

## **VI EMERGENCY SITUATION [EmSi] RULES FOR BOARDS OF EXAMINERS**

### **Procedure for Boards of Examiners and Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committees for Taught Programmes**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

1. These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Assessment Regulations and the Progression and Classification Regulations for Specific Types of Programme. In addition, any Key Changes to University Regulations in an EmSi academic year must also be referred to.

These are supplementary regulations, which either adjust or redefine the sections below in times of Emergency Situations [EmSi]. The following regulations will be marked with the code [EmSi] next to the relevant section if there are supplementary regulations that need to be considered in such circumstances.

#### **B. The Board of Examiners**

##### **Chair of the Board**

**5.1.** The Chair of the Board of Examiners is required to inform the External Examiner/s ahead of the Board of Examiners of any adjustments to module delivery and/or assessment as a result of mitigating the impact of the Emergency Situation on students. Boards of Examiners routinely receive a brief report from the Chair to the Board regarding the PEC Committee considerations. For academic years where an Emergency Situation/s have been initiated, the Boards of Examiners should also receive a report of any relevant module adjustments (delivery, assessment and/or scaling) that have been made to mitigate the effects of the Emergency Situation on students. Boards of Examiners should be sufficiently appraised of adjustments which have been made prior to the Board of Examiners meeting so as to guard against multiple counting of impact when using their discretion to adjust for the impact of the Emergency Situation on students.

##### **Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Committee**

**9.1.** Key changes to University Regulations 2019/20 - April 2020 Addendum  
Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Committee

The Safety Nets approved by Senate and summarised in the Undergraduate and Masters students FAQs <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/wellbeing/coronavirus-updatedinformation/undergraduate-masters/#exams&assessment>, include both the baseline average provisions set out elsewhere in the EmSi rules and the following measures to help mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on students:

- a. Allowing all taught students the opportunity to defer their first attempts at assessment due for Semester 2 2019-20 to the next normal assessment period (August 2020 resit period) without the need to provide any supporting evidence, or for PEC approval. All requests will be automatically approved and progressed.
- b. Operating a simplified version of the Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) form/process, with no requirement for the submission of supporting evidence, to allow students to identify personal circumstances relating to them that have affected their academic performance.
- c. Utilising a new COVID-19 Impact Form to allow students to flag specific situations where there has been disruption or impact on learning with your module and programme. Details of the different types of mitigating circumstances forms and processes can be found here:  
<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/wellbeing/coronavirus-updatedinformation/support-for-students/mitigating-circumstances/>

### **10.1 Consideration of Dissertation or Project.**

In the case of dissertation or project modules any adjustments will have to be considered on both an individual and group basis. The dissertation or project module leader, or Head of School should maintain an 'impact log' stating which specific individual students are directly or significantly impacted by the Emergency Situation.

Where one student has received a PEC rating in relation to the impact of the Emergency Situation on their dissertation/project performance specifically (for example supervision impacted by Industrial Action, and reported via Industrial Action Impact Form IAIF), all other students on the module who were similarly exceptionally affected should also be considered by the PEC Committee irrespective of whether those students had submitted a PEC.

The PEC Committee should determine PEC ratings for all such students and where appropriate supported with documentation (IAIF). Where the Emergency Situation affects an entire cohort, if an alternative adjustment has already been implemented (for example alternative assessment methods or submission date), then the relevant Module Disruption forms should take account of this and be provided to the Chair of Module Moderation Board for consideration.

### **10.2**

#### **10.2a Additional PEC consideration relating to Emergency Situations**

Module Moderation Boards are responsible for reviewing all data associated with individual modules, including but not limited to information on previous year statistics, Module Disruption Form/Logs, Industrial Action and Covid-19 Impact Forms, in order to make judgements about the need to apply

adjustments to the marks. For HaSS only this involves the allocation of a Module Impact Rating (see section 10.2.c).

In Emergency Situations the PEC Committee will receive the outcomes of the Module Moderation Board's consideration and in HaSS the Module Impact Rating to consider where a student has submitted an individual PEC or Industrial Action Impact Form whether the circumstances raised are specific to the individual and have not already been mitigated against by the module level adjustment. In such cases a relevant individual PEC rating will be given for the student.

Additional meetings of the PEC Committee can be convened in order to consider additional PEC requests resulting from the Emergency Situation.

**10.2b Situation.** Where an adjustment has been made for the module assessment (either pre- assessment e.g. alteration of assessment or post marking e.g. scaling) a zero rating should be applied to the student's records, unless there are other serious individual personal circumstances which need to be taken into account. Module Moderation Board decisions must be informed by the module disruption forms recorded within each faculty and which are outlined in 'Guidance Document for Chairs and Secretaries to Boards of Examiners when using Standard and/or Emergency Situation [EmSi] Regulations'. If a school has made an appropriate adjustment to the assessment (or through scaling) an additional rating should not be applied to the individual's record to aid consistency across the Faculty/University.

### 10.2c Guidance on Rating

The following provides an explanation and suggestions for the level of discretion to be shown. These are guidelines only. The Board of Examiners has ultimate discretion to determine whether adjustment should be applied or not and how much discretion is appropriate and rely on the PEC Committee rating for determining the seriousness of the Personal Extenuating Circumstance affecting the studies/assessment of the student.

This rating needs to take account of the severity, duration and timing of the circumstance. This can cover all situations from a single module assessment to a whole year of study. NB: Boards of Examiners and PEC Committees may only make decisions within University regulations. In the rare event that an unusual adjustment is deemed necessary, the relevant Dean of Taught Programmes should be consulted.

Ratings for Extraordinary/Combined PEC Committee Outcomes

Rating	Support	Example
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0	No support	Where an appropriate adjustment has been made to the module either pre- or post-assessment or where no adjustment has been made but the circumstances do not warrant support for adjustment
1	Low Support	Where no obvious adjustment has been made, but the impact on the student may have caused a small adverse effect on performance or where no adjustment has been made but the circumstances do not warrant more than low support
2	Moderate Support	Where no adjustment has been made and the impact on the student may be significant and the impact on the student is likely to have had an adverse effect on performance or where adjustment has been made but the individual circumstances warrant further support
3	Strong Support	Where no adjustment has been made and the impact is likely to have had a severe impact on the student's performance on the module or where adjustment has been made but the individual circumstances warrant further strong support for additional adjustment

Where no adjustment has been made and the impact is likely to have had a severe impact on the student's performance on the module or where adjustment has been made but the individual circumstances warrant further strong support for additional adjustment then it is appropriate for the PEC Committee to provide a rating.

## C. Board of Examiners Procedures

**15.1.** Where the Board of Examiners may be meeting under an Emergency Situation (for example convened remotely, or at a later date than initially scheduled), there may be a delay in releasing decisions. Where there is likely to be a delay, the revised timings will be relayed to students.

**16.1.** During Board of Examiner meetings, the Chair must be mindful of all mark adjustments and mitigation in place to prevent an individual student or whole cohort being awarded multiple adjustments or mitigation for a single assessment task or module mark.

### **16.2. Baseline Average Calculations**

Where the Emergency Situation has required the calculation of baseline average information, the guidance and detail regarding this will be issued to staff and students in the academic year where this is relevant. As with all

marks generated up to the cut-off point for marks for the Baseline average, the Baseline average is a **provisional mark** that will be confirmed by the Board of Examiners *after* internal moderation and consideration by the External Examiner. Following this process, confirmed baseline averages will be recorded in NESS and presented to Board of Examiners. Confirmed baseline averages will supersede provisional baseline averages.

## **D. Releasing and Adjusting Marks**

**20.1.** Where an Emergency Situation has resulted in amended delivery of teaching, or mode of assessment (latter approved by the relevant Dean of Taught Programmes), a module level record will be maintained (module disruption forms) will be maintained by the School. The School maintains a list of modules that may have been affected by the Emergency Situation. Any action taken by the School to mitigate the impact of the Emergency Situation must be recorded against the module. Actions may include the following:

- Cohort Extension
- Alteration of Assessment
- Rescheduling of teaching sessions
- Alternative provision of material for students

This information log will be available to the Secretary/Chair of Board of Examiners, or Chair of Module Moderation Board, if not the same person, to inform the consideration of adjustment made by Moderation and Scaling. It is not the role of Module Moderation Boards to review the performance of individual students, however it may consider cases whereby a subset of students may be affected (e.g. group/stream). This may lead to a recommendation following a discussion between the Chair of the Board of Examiners, the Module Leader and other appropriate colleagues for consideration ahead of the Board of Examiners meeting.