

Communication to students re Emergency Regulations

1 April 2020

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Context

Firstly, we would like to thank you for your patience in waiting for us to finalise how we will support you with your ongoing studies during this extremely challenging time. We know how much you have been wanting to know more about our Emergency Academic and Student Regulations and appreciate you allowing us to finalise all the details.

As you know, your module and programme tutors have already been working to revise teaching and learning approaches to respond to the lockdown situation the whole country is in. Tutors have also been working to change any exams or other face to face assessments and to communicate the revised details to you on NILE. And we agreed a 14 day extension to any assessments (except those undertaken under timed conditions) that fell between 23 March and 3 April 2020.

We hope that all of these actions have helped to support you in the short term, as you adjust to the revised study conditions and broader situation facing us all. But obviously, there are more questions that need answering in terms of how your work will be marked and your outcomes processed.

The following information is lengthy and detailed because we want to give you as much information as possible to help you to understand the structures and approaches the University is putting in place to protect your academic achievements during this time.

Emergency Academic and Student Regulations

We are now able to share the details of our Emergency Academic and Student Regulations. These have been signed off by the Chair of Senate yesterday (31st March) and will be enacted immediately.

The full Emergency Regulations can be found on the [University policies, procedures and regulations page](#).

These Emergency Academic and Student Regulations only change a small proportion of our Standard Regulations. It should be noted that they do not override the additional Supplementary Regulations that some programmes have in place as a result of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements, although some of those are also being temporarily suspended following agreement by the relevant PSRB. If you are on a programme where Supplementary Regulations apply, then your programme leaders will be providing additional information for you on NILE.

Where there is no Emergency Regulation, our Standard Regulations continue to apply.

Principles underpinning the Emergency Regulations

The Emergency Academic and Student Regulations are based on five principles:

1. That you, the students, are not academically disadvantaged because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. i.e. the University adopts a 'no detriment' approach to student outcomes during this period.
2. That you, the students, are supported to complete your learning and assessment for this academic year where the nature of the subject matter makes it possible to do so.
3. If you are an undergraduate student and the subject you are studying means that it is not possible for your learning and assessment to be completed for this academic year, post-emergency deadlines will be established for retrieval of any outstanding work.
4. Assessment against, and achievement of, Module and Programme Learning Outcomes, including any Learning Outcomes and associated supplementary regulations mandated by Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Bodies, remains the cornerstone of the University's approach to the award of credit.
5. Maintenance of institutional and sector standards is paramount.

These principles help us to ensure that we support you to continue to demonstrate your potential and to achieve during this challenging time, whilst also continue to uphold the standards of our awards and the academic worth of your degree.

Key messages

The biggest changes we are making through our Emergency Regulations are:

1. Suspending the current Mitigating Circumstances and Extensions Processes. Guidance has been produced to explain this to you. Information on the Exceptional Circumstances Process is also available. Please note that the initial deadline for submissions under this process is 31 May 2020.
2. Providing 3 opportunities for submission of assessments (of which students can submit to 2). A table to explain how this will work for you is available via the link at the end of this communication.
3. In certain circumstances, allowing grades from partially completed modules to be used for the whole module grade (the Emergency Regulations explain in detail when this will be relevant).
4. Where subject content means that module completion (including assessments) has to be delayed until face to face teaching and learning can be resumed, we are allowing students to progress to next year's studies and make up that outstanding learning and assessment alongside next year's learning.
5. Providing a mechanism for students to suspend their studies if they have no alternative during this time. More details can be found via the link at the end of this communication.
6. Extending our move away from face to face assessments and exams to alternative forms of assessment. This applies to all exams scheduled up to the end of August 2020 (there may be exceptions to this; for example, if a face to face assessment is the only option, and if government restrictions are lifted in a way that enable those assessments to be undertaken safely).
7. Suspending the accumulated failure count and subsequent risk of termination of studies for accumulated failure for any modules failed due to assessments undertaken after 20 March 2020. Where a module is failed in these circumstances you will still be asked to repeat the module next year but you will not be removed from your studies.
8. Relaxing our restrictions on split level study so that students who have to repeat modules can do so alongside modules from other levels (as long as pre-requisites are met).
9. No detriment approach

As a University, we are committed to ensuring a no detriment approach to student outcomes in light of the Covid-19 crisis. We aim to be as flexible and supportive as possible. The Emergency Regulations have been written with this principle in mind. We

are also committed to ensuring that academic standards continue to be upheld and that credit is only awarded where learning outcomes have been demonstrated to have been met, because we know that this will protect the value of the award we give to you.

Our approach may look different from that at some other Universities but that is because our Regulations are likely to be different from theirs.

As a small reminder, our standard Academic and Student Regulations already:

- allow you to pass modules on aggregate;
- discount the grades of your lowest 40 credits from Levels 5 and 6 (maximum of 20 at Level 6) from the algorithm that determines your final degree;
- base your final degree classification on the best of two algorithms.

These parts of the Regulations will remain in place during this time.

We are exploring whether there are additional steps we can take to adjust the mechanisms we use to calculate your final degree classification, to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 crisis, and will share more information with you on this when it is available.

What all this means for you

We have asked all programme and module leaders to provide you with detailed information on what these Emergency Regulations mean for your programme. This information will be provided on NILE and will cover:

- By 5pm on Friday 3rd April: Assessment submission deadlines (the deadline for the third opportunity plus any information if the second opportunity deadline has been revised)
- By 5pm on Friday 3rd April: For any modules that cannot be completed this academic year – information on the post-emergency retrieval plan
- By 5pm on Thursday 16th April: Information on any programme restrictions caused by professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements
- By 5pm on Friday 3rd April: Any further information on revised assessments to replace exams and other face to face assessments (if this has not already been made available to you)

Please make sure you have read and understand the Emergency Regulations and what they mean for the remainder of your studies this year. Please also consider if either the Exceptional Circumstances Process or the Covid-19 related Study Break process is relevant to your circumstances.

If you have any questions about these Emergency Regulations, please pose them in one of the following ways:

- Email covid19@northampton.ac.uk
- You can [submit a question online](#) (you can remain anonymous if you wish to) which will be escalated to the relevant teams
- You can post a question in the dedicated Facebook group for your year and our communications team will escalate it to find an answer.

Support

We are all here to support you during these challenging times.

Please make sure that you are accessing the following for support:

- Find information about Student Support still available on the [University Website Situation Updates page](#).
- [Library Service Updates](#)
- [Support and Wellbeing on the Student Hub](#)

Please also continue to liaise with your Personal Tutors.

Information

All the documents referenced in this communication can be found on the [University policies, procedures and regulations page](#):

Once again, thank you all for your patience during this time.

Best wishes,

Professor Shân Wareing

Deputy Vice Chancellor

Kathryn Kendon

Academic Registrar and Director, Student and Academic Services