

## VII. Emergency Situation [EmSi] Regulations for Research Masters Degree Programmes (excluding MPhil programmes)

*These regulations apply to all postgraduate students registered in academic year 2019/20 (or in the case of B. Masters Degree Entrance Requirements, are applying during 2019/20), revised May 2020.*

### Introduction

These Emergency Situation [EmSi] regulations shall be understood alongside the standard regulations and not in isolation. They consider the respective definitions of terms and requirements outlined in the General Regulations of the University and in the specific regulations on progression and classification of awards. They should be read together with any examination regulations specific to an individual degree programme, as approved by the relevant Postgraduate Dean. These Emergency Situations [EmSi] regulations shall not be used without reference to the standard regulations.

#### A. Glossary of Terms

- t) **Safety Net:** A suite of measures including a 'baseline' of academic performance recognised through the prior academic achievement pertaining to each student and amendments to student progress procedures and where appropriate University regulations. Only used during Exceptional Circumstances.
- u) **Provisional stage baseline average:** A student's baseline average calculated from provisional marks for taught modules that are part of their current stage of study up to the end of Semester 1 of 2019-20 (i.e. marks that have yet to be confirmed following a module moderation board and external examiner scrutiny).
- v) **Provisional programme baseline average:** A student's baseline average calculated from provisional marks for taught modules that are part of their current stage of study up to the end of Semester 1 of 2019-20 (i.e. marks that have yet to be confirmed following MMB and external examiner scrutiny) plus their confirmed stage average from previously completed stages of study, weighted according to the programme regulations.
- w) **Confirmed stage baseline average:** A student's baseline average calculated from confirmed marks for modules that are part of their current stage of study up to the end of Semester 1 of 2019-20 (i.e. marks that have been confirmed following MMB and external examiner scrutiny)
- x) **Confirmed programme baseline average:** A student's baseline average calculated from provisional marks for taught modules that are part of their current stage of study up to the end of Semester 1 of 2019-20 (i.e. marks that have been confirmed following MMB and external examiner scrutiny) plus their confirmed stage average

from previously completed stages of study, weighted according to the programme regulations.

- y) **Overall stage average:** A student's overall average for their current stage of study calculated from their confirmed marks from all modules in their current stage of study.
- z) **Overall programme average:** A student's overall average calculated from their confirmed marks for their current stage of study plus their confirmed stage average from previously completed stages of study, weighted according to the programme regulations.
- aa) **Covid 19 Impact Form:** Form submitted by students to highlight issues affecting a whole cohort following the transition to remote learning and remote teaching and assessment
- bb) **Industrial Action Impact Form:** Form submitted by students to highlight issues affecting a whole module cohort following the period of industrial action.

## **B. Masters Degree Entrance Requirements**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

## **C. Preconditions to the Award of a Masters Degree**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

## **D. Patterns of Study**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

## **E. Attendance and Progress**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

## **F. Study Undertaken Outside the University**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

## **G. Assessment**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

## **H. Provisions for Interruption of Progress**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**J. Supervisory Arrangements**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**K. Applications from Members of Staff of the University**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**L. Examination Committee**

33.1 Senate has agreed that Newcastle University adopt a Safety Net policy for taught programmes and any taught components of Research Masters Programmes during 2019/20, implemented in ways that builds on already approved approaches to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 as set out in the policy statement approved by Executive Board in March, and as set out in the previously Emergency Guidance approved by Senate.

33.2 Semester 1 2019-20 can be used as an indicator of student attainment, and this information can be provided to the Examination Committee **in addition to the information on performance across the whole programme so that the decisions of Committees can take full account of any significant variations between performance on taught modules across the three postgraduate semesters.**

**Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Committee**

36.1 In emergency situations in addition to the normal PEC process to request an individual adjustment to assessment you will have the opportunity to inform the University of issues which have impacted the educational experience of your whole cohort through a separate Impact Form process.

36.2 The Examination Committee will also receive reports from students and staff regarding disruption to taught modules which can be used for moderation and scaling purposes before final marks are considered by the Examination Committee.

**M. Absence from Examinations, Failure to Submit Assessed Work and Assessment Irregularities**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**N. Marking Procedures**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**P. Return of Marks**

47.1 For programmes with taught components the Examination Committee may consider the final overall programme average mark as the average of all the module marks weighted according to their credit value, or the confirmed programme baseline average where the safety net is applied.

## **R. Releasing and Adjusting Marks**

50. Recognising the significant pressures resulting from the current emergency situation, the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education has authorised Faculty Deans to extend feedback turnaround times by five days (from 20 working days to 25 working days) where necessary. This has not been a blanket approach, and has only been implemented where appropriate. Where there have been changes, these will be communicated to you by your School.

Where a School have chosen to replace an exam with an alternative assessment, the University's requirement for the provision of feedback to students will be as for an exam (and not as for a piece of coursework).

## **S. Credits Required and Using Credit Value**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

## **T. Progression within Research Masters' Programmes**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

## **U. Reassessment**

54.1. To reflect the fact that Semester 1 2019-20 represents on average only a third of the total credits for Master's students for the current academic year, you are **entitled as of right** to one resit for any and all taught modules that you did not pass at the first attempt.

## **V. Discretion**

59.1 The Examination Committee are reminded that they are empowered to use discretion as they deem fit, in accordance with University regulations, bearing in mind the specific progression and classification rules for individual programmes.

59.2 The Examination Committee should proceed on the basis that their core role is to decide whether individual students have satisfactorily demonstrated the achievement of the learning outcomes associated with the programme of study. They should be prepared to take full account of any disruption to examinations or assessments and to exercise discretion on an individual basis. This requires that Chairs and Secretaries are adequately informed of the impact on individual candidates. Progression and award decisions taken by the Committee must also comply with any external accreditation requirements.

59.3 The Examination Committee will need to decide if they have sufficient evidence on which to base a decision on achievement of learning outcomes in respect of each individual student. The guiding principle is that there should be sufficient evidence on which to base the decision of the Committee. Sufficient information is not necessarily complete information, and the Committee must use its discretion in deciding whether the available run of marks is sufficient to determine a progression decision. Committees should consider the balance of evidence available about a particular candidate and consider whether sufficient learning outcomes have been met to be able to award a degree classification.

59.4 Committees considering candidates for whom professional accreditation issues arise must ensure that any decision based on incomplete results is consistent with the terms of the accreditation or is otherwise acceptable to the accrediting body. For some stages of a degree it may be appropriate to publish only a broad outcome (e.g. pass or fail) and then to reconvene if or when further information becomes available to determine a more detailed set of outcomes.

59.5 To avoid the risk of inconsistency in determining whether there is sufficient evidence for a decision to be made, The Examination Committee should seek advice from the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and/or Chair of Faculty Education Committee (FEC), in line with any further guidance issued.

59.6 Caution should be exercised, and if the Committee is not convinced that sufficient evidence exists to enable decisions to be made on an academically sound, fair and consistent basis, they should not be made. If this is the case:

59.7.a The Committee should empower the Chair to make decisions as required at a later date or otherwise arrange for a re-convened Committee.

59.7.b Where the Chair is given authority to act, the Chair shall consult the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and/or Chair of Faculty Education Committee (FEC) before acting.

59.8 In accordance with normal procedures, the Committee should retain a full minute when discretion is used – and, if appropriate, where discretion is withheld.

**W. Use of Marks after Reassessment or Discretion**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**X. Nature of the Dissertation Examination**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**Y. Recommendations Open to the Examiners**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**Z. The Award and Classification of Masters Degrees**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**AA. Award of a Postgraduate Diploma (exit award)**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**BB. Award of a Postgraduate Certificate (exit award)**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**CC. Minor Revisions or Corrections**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**DD. Recommendations After Resubmission of the Dissertation for Re-examination by the Internal Examiner**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**EE. Provision to the Candidate of Information about Revisions Required**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**FF. Communication of the Result to the Candidate**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**GG. Disagreement between the Examiners**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

**HH. Mid-year Student Withdrawals**

No EmSi Regulations are in this section, please refer to Standard Regulations.

