



Summary of changes to Research Student Policies

2023/24 Academic Year

This document summarises changes made from the University's Regulations and Policies that were in force in 2022/23.

Student Regulations and Policies

uclan.ac.uk/studentcontract

Introduction

This document sets out a summary of the changes that have been made to the Academic Regulations and student facing policies since the start of the last academic year in September 2022. These changes will take effect in the next academic year i.e. 2023/2024.

It is very important that students familiarise themselves with these changes.

The full versions of the student policies can be viewed on the University's website.

Summary of Changes

Research specific policies:

Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees

Throughout - amendment of terminology e.g. extenuating circumstances amended to mitigating circumstances; unfair means amended to academic misconduct, deferral amended to interruption.

A3.1. Clarification that the period allowed for Research Programme Approval is a maximum deadline for completion of this milestone.

A3.3. Clarification that Research Degree Tutors will only be required to approve changes to approved programmes if they are "significant or material"

A4.1.1. Removal of PhD by Portfolio from list of awards that do not require Research Programme Approval.

A7.1.2. Clarification that this Regulation also applies to PhD by Portfolio, which requires a synoptic commentary not a thesis.

A7.1.4. Clarification that examination arrangements proposed by the School must be approved by the Research Degrees Board before the thesis will be accepted and examination can occur.

A7.1.10. Addition of 'The University does not allow recording of any oral examinations by any party.' This text is relocated from the now discontinued Research Student Assessment Handbook

A7.6.6 and A7.7.5. Addition of PhD by Portfolio.

A7.7.2. Expanded to include the portfolio (for PhD by Portfolio) and synoptic commentary (for PhD by Portfolio and MD/PhD by Published Works). Redundant sentence removed as all students must have an oral examination at first examination.

A6.4.1 and A9.1.2. Location of Mitigating Circumstances and Appeals procedures updated.

Academic Regulations for Professional Doctorates

Throughout - removal of references to the Assessment Handbook for taught courses and Research Student Assessment Handbook both of which have been discontinued. Relocation of relevant requirements to the Regulations.

Throughout - amendment of terminology e.g. extenuating circumstances amended to mitigating circumstances; unfair means amended to academic misconduct, deferral amended to interruption.

A2.8. Period of interruption to study of up to 12 months may be approved by the School. This is increased from 6 months, in line with the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees.

A3.5.3. Clarification that Research Degree Tutors will only be required to approve changes to approved programmes if they are "significant or material".

A7.1.3. Clarification that examination arrangements proposed by the School must be approved by the Research Degrees Board before the thesis will be accepted and examination can occur.

A7.1.8. Addition of 'The University does not allow recording of any oral examinations by any party.' This text is relocated from the now discontinued Research Student Assessment Handbook.

Research Assessment Handbook

This policy has been withdrawn. Relevant guidance is now located on the Student Hub.

Ethical Principles for Teaching, Research, Consultancy, Knowledge Exchange and Related Activities

Section 4: Ethical principles for work using animals wholly revised

The Global Code of Conduct in Resource Poor Settings name revised to the TRUST Code - A Global Code of Conduct for Equitable Research Partnerships

Ethics Guidance Notes for Research Degree Students

Updated weblinks to access templates, forms and guidance and information relating to the two online ethics modules.

Guidance notes for PhD by Published Works

This policy has been withdrawn. Relevant guidance is now located on the Student Hub.

Postgraduate Research Studentships: Conditions of Award

Following legal advice this policy has been incorporated into the Student Contract. It has been recently substantially revised to ensure that the University remains in line with funders such as UKRI as well as other Universities, and compliant with, for example, UK equality legislation and international student visa guidance.

The conditions of award apply to all University funded research studentships including fully funded studentships, fees-only studentships, and maintenance stipend only studentships. Regulations relate to starting rates and duration of the Studentship, absence, employment, Maternity/Adoption/Paternity/Shared Parental Leave, holidays, continuation and termination of awards, and payments in respect of studentship awards. Conditions of award may vary for international students as detailed in the policy.

General policies:

Addition of new policies - preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct.

In order to fulfil the requirements of the Office for Students (OfS) Statement of Expectations for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct and the recent OfS consultation on a new approach to regulating harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education, 4 new policies have been approved with effect from September 2023.

Domestic Abuse Policy for Students. This policy sets out the University's commitment to prevent and to protect students from behaviour that constitutes domestic abuse.

Harassment Policy for Students. This Policy sets out the University's commitment to prevent and to protect students from harassment and related unacceptable behaviours.

Sexual Misconduct Policy. This policy sets out the University's commitment to prevent and to protect students from behaviour that constitutes sexual misconduct.

Procedure for Reporting and responding to incidents of Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Domestic Abuse. This procedure sets out the reporting pathways and steps for the University to respond to student reports of harassment, sexual misconduct and domestic abuse.

The **Student Dignity and Respect Policy** has been withdrawn as replaced by the above.

Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure for Academic Misconduct

Addition of section: Unauthorised Use of Technological Aids. To confirm that the unauthorised use of technological aids and/or AI will constitute an offence of academic misconduct and enable the University to take action in line with the Procedure to safeguard the academic integrity of its awards. *'Academic misconduct will occur where a student uses technological aids and/or Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate all or part of an assessment without specific authorisation, including translation software, paraphrasing tools, text generating software (essay bots) and tools to generate graphics or artworks.'*

Admissions Policy and Applicant Complaints Procedure

5.1.15. General Admissions Practice. Replacement of existing text to give more detailed information in relation to Competition and Markets Authority guidance.

5.2.2 Entry Requirements. Inclusion of reference to Occupational Health Screening

5.3.3 Proof of Qualifications. Additional text to strengthen qualification evidence for international applicants, *'International applicants will have a specific deadline to meet the evidence requirements which will be communicated. Failure to meet this will result in a place being withdrawn and a deferral offered for a future intake'*.

5.5.3 Admission of Students with Criminal Convictions. Addition of relevant in country police check (clarity for applicants)

5.5.3 Admission of Students with Criminal Convictions. Head of School amended to Head of Admissions to reflect internal changes in responsibility and process brought forward to Admissions cycle.

5.7.5. References to UKVI Tier 4 visa updated to Student route visa to reflect current UKVI nomenclature

5.12.2. Archive of Applicant Records. Deletion of sections relating to paper application forms to reflect current practice.

Admissions Policy for Applicants with a Criminal Conviction

2.3. Additional text to clarify timings. Request for declaration is following acceptance of a place.

4.1.3 Implementation. Amendment from School to Admissions to reflect internal changes in responsibility, *'Responsibility for implementation, monitoring and review of the Admissions Policy lies with the Head of Admissions.'*

10.1.1 Removal of one ground of appeal in line with external legal advice. Deletion of - *'That evidence is available to show that the outcome reached by the panel was manifestly unreasonable. In this context, unreasonable shall be taken to mean perverse, (i.e. that the outcome was so unreasonable that no reasonable panel*

appraised of the information made available to the Disclosure Panel would have reached it).

Email Use Policy

Changes to definitions in section A. Some definitions moved from section B into section A.

Throughout - Amendments to make it clear where a requirement applies to all users, or just to staff and other paid workers (and not students); mergers of some sections to reduce duplication within the policy; amendments to reflect that the UCLan network is no longer the preferred storage location

Section E amended to reflect new defined terms as referred to in Section A.

Change to the title of section F.

Further clarity of what 'personal use of the system' means to section F.

Update of the legislation cited in section G in relation to interception of communications.

Rules on using auto-forwarding of emails now apply to all users (including students), not just to staff.

Appendix B - reference to alumni email accounts removed.

Standard additional costs (UK)

Periodic updating of estimated costs

Standard additional costs (International)

Periodic updating of estimated costs

Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure

Throughout - inclusion of Postgraduate Research within the policy to provide alignment and mirror principles across both taught and research provision.

Separation of policy and procedure within the document for clarity to ensure that the policy can be made operational by Partners and UCLan Cyprus using local procedures and processes.

Throughout - reduction in the complexity of language used to support the accessibility of the Policy to students and other stakeholders.

Mitigating Circumstances Panel can now approve up to 14-day extensions for taught students without referring to Academic Team

Clarification of types of assessment where it is not possible to have an extension. Such assessments will be communicated by course teams in advance - *'When a student asks for a longer period or are requesting an extension for an exam, in-class assessment and for certain other assessment types where an extension is not appropriate or possible. Assessments which are not appropriate for standard extensions (up to 14 days) will be communicated by courses teams to students in advance. These applications will be classed as a 'deferral'.* In some circumstances a student may submit and have MCs approved by panel - but the YT/PT can subsequently decline this decision due to the nature of assessment and that this information has been provided to the students.

Clarification of guidance on submission of assessments whilst awaiting the outcome of a mitigating circumstances application. Students are advised to submit work to the original deadline.

Addition - *'There may be a pre-panel triage in place that will consider applications in advance and may approve or decline on the following basis - approve applications from students that have pre-agreed flexibility with deadlines - (inc.*

specific disability support and carers); decline applications without evidence that apply with for an extension that requires evidence on submission.'

Extension of the timeframe for the Panels to be held within the Policy timeframes. from 3 to up to 5 working days.

Clarification of timeframes (4 weeks). The policy now provides a maximum usual timeframe of applications in advance of a deadline – the applications must still meet the 'Unexpected' and 'Unpreventable' criteria.

Regulations for the Conduct of Students

Updated to reflect the discontinuation of the Student, Dignity and Respect Policy and the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Policy for Students, Harassment Policy for Students, Sexual Misconduct Policy, and Procedure for Reporting and responding to incidents of Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Domestic Abuse.

Rules for the use of IT Facilities

Amendments to given examples within section 2 (Interpretation) to better reflect the current service delivery.

Rules for the use of the Library

Throughout - Removal of Registration Procedures.

Section 4. 'At the Preston Campus' added to text to confirm that bookable group study rooms only available at Preston.

Smoking and Vaping Policy

Vaping added to title and throughout policy.

Student Complaints Procedure

Updated to reflect the discontinuation of the Student, Dignity and Respect Policy and the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Policy for Students, Harassment Policy for Students, Sexual Misconduct Policy, and Procedure for Reporting and responding to incidents of Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Domestic Abuse.

Addition of section: Feedback opportunities. Text setting out the various routes for feedback and encouraging students to make use of these routes before submitting a formal complaint.

Addition of section: Student Charter. Text to encouraging students to consult the Student Charter before submitting a formal complaint to check expectations and responsibilities.

Addition of section: Complaints about Personal Behaviours. Text referring to the new Procedure for Reporting and Responding to Incidents of Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Domestic Abuse (see above).

Addition of section: Stage 2: Complaints about UCLan Staff. Text distinguishing between complaints about a UCLan staff member relating to:

a. academic or professional services; or b. inappropriate personal behaviours such as harassment, sexual misconduct or domestic abuse, and to align with the Procedure for Reporting and Responding to Incidents of Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Domestic Abuse.

Addition of section: Where more than one procedure is involved. Clarification in circumstances where the complaints procedure interacts with other University procedures.

Addition of section: Mediation. Text facilitating the increased use of early stage mediation in all forms of student dispute in order to increase student confidence in the impartiality of University processes, and enable more effective resolution.

Timescales. Addition of text clarifying that timescales may be adjusted where a student has inclusivity needs or has experienced trauma, for example, if there is a report of sexual misconduct or harassment. Additional reference to potential challenges in investigating matters which occurred a long time ago.

Timescales. Inclusion of explicit reference within the procedures to the OIA overall timescales for completion, *'Complaints will be dealt with within 90 days of receipt of a Stage 2 Complaint by the Student Casework Team, as recommended by the OIA.'*

Monitoring. Addition of text 'This will include an analysis of equality issues and protected characteristics to ensure the Procedure is accessible to all students and ensure effective outcomes for all groups.'

Student Protection Plan

References to UKVI Tier 4 visa updated to Student route visa to reflect current UKVI nomenclature.

Student Transfer Policy

Section 2. References to UKVI Tier 4 visa updated to Student route visa to reflect current UKVI nomenclature

Section 3. Addition of 'This may include seeking advice from the Student Loans Company where the student is in receipt of funding from Student Finance England.'

Section 7. Advice and support section updated to signpost students correctly.

Technical Services Loans Policy

Amendment to service location for accuracy (technical services has relocated to a central location).

Extending a loan section removed for accuracy - process for extending a loan process has now moved to the helpdesk system

Change of contact details and reporting process

Addition of loan facility suspension as opposed to initial fine to reflect current practice

University Student Handbook

Section 6. Deletion of reference to the Quality Assurance Agency as the QAA is no longer the Designated Quality Body for England.

Section 4.3. Addition of text relating to Personal Tutors to reflect the rolling out of this role to all levels in the 2023/24 academic year.

Section 7.1. Deletion of information on late submission as this is repeated elsewhere.