodgement, unless otherwise agreed with the complainant and contracting authorities.

Appeal via escalation within UCQ

Should the complainant consider that their formal complaint has not been properly investigated they may escalate to the Chair of the Academic Council to review their complaint. The complainant must submit, in writing, the grounds on which the complaint should be reviewed and the resolution that the complainant seeks. This review will only be considered by the Chair of the Academic Council where:

- the request for review has been received by the Chair of the Academic Council within 7 calendar days of the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint; and
- there were procedural irregularities in the investigation; or
- new evidence can be presented which could not reasonably have been available to the investigator of the formal complaint

The complainant will be notified of the outcome in writing within 7 calendar days of escalation. UCQ will issue a Completion of Internal Procedures (COIP) letter to the complainant following the completion of this final internal stage.

This will be the final route of escalation within UCQ. Therefore, if the complainant remains unhappy after following the internal complaints procedure and the complaint refers to services received relating to a course or achieving a qualification, the complainant must contact the Awarding Organisation directly. Contact details of the Awarding Organisation can be found on their website. To confirm who the relevant Awarding Organisation is, please contact the UCQ Student Services Team on 03330048470 or review the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Should the complainant address the complaint to the Awarding Organisation and remain unhappy with the outcome, they may raise the complaint with the relevant qualification regulator. Either a representative of UCQ or the Awarding Organisation will be able to offer guidance on the appropriate qualification regulator in each instance and provide contact details.

For those studying on the BA (Hons) Professional Management, the Awarding Organisation is The Open University. There shall be a final right to escalate the complaint for review to The Open University if it meets the following criteria:

- the complaint relates only to a programme that has been validated by the Open University;
- all appropriate internal procedures at UCQ have been exhausted;
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that UCQ's internal procedures and regulations for dealing with complaints were not implemented correctly or fairly.

After UCQ has issued the COIP letter, the complainant will have 28 calendar days to submit a request for a review at The Open University.

For those studying on an Apprenticeship or a course funded through the Adult Education Budget, they may raise the complaint with the relevant funding organisation should they be unable to reach an outcome they are satisfied with, and where all appropriate internal procedures at UCQ have been exhausted. This may be the Education & Skills Funding Agency or the relevant Devolved Authority. A representative of UCQ will be able to offer guidance on the appropriate funding organisation in each instance and provide contact details.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

UCQ subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of higher education student complaints and appeals. Once UCQ's internal procedures have been exhausted and the complainant remains dissatisfied after escalating their case to The Open University, they may be able to apply for a review of the appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), providing that the complaint is eligible under its Rules. The time limit for bringing a complaint to the OIA is 12 months.

This Complaints Procedure aligns to the good practice framework as published by the OIA, revised in December 2022.

32.0 Action following appeal procedures

32.1 The student will be sent a written statement setting out the decision that has been made and the reasons for reaching that decision, together with any actions required by the student or the partner institution to follow up and implement that decision. Partner institutions will align to Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) timelines. The written statement will also include details of any further right of appeal available to the student if they remain dissatisfied with the final outcome of the institution's procedures. This will include, where applicable, the right to appeal to The Open University under paragraph 33 below.

33.0 Appeals to The Open University

33.1 There shall be a final right of appeal to The Open University against a decision of a Board of Examiners only if the appeal is against a decision related to either:

(a) progression from one stage to another of the programme to the next; or
(b) a final award; or

(c) an assessment

and both of the following criteria are met:

(a) all appropriate internal procedures at the partner institution have been exhausted;
(b) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the partner institution's internal procedures and regulations for dealing with appeals were not implemented correctly or fairly.

The procedure for appealing to The Open University is set out in The Open University Handbook for Validated Awards which students should have access to through the partner institution.

I. TRANSCRIPTS, DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENTS, AND CERTIFICATES

34.0 Transcript

34.1 The transcript is produced by the partner institution and provides a comprehensible verifiable record of a student's learning. The standard content of a transcript is listed in Appendix 1 of these Regulations.

34.2 The transcript is issued to the student after each stage of their programme is completed.

34.3 If a student has completed only a part of a programme of study or a single registerable module, without fulfilling the full requirements for an award, a transcript is issued.

35.0 Diploma supplement

35.1 The diploma supplement is issued to a student solely on the successful completion of a qualification.

35.2 The diploma supplement is produced by the partner institution and provides students who have completed an Open University validated award with a formal, verifiable and comprehensive record of learning and achievement. The standard content of a diploma supplement are set out in Appendix 2 to these Regulations.

36.0 Certificates

36.1 The Open University issues a certificate for each conferred award or completed single registerable module. The standard content of a Certificate for a validated award or completed single registerable module is set out in Appendix 3 to these Regulations.

36.2 Students will be issued with a certificate of The Open University in the name held in formal records at the point when the award is conferred. A certificate will not be amended or reissued in a different name if a change of name is notified after the date of conferment, except in the case of an error by The Open University in recording personal details, or if a valid request is made under the Gender Recognition Act 2004. A duplicate certificate will be issued in the same name as the

original certificate (unless amended as above), even if a change of name may subsequently have been notified.

Content of transcripts

Partner institutions will present the information in the format that they consider to be most appropriate. The minimum requirements for the content of transcripts of The Open University validated awards are:

(a) Student details

(b) Details of the qualification or single registerable module, including any professional, statutory or regulatory body accreditation or recognition.

(c) Up-to-date details of learning and achievement, i.e. modules or units studied, credits awarded, marks or grades achieved and the date and year in which credits were awarded.

(d) Level of study

(e) Mode of study i.e. face-to-face, blended, distance learning

(f) Up-to-date details of non-completion, including the number of attempts taken to complete a module.

(g) Other types of learning, e.g. study abroad, work placement and work experience, accreditation of prior certificated and experiential learning, or accreditation of key skills.

Outline structure for the diploma supplement

The following information will be given in the diploma supplement:

1 Information identifying the holder of the qualification

1.1 Family name(s)

1.2 Given name(s)

1.3 Date of birth (day/month/year)

1.4 Student identification number or code (if available)

2 Information identifying the qualification

2.1 Name of qualification and (if applicable) title conferred (in original language)

2.2 Main field(s) of study for the qualification

2.3 Name and status of awarding institution (in original language)

2.4 Name, address and status of institution (if different from 2.3) delivering studies

a. Principal location of study (if different from 2.4 above)

2.5 Language(s) of instruction/examination

3 Information on the level of the qualification

3.1 Level of qualification

3.2 Official length of programme

3.3 Access requirements(s)

4 Information on the contents and results gained

4.1 Mode of study

4.2 Programme requirements

4.3 Programme details (e.g. modules or units studied) and the individual grades/marks/credits obtained

4.4 Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution guidance

4.5 Overall classification of the qualification (in original language)

5 Information on the function of the qualification

5.1 Access to further study

5.2 Professional status (if applicable)

6 Additional information

6.1 Additional information

6.2 Further information sources

7 Certification of the supplement

7.1 Date

7.2 Signature of official certifying the diploma supplement

7.3 Capacity

7.4 Official stamp or seal of partner institution

8 Information on the higher education system

8.1 For this field, Partner institutions will adopt the standard description adopted by the rest of The Open University.

Content of certificates

A validated award certificate conferred under the Charter of The Open University records:

(a) the name of the Partner institution at which the student has been registered, together with the name of any other institution sharing responsibility for the student's programme of study
(b) the student's full name as given on the list of recommendations submitted to The Open University by the institution at which the student was registered. For gender reassignment, The Open University will require proof of the new identity before a new certificate is issued.
(c) the award
(d) the title of the programme, as approved by The Open University
(e) the language of instruction and assessment, where this is not English
(f) an approved endorsement, where appropriate, that the programme of study was in sandwich mode
(g) the date the award was conferred.

A certificate awarded upon completion of a single registerable module records:

(a) the name of the Partner institution at which the student has been registered together with the name of any other institution sharing responsibility for the student's study.
(b) the student's full name as given on the list of recommendations submitted to The Open University by the institution at which the student was registered. For gender reassignment, The Open University will require proof of the new identity before a new certificate is issued.
(c) the title of the single registerable module, as approved by The Open University
(d) the level of the single registerable module
(e) the credit value of the single registerable module
(f) the language of instruction and assessment, where this is not English
(g) the date the module was conferred.
(h) the module aims and learning outcomes.

The Open University validated award and single registerable module certificates conform with specific design requirements of The Open University.

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