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**Meeting:** FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
LEARNING, TEACHING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time:** Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 at 14.00

**Venue:** Via Teams

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**Present:** Dr N Gjersoe, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), (Chair)  
Dr A Bush, Department for Health  
Miss M Clutterbuck, Learning Partnerships Office  
Prof J Devine, Head of Department of Social and Policy Sciences  
Prof R Joiner, Department of Psychology  
Dr S Martin, Department of Education  
Dr K von Oppen, Department of Politics, Languages and International  
Studies  
Dr P Ozieranski, Department of Social and Policy Sciences  
Dr A Schaeffer, Department of Economics

**In Attendance:** Miss S E Jacobs, Assistant Registrar (Secretary)  
Mrs R Acres, Assistant Registrar  
Mr M Ashdown, Project Manager  
Ms B Frost, Curriculum Development Officer  
Mrs A Theilgaard, Student Engagement Manager  
Mrs E Whittleton, Programmes Manager

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**1807. ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS**

- a)** The Committee noted the guidance for the process for making assessment changes during the COVID-19 crisis (paper 90).

The Committee noted that departmental spreadsheets listing all Semester 2 UG and PGT assessments had now been provided and that these would need to be completed by each Department to indicate their alternative assessment proposals.

It was noted that the Chair and the Dean would be considering and approving initial proposals for alternative assessments already submitted outside of the spreadsheets after the conclusion of this meeting.

- b)** The Committee noted that decisions with regard to **submission deadlines for alternative assessments replacing examinations** will need to be taken at the level of the University in order to spread the load on systems for the on-line submission of work. It was noted,

however, that there is also a possibility for more cloud space to be purchased should this be necessary at peak times. A question was raised in relation to the setting of new **coursework deadlines**, which the Chair agreed to discuss with Academic Registry.

*[After the meeting, it was confirmed that Departments should indicate a preferred submission deadline but that the final schedule of deadlines will only be agreed after Academic Registry and TEL have been able to review the proposals across the whole of the University in order to spot any potentially difficult peak times.]*

The Chair explained a number of the proposals currently being considered by **Senate** in relation to an extension of the assessment period and the operation of Boards of Examiners to ensure that no student is adversely affected by the current situation.

The Committee noted that **detailed guidance will be provided to guide the operation of Boards of Examiners** in these exceptional circumstances. Members of the Board noted that the usual algorithmic decision-making through the application of the NFAAR Assessment Regulations would not be possible. While Committee members noted that Boards of Examiners will have more discretion in their decision-making than has been the case since the implementation of NFAAR, it will be helpful to ensure a level of consistency of approach across the whole of the University, in order to ensure that all students are considered fairly.

It was noted that it may not be possible to **release marks** to students as would normally be the case as there is a possibility that these might change as a result of scaling by Unit Boards of Examiners.

The Committee noted that **extended submission deadlines** could be given to students through the summer to the beginning of September should their circumstances necessitate this.

While it was noted that priority will be given to **finalist unit** marking and the scheduling of Boards of Examiners, it should also be noted that in some cases Level 5 undergraduate units are taken by students in their final year of study and therefore that submission and marking deadlines will need to take this into account.

The Committee noted that in the **Faculty of Engineering and Design** it had been decided that students would be given the whole of the assessment period in which to complete and submit all alternative assessments, with the advice that they should spend the usual number of hours on each assessment as if it were a formal examination. This will ensure that any illness or caring responsibilities during the 5 week period would be mitigated and therefore students would not need to submit any IMC claim.

It was noted that currently it is unclear how students would be expected to indicate if they would wish to **defer their assessments to the August assessment period**. Further guidance on this is awaited.

The Chair explained that it is acceptable for students to submit an **extension request** without the usual expectation of evidence to support

this. She also explained that in the Department of Psychology, the default period of extension has been agreed as 2 weeks.

The Committee noted that all **External Examiners** will soon receive a communication from the PVC Learning and Teaching explaining the University's general approach to the assessment of students in the current situation. It was also noted, however, that Departments would be expected to communicate their plans to their External Examiners so that they are fully informed, but with no expectation that they would need to approve any proposals.

- c) Directors of Teaching for each of the Departments briefly described the **approach being taken for alternative assessments** in their Department (at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels).

It was noted that in some cases there are concerns over the proposal to allow students 48 hours to complete an examination which would normally only be a 2-hour paper, and for which students would not have access to resources (Economics, Health and PoLIS). The Committee noted that it will be important to advise students on how to approach the alternative assessments, that marking may need to be adjusted to take the unusual circumstances into account, and also that marks at Unit Boards of Examiners will have to be benchmarked against previous years with an expectation that scaling may be needed in some cases.

Some concerns were also expressed with regard to the ability to fit all alternative assessments in to the extended assessment period (Economics).

**1808. NEXT MEETING**

The Committee noted that the next planned meeting is on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020.