

Summary of Changes to regulations and Policies for 2015-16

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

APPEALS POLICY

ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK POLICY

AUDITING MODULES POLICY

COURSEWORK SUBMISSION POLICY

GENERAL AND ADMISSIONS REGULATIONS

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

TAUGHT DEGREE REGULATIONS

WORD COUNT AND OVER-LENGTH COURSEWORK POLICY

GENERAL AND ADMISSIONS REGULATIONS (Approved by AB on 9th June 2015)

1. Re-ordered and re-formatted the regulations so that information is more accessible and easier to use.
2. Combined all admissions regulations into one place rather than scattered across the taught and research degree regulations (Regulations 5 and 6).
3. Broadened Regulation 4 to include the possibility of the School to revoke an award in exceptional circumstances.
4. Revised the regulations on academic misconduct to incorporate new forms of misconduct such as falsifying data and contract cheating.

TAUGHT DEGREE REGULATIONS (Approved by AB on 9th June 2015)

1. Formatting of the regulations
The undergraduate and postgraduate taught degree regulations and classification schemes have been combined into a single regulatory framework. This covers the following programmes:
 - Undergraduate Degrees, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas
 - Postgraduate taught degrees, Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas
2. Terminology [Regulation 7.1]
Removed confusion and aligned the School's terminology with national frameworks, the term 'Course' has been replaced by 'Module' in the regulations and associated policies and procedures. It has been made clear that at SOAS, modules are referred to as Courses or Course Units. (This means that departments will not have to change all of the documentation at this stage.)
3. Credit Framework and Qualifications [Regulation 2.2]
Reference to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) has been included to demonstrate how the School's awards align with the framework.

4. Exit Awards [Regulation 2.3]

The option of awarding exit awards has been included for students who fail to complete their named qualification or wish to withdraw from their degree course and have sufficient credits at the correct level for a lower level qualification.

5. Annual progression requirements [Regulation 9]

- Removal of requirement to undertake all assessment elements
- Addition of higher qualifying mark for progression to Year 2 for the BA Arabic (in line with the same regulations for BA Japanese.)

6. Resit regulations [Regulation 11]

The following changes have been incorporated:

- Removal of the separate resit regulations for 80/20 modules
- Removal the distinction between fails at 0-19 (where students have to repeat in the following year) and 20-39 (repeat at the earliest opportunity)
- Students automatically entered for all failed assessment elements where the module has been failed overall.
- Statement that all students will be re-assessed at the next available opportunity (i.e. late summer for non-finalists and the following academic year for UG finalists and PGTs.)
- No assessment elements should be non-repeatable except in exceptional circumstances. Alternative assessments should be agreed at the module approval stage, based on learning outcomes.
- Removal of the differentiation between fails, fails due to late submissions, and fails due to non-submissions. All fails are treated in the same way and normal resit requirements apply.
- Removal of the option for students to resubmit revised versions of failed assignments. Students will be required to take new assessments just as they sit new resit examinations. The exception to this will be Independent Study Projects and Postgraduate Dissertations where the submission of a new piece of work is not feasible.)

7. Deferral procedures and mitigating circumstances

The separate procedures for deferring examinations and postgraduate dissertations have been removed. Such requests have been incorporated into the mitigating circumstances policy so that there is a single procedure to follow and cases are treated equally.

8. Repeat Years of Study [Regulation 4.10]

- Combined the various regulations on repeat years into one section
- Clarified that repeat years (full or part-time) will only be permitted where there are mitigating circumstances which have had a long-term impact. Students cannot opt to repeat the year just because they wish to achieve a better mark (this advantaged those students who could afford the cost of repeating the year over those who could not.)

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY (Approved by LTQC on 3rd June 2015)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Clarified that the policy applies to all students studying at SOAS including Research Degree students.

2. Academic Misconduct (AM)

- 2.1 Definitions of AM broadened to include excessive proof-reading, contract cheating, falsification of data and self-plagiarism.
- 2.4 Introduced a definition of minor and major plagiarism
- 2.5 Introduced clear information about self-plagiarism
- 2.6 Introduced clear information about repeat offences
- 2.7 Introduced clear information about how mitigating circumstances relate to AM cases
- 2.8 Introduced clear information about contract cheating
- 2.9 Introduced a procedure for investigating contract cheating

3. Procedure for Investigating Academic Misconduct (AM)

- 3.2 Clarified the roles of the Faculties and Registry in the investigation process and listed the various stages of the investigation.

4. Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP)

- 4.2 Revised the membership to remove the Director of Student and Registry Services and replace them with a member of academic staff from the student's home department. Also, clarified that the Secretary is not involved in the decision-making process.

5. Penalty tariffs for taught degrees

- 5.1 Formalised the list of tariffs for academic misconduct for taught degree students.

6. Penalty tariffs for research degrees

- 6.1 Formalised the list of tariffs for academic misconduct for research degree students.

7. Appeal

- 7.1 Replaced the separate appeal procedure for AM cases with the standard School process to ensure equity of treatment.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY (Approved by LTQC on 3rd June 2015)

General Information

- 1.1 Emphasised that MCs are unexpected, non-academic events and that the School operates an evidence-based approach.
- 1.4 Stressed that claims must not be submitted as insurance against poor performance. Submitting false claims will be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedures.

What are Mitigating Circumstances?

- 2.1 Clarified that MCs are short-term events
- 2.2 Clarified that MCs are non-academic problems. Academic problems should be dealt with via the School's Complaints Procedure.
- 2.3 Clarified the list of acceptable and unacceptable MCs

Long-term health conditions/ Pregnancy/ Disabilities

- 3.1 Clarified that pregnancy is also covered by the MC policy
- 3.1 Clarified when long-term health conditions/ Pregnancy/ Disabilities would come under the remit of the MC Policy
- 3.2 Added a link to the Student Advice and Wellbeing website

Specific Learning Differences (updated April 2016)

- Information integrated into Coursework Submission Policy.

Submission Procedures and Deadlines

- 5.4 Clarified how sensitive information will be treated.
- 5.6 Faculty Offices will no longer issue receipts for MCs. Students must keep a scan/photocopy of their signed MC form and the documentary evidence. This will serve as proof that evidence was obtained at the time of the MCs occurring should a claim go missing.
- 5.7 Clarified that dates for the submission of MSc will be included in the Assessment Calendar and the Faculty MCPs must occur in the same week.

Appendix B – Decision available to the Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP)

- B5 MCs are no longer graded as minor/major or as being short-term/long-term (MCs are short-term events). By their very nature, MCs should be major and minor cases will be rejected. The MCP will accept or reject the claim based on the requirements for acceptable MCs. These decisions will be forwarded to the Board of Examiners who will take action in light of a student's results.

Appendix C – Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP)

- C5 Visiting Examiners are no longer required to be members of the MCPs.

APPEALS POLICY (Approved by LTQC on 3rd June 2015)

- School Appeals Policy revised so that here is one single policy rather than 6 separate processes.
- Procedure was designed in line with the OIA's Good Practice Framework <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/96361/oia-good-practice-framework.pdf>
- Designed an Appeals Form for all students to use.

ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK POLICY (Approved by LTQC on 3rd June 2015)

- Consolidated current practice into one document.

AUDITING MODULES POLICY (Approved by LTQC on 3rd June 2015)

- Revised the old Code of Practice on Auditing modules

COURSEWORK SUBMISSION POLICY (Approved by LTQC on 3rd June 2015)

- Removed this from the Taught Degree Regulations so that this could be reviewed annually.
- This includes the penalties for late submission.
- Includes information on Specific Learning Differences, formerly part of Mitigating Circumstances Policy (updated April 2016).

WORD COUNT AND OVER-LENGTH COURSEWORK POLICY (Approved by LTQC on 3rd June 2015)

- Removed this from the Taught Degree Regulations so that this could be reviewed annually.