



University of Wales  
Prifysgol Cymru

# Academic Protocol 1 Taught Initial Degrees

Academic Year 2009-2010

**Taught Initial Degrees**

This document shall apply to schemes of study validated by the University leading to the award at collaborative partner institutions of: Foundation Certificates and Degrees; University Certificates and Diplomas; Initial Degrees; Graduate Certificates and Diplomas; Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates (including PGCE awards).

The protocols should be read in conjunction with the Academic Regulations approved for the scheme of study in question; in the case of a dispute, the University's Academic Regulations shall prevail.

**Entry**

- 1 Candidates are admitted to schemes of study by institutions in accordance with the Regulations for Matriculation and, in the case of modular schemes of study for which advanced standing may be given, the appropriate provisions of the relevant University Regulations and the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Schemes (CATS).

**Information to be Supplied to Candidates**

- 2 All candidates shall be informed in writing by the Institution concerned at the beginning of the relevant session of the following:
  - i. methods of assessment to be used in their schemes including the weighting given to the assessment components of each unit;
  - ii. information concerning the University's Verification and Appeals Procedure;
  - iii. information concerning the University's 'Unfair Practice Procedure';
  - iv. that any exceptional personal circumstances which may have adversely affected their academic performance must be reported to the appropriate Examining Board(s) prior to the meetings of Examining Boards.

**The Superintendent of Examinations**

- 3 Each institution shall nominate a Superintendent of Examinations who shall be responsible for the conduct, probity and security of examinations/assessments at his/her institution. The responsibilities of the Superintendent shall include:
  - i. nomination of invigilators and the making of arrangements for invigilation of examinations (so that normally one invigilator acts for each group of fifty candidates or fewer); and
  - ii. the making of appropriate arrangements for dealing with absentees from examinations/assessments in accordance with the provisions of this document,

including notification of cases to Examining Boards and the recording and reporting of such cases;

- 4 Each candidate shall be examined at the partner institution at which he or she has pursued the scheme save that, in exceptional circumstances, a candidate may, with the approval of the University sit a written examination, under approved conditions, at another comparable institution or place. Approval may be given to such requests provided that satisfactory arrangements can be made for the examination by the Institution concerned that where the same paper is to be sat by other candidates the examination is taken at the same time as the paper in the institution and that any expense incurred will be borne by the candidate.
- 5 Candidates shall inform the institution concerned *within the first month of the academic session* if they are unable, on religious grounds, to take examinations on certain days. The Superintendent of Examinations of the institution shall, as far as possible, take account of this request during the compilation of the examinations time-table.
- 6 Any candidate who is following a scheme of study of the University of Wales may choose – regardless of whether the main language of assessment of the scheme in question is Welsh or English – to submit examination scripts or assessed work in either Welsh or English. A candidate who wishes to be assessed in a language (ie. one of either Welsh or English) which is not the main language of tuition/assessment for the scheme concerned is required to notify the Institution Registrar by the time-limit laid down by the institution.
- 7 The Superintendent (or nominee/equivalent) shall liaise appropriately regarding:
  - i. the provision of question papers through the medium of Welsh or English;
  - ii. the necessary arrangements, which must be approved by the external examiner(s), for the translation and/or marking of scripts in time for the inclusion of candidates' results on the official Notification of Results form;
  - iii. the engagement of a suitable person or persons to act as advisory examiners or (at an approved fee) as translators.
  - iv. Preparation of Examination Papers
- 8 Examination papers shall be prepared by institutions following their approval by the external examiner(s) concerned.

### **Special Examination Arrangements**

- 9 Institutions shall make reasonable adjustments for candidates with special needs, in compliance with the requirements of prevailing legislation. Good practice guidelines on such provision are attached in an Appendix to this document.

## **Conduct of Examinations**

- 10 An invigilator shall not admit any candidate to the examination room without the authority of the Superintendent of Examinations.
- 11 During the whole examination, the invigilators shall maintain a constant supervision over the candidates and shall see that candidates are provided with the necessary materials. They shall inspect all materials brought into the examination room by candidates and shall see that every candidate complies with the "Directions to Candidates".
- 12 No candidates may enter the examination room thirty minutes or more after the commencement of an examination.
- 13 Candidates are not permitted to leave the examination room until forty five minutes have elapsed, nor may they leave in the last fifteen minutes of the examination. Any candidate who has left the room without the invigilators' authority shall not be allowed to re-enter it during the examination. Under special circumstances, the invigilator may act according to his/her discretion and the circumstances shall be reported to the Superintendent of Examinations. No candidate shall be allowed to take any copy of an examination paper from the examination room until at least forty-five minutes have elapsed from the start of the examination.
- 14 During each examination the invigilator shall have power to exclude from the examination room all persons save officers of the University or staff of the the institution and the candidates sitting examination. The invigilator shall prevent any unauthorised communication on the part of the candidates amongst themselves or with any other person.
- 15 An invigilator who considers or suspects that a candidate is engaging in an unfair examination practice shall inform that candidate, preferably in the presence of a witness, that the circumstances will be reported and that he may continue that and any subsequent examinations without prejudice to any decision which may be taken, but failure to warn shall not prejudice subsequent proceedings. Where appropriate, the invigilator shall confiscate and retain evidence relating to any alleged unfair examination practice, so that it is available to any subsequent investigation. The invigilator shall as soon as possible report the circumstances in writing to the Chair of the relevant Examining Board.
- 16 The invigilator shall collect the scripts and arrange for their transmission to the Superintendent of Examinations or his/her nominee(s) who shall then arrange for their transmission to appropriate examiners, together with the surplus copies of the examination paper or papers and a form giving the names of candidates who did not submit scripts.

The invigilators shall make a report to the Superintendent of Examinations on the conduct of the examinations, drawing attention to any special circumstances. An institution form containing this information and a signed declaration that the examination has been conducted in accordance with this Academic Protocol shall be sent by the invigilator to the Superintendent of Examinations.

## **Absence from Examinations and Assessments**

- 17 A candidate may be deemed absent with good cause from an examination or assessment because of documented illness, accident, close bereavement or on closely related compassionate grounds.

*Provisions Specific to Candidates for Modular Schemes of Study*

- 18 The Examining Board concerned shall have discretion to decide whether, on the basis of the evidence received, a candidate has been absent with good cause.

- 19 A candidate who, without good cause, has been absent from any University examination or failed to complete other forms of assessment by the required date, shall be awarded a zero mark for the examination concerned. This zero mark shall be treated as any other mark in an Examining Board's procedure for arriving at the degree result. If the Examining Board's procedure involves an averaging exercise, the zero mark must be included as a mark. Examining Boards must not arrive at a mark for the missed examination by averaging the candidate's other marks or by arriving at a mark derived from the candidate's performance during the session. Where the missed examination is only a component of the overall assessment for a unit, the mark gained in the other assessment component shall be counted, pro-rata, in arriving at degree results.

- 20 If a candidate completes a module but is absent from the examination/assessment concerned for good cause, the institution may permit the candidate:

- i. to sit a supplementary examination or a special oral examination, before the meeting of the Examining Board; *or*
- ii. to sit the examination or submit the assessed work, as a first attempt on the next occasion on which the examination/assessment is scheduled to take place.

- 21 If an Examining Board is satisfied that a candidate is absent for good cause from a final examination/assessment following his/her presentation to the University, provided that the Examining Board is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds, it may:

- i. award the qualification without further examination/assessment provided that at least two thirds of the modules which count towards the final award have been completed successfully;
- ii. recommend that the candidate receives an *aegrotat* award.

- 22 The provisions described at (i) and (ii) immediately above may be made only if (a) the external examiner agrees that the supporting evidence is satisfactory, (b) if the candidate's performance in other examinations or assessed work justifies such action and (c) if the authorisation of the Vice-Chancellor has been obtained.

- 23 Examining Boards shall have discretion to apply the provisions of paragraph 22, above, to candidates who attend examinations/assessments but produce evidence subsequently of illness, accident, close bereavement or of other closely associated compassionate grounds.

*Provisions Specific to Candidates for Non-Modular Schemes of Study*

- 24 Where candidates are absent for good cause from all or a proportion of their University examinations, the Vice-Chancellor may authorise *either* (i) the setting of supplementary papers *or* (ii) the holding of a special oral examination or examinations. Either of these courses of action shall be subject to the approval of the external examiner, who shall attend any oral examination(s) held. Where supplementary examination papers or oral examinations are set they shall be completed before the meeting of the Examining Board concerned.
- 25 Where the setting of supplementary examination papers or the holding of a special oral examination has been considered but is not practicable, the Vice-Chancellor may authorise an Examining Board, or Boards, to award a Final Year candidate for an initial degree *either* (i) an Ordinary degree, in the case of candidates entered for such a degree *or* (ii) a Pass degree, or a classified Honours degree, in the case of Honours candidates. In either case such an award may be made without further examination in the paper or papers from which the candidate has been absent provided that the Examining Board is satisfied that the candidate's performance in his/her other examinations and in other assessed work justifies such an action.
- 26 In the case of Penultimate Year candidates the provisions of paragraph 26 shall apply, except that, where no more than two supplementary examinations are to be held, the Vice-Chancellor may, on the recommendation of the Examining Board(s), grant permission for such a candidate to be re-presented for the papers concerned in the final year of the scheme of study (when final year examinations are held).
- 27 Where Penultimate Year candidates have been absent for good cause from more than two examinations and are required, as a consequence, to take more than two supplementary examinations, the Examining Board may:
- i. require such candidates to re-present themselves for the supplementary examinations in their final year of study (when final year examinations are held) *or*
  - ii. allow such candidates to re-present themselves for supplementary examinations in the September immediately following *or*
  - iii. allow such candidates to suspend their studies for one year and to present themselves for penultimate year University Examinations in the following session (provided that the time-limits prescribed by regulation will not thereby be exceeded).

Candidates dealt with under (i)-(iii) above shall be entered for examination in the same subject, at the same level, without payment of any fee.

- 28 Where candidates are absent for good cause from a practical examination, or practical examinations, the Vice-Chancellor may authorise the award of a pass to candidates in such a part of the examination.
- 29 Where candidates are absent from one or more University Examinations without good cause, they shall be awarded a zero mark in respect of the paper(s) concerned. This zero mark shall be treated as any other mark in an Examining Board's procedure for arriving at degree results or pass marks. If the Examining Board's procedure involves an averaging exercise, the zero mark must be included as a mark, as illustrated at (i) below; Examining

Boards must not arrive at a mark for the missed paper(s) by averaging the candidate's marks in the papers for which he/she was present (as at (ii) below) or by arriving at an assessment mark (as at (iii) below);

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Total	Ave	Class
(i)	57	58	60	60	65	ABS 0	300	50	2.2
(ii)	57	58	60	60	65	A60	360	60	2.1
(iii)	57	58	60	60	65	A55	355	59	2.2

- 30 If a candidate is prevented by illness or other sufficient cause from attempting the whole or part of a University examination for an initial degree, diploma or certificate, the University may, on the special recommendation of the institution concerned, and upon such further evidence and subject to such conditions as it shall think fit, either:
- i. award such candidate an *aegrotat* degree, diploma, or certificate without Honours or Distinction; or
  - ii. allow such candidate to be presented for the University examinations which they had missed in a subsequent year provided that in the case of a candidate for a degree of Bachelor the time limit prescribed by regulation shall not have expired.
- 31 The foregoing paragraph shall not exempt a candidate from presenting a dissertation or thesis when such is prescribed. Candidates proceeding to a degree, diploma, or certificate which entitles the holder to registration for a professional qualification, or to any exemption from part or the whole or any requirements for a professional qualification shall not necessarily or automatically be granted such registration or exemption.
- 32 If a candidate is absent because of illness, close bereavement or closely-related compassionate grounds from more than two final examinations, the Vice-Chancellor may authorise such a candidate to be re-presented for the Final Examination in the August/September immediately following the absence. Approval may be given provided that any such special case is submitted with the agreement of the Examining Board concerned; is (for candidates absent because of illness) supported by convincing medical certification; and is able to demonstrate why the usual provisions of the Academic Regulations and these Protocols should not be applied.

## Retrieval of Failure

### *Modular Schemes*

- 33 Where a candidate is required to repeat the assessment for one or more modules prior to the start of the following academic year, the re-assessment shall, unless the Examining Board decides that this is not practicable, be of the same structure and be based upon the same syllabus as the assessment at the time of the initial failure.
- 34 Where a candidate is permitted to repeat one or more failed modules as an internal candidate, the repeat assessment shall be of the same structure and be based upon the syllabus taught to all internal candidates at the time of their re-assessment.

- 35 Where a candidate is re-sitting the assessment as an external candidate, the reassessment will normally be the same as for candidates sitting internally unless the Examining Board decides otherwise.
- 36 Where a candidate is re-sitting the assessment as an external candidate and the structure of the assessment is different from that at the time of the initial failure and/or the reassessment is to be based upon a different syllabus, the Head of Department concerned shall inform the candidate in advance of changes in the structure of the assessment and syllabus content.
- 37 A candidate who passes a module in which he/she has previously failed shall be awarded the minimum pass mark only.
- 38 In the event of a candidate failing to complete the required amount of assessed work by the required date, an Examining Board shall apply such penalty as is determined by Regulations or as it may consider appropriate in the circumstances. Penalties may include *inter alia* the lowering of a mark, the award of a fail grade or failing the candidate in that particular unit. However, where there are extenuating circumstances such as illness or accident which have prevented a candidate from completing assessed work by the required date, the Examining Board may allow an extension of the period for the submission of the assessed work, provided that there is sufficient time for adequate and proper assessment of the work prior to the meeting of the Examining Board. Appropriate medical or other evidence shall be submitted to the Chair or his/her nominee in support of the illness or accident.

*Retrieval of Failures: Non-Modular Schemes*

- 39 A candidate for Honours or Joint Honours who is unclassified and who also fails to reach the required standard for a pass degree, may, on the recommendation of the Examining Board, be permitted to sit an examination in a subsequent year which would enable him/her to qualify for a degree at pass level. This examination may be taken internally or externally on not more than two occasions subsequent to the initial failure and within a period of five years from the date of the examination of the first presentation. Such a candidate shall not be eligible for the award of Honours or Joint Honours.

**Examining Boards**

- 40 Each partner institution shall establish a final Examining Board or Boards to consider results and make recommendations on candidates pursuing schemes leading to awards of the University. Institutions shall establish conventions for such meetings, subject to adherence to guidance issued by the Validation Board (for example, on the matter of a quorum).
- 41 In addition to the final Examining Board(s), institutions may also establish:

Joint/Composite Examining Boards;  
Modular Unit Examining Boards (modular schemes only).

In both cases, marks awarded shall be subject to ratification by the external examiner(s).

42 For each final Examining Board there shall be:

- i. A Chair, appointed by the Institution, who shall be a senior member of the full-time academic staff. [In addition to the Chair, there may be a Convenor who shall be a member of the full-time academic staff appointed by the Department or Institution concerned who will be responsible for administrative arrangements associated with the work of the Examining Board which would otherwise be carried out by the Chair.];
- ii. An external examiner (or examiners) appointed on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor on the recommendation of the Institution;
- iii. An internal examiner (or examiners) and/or representative(s) of relevant modules appointed by the Institution;
- iv. The moderator(s) appointed by the University who shall attend in an advisory capacity.
- v. The Chair of the Examining Board may invite appropriate persons to attend a meeting of an Examining Board in an advisory capacity. Such persons shall possess no voting rights.

43 Each Examining Board shall meet normally at the partner institution concerned as and when required to consider students' performance and to make decisions on termination of study, progression and recommendations on award of degrees or intermediate awards as appropriate.

44 In the unexplained absence of any examiner from a meeting, the Chair shall take such steps as he/she thinks fit for the due performance of the business of the meeting, and may adjourn it for that purpose. If the Chair is absent, and the Examining Board conventions approved by the University so provide, the Examining Board shall appoint one of its members to the Chair.

#### *Special Provisions for Examining Boards for Modular Schemes*

45 The following shall be required to be in attendance where an Examining Board meets to consider the results of *modular units of study only*: the Chair; Convenor (where appropriate); the relevant internal examiner(s) and the external examiner (where the Examining Board is meeting after the main summer examining period or at the end of the Session).

46 During Semester One, the external examiner(s) shall perform all the tasks normally associated with examining such as the approval of examination papers. The external examiner(s) will not be required to attend Examining Board meetings but may do so if he or she wishes. Consultation shall take place by correspondence or other appropriate means. The external examiner(s) shall attend Examining Board meetings and perform all functions normally associated with examining in Semester Two.

#### *Final Examining Boards*

- 47 The University shall supply to the Chair of each Examining Board an official notification of results form in respect of those candidates who have been presented for their final examinations. In accordance with instructions on the results form, the Examining Board shall indicate thereon the results of those candidates who pass the final examinations with or without classified Honours where appropriate. The completed notification of results form shall be returned to the University Registry within one working day; a copy shall be retained by the Registrar of the partner institution.
- 48 The notification of results form shall be signed by the Chair of the Examining Board and by the external examiner(s) and internal examiner(s) present. In respect of those external examiners not present, suitable arrangements shall be made for obtaining their endorsement of the results proposed.
- 49 Where a case of suspected unfair practice is the subject of investigation at the time that a result form is issued, the result of the candidate concerned shall be withheld (the result form should be marked 'subject to unfair practice investigation'). A supplementary form should be issued and completed later, if appropriate.
- 50 If a case of suspected unfair practice arises after the publication of a pass list, and the allegation against a candidate is established, then the Examining Board(s) concerned shall review and re-determine the candidate's result in the light of any penalty which may have been imposed. In such circumstances, the Examining Board(s) shall, if necessary, cancel a result previously published and the University Registry shall issue a supplementary pass list for completion as appropriate.
- 51 In the case of candidates with outstanding debts, results should be recorded and released to candidates. Should an institution wish the University to withhold the award certificate until payment of the sum(s) due is made, an appropriate note should be attached to the results form.
- 52 All Examining Boards shall follow conventions which must be approved by the Validation Board and current copies of which must be lodged with the University. These conventions may include procedures or mechanisms for the exercise of discretion by the Examining Board (including any arrangements established for compensation/ condonement mechanisms) and, in the case of candidates for initial degrees, shall accord with the following University scales for classification of awards:
- |                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 70 per cent and over | I Honours      |
| 60-69                | II(i) Honours  |
| 50-59                | II(ii) Honours |
| 40-49                | III Honours    |
| 35-39                | Pass Degree    |
| 0-34                 | Fail           |
- 53 A record of the marks attained by candidates in all assessed work contributing to the final award shall be available at the Examining Board.

### **Publication of Pass Lists**

- 54 The University Registry, upon receipt of a completed results form, shall print and publish a University pass list showing those candidates who have qualified for University awards. A copy of the list shall be distributed to the Registrar of the institution concerned.
- 55 The original copies of the signed notification of results forms received from Institutions shall be retained by the University.

### **Admission to Degrees**

- 56 The process through which candidates are admitted to degrees is prescribed by Regulations. In brief, however, candidates at partner institutions are admitted to their degrees by decree of the Vice-Chancellor; this is an administrative procedure carried out at frequent intervals throughout the year.
- 57 It is the responsibility of the University Registry to issue final award certificates and academic transcripts in respect of validated awards.

### **Appeals**

- 58 Candidates who wish to appeal against a decision of the examiners are allowed to do so under the terms of the University's Verification and Appeals Procedure. (The Procedure is made available to candidates for University examinations by the institution concerned.)

### **Aegrotat/Posthumous Awards**

- 59 The University has established Regulations under which awards of aegrotat or of posthumous qualifications may be made.

## Contact

Copies of any of the procedures, Regulations or other guidance mentioned in this document may be obtained from Registry of the partner institution or directly from the University's Validation Unit (as below) or from the following website: ([www.wales.ac.uk/validation](http://www.wales.ac.uk/validation))

Postal address: The University of Wales Validation Unit  
University of Wales Registry  
King Edward VII Avenue  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NS

Telephone: (02920) 376999

e-mail: [validation@wales.ac.uk](mailto:validation@wales.ac.uk)

## **Guidelines For Making Reasonable Adjustments to Examination/Assessment Arrangements**

### **Introduction**

1. The variation of assessment arrangements is intended to enable all students to have the same opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of specific learning outcomes:
  - without compromising academic standards or affecting prescribed standards of professional bodies,
  - and taking into account the guidance in the QAA Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 3: Students with disabilities and relevant legislation (including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001).
2. At the same time, institutions may choose to develop a more inclusive approach by, for example, considering the use of alternative methods of assessment.

### **Guidelines**

3. The Superintendent of Examinations may permit reasonable adjustments to the arrangements for the conduct of examinations for disabled students.
4. The Institution is responsible for taking all reasonable steps to identify the support needs of disabled students and shall publish clear information on the procedure and time limits for requesting reasonable adjustments. It is the student's responsibility to inform the Institution if he/she expects to have additional specific needs.
5. An application for reasonable adjustment shall be supported by appropriate documentary evidence. The disability may remain constant but the type of adjustment may vary over time. Requests shall normally be disregarded if not supported by appropriate documentary evidence. In the case of students with dyslexia, a report must be received from a qualified psychologist experienced in working with dyslexic adults or from someone with a qualification from a professional training course involving assessing adults with dyslexia.
6. The procedure and time-limit for making an application for reasonable adjustment shall be specified by the institution concerned. The student should be made aware that it may not be possible to process an application outside the specified deadline in time for an examination which has already been scheduled. The procedure shall direct the student to the first point of contact. Where a student's circumstances are known to be prolonged or permanent, the identification of specific needs may be initiated prior to the start of the session.

7. A range of reasonable adjustments may be considered at the discretion of the institution. These may be technical, for example, use of a PC, or may require a change in the location of the examination or may be facilitated by the use of an appropriate Support Worker (allocated by the Institution). More than one adjustment may be required. In some cases, an appropriate reasonable adjustment may be to change the method of assessment in order to allow the students to demonstrate their ability; this will need to be agreed with the relevant academic staff to ensure comparability.
8. The adjustment shall depend on the nature of the disability and shall take into account the advice of Disability Services and relevant specialists, the student's preference and the nature of the assessment. Where there is professional body accreditation, these adjustments will need to be undertaken in consultation with that body.
9. The choice of adjustment may be limited by the available technical, physical and human resources.
10. The adjustment shall comply with the requirements for invigilation and security to ensure the effective conduct of the examination.
11. The Institution, on receipt of a recommendation for reasonable adjustments, shall decide whether or not to approve the application and the provision which shall be made available to the student. The decision of the Institution shall be final.
12. The institution shall indicate how and by whom the student will be informed of the adjustment which has been approved. The range of adjustments can be amended subsequently, where this is required to meet the changing needs of the individual student.
13. Depending on the adjustment provided, students shall be advised to familiarise themselves with its use before the examinations take place.
14. Students shall inform the Superintendent in good time if the adjustment needs to be modified or is no longer required.
15. The School/Department shall be notified of the adjustment which has been approved. The Examining Board shall receive a list of students with approved adjustments and no further allowance shall be made in reaching a decision on the performance of the student in the examination.
16. The student may request a review of the case if he/she feels that the agreed adjustment does not meet his/her individual needs. The procedure for requesting a review shall be specified by the institution.

### **Temporary Illness or Disability**

17. A student who has submitted to the Superintendent of Examinations a medical certificate that he or she is unable through illness or accident to attend at the examination room but is fit to undergo examination may be examined in a special room if the Superintendent is able to make satisfactory arrangements for the

examination and with the support of the School/Department. Other adjustments may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent.

**Students whose first language is not English or Welsh**

18. The use of foreign language bilingual dictionaries in examinations shall be determined at the discretion of the Institution.
19. Arrangements for the use of a British Sign Language (BSL) communicator and other adjustments shall be made in consultation with Disability Services or other specialised staff.

University of Wales Registry  
King Edward VII Avenue  
Cathays Park  
CARDIFF  
CF10 3NS

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