

Briefing note for COVID-19

Principles for assessment (Semester 2 2020)

Applies to University of Liverpool students on taught programmes

In view of COVID-19 and the move of all teaching and learning off-campus, we have reviewed our examination arrangements for the **Semester 2 exam** and summer resit period. Unless you have advised students otherwise then they have been told not expect to attend any formal examinations in Liverpool.

All students on taught programmes have been told that Departments/Schools will communicate to them finalised details of their assessments by no later than 27th March.

Below is a set of university-wide principles that have been approved and which are designed to ensure a degree of consistency across modules and programmes. In the majority of cases examinations will be replaced by seen (open-book) assessments. In some exceptional cases, there may be local variation in arrangements, but the rationale for these decisions must be made clear to students and must be approved through internal quality assurance processes.

Principles:

1. All face-to-face teaching will be cancelled from 16th March for the remainder of the academic year.
2. Teaching will now be provided online for all modules with appropriate learning materials being made available through a combination of VITAL and other IT platforms.
3. Opportunities for asynchronous online interaction between lecturers and students must be provided in all modules. The inclusion of synchronous online interaction is at the discretion of individual lecturers.
4. Final year students completing projects/dissertations must have the opportunity for synchronous dialogue with their supervisor(s).
5. All planned coursework will take place as expected or be modified to reflect the move to online teaching, learning and submission. Expected coursework will only be cancelled or changed in exceptional circumstances and after approval by the Faculty.
6. On-campus examinations must now be replaced by on-line alternative assessment (unless exemptions have been approved by the Faculty).
7. The format for alternative assessments should be as close as possible to that of the anticipated examination. You must provide detail to students on the format for these alternative assessments by 27th March.
8. In most cases the alternative assessment should be in the form of a seen (open-book) exam available to students over an extended period. The use of time-controlled tests should be minimised except where these are required by, for example, professional bodies.
9. Scheduling of submission deadlines should be staggered as far as possible. Some deadlines may now be later than the timing of the original examination period in order to give students more time to complete work.
10. Alternative assessments will be viewed as exam replacements, and not as coursework. Word limits should be set in order to manage students' workload; normal conventions of coursework (e.g. footnotes) will not be followed, and work should be marked as an examination would be (not with the level of feedback normally provided for coursework).
11. All assessment should be submitted, marked and returned online.

12. If resits are required for failed Semester 2 modules the resit will be in the new alternative format and will be held in the resit period. Any resits for failed semester 1 modules would be expected to be carried out in their original format providing that it is possible to do so.
13. Exam boards will use the well-established institutional Procedures for Protecting the Interests of Students in the Event of Major Disruption to guide fair decisions concerning progression and classification.
14. For non-final year students who, due to the current situation, will not have the opportunity to demonstrate that they fully meet all learning objectives intended for their current year of study, then they must be provided with an opportunity to acquire these outcomes at a future date at some point during the remainder of their programme.
15. Students will not need to submit extenuating circumstances relating to the impact of COVID-19 on their learning as these should be applied automatically by exam boards. Individual extenuating circumstances only need to be submitted for anything additional to this, for example, illness at key submission points (medical evidence will not be required and this will normally be dealt with by the offer of an extension), bereavement, etc.

Note:

- a) Separate arrangements have been approved for some programmes including Medicine, Dentistry, Health Sciences and Veterinary Sciences. Students must be notified about the specific alternative arrangements where they sit outside of the above principles.
- b) Exam Boards already have a great deal of experience in dealing with extenuating circumstances and ensuring that all students are treated fairly, and should use existing methods for applying discretion. For all students we will already have a set of 'unaffected' marks that we can use to inform judgements on classification or progression.
- c) We know that it is likely that some students will fall ill over the coming period, and we will deal with this flexibly and sensitively. Departments are expected to treat requests for extensions sympathetically during this period.
- d) We should do everything we can to support our students to complete this academic year successfully.