

Communication to postgraduate research students

As you may be aware, the University is moving to a different standard structure for the academic year from September 2013. This will mean that:

- The introductory week for new students will start one week earlier than previously (beginning 23 Sept in 2013).
- Teaching Block 1 will also begin one week earlier than previously (beginning 30 Sept in 2013).
- The Christmas and Easter vacations will each be three weeks long in future (reduced from four weeks). The Christmas vacation will start on 23 Dec in 2013, and the Easter vacation on 7 April in 2014.
- For students on programmes that have a standard structure there will be two dedicated assessment periods (one at the end of each Teaching Block). These periods will comprise two weeks in January and three weeks in May/June. In 2014, these periods will start on 13 January and 19 May.
- For students on programmes that have examinations in May/June, there will be a dedicated revision week before the examinations start. In 2014 this revision week will be 12 – 16 May.
- For students on programmes which offer re-sit opportunities towards the end of summer, the re-sit examination period will be in late August /early September (beginning 28 Aug in 2014).

As a postgraduate research student, these changes to the structure of the academic year will only affect you directly if (a) you teach or (b) your programme of study includes a taught element that will be modified by these changes. In case (a) you will receive details of your teaching commitments from your School in the normal way and in case (b) **you will be informed by your Programme Director of any changes to teaching dates or assessment dates that are relevant to your studies.** However, it is important that you are all aware of these changes as they will affect the way that the University operates from September 2013.

The key dates for 2013/14 academic year are available on the [University almanac](#) and we advise you to check these in conjunction with any information you receive from your School or your Programme Director.

The University has worked with the Students' Union to formulate the new structure of the academic year, which aims to improve the overall educational experience for students. Improvements include:

- More of the academic year will be dedicated to teaching and learning.
- Most students will now get a clear break (either holiday or dedicated revision period) between their main teaching and assessment periods.
- For some students, moving to two dedicated assessment periods will spread the assessment load across the year and give more time for marking and student feedback.
- There should no longer be clashes between assessment and teaching activities
- There will be greater consistency across the University of teaching and assessment arrangements, benefiting students that study across more than one academic area.

If you have any questions about the new structure of the academic year and how it will affect you, please contact your supervisor or your Programme Director in the first instance. If you still have questions, please contact the Students' Union's "Just Ask" service on ubu-justask@bristol.ac.uk. The Students' Union will assist you with your enquiry and also will collate any queries so that they can develop a set of web based Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to assist other students.

Professor Nick Lieven (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education)

Paul Charlton (UBU President)