

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS A GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

### General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards, 2019

#### OPPORTUNITIES

**Q. How can one know at which assessment opportunity a student is for a given study-unit?**

A. On SIMS, on SMO one can find the next opportunity that the student is to sit for (SMO UDF8), whilst on SMR, one can find the opportunities that have been consumed (SMR UDF8).

Opportunity 1 is the end of semester assessment session; opportunity 2 is the September assessment session; opportunity 3 is the end of semester assessment session of the following year, that is, in an extension year or when the student is progressed conditionally; opportunity 4 is the September assessment session in an extension year or when the student is progressed conditionally.

If the study-unit is not reassessable, thus having only two opportunities, opportunity 1 is the end of semester assessment session and opportunity 2 is the end of semester assessment session of the following year, that is, in an extension year or when the student is progressed conditionally.

(UG Reg 49 refers).

Dissertations or Long Essays or similar have only two opportunities, that is, the first submission and if they fail, a re-examination.

**Q. If a student fails in the final assessment opportunity of an elective or optional study-unit, would the student still be required to withdraw from the course?**

A. Yes, in terms of regulation 66(3) students who fail in a referred study-unit in the September assessment session, that is, at opportunity 4, or at opportunity 2, as applicable, shall be required to withdraw from the Course.

#### MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

**Q. When is an opportunity considered as a missed opportunity?**

A. An absence **for whatever reason** from an assessment is considered a missed opportunity. The student will be able to sit at the next available opportunity, under the same conditions as he was entitled at the missed opportunity, first sit or resit, if eligible. UG Regs 52 to 56 indicate when students are required to provide a valid reason for absence.

**Q. If a student is absent for the entire end of Semester assessment session, what should be done?**

A. If the limit of eligibility for the September session is not exceeded, the Faculty Manager / Officer in Charge should ask the student about his intentions by generating the template letter "UG/PG No work submitted – Exam Assessment Session" (SPR-LTR-SSCD).

Example:

If the student is absent for all the assessments of the Semester 1 assessment session and no reply to the letter is received, the student should be withdrawn and the semester 2 registrations should be

deleted. If the student has any incomplete study-units from Semester 1, the administrator needs to close these pending result records from the RAS table with a 0/WD.

If the student replies that he wishes to continue, the student should be allowed to sit for the semester 2 assessments if the limit of 20 credits is not exceeded. If the limit of 20 credits is exceeded (from Semester 1 and any incomplete study-units from Semester 2) the student should be contacted, and if interested and following academic advice, the student may choose to go into an extension year or a repeat year, if eligible.

**Q. What should be inputted in SIMS when a student resigns from the course in the middle of the academic year and only a part of the study-unit is completed?**

A. If a student sits for one (or more components) but not all the components, the result/s of the component/s shall be inputted, whilst the ones which the student did not sit for, due to having resigned, shall be inputted as 0/WD. The overall result of the study-unit will not feature on the transcript.

If a student resigns before sitting for any of the assessments of the study-unit, the registration for the study-unit shall be deleted.

**Q. What happens if a student misses a number of assessments due to special circumstances?**

A. If a student, due to special circumstances, misses a whole assessment session or part thereof, the opportunities of the study-units would be lost but a note (including the reason) should be inputted on SIMS in the SMM table through SMR to be taken into consideration if the student reaches the final opportunity. Such special circumstances, after consultation with the Office of the Registrar, may also be considered for other possibilities, such as, a suspension of studies or spreading the programme of study over two years, through ACCESS arrangements and according to the regulations.

**Q. If a student exceeds the limit of eligibility for the September assessment session, ie, 20 credits, and thus is not eligible to sit for assessments in the September assessment session, would that count as a missed opportunity?**

A. Yes, if a student is not eligible to sit for the September assessment session, the student would lose the opportunity to take the assessments in that session, thus, be counted as missed opportunities.

E.g. On the proviso that a study-unit has 4 opportunities, if a student fails a number of study-units at opportunity 1 and exceeds the limit of credits that can be taken in September, then he is not eligible to take the assessments at opportunity 2. He can then take the next assessments at opportunity 3 and 4 in an extension year, unless the student opts to repeat the year in its entirety, if eligible.

**Q. Are missed assessments due to the Covid-19 pandemic considered as a missed opportunity?**

A. If a student is not taking an assessment because of personal or health issues triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic this should be considered as any other sickness and therefore it is a missed opportunity.

**Q. Are deferred study-units due to the Covid-19 pandemic considered as a missed opportunity?**

A. Deferred study-units by the F/I/C/S should not be considered as missed opportunities since the study-units are not offered and students do not have an opportunity to take their assessments. Results for such study-units are to be closed with a 0/SS or a 0/SU, as applicable.

**Q. Should extraordinary extensions of studies/suspension of studies due to Covid-19 pandemic continue to be granted?**

A. As from September 2021, requests for extraordinary extensions of studies/suspension of studies due to the Covid-19 pandemic should be discussed individually and permitted only in exceptional circumstances when it is proven through documentary evidence that the pandemic situation is really hindering the student's progress. In line with the evolving national and global situation, the University

is directing its efforts to achieve normalcy and therefore extraordinary extensions or suspensions are to be reviewed in detail before these are granted as a matter of last resort.

#### **ADDITIONAL (5<sup>th</sup>) OPPORTUNITY**

**Q. If a student is given an additional (5<sup>th</sup>) opportunity by Senate, in terms of the regulations, and is thus required to use an extension year, will the classification be lowered if it will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> extension year being utilized?**

A. Yes, the classification will be lowered if the 2<sup>nd</sup> extension year is being utilized.

**Q. When a student is in an extension year and an additional (5<sup>th</sup>) opportunity is allowed for a study-unit, can the student be progressed conditionally?**

A. Yes, when an additional (5<sup>th</sup>) opportunity is allowed, the student can still progress conditionally from an extension year, if all the requirements of the regulations are satisfied, since the study-unit is from the current extended course year.

**Q. When a student has been progressed conditionally and an additional (5<sup>th</sup>) opportunity is allowed for a referred study-unit, can the student be progressed conditionally again?**

A. No, since the student would have already been progressed conditionally, the student would not be able to progress conditionally again to the following year since the regulations only permit a student to carry forward incomplete study-units from the current year. Example:

- student fails and is absent in a first year study-unit at opp.1 and opp.2;
- student progresses conditionally to second year;
- student fails the referred unit at opp. 3 and has a valid reason for absence at opp. 4. Senate grants opp.5;
- student cannot proceed conditionally to the third year with an incomplete first year study-unit;
- student should follow the incomplete first year study-unit at opp. 5 in an extension year.

#### **ELIGIBILITY FOR SEPTEMBER ASSESSMENT SESSION (20 credit limit)**

**Q. In a part-time undergraduate course, what is the limit of credits a student can sit for in the September assessment session?**

In the case of part-time undergraduate courses, the limit a student can sit for in the September assessment session is always pro-rata, depending on the programme of studies. Therefore, if a part-time programme of study consists of 30 credits, the limit would be 10 credits.

**Q. What is the number of credits a student can sit for in the September assessment session in an extension year?**

A. The limit for the September assessment session is still 20 credits in an extension year and should not be worked out pro-rata.

E.g. if a student is following 30 credits in an extension year, the limit for the September assessment session is still 20 credits and should not be reduced. If a student is following 12 credits in an extension year, then the student would be eligible to do all the 12 credits in September.

**Q. What happens when the students exceed the limit for the September assessment session since they had difficulties due to the Covid-19 pandemic?**

A. Such cases shall be referred and considered individually by the Office of the Registrar/Rectorate. These cases are to be exceptional and documentary evidence is to be presented to sustain the case.

**Q. If a student has an extension for the dissertation or long essay or similar submission deadline until the end of September, should this count with the 20 credit limit?**

A. No. An extension of the dissertation or project or similar deadline should not be considered as an incomplete study-unit (failure or absent) and thus the student should be eligible to sit for the September assessment session if the 20 credit limit is not exceeded by the incomplete study-units where a fail or absent has been obtained.

**Q. If a student has an extension for the dissertation or long essay or similar submission deadline until the end of September, can a compensated pass be given for a study-unit and thus the study-unit will not count with the 20 credit limit?**

A. If with the incomplete study-unit (due to an extended deadline) the student already has at least 50% average, the compensated pass can be awarded. If not, the student shall wait until the result of the dissertation or long essay or similar is published.

**Q. When due to an Assessment Disciplinary action the result of an another/additional study-unit is cancelled and the student has to re-do its assessment, would this count with the 20 credit limit?**

A. No, the cancelled additional study-unit/s should not count towards the 20 credit limit (such cancelled results are to be processed by SIMS Office). This is unlike the study-unit which is given a O/F because of an irregularity, which is always counted as part of the 20 credit limit.

These conditions are made clear in the letter sent by UADB to students.

**Q. If a student is not eligible for the September assessment session since the limit of 20 credits has been exceeded, can s/he still re-do the assessment for the other/additional study-unit being cancelled as an Assessment Disciplinary action?**

A. Yes, in this case the student can still re-do the assessment for such study-unit. In such cases, the student's withdrawal cannot be processed so the administrator would need to close the resits results of the failed compulsory and elective study-units.

**Q. Are Extra Study-Units part of the 20 credit limit that a student can sit for in the September assessment session?**

A. Since Extra Study-Units are not part of a programme of study they should not count as part of this limit.

## COMPONENTS

**Q. If a student is absent for a component and fails the other component, can the student sit for both components in the September assessment session?**

A. No, the student is to first complete the component for which he was absent in order for the overall mark to be computed using the marks obtained for all the components. It might be the case that after sitting for the absent component, the student obtains an overall pass mark in the study-unit and consequently the student would not be required to sit for the failed component. (UG Reg 51 refers)

**Q. Can a student choose to close an incomplete result of a study-unit after the January assessment session without knowing the results for Semester 2? (UG Reg 51 (2) (b) refers)**

A. Yes, closing an incomplete result after the January assessment session may work as an advantage to the student, if the overall result is calculated to be a pass, since this will reduce the number of Incomplete study-units for the September assessment session. Such a task can be carried out by the student on the student's eSIMS portal within 7 days from the publication of result.

With regards to Compensated Passes, students would have to wait until the Semester 2 results are published to see if they have obtained the year average of 50% in order to be eligible.

**Q. If a student has an incomplete result of a study-unit but the overall mark and year average mark would make him eligible for a compensated pass what should the student do?**

A. In this case, if the student does not intend to take the missed assessment in September, he can close the result as a Fail (Reg 51 (2) (a) refers), through the respective task on the student's eSIMS portal within 7 days from the publication of result, so that he would be eligible for a compensated pass as per UG Reg 48(1).

**Q. When a student wants to close an incomplete result of a study-unit in terms of regulation 51 (2) after the September assessment session, does the seven days window apply?**

A. Yes, the seven days window applies every time an overall result is published.

**Q. What is the procedure to copy referred components results from one academic year to the other?**

A. In December of each year, SIMS Office will be sending to F/I/C/S a list of study-units indicating the results of components which need to be copied. This exercise will only apply to results which have been closed in the previous academic year for students who have been progressed.

**Q. What should be inputted in SIMS when a student resigns from the course in the middle of the academic year and only a part of the study-unit is complete?**

A. If a student sits for one (or more components) but not all the components, the result/s of the component/s shall be inputted, whilst the ones which the student did not sit for, due to having resigned, shall be inputted as 0/WD. The overall result of the study-unit will not feature in the transcript.

If a student resigns before sitting for any of the assessments of the study-unit, the registration for the study-unit shall be deleted.

**Q. If a dissertation or long essay or similar study-unit includes a presentation and the student submits a reason for absence which is considered valid by the BoE, what result should be inputted?**

A. An absent (AB) result cannot be inputted for a dissertation or long essay or similar study-unit. Therefore, in this case, an Incomplete (I) result for the presentation component shall be inputted until the presentation is done.

If no reason was submitted or if the reason is not accepted by the BoE, a Failed (F) result shall be inputted.

## **EXTENSION YEAR**

**Q. When are students allowed an extension year?**

Students may opt for an extension year after each year of the course in order to refer incomplete study-units, if eligible in terms of the regulations. Utilising more than one extension year in a course will result in a lower classification of the award as per regulation 84(5).

**Q. What should be the overall result that a student can obtain at opportunity 3 and 4 when following an extension year?**

A. Unless the student has obtained an overall failing mark in the previous opportunities, the mark should be a normal mark. A resit mark is only awarded if an overall failing mark has been obtained at any previous opportunity. This is computed by the system after the administrator inputs the real mark obtained by the student.

**Q. If a student has to submit the dissertation or long essay or similar in an extension year, should the deadline be as extended, or as per re-examination period, as applicable, OR should the student submit with the cohort of that year?**

A. If a student has an extended deadline or a re-examination, then the dissertation or long essay or similar should be submitted by the new extended / re-examination deadline and not with the cohort of that year. Therefore, a specific individual deadline is to be set to the student concerned. The student would need to re-register for the dissertation or long essay or similar study-unit.

## STUDY-UNITS

**Q. What are the options if a student needs to refer a study-unit in a subsequent year, but the study-unit is not on offer?**

A. If the study-unit is not compulsory, the student can opt to register for an alternative study-unit (still at opportunity 3 and 4). If the study-unit is compulsory, since attendance for lectures is not obligatory for referred study-units, arrangements can still be made for the student to be assessed in it, even if it is through an alternative method of assessment. In this case, the Academic Registrar's approval is to be sought. (UG Reg 62-64, 68 refer)

**Q. If a student fails or is absent at opportunities 1 and 2 of a study-unit that is a pre-requisite to a study-unit in the next year will the student be eligible to follow the study-unit since the pre-requisite study-unit was not completed?**

A. Yes, a pre-requisite study-unit is a study-unit which must have been followed in order for a student to be able to register on the subsequent study-unit and thus, a pass in the pre-requisite study-unit is not required, unless it is stated otherwise in the study-unit description.

**Q. Can a student choose which study-units to retain and which study-units to re-do in an extension year or in a repeat year?**

A. No, a student who chooses to follow an extension year may only sit for the incomplete (failed/absent) study-units, whereas, a student who chooses to repeat the year should redo all the study-units of the previous failed year of study (including those successfully passed). (UG regs 68 & 70 refer)

The only exceptions are for **non-compulsory referred study-units in an extension year**, for which an alternative study-unit can be chosen in terms of UG Regs 62 – 64 and for the **research study-unit (dissertation, long essay or similar) in a repeat year** in terms of UG Reg 79.

**Q. Is attendance obligatory when a study-unit is being referred to the following year (conditional progression or extension year)?**

A. No, whenever a study-unit is being referred to the following year (as conditional progression or to an extension year), attendance at lectures is not obligatory, unless the student referred the study-unit due to not satisfying the attendance requirement in terms of UG Reg 38) or is required to do so by F/I/C/S concerned. It is essential that students seek academic counselling and a proper document trail is kept by the respective F/I/C/S.

## TRANSFER OF STUDY-UNITS

### **Q. Can a study-unit be transferred from one course to another?**

A. A study-unit can be transferred from one course to another if the course from where the study-unit is to be transferred was not completed. For transfer of credits obtained at other recognised institutions of higher education the provisions in UG Regulation 37 shall apply.

A study-unit cannot be transferred from a successfully completed course to another course since such an instance would lead to double counting, except when the study-unit is compulsory in the second course, in which case, the proviso to UG Regulation 36 shall apply.

### **Q. When transferring study-units from previous courses, will grades/marks for transferred study-units remain as per old grading scheme or should they be changed as per new grading scheme?**

A. No, results for transferred study-units should not change. However, the transcript will include the different grade schemes with applicability dates.

## CHANGES IN THE PROGRAMME OF STUDY AND STUDY-UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

### **Q. When is the appropriate time to effect changes to the Programmes of Study and Study-Unit Descriptors?**

A. Changes to the Programmes of Study and Study-Unit Descriptions shall be effected before the registration process of students and when the list of study-units are sent to APQRU for review and necessary updates. No changes are allowed after, especially throughout the academic year, except for exceptional circumstances. As a matter of principle, all changes are to be considered by the respective Board of Studies during the Annual Programme Review.

## CHANGE IN A METHOD OF ASSESSMENT IN CASE OF A REFERRED STUDY-UNIT

### **Q. When a study-unit is referred to an extension year or in a conditional progression and the method of assessment changes from the original assessment, by which method of assessment should the student be assessed?**

A. Students shall be assessed by the assessment method current during the Academic Year in which the assessment is held.

### **Q. What happens when one or more components of the referred study-unit, for which a result has already been obtained, has a change in the method of assessment and/or in the percentage weighting? (UG Reg 68(1)(b) refers)**

A. When a student has to refer a study-unit for which one of the components has already been obtained the following action should be taken:

- If the student **obtained an overall Failing grade in all the assessment sessions** and the weighted percentage for that particular component followed during the previous year, is **increased**, the passed component will have to be repeated on the assumption that since the percentage weighting has changed, so has the work involved (amount of study or work to do the assessment also changed), unless the lecturer on his own responsibility, declares that the component, whose weighting was changed, is basically the same as in the previous year, and recommends that the student retains the mark obtained in the previous year. Permission by the Academic Registrar to transfer the mark, will only be given if the change in the weighting is not very great (example 15% increased to 20%; if 20% is changed to 50% then permission will not be given).

- If the student **obtained an overall Failing grade in all the assessment sessions** and the weighted percentage of a passed component is **reduced or not changed**, then the mark from the previous year should be retained and transferred to the current year. The student should not be required or allowed to be reassessed in that passed component. If in addition to the weighting, there is a change in the method of assessment and the FICS insists that the student should take the new assessment of the component, then the FICS should explain the reason to the student and why the original mark cannot be retained.

- If the student **obtained an overall Failing grade in all the assessment sessions** and the student has **no marks for any of the components**, the revised method of assessment as published during the current year, is to be followed. This applies when a student is referring a study-unit to an extension year or in the case of conditional progression. (see previous Q&A)

- If the student **obtained an overall grade of AB or SU** in either one of the January, June or September Assessment Sessions, the case is to be referred to the Office of the Registrar.

#### **CHANGE IN LECTURER IN CASE OF A REFERRED STUDY-UNIT**

**Q. What happens if there is a change in the lecturer for a study-unit being referred to an extension year or in a conditional progression?**

A. The FICS should draw the attention of such students and advise them accordingly especially if there are changes in the study-unit description and the student would need to attend lectures. A change in the lecturer does not necessarily lead to a change in the study-unit description and in the corresponding learning outcomes. If that is the case, such a change is to be considered by the Board of Studies.

#### **CLASSIFICATION**

**Q. If a final year student fails in opportunity 2 of a study-unit and has to refer this to an extension year, will the classification be lowered if another extension year had already been taken for a previous year?**

A. If the student goes into an extension year with up to 12 credits, this should be considered similar to conditional progression and thus the classification should not be effected if he had already done an extension for another course year. If the student is referring more than 12 credits, then yes the classification should be lowered. (Regulation 68(3) refers).

**Q. If a student has an extension for the dissertation or long essay or similar deadline which goes beyond the end of the academic year, will the classification be effected?**

A. If the student manages to submit and be able to graduate, this should not be considered as an extension year. If the extension goes beyond and the student will not be able to graduate, the Answer to the previous Q&A should apply.

**Q. If a student had done an additional year under the old regulations and an extension year in terms of the new regulations, should the classification be lowered?**

A. No, this should not affect the classification since the student is caught up between the old and the new regulations.

**Q. If a student has done an additional year and an extension year both in terms of the new regulations, should the classification be lowered?**

A. No, since in terms of the new regulations an additional year is allowed only for a student to change an area of study (Reg 65) or to repeat a year of an area of study in its entirety (Reg 72). An additional year is thus similar to a repeat year and therefore in such a case the classification should not be lowered.

#### **GENERAL STUDIES AWARDS**

**Q. If a student requests a general studies award and the course was completed prior to October 2019, ie, before the new regulations came into effect, should the student be awarded the general studies award according to the new regulations or to the old regulations?**

A. If the student has completed the course before October 2019, the general studies award should be according to the old regulations, ie, Certificate/Diploma/Bachelor. If the student has completed the course after October 2019, the general studies award should be according to the new regulations, ie, Diploma/Higher Diploma/Bachelor.

**Q. If a student only lacks a few credits to be eligible for the award of the Diploma/Higher Diploma/Bachelor in General Studies, can the CASP study-units be considered?**

A. Yes, the CASP study-units will count towards the award of the General Studies qualifications in such case.

#### **EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES (ERASMUS)**

**Q. Should students going on an exchange programme (Erasmus+) be given a special exemption from assessments of study-units done in the semester before their leaving, or will they be considered as as having lost the assessment opportunity if they go away before taking the assessment?**

A. Students leaving for an exchange programme should always try to make arrangements to leave after having sat the assessments of the previous semester. If this is not possible, arrangements should be made either for alternative methods of assessment, or for them to sit for the examination at the host institution. If no arrangements can be made, the student shall be deemed as having been absent and having missed an opportunity. In such cases, a note (including the reason) should be inputted on SIMS in the SMM table through SMR to be taken into consideration if the student reaches the final opportunity.

**Q. Can students on an extension year go on an exchange programme (Erasmus)?**

A. No, students shall only go on an exchange programme if they have been progressed to the following year of the course as regular students.

**Q. If a student fails in more than 20 credits whilst on an exchange programme (Erasmus), which regulations shall apply, ours or those of the host Institution?**

A. Our regulations should always apply for our students. Thus, if a student fails in more than 20 credits, the student should either repeat the year or follow an extension year, if eligible in terms of the UG regulations.

#### **ENGLISH COMMUNICATIVE APTITUDE (CASP) STUDY-UNITS**

**Q. Do the CASP study-units count as part of the 20 credit limit for eligibility for September assessment session?**

No. Since CASP study-units are not part of the course's programme of study these should not count towards the 20 credit limit.

**Q. Can a compensated pass (CP) be awarded for a CASP study-unit?**

Since the CASP study-units are not part of a programme of study, then a CP cannot be awarded for CASP study-units.

**Q. Are students allowed an additional (5<sup>th</sup>) opportunity for English Communicative Aptitude (ECA) study-units?**

No. Since CASP study-units are not part of the course's programme of study, an additional opportunity should not be granted.

**Q. Are students allowed to follow CASP study-units during an extension year of studies?**

Yes. These can still be followed together with the referred study-units.

**Q. When repeating a year of study, are students expected to repeat the CASP study-units as well?**

No. Since CASP study-units are not part of a programme of study, the students shall not be required to repeat such study-units.

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