

## Further guidance on the structure of the academic year from 2013/14

This guidance follows the communication from the PVC (Education & Students) to organisational heads in June 2012 and seeks to provide further clarity on what may or may not take place during the revision and assessment periods. This guidance relates to undergraduate and postgraduate study, unless stated otherwise. It is recognised that there may be more exceptions approved for postgraduate study because of their greater variability.

It also sets out the process for the approval of exceptional cases.

### 1. General principles

- i. Teaching will start at the beginning of teaching block 1 **except** for agreed exceptions. (Please note, teaching block 1 will begin one week earlier than previously).
- ii. There will be no summative examinations outside the January, May/June, or August/September re-sit examination periods **except** for agreed exceptions.
- iii. Students must be assessed during or at the end of the teaching block in which a unit is run **except** for agreed exceptions.
- iv. No teaching on a given programme (other than revision sessions) may take place in the revision and open unit exams week after the end of teaching block 2 **except** where **all** the students on that programme have no assessment scheduled in the following week.
- v. No teaching on a given programme may take place in either the January or May/June examination periods **except** where **all** the students on that programme have no assessments scheduled for that period or for other agreed exceptions.
- vi. The clinical years of medical, dental and veterinary undergraduate programmes and other specified professional programmes<sup>1</sup> are not bound by the standard academic year structure but the programme directors should attempt to apply principles ii-vi as far as possible.
- vii. Postgraduate taught dissertations should be submitted one week earlier than currently, to align with the new structure and timing of the academic year.

### 2. Approval of exceptions

- i. Where there is a good academic reason to request an exception from one or more of the general principles set out in section 1, the programme director should make a case to the relevant Faculty Education Director (FED). If the FED approves the case, it will go to the relevant Academic Director of Studies for final approval. The Academic Directors of Studies will jointly monitor the number and nature of such exceptions and report on them annually to Education Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> PGCE, DEdPsy, DSocSci, EdD, EngD, all MEd programmes, MSc in Social Work, MSc in Advanced Social Work with Children & Families, MSc in Disability Studies, MSc in Educational Research, MSc in Science & Education, MSc in Systems, Learning & Leadership, MSc in Education, Technology & Society, MSc in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, MPhil/PhD in Education, MEd/Diploma/Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, MSc in Transfusion and Transplantation Sciences, MSc in Meat Science and Technology, MRes in Systems Neuroscience, MSc in Reproduction and Development, MSc in Stem Cells and Regeneration, MSc in Molecular Neuroscience, MSc in Translational Cardiovascular Medicine, MSc/Diploma in Dental Postgraduate Studies, MSc/Diploma/Cert in Teaching and Learning for Health Professionals, DDS in Orthodontics

### 3. Detailed guidance for specific periods during the academic year

#### January assessment period (2 weeks)

Guidance	Possible exceptions
TB1 units to be assessed before or during this period.  Formal exams will take place during this period.	Where an academic exception has been approved by the FED and relevant Academic Director.
No teaching to take place, including TB4 units.	Where an exception has been approved for a programme on the grounds that <b>all</b> the students on that programme have no assessments (of any kind) scheduled for this period.  In UG programmes, where there is no assessment during the January period, or after the assessment has been completed, academic departments are encouraged to use this time for teaching, study skills development and revision.
Formal examinations to take priority over other types of assessment during this period, to avoid clashes as far as possible.	
All relevant students expected to be in attendance – UGs, PGTs and any PGRs with scheduled assessment or teaching.	Only with extenuating circumstances.

#### Revision/open unit examination week (week before main summer exam period)

Guidance	Possible exceptions
No teaching to take place other than revision classes.	Where an exception has been approved for a programme on the grounds that <b>all</b> the students on that programme have no exams in the following week.
No exams or other assessment <b>except</b> Open Unit exams (including language units taken as Open Units).  Where Open Unit exams are scheduled in this week, teaching is still permitted in the preceding week (the last week of TB2).	Where an exception has been approved for a programme to schedule coursework assessments in this week on the grounds that <b>all</b> the students on that programme have no exams in the following week.
All relevant students expected to be in attendance – UGs, PGTs and any PGRs with scheduled assessment or teaching.	Only with extenuating circumstances.

#### Summer assessment period (3 weeks)

<b>Guidance</b>	<b>Possible exceptions</b>
TB2 units to be assessed before or during this period.  Formal exams will take place during this period.	Where an academic exemption has been approved by the FED and relevant Academic Director.
Year-long (TB4) units to be assessed before or during this period.  Formal exams will take place during this period.	
All relevant students expected to be in attendance for the weeks of the summer assessment period and the following week–UGs, PGTs and any PGRs with scheduled assessment or teaching.	Only with extenuating circumstances.

**Re-sit examination period - (start on the Wednesday of August Bank Holiday week)**

<b>Guidance</b>	<b>Possible exceptions</b>
Re-sits will take place at this time and all students with re-sits must be available for exams in this period.	Those re-sits that normally take place in July (e.g. the clinical programmes in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry).

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