

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

2013-2014

For Open University Validated Awards

These Regulations are available on the Portal and in print version by request

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SOMERSET COLLEGE

Regulatory Framework for Undergraduate Awards

1 Introduction

1.1 These Regulations apply to the following undergraduate awards.

Certificate of Higher Education	CertHE
Diploma of Higher Education	DipHE
Foundation Degree (in Arts / Science)	FdA / FdSc
Non-honours Bachelors Degree (of Arts/Science)	BA / BSc
Bachelors Degree with Honours	BA(Hons) / BSc(Hons)

1.2 Programmes are expected to conform to the principles underlying these Regulations.

1.3 Unless specific mention is made, these Regulations make no distinction, for assessment purposes, between students on different modes of attendance.

1.4 Variations from these Regulations may be permitted but will be subject to specific approval under the College's and Open University quality assurance processes. Such variations will be specific to the needs of an individual programme and will be confirmed during the validation process of a programme. Such variations will be clearly specified in the Student Programme Handbook for the individual award. Students should refer to the appropriate student programme handbook for full details of the programme structure and assessment regulations.

2 Programme/scheme structure

2.1 Academic study will be organised into modules, specified in terms of credits. Credit can only be assigned on the basis of assessed learning. An individual learner will achieve credit by achieving the learning outcomes for a module. The College's credit system is in line with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx>

The College's standard module size is 20 credits; half modules (10 credits) and a final project module worth up to 40 credits are also within the standard module designation. Modules will be operated on a semester structure although some modules may run over two semesters.

2.2 Individual modules will each have a 'shelf life' beyond which the module ceases to be valid for credit transfer or towards an award. This shelf life is five years from when the credits were awarded/Award was achieved. Arrangements for part time students completing Awards will be specified in the relevant Student Programme Handbook. See also section 3.1 for maximum length of time allowable to be registered for an award.

2.3 The standard study programme for a Foundation Degree and Bachelors degree with honours award consists of a number of Stages, each of which is worth 120 credits. A 'Stage' is equivalent to one year of study for a full time student.

2.4 No student may study more than 120 credits in any one stage without the specific consent of his/her Curriculum Area Manager. A student studying more than the designated number of credits for the Award on which they have registered will (at the discretion of the Director for Curriculum (Higher Education, International and Adults)) be required to pay an additional tuition fee for the additional credits. The maximum number of credits a student can be examined for in any one Stage is 150 credits for an undergraduate programme.

2.5 The level of a module is determined by the standard of work required to achieve the learning outcomes of the module (see information on level descriptors)

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx>)

2.6 The level of awards is as follows (in line with the FHEQ Qualification level):

Certificate of Higher Education	Level 4
Diploma of Higher Education	Level 5
Foundation Degree (in Arts / Science)	Level 5
Non-honours Bachelors Degree (of Arts/Science)	Level 6
Bachelors Degree with Honours (of Arts / Science)	Level 6

2.7 The credit weighting of awards will be:

Qualification	FHEQ Qualification Level	Overall Number of Credits required	Levels of credit required	Stages
Certificate of Higher Education	4	120	120 at level 4	Stage 1
Diploma of Higher Education	5	240	120 at level 4 120 at level 5	Stage 1 Stage 2
Foundation Degree	5	240	120 at level 4 120 at level 5 Including at least 60 credits work-related learning	Stage 1 Stage 2
Non-honours Bachelors Degree	6	300	120 at level 4 120 at level 5 60 at level 6	Stage 1 Stage 2 Stage 3
Bachelors Degree with Honours	6	360	120 at level 4 120 at level 5 120 at level 6	Stage 1 Stage 2 Stage 3

2.8 The title(s) of the award(s) available within an undergraduate programme are specified in the appropriate programme definitive document.

3 Student registration/withdrawal

- 3.1 All students must register at the beginning of their programme of study and subsequently as required. The maximum period of registration for programmes of more than one year's duration is normally three years longer than the planned duration of the programme of study.
- 3.2 New students are required to complete their module choices (if appropriate) by the time specified in their programme handbook. Continuing students will complete module choices before the end of the standard teaching year.
- 3.3 Students who wish to withdraw from their programme of study must notify their Lead Tutor in writing at the earliest opportunity. The Award Assessment Board will consider any achievement gained by the student and issue the appropriate award and transcript.

4 Credit for Prior Learning (see also Regulations on Recognition of Prior Learning incorporating APL, APCL and APEL)

4.1 Credit for prior learning, whether certificated or experiential, may count towards the requirements of a named award up to the following maxima which is equal to 50% of the credits for each Award:

Certificate of Higher Education	60 credits
Diploma of Higher Education	120 credits
Foundation Degree (in Arts / Science)	120 credits
Non-honours Bachelors Degree (of Arts/Science)	150 credits
Bachelors Degree with Honours (of Arts / Science)	180 credits

4.2 APL is NOT allowed at level 6, the final year of Bachelors Degree. (See Regulations on Recognition of Prior Learning for details).

4.3 In all cases the learning for which credit is awarded must constitute a coherent programme of study when considered with the credits to be studied. Accreditation of prior learning is based on the concept of specific credit (that is that the learning outcomes of the prior learning are directly equivalent to those of the modules from which the student will be exempt as a result).

4.4 Where it is agreed that certificated prior learning to which credits are attached may contribute towards a final award, a decision must be taken at the same time as to whether the credits, in their original or an amended form, will be included in the student record. Refer also to section 4.5 of the Regulations on Recognition of Prior Learning.

4.5 Individual programmes/schemes will determine the nature of the processes adopted for accreditation of prior learning (certificated and/or experiential). (See separate Regulations on Recognition of Prior Learning incorporating Accreditation of Prior Learning [APL] Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning [APCL] and Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning [APEL])

5 Assessment

5.1 The purposes of assessment are to:

- measure a student's achievements objectively against the learning outcomes of modules
- enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the intended aims and learning outcomes of the programme of study
- assist student learning by providing appropriate feedback on performance
- provide a reliable and consistent basis for the recommendation of an appropriate award
- assist staff in evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching

5.2 The assessment for each module will be detailed in the Module Specification (module specifications are contained within the Student Programme Handbook). This will specify the elements contributing to summative assessment (eg whether coursework or examination or a combination of both). Where assessment is by a combination of coursework and examination, the weightings of each element must be stated.

5.3 Coursework assessment will be set during the module.

5.4 Students will be assessed according to the assessment specified for each module on which they are registered, irrespective of their programme of study.

5.5 Appropriate adjustments will be made to the learning and teaching experience to take account of identified disabilities.

6 Successful completion of a module

- 6.1 The pass mark for an undergraduate module (Levels 4-6) is 40%.
- 6.2 A student who fails an assessed element is required to re-sit only the assessment element(s) of the module which s/he failed. The maximum grade a student can obtain for the reassessed element of assessment is 40%.

7 Provisions for Compensation

- 7.1 Compensation is not normally allowable. For further information please see section 18 of the Academic Regulations.
- 7.2 In exceptional circumstances an Assessment Board shall have discretion to allow a student's overall performance to compensate for partial failure in the assessment for an award. This would normally relate to a maximum of one module. The discretion available to the Assessment Board is specified in the sections of these Regulations relating to the "Procedure in the event of failure...".

8 Successful completion of Stage One and Stage Two

- 8.1 An Award Assessment Board will normally meet at the end of the first and second semester, normally followed by re-sit Boards.
- 8.2 A student must pass 120 credits to complete the Stage
- 8.3 A full-time student will be expected to complete a Stage before being allowed to progress to the next Stage, unless agreed otherwise in exceptional circumstances by the Award Assessment Board. (But see section 12.1 below)
- 8.4 Any additional marks gained in this way cannot replace marks for core modules or pre-requisites.
- 8.5 Modules which have been successfully completed cannot be reassessed.

9 Award of the Certificate of Higher Education (Level 4)

- 9.1 A Certificate of Higher Education may be awarded to:
- 9.1.1 a student who is registered for the award of a Certificate of Higher Education and has successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4 or above; or
- 9.1.2 a student who has successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4 or above in an undergraduate programme on which s/he is not continuing.
- 9.2 If the average of the student's best 120 credits falling within the programme specification (subject to any core or co-requisite requirements) is between 60% and 69% the CertHE will be awarded with Merit, if this mark is 70% or above, the CertHE will be awarded with Distinction.

10 Award of the Diploma of Higher Education (Level 5)

- 10.1 A Diploma of Higher Education may be awarded to:
- 10.1.1 a student who is registered for the award of a Diploma of Higher Education and has successfully completed 240 credits (including 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5).

- 10.1.2 a student who has successfully completed 240 credits (including 120 credits at Level 4 or above and 120 credits at Level 5 or above) on an undergraduate programme on which s/he is not continuing.
- 10.2 If the average of the student's best 120 credits at Level 5 falling within the programme specification (subject to any core or co-requisite requirements) is between 60% and 69% the DipHE will be awarded with Merit. If this mark is 70% or above, the DipHE will be awarded with Distinction.
- 11 Award of the Foundation Degree (Level 5)**
- 11.1 A Foundation Degree will be awarded to a student who successfully completes 240 credits, (including at least 25% work-related learning, and including 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5). If a student's average mark across all level 5 modules is between 60% and 69% the Foundation Degree will be awarded with Merit. If this mark is 70% or above, the Foundation Degree will be awarded with Distinction.
- 11.2 If the average percentage achieved by a candidate is not more than 1 percentage point below a classification band, the Board **must** invoke the following alternative classification method.
- 11.2.1 Level 5 average: The Award Assessment Board will award a Foundation Degree with the higher classification to a student whose average percentage is not more than 1 percentage point below the next classification band provided that the student has achieved more than half of the level 5 credits in the higher classification band.
- 12 Procedure in the event of failure at Stages One and Two (at the end of the years for level 4 and level 5 assessment)**
- 12.1 If a student fails elements of assessment to the value of 60 credits maximum, s/he will be allowed to re-sit/resubmit the appropriate assessment(s) (as specified by the Award Assessment Board) at the next available opportunity. The original rule for passing the module (6.1) will apply, unless the Award Assessment Board has specified a single module assessment in substitution for all assessments for that module, in which case the student must achieve 40% in that assessment.
- 12.2 The form of the retake assessment does **not** have to be the same as the form of assessment which was originally failed. It is the responsibility of the Award Assessment Board to specify the form of the assessment, ensuring that the learning outcomes are all met. However, if the form of assessment is different to the assessment they have already undertaken (including cases where the nature of the examination or coursework has changed) students should be informed in writing.
- 12.3 If a student, at the first attempt, fails more than 60 credits the Award Assessment Board may, at its discretion:-
- 12.3.1 allow the student to re-sit/resubmit the appropriate assessments at the next available opportunity, based on a judgement of the student's overall performance and potential; or
- 12.3.2 require the student to repeat the failed modules with attendance;
- 12.4 A student will be permitted a maximum of three attempts at each assessment. A student who fails a module may not therefore re-sit or repeat any assessment on more than two occasions.
- 12.5 Where a failed assessment is successfully retaken or repeated, a mark of 40% (i.e. a maximum of a bare pass) will be given and carried forward when calculating the module grade.

- 12.6 The Award Assessment Board may, at its discretion make such special arrangements as it deems appropriate in cases where it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same elements and by the same methods as at the first attempt. The Award Assessment Board must enable re-sit opportunities in accordance with the validated programme regulations.

13 Failure after re-sit at Stages One and Two

- 13.1 If after re-sits, a student has not achieved the requisite number of credits to complete the Stage, the Award Assessment Board may, at its discretion:
- 13.1.1 require the student to repeat the failed modules with attendance; or
 - 13.1.2 require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent the completion of the award during the normal period of registration, or have prevented her/him from making academic progress in the previous session, to suspend or withdraw from the programme; or
 - 13.1.3 require the student to withdraw from the programme and award any intermediate qualification for which the student has achieved the credit requirements.
 - 13.2.4 Where a student withdraws or is required to withdraw from the programme on which s/he is registered, the Award Board will confer the highest award to which s/he is entitled.

14 Average percentage mark calculations

- 14.1 *Average percentage mark.* Each module is awarded a mark out of 100. The average percentage mark is calculated by multiplying the marks for each module by the appropriate scaling factor (credit value) and adding them together. The resulting average mark is converted to a percentage of the maximum mark obtainable – the average percentage mark.
- 14.2 *Additional credits.* If a student studies more credits than are required for the award for which s/he is registered, the Award Assessment Board will take account only of modules falling within the programme specification. Provided that the credits falling within this definition exceed those required for the award, the Board will consider the best of those credits, subject to any core/co-requisite requirements, in calculating the average percentage mark.

15 Award of the Non-honours Bachelors Degree (Level 6)

- 15.1 A student registered for a Non-honours Bachelors Degree is required to successfully complete 300 credits, (made up of 120 credits at level 4, 120 credits at level 5 and a further 60 credits at Level 6).
- 15.2 There is no classification for Non-honours Bachelors Degrees.

16 Award of the Bachelors Degree with Honours (Level 6)

- 16.1 A Bachelor's Degree with Honours will be awarded to a student who has passed 360 credits, (including 120 credits at Level 4, 120 credits at Level 5 and 120 credits at Level 6).
- 16.2 Classification will be based initially on the average percentage mark across all modules at Level 6 and Level 5 at a ratio of 70/30 respectively. [Refer to section 16.5 for Honours Top-up programmes] Therefore the Level 6 average mark will represent 70% of the final classification and the Level 5 average mark will represent 30% of the final classification. If the student's average percentage mark falls within the boundaries of the classifications defined below, s/he is entitled to that award.

First Class Honours	70% or above
Second Class Honours, Upper Division	60% - 69%
Second Class Honours, Lower Division	50% - 59%
Third Class Honours	40% - 49%

16.3 If the average percentage achieved by a candidate is not more than 1 percentage point below a classification band, the Board **must** invoke the following alternative classification method.

16.3.1 Level 6 average: The Award Assessment Board will award an Honours Degree with the higher classification to a student whose average percentage is not more than 1 percentage point below the next classification band provided that the student has achieved more than half of the level 6 credits in the higher classification band.

16.4 Where a student has gained Level 5 credits from another approved institution in the UK or overseas, the final classification will be calculated based on the average marks obtained at level 6 only.

16.5 For students enrolled on 3rd year only Honours Top-up courses, the final classification will be calculated based on the average marks obtained at level 6 only, even if the student's Level 5 credits were earned at an OU-validated institution (including Somerset College).

17 Procedure in the event of failure at Stage 3

17.1 In the case of a student who fails to meet the requirements for the award for which s/he is registered at Stage 3, the Award Assessment Board may at its discretion: -

17.1.1 allow the student to re-sit/resubmit the appropriate assessments(s) (as specified by the Award Assessment Board) in up to 40 credits for a student registered on a Non-honours Bachelors degree or up to 60 credits for a student registered on a Bachelors degree with honours at the next available opportunity.

17.1.2 allow the student to repeat the failed modules with attendance where more than 40 credits have been failed. Or

17.1.3 where the student is registered for a Bachelors degree with Honours but has met the learning outcomes and credit requirements for a Bachelors degree, the Award Assessment Board may at its discretion:

17.1.3.1 offer the candidate the choice of accepting the lower award immediately or re-sitting for the higher award, or

17.1.3.2 award the Non-honours Bachelors degree where the student has signified willingness to accept the award and understands that this implies waiving the right to be reassessed for the honours programme.

17.1.4 require the student to withdraw from the programme and award any intermediate qualification for which the student has achieved the credit requirements, or

17.1.5 require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent the completion of the award during the normal period of registration, or have prevented her/him from making academic progress in the previous session, to suspend or withdraw from the programme.

- 17.1.6 Where a student withdraws or is required to withdraw from the programme on which s/he is registered, the Award Board will confer the highest award to which s/he is entitled.
- 17.2 In order to ensure that candidates demonstrate the capacity for sustained independent and high quality work, candidates who fail to achieve Honours at the first attempt may be re-examined once only in their final major project/dissertation at the discretion of the Award Assessment Board.
- 17.3 The Award Assessment Board may, at its discretion make such special arrangements as it deems appropriate in cases where it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same elements and by the same methods as at the first attempt. The Award Assessment Board must enable re-sit opportunities in accordance with the regulations.
- 18 Extenuating circumstances**
- 18.1 If a student has failed (or failed to sit/submit) all or part of an assessment due to valid extenuating circumstances, the student has a right to sit/submit the assessment as if for the first time in a form and by a date to be determined by the Board. Similarly if the student has passed the assessment but has submitted valid extenuating circumstances which the Board believes may have affected his/her performance, the student has a right to sit/submit as if for the first time.
- 18.2 If the Board is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to arrive at a fair estimation of the student's performance had the extenuating circumstances not been in force, it may ascribe a mark. In such circumstances the student must however be offered the opportunity to sit/submit as if for the first time.
- 18.3 If on the basis of a decision by the Board under 18.2 above the student is eligible for an award, the student may be offered the award but must also be offered the opportunity to sit/submit the assessments as if for the first time.
- 18.4 At the end of the final stage of the award and in exceptional circumstances only, the Award Assessment Board may, at its discretion, allow a student's overall performance to compensate for a partial failure in the assessment for an award, normally in relation to a maximum of one module. In such cases the student can be awarded a compensated pass of 40% for the module.
- 18.5 The circumstances may be such that the student is known to be unable to complete work which has been failed or which s/he has failed to sit/submit. If there is insufficient evidence of the student's performance to ascribe a mark to modules but the Board is nonetheless satisfied that the student would have qualified for an award had the circumstances not existed, the Board may offer an Aegrotat award (defined as an award given when a student has been prevented from completing an assessment because of serious illness, injury or other circumstances outside the students control such as personal bereavement). It should be noted that Aegrotat awards are not permitted on some professional programmes and are not recognised for membership of many external professional institutions. Aegrotat awards are not granted with Commendation, Distinction or classification.
- 18.6 Before a recommendation of an Aegrotat is submitted to the Open University, the student must have signified willingness to accept the award and understand that this implies waiving the right to be reassessed.
- 18.7 Valid extenuating circumstances enable the Board to exercise discretion in respect of many of the provisions of these Regulations.

SOMERSET COLLEGE

Regulations on Recognition of Prior Learning

These regulations incorporate Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Accreditation/Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

The term 'accreditation of prior learning' (APL) is used to encapsulate the range of activities and approaches used formally to acknowledge and establish publicly that some reasonably significant element of learning has taken place. Such learning may have been achieved by reflecting upon experiences outside the formal education and training systems, in which case the term 'accreditation of prior experiential learning' (APEL) is normally applied.

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)

1 Definitions

- 1.1 *Accreditation of prior certificated learning (APCL)*: is the award of credit towards an Open University validated award in respect of previous study at HE level which the student has passed. APCL may be awarded in respect of a completed programme of study (eg HNC, Cert HE, DipHE, Foundation Degree) or in respect of one or more modules or units of a programme.
- 1.2 *General credit*: is not programme-specific but is an objective measure of the credit weighting and Level of previous learning. Prior certificated learning undertaken in the UK Higher Education system will normally have appropriate credit weightings and levels attributed to it. As such it will attract general credit based on the academic value and level of the achievement: a student who has successfully completed a Diploma of Higher Education, for instance, will normally be entitled to claim 240 general credits, 120 at Level 4 and 120 at Level 5. General credit may be recorded on a transcript provided by another HE institution or confirmed by another institution.
- 1.3 *Specific credit*: is credit awarded towards the attainment of a specific programme of study leading to an award. That is, it is general credit which is judged to be sufficiently relevant to count towards the award for which the student wishes to register. It is again defined in terms of credit weighting and Level but is identified against specific module(s) or Level(s) of a programme (that is a student is effectively given credit for those modules/Levels on the basis of having achieved the equivalent of the learning outcomes). Specific credit can only be confirmed by the College. The amount of specific credit awarded to any students cannot exceed the amount of general credit which the student has, and will in many cases be significantly less.

2 Maximum permitted credit for APCL

- 2.1 The maximum permitted APCL credit available towards a final award from the Open University is identified in relation both to the specific credit which may be counted towards the award and the minimum credits studied at the College to enable a student to be eligible for an award. The maximum credit which may be claimed is not more than 50% of the taught or training element of a programme leading to an Open University validated award.
- 2.2 APL is not allowed at level 6. Therefore for those Awards with a level 6 element, the level 6 credits must be studied and achieved in full.
- 2.3 The maximum amount of APCL credit which a student may claim towards an Open University award and the minimum credit which must be studied at the College in relation to specific awards is:

	APCL Allowable (Maximum)	Credit which <i>must be studied at the College</i>
Degree with honours	180 credits (at levels 4 and 5)	180 credits, including all 120 credits at Level 6
Non-honours Degree	150 credits (at levels 4 and 5)	150 credits, including all 60 credits at Level 6
Foundation Degree	120 credits	120 credits, including at least 60 at Level 5
DipHE	120 credits	120 credits at level 5 or above
CertHE	60 credits	60 credits at Level 4 or above

- 2.4 These maxima may be waived in the case of a student who has successfully passed a Foundation Degree and wishes to convert it to a Non-honours degree or a Bachelors degree with honours, in which case the student may be awarded up to 240 APCL credits towards the Non-honours degree/Bachelors degree with honours subject to studying the remaining credits in full. (This would be a further 60 credits at level 6 for the Non-honours degree or 120 credits at level 6 for the Bachelors degree with honours)
- 2.5 In certain circumstances the maxima stated in the table in 2.3 may also be waived in the case of a student who has successfully passed a Non-honours Degree and wishes to convert it to a Bachelors degree with honours, in which case the student may be awarded up to 300 APCL credits towards the Bachelors degree with honours subject to studying 60 Level 6 credits in full.
- 2.6 APCL awarded at Level 4 need not necessarily relate to specific modules (unless constrained by the particular requirements of an award recognised by a professional body). A programme may therefore agree to exempt a student from the whole or part of Level 4 on the basis of successful completion of 120 Level 4 credits within another programme provided that any pre-requisite requirements have been met.
- 2.7 Where a student claims APCL credit towards an undergraduate programme in respect of credits which form part of another Bachelors degree with honours which he or she has previously been awarded, the amount of APCL credit which can be awarded should be carefully considered by the programme team and should not exceed 180 credits.

3 Programme specific requirements

- 3.1 Certain modules may fall outside of the APCL regulations and are required to contribute to the Programme. Such modules will be outlined in programme specifications.

4 Procedures for the award of APCL

- 4.1 A student seeking APCL credit will normally be required to apply for such credit on receipt of an offer of a place on a programme. The College will consider requests for APCL from students already on programmes, provided that the student submits the request by the end of May in the session before he or she would normally begin the module(s)/Level for which he or she is seeking credit.
- 4.2 All requests for APCL must be made in writing and addressed to the relevant Lead Tutor. It is the responsibility of the student applying for APCL to make the claim and to provide necessary documentary evidence. Admissions tutors and Lead Tutors are however encouraged to be pro-active in identifying APCL opportunities and advising students accordingly.
- 4.3 The value (number of credits) and Level (in terms of the FHEQ Levels) of specific credit to be awarded to a student should normally be determined by the admissions tutor (in consultation with the module leader(s) of modules for which specific credit may be awarded and the lead tutor/Curriculum Area Manager).
- 4.4 In judging specific APCL credit to be awarded, the staff concerned will wish to consider whether:

- the prior study is sufficiently recent to meet the current learning outcomes of the programme (achieved within preceding 5 years)
 - the combination of APCL and modules to be studied at the College will together constitute a coherent programme of study which will meet the programme specification
 - the APCL is sufficiently equivalent to the learning outcomes of module(s)/Level(s) for which the student may consequently be awarded credit
 - sufficient information is available on the academic value and Level of previous study
- 4.5 Where specific (rather than general) APCL is awarded towards an Open University award which may be classified and the APCL is awarded in respect of credit to which marks are attached, these marks cannot be used in the calculation of the final grade. In such cases the final classification will need to be calculated on the basis of the marks obtained for work undertaken whilst at Somerset College.
- 4.6 All APCL decisions must be recorded and clearly identified in all papers considered by Award Assessment Boards and in the student transcript.

5 Appeals

A student may use the College academic appeals procedure to appeal against a decision made on an APCL claim (See Appendix 1)

SOMERSET COLLEGE

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

1 Definitions

- 1.1 *Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL)*: is the award of credit towards an Open University award in respect of knowledge and skills acquired through life, work experience, and/or study which are not formally attested through certification by a recognised professional or academic body.
- 1.2 *Assessment of prior experiential learning*: is the process by which experiential learning is formally reviewed to determine that the learning has in fact occurred and that it is still current in relation to the module(s) concerned, and its equivalence in relation to HE credit weightings and levels. It is the student's learning, not his or her experience, which is being assessed.
- 1.3 *General credit*: is not programme-specific but is an objective measure of the credit weighting and level of previous learning.
- 1.4 *Specific credit*: is credit awarded towards the attainment of a specific programme of study leading to a College award. That is, it is general credit which is judged to be sufficiently relevant to count towards the award for which the student wishes to register. It is again defined in terms of credit weighting and level but is identified against specific module(s) or Level(s) of a programme; a student is effectively given credit for those modules/Levels on the basis of having achieved the equivalent of the learning outcomes. Specific credit can only be confirmed by Somerset College.

2 Maximum permitted credit for APEL

- 2.1 The maximum permitted APEL credit available towards a final award is identified in relation both to the specific credit which may be counted towards the award and the minimum credits studied at the College to enable a student to be eligible for a College award. The maximum credit which may be claimed is not more than 50% of the taught or training element of a programme leading to an Open University validated award.
- 2.2 APEL is not allowed at level 6. Therefore for those Awards with a level 6 element, the level 6 credits must be studied and achieved in full.
- 2.3 The maximum amount of APEL credit which a student may claim towards an award and the minimum credit which must be studied at the College in relation to specific awards is:

	<i>APEL Allowable (Maximum)</i>	<i>Credit which <u>must be studied at the College</u></i>
Degree with honours	180 credits (at levels 4 and 5)	180 credits, including all 120 credits at Level 6
Non-honours Degree	150 credits (at levels 4 and 5)	150 credits, including all 60 credits at Level 6
Foundation Degree	120 credits	120 credits, including at least 60 at Level 5
DipHE	120 credits	120 credits at level 5 or above
CertHE	60 credits	60 credits at Level 4 or above

- 2.4 APEL awarded at Level 4 need not necessarily relate to specific modules (unless constrained by the particular requirements of an award recognised by a professional body). A programme may therefore agree to exempt a student from the whole or part of Level 4 on the basis of general Level 4 APEL credits provided that any Level 5 pre-requisite requirements have been met.

3 Programme specific requirements

- 3.1 Certain modules may fall outside of the APEL regulations and are required to contribute to the Programme. Such modules will be outlined in the programme specifications.

4 Making an APEL claim

- 4.1 A student seeking APEL credit will normally be required to apply for such credit on receipt of an offer of a place on a programme. The College will consider requests for APEL from students already on programmes, provided that the student submits the request at least six months before the beginning of the session before s/he would normally begin the module(s)/Level against which s/he is seeking credit.
- 4.2 APEL should normally be claimed against a specific module or modules. A student may not be awarded APEL in respect of a part module, except where a module incorporates both a theoretical and professional practice element, and those elements are separately assessed. In such cases the programme team may agree to consider APEL claims against one of the two elements.
- 4.3 All programmes are required to identify the processes by which an APEL claim should be submitted and will be assessed, bearing in mind the statements below about the College's expectations, and to publicise those procedures widely.
- 4.4 All requests for APEL must be made in writing and addressed to the Lead Tutor. Applicants will be provided with information on the procedures adopted by the programme in question for the submission and assessment of APEL claims. It is the responsibility of a student to make a claim. Admissions tutors and Lead Tutors are however encouraged to be pro-active in identifying APEL opportunities and advising students accordingly.
- 4.5 The learning derived from experience or study must be identified in order to be assessed. Identification must be made by the student, on the basis of systematic reflection on the experience or study and the provision of clear and evidenced statements about that learning. The form of evidence acceptable will be determined by the programme, but may include any combination of: a reflective account, the presentation of a portfolio, a viva voce examination, production of an artefact or performance, or a piece of written work or practical task. The evidence needs to demonstrate current understanding and skills.
- 4.6 A variety of ways of assisting students in the development of an APEL claim may be adopted, including class or group work, tutorials, specific manuals or study packs, or the development of specific APEL modules. The approach chosen will inevitably reflect the nature of the programme, the timing of the claim and the number of students for whom APEL may be appropriate.

5 Assessment of APEL claims

- 5.1 Assessment of APEL claims is the responsibility of relevant academic staff (including the module leader(s)), who may employ any reasonable procedure to arrive at an academic judgement about the evidence submitted and the value and level of credit to be awarded. Staff may make use of both internal and external expertise as appropriate in making such judgements. Where students have been assisted to develop a claim, those involved in providing that assistance should not be the sole assessors of the claim.
- 5.2 The assessment of credit must be undertaken and recorded in such a way that it can be reviewed by the relevant external examiner, who shall have access to the evidence base, and comments from staff in relation to the internal assessment of credit.
- 5.3 In judging specific APEL credit to be awarded, staff will wish to consider whether

- the combination of APEL and modules to be studied at the College will together constitute a coherent programme of study which will meet the programme specification
- the learning which is being claimed is sufficiently equivalent to the learning outcomes of module(s)/Level(s) for which the student is seeking credit
- there is sufficient evidence of the learning achieved
- the learning is sufficiently current

5.4 If the judgement is that APEL credit cannot be awarded, the student will be required to take the module(s) concerned in the usual way

5.5 Where specific (rather than general) APEL is awarded towards an Open University award which may be classified the APEL must be awarded in respect of specific modules.

5.6 All APEL decisions must be recorded and clearly identified in all papers considered by Award Assessment Boards and in the student transcript.

6 Appeals

A student may use the College academic appeals procedure to appeal against a decision made on an APEL claim (See Appendix 1)

SOMERSET COLLEGE

Regulations on Late Coursework and Extenuating Circumstances

These Regulations apply to students on all taught programmes of study

Late Coursework

- 1 Coursework submitted after the deadline date and time will be awarded a mark of zero.
- 2 Extensions to deadlines for submission of coursework may not be granted by members of academic staff. A student who misses a deadline or believes that he or she will miss a deadline should submit extenuating circumstances in accordance with these Regulations.
- 3 Coursework which is submitted after the deadline will be assessed but the results will not be entered onto the official record until any claim for extenuating circumstances has been considered. Feedback may be given on the quality of the work submitted and an indicative grade awarded. If the circumstances are deemed valid, the actual result achieved will be entered onto the record and submitted to the Award Assessment Board.
- 4 If the circumstances are not considered valid a mark of zero will be recorded at the Award Assessment Board.

Extenuating Circumstances

Note 1: Students with Specific Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities and other (Short Term) Needs

Somerset College is committed to eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for students. The College has developed policies and procedures to assist students who are disabled, have specific learning difficulties or have experienced exceptional medical or personal circumstances, by attempting to minimise any adverse impact on their study and performance in assessments.

The College's aim is to ensure, as far as possible, a 'level playing field' by providing appropriate forms of support to enable students to undertake assessments and achieve the learning outcomes of modules. It is not the intention of the extenuating circumstances procedure to mitigate failure or give students an unfair advantage over their peers.

Students and staff must consult with the Learning Support team for advice which may lead to the submission of a claim for a Disabled Student Allowance and thereby the provision of appropriate specified support.

Note 2: Where a student is aware that particular circumstances, be they work-related, family or financial problems, or any other issues, are likely to interfere with their ability successfully to complete their academic work in any semester or academic session, it is open to the student to suspend studies for a period (which may be one semester or one year, or longer) and to return to complete the programme of study when the problems are not so great. There is no limit to a student's ability to do this provided that they remain within the maximum period of registration established for their programme of study.

It may also be possible for a student undertaking a full time programme to transfer to part-time study so as better to balance academic and other commitments.

The Extenuating Circumstances Regulation applies to students who have registered for one or more modules, started their studies, and then found themselves in circumstances outside their control which impacted on their performance in one or more elements of assessment.

1 Definitions

1.1 Extenuating circumstances are circumstances which

are exceptional;
are outside the student's control;
can be corroborated by independent evidence;
occurred during or immediately before the assessment in question; and may have led to an unrepresentative performance in relation to the student's previously demonstrated ability

1.2 It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules about extenuating circumstances which may be deemed valid or not, but examples of specific circumstances are given in an Appendix to these Regulations, for guidance of students, staff and Extenuating Circumstances Panels.

2 Submission of information on extenuating circumstances

2.1 Students who wish extenuating circumstances to be considered should obtain an Extenuating Circumstances Form from the Curriculum Area Administration office. The form should be completed by the student, corroborating evidence attached, and the student should obtain the signature of the Lead Tutor. The Lead Tutor will not sign the form without corroborating evidence.

2.2 Once the form has been signed, the Lead Tutor must pass the form to the Curriculum Area Administration office, who will log the claim.

2.3 Extenuating circumstances claims should be submitted as soon as feasible. In the case of assessed coursework/major project/dissertation or equivalent, extenuating circumstances claims must be submitted **in advance** of the deadline, (except where prevented by the nature of the circumstance from so doing). If a student who has submitted a claim of extenuating circumstances in advance of a submission deadline, has not received formal confirmation of the outcome, of their claim and is in any doubt as to whether the circumstances will be deemed valid, he or she should consult the Lead Tutor. Extenuating circumstances claims with respect to formal examinations should be submitted in advance of the start of the relevant examination (except where prevented by the nature of the circumstance from so doing). A phone call in advance of the start of an exam, alerting the teaching team to the fact that a student will be unable to attend may then be followed up by the correct form and evidence as soon as possible thereafter.

3 Corroborating evidence

3.1 All claims of extenuating circumstances must be accompanied by independent corroborating evidence. That evidence must be specific about the nature, timing and severity of the problem and if possible provide an independent assessment of the effect the problem may have had on the student's performance.

3.2 Corroborating evidence may include:

- A signed medical certificate confirming a medical or psychological condition (provided at the time when the student was suffering from that condition)
- A letter from a qualified counsellor confirming a personal, psychological or emotional problem for which the student has been receiving counselling
- Written confirmation from relevant staff in the Student Services team confirming a particularly severe accommodation problem
- An official document such as a police report including a police reference number, court summons or other legal document
- A letter from a solicitor, social worker or other official agency
- An insurance claim document supported by a letter from the insurance company
- Written evidence from College staff to support the case

3.3 Full-time students may not make an extenuating circumstances claim relating to pressures of work, since such students have by implication made a commitment to

make available the time necessary for study. Part-time students in full-time employment, who wish to make claims based on exceptional pressures in their employment, must submit corroborating documentary evidence (e.g. a letter from their employer) which confirms the particular circumstances, explains why they are exceptional and outside the student's control and formally supports the student's claim. Where a student is self-employed, she or he must provide independent evidence to support the claim that the pressures are exceptional and outside the student's control.

- 3.4 Students should not seek to obtain corroborating evidence retrospectively. Any certificate or other medical note where the date of the certificate is after the date(s) of the illness may not be accepted.

4 Confidentiality

- 4.1 The College understands that students may be reluctant to disclose confidential personal information. However, students can be assured that all claims of extenuating circumstances are deemed to be confidential to the HE Quality Assurance Administrator, Extenuating Circumstances Panel and to the relevant Award Assessment Board and will not be disclosed outside those meetings (other than if they need to be considered as part of a student appeal).
- 4.2 If a student is reluctant to disclose information of a particularly personal nature, he or she may enter the word 'Confidential' on the form in the boxes headed 'Brief Description' and 'Comments' and attach written evidence in a sealed envelope. The information will then be made available only to the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

5 Consideration of extenuating circumstances

- 5.1 Claims will be considered within 10 working days of submission by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. Students will be advised of the decision regarding their claim within 15 working days of submission.
- 5.2 The College has established an Extenuating Circumstances Panel to consider extenuating circumstances. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will include in membership the Chair and two Academic staff members. Plus, if deemed necessary by the Chair, appropriate academic staff or welfare tutors. A record will be kept of the outcome of each meeting.
- 5.3 The purpose of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel meeting is to determine whether the extenuating circumstances submitted are valid within the Regulations (that is, that they are exceptional, outside the student's control, and corroborated by appropriate independent documentary evidence). An Extenuating Circumstances Panel must accept the professional recommendation of a medical practitioner or qualified counsellor regarding the effect on a student of a particular condition or problem. But in the absence of an opinion as to the impact of the illness or condition the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may use its own judgement to determine whether the circumstances are likely to have had an impact on performance. See also the Appendix for examples of conditions which would not normally be considered valid extenuating circumstances.
- 5.4 If an Extenuating Circumstances Panel does not consider that it has sufficient corroborating evidence the Chair of the Panel will liaise with the Chair of the relevant Award Assessment Board and the student as appropriate in order to secure such additional evidence as may be deemed necessary.
- 5.5 If a student fails, without good cause, to provide sufficient evidence to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in advance of the Award Assessment Board meeting, the Award Assessment Board has authority to reject the request on those grounds.
- 5.6 Following each Extenuating Circumstances Panel, students will be sent a letter confirming the decision made regarding their Extenuating Circumstances application.

6 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances: Award Assessment Board

- 6.1 If the circumstances are deemed valid, this decision will be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board who will take it into account. Extenuating circumstances may be taken into account not only where a student has failed an assessment or part of an assessment but also to take into account where student performance may have been impeded.
- 6.2 The existence of a valid claim of extenuating circumstances (confirmed by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel) will only lead to a change in a student's results where the Board has sufficient evidence that the performance would have been different had the circumstances not existed.
- 6.3 If extenuating circumstances are deemed valid, the Award Assessment Board will normally offer a student another attempt at the assessment without penalty, thus if the assessment affected by the circumstances was a first/second attempt, the student will be offered a sit/submit as if for the first/second time.
- 6.4 Depending on the circumstances, the Award Assessment Board may exercise discretion in deciding on the particular form any reassessment should take. Options include viva voce examination, additional assessment tasks designed to show whether the student has satisfied the programme learning outcomes, review of previous work, or normal assessment at the next available opportunity. The student should not be put in a position of unfair advantage or disadvantage over other candidates; the aim should be to enable the student to be assessed on equal terms.
- 6.5 Where the Award Assessment Board has not been recommended by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel that the student has presented a valid case, the student does not have a right to re-sit as if for the first time.

7 Appeals

- 7.1 A student who has not submitted a claim of extenuating circumstances under this Regulation will not normally be able to use extenuating circumstances as the basis for a subsequent appeal.
- 7.2 If a student fails, without good cause, to provide sufficient evidence to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in advance of the Award Assessment Board meeting, the Appeals Panel authorised to consider requests for the review of an Award Assessment Board's decision, has authority to reject the request on those grounds.

8 Chronic Ill Health

- 8.1 Chronic ill health encompasses medical conditions which
- Are persistent, often lasting for more than three months, and often life-long
 - Cannot be solved in a short time, or which will recur regardless of action, or which need to be managed on a long-term basis
 - Are a long-term or permanent illness that often results in some type of disability and which may require a person to seek help with various activities
 - Can be managed but can 'flare-up'

Examples of conditions which fall into this category are: Cystic Fibrosis, Costochondritis, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME), Psychosis, Bipolar Disorder.

Most students with chronic ill health will be identified at the admissions stage, and will be seen by the Student Support service to ensure appropriate support is in place. Some students, however, will develop conditions during the period of their study at the College, or previously undeclared conditions may become more serious or difficult to manage. If a student feels s/he is in difficulty, or is identified as being in difficulty, there should be a Case Conference including the student, Curriculum Area

Manager/Programme Lead Lecturer/Module Leader (as appropriate) and representative from Student Support to discuss the support available (as appropriate). The meeting will explore all the difficulties (i.e. outstanding work) and the options for the student, e.g. adjusting deadlines for submission, transferring to part-time mode or temporary suspension of studies. Agreements reached at the meeting will be confirmed in writing to the student.

A student who has chronic ill health will be required to complete a Chronic Ill Health Notification Form for the initial notification of their condition and provide supporting evidence from the hospital consultant, an appropriate specialist or a General Practitioner. The evidence must include confirmation of the condition, prognosis, duration dates and a description of the symptoms during acute episodes. The form must be submitted to the Curriculum Area Administrator who will notify the relevant staff and set up the Chronic Ill Health case conference meeting.

Students with chronic ill health should be regularly monitored by a Case Conference.

Any student with chronic ill health who suffers an acute episode which affects assessment, should submit an extenuating circumstances form to confirm the particular modules affected but will NOT normally be required to submit further corroborative evidence. Additional evidence will only be required if there is a change in their condition, i.e. a significant improvement or deterioration.

Appendix – Late Coursework and Extenuating Circumstances

The following are only examples of claims which may or may not normally be considered valid. The key issues in all cases will be whether the claim meets the requirements in the Regulations that the circumstances are exceptional, outside the student's control and corroborated by independent evidence.

It is not possible in many cases to lay down hard and fast rules. For instance, the College would not normally accept claims relating to travel delays which a student might be expected to have planned for, but if the delay were exceptional, a claim would be considered. Similarly, a cough, cold or throat infection during a semester would not normally be a valid extenuating circumstance, since students would be expected to plan their work taking into account the likelihood of minor disruptions: a student on a perfumery programme for instance may be disadvantaged by loss of the sense of smell as a result of a cold and could then have a valid claim.

The College will not accept claims relating to computer failure, corruption of data by virus or software application, inability to print work or network failure, since students are expected to keep back-up copies and to plan their work so that they have time to manage computer/printer failure.

Full-time students may not claim pressure of work as an extenuating circumstance, since the commitment to full-time study implies a commitment to make available the time necessary. Part-time students in full-time employment may claim pressure of work, corroborated by independent documentary evidence that the pressures are exceptional, unpredictable and outside the student's control.

Examples of circumstances which would not normally be considered valid

- Alarm clock did not go off
- Car broke down, train/bus delayed or cancelled, other public transport problems (unless the student can demonstrate that he or she had allowed adequate time to compensate for such problems as might reasonably have been anticipated)
- Child care problems which could have been anticipated
- Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends (unless serious, or the student is a sole carer)
- Unspecified anxiety, mild depression or examination stress
- Cough, cold, Upper Respiratory Tract Infection, sore throat, minor viral infection, unless the illness was at its peak at the time of an examination, end-of-module test or in-class test and the corroborating evidence refers to the impact on the student's performance
- Financial problems (other than cases of exceptional hardship)
- Holidays, house moves, family celebrations or other events where the student either has control over the date or may choose not to participate
- Computer problems, corrupt data, disk or printer failure or similar
- Problems with postal delivery of work (unless recorded delivery or registered mail)
- Pregnancy (unless specific complications)
- Time management problems (e.g. competing deadlines)
- Appointments (legal, medical etc) which could be rearranged
- Territorial Army commitments or similar (unless unavoidable)
- Sporting or recreational commitments (unless the student is representing the College in national competition or representing his/her country in international competition)

Examples of circumstances which might be considered valid

- Hospitalisation, including operations
- Long-standing health problems
- Personal or psychological problems for which the student is undergoing counselling or has been referred to a counsellor or other qualified practitioner
- Chronic illness
- Childbirth (including a partner in labour)
- Recent death or serious illness of a close family member, or other person with whom the student has a close relationship
- Major accident or injury, acute ailments or conditions which coincide with an assessment deadline or an examination or test, or are sufficiently long-lasting to impact on a significant part of a semester
- Clinical depression or other mental health problem
- Recent burglary/theft/serious car accident
- Jury Service which cannot be deferred
- Representing the College at national level or his/her country at international level in a sporting event
- For part-time students in full-time employment, exceptional pressure of work or permanent change of employment circumstances

SOMERSET COLLEGE

Academic Offences

Examination and Assessment Offences

Note: 1. This Regulation applies to all students registered on credit-rated modules or undergraduate award bearing programmes.

1 Definitions

- 1.1 A breach of any part of College or Programme Regulations relating to assessment, or of the instructions issued in relation to an individual examination or piece of assessed work, will be considered an offence, irrespective of the intentions of the students concerned.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this Regulation, 'examination or piece of assessed work' includes, *inter alia* written and oral examinations, tests, coursework essays and assignments, projects and dissertations, practical/laboratory work, group and other collaborative work, placements and field trips and reports thereon, designs, artefacts, computer programmes.

2 Examples of Examination and Assessment Offences

Note: these examples are not necessarily exhaustive

- 2.1 Obtaining or attempting to obtain access to an unseen examination or test paper prior to the start of the examination/test
- 2.2 The introduction or use in an examination/test of any books, notes, paper or devices of any kind other than those specifically permitted in the rubric of the paper. (eg use of a pre-programmable calculator/electronic device where the paper permits use of a Non-honours calculator)
- 2.3 Failing to comply with the instructions of an invigilator or examiner, or with the printed instructions for candidates.
- 2.4 Removing from an examination or test any script, paper, or other official stationery (whether or not completed) unless specifically authorised by an invigilator or examiner.
- 2.5 Being party to any arrangement whereby a person other than the candidate fraudulently represents, or intends to represent, the candidate in an examination or test (impersonation).
- 2.6 Communicating, or attempting to communicate with another student or with any third party other than the invigilator/examiner during an examination or test.
- 2.7 Use of crib sheets, revision notes etc at any time during an examination or test.
- 2.8 Copying or attempting to copy the work of another student, whether by overlooking his/her work, asking him/her for information, or by any other means.
- 2.9 The submission for assessment of material (written, computer-generated, visual or oral) or ideas originally produced by another person or persons, without clearly indicating that the material is not original, such that the work could be assumed to be the student's own.
- 2.9.1 Offences can also include the use of intellectual data or ideas without acknowledgement; copying, summarizing or paraphrasing the work of another student or graduate; commissioning another person to complete work which is

then submitted as a student's own work; the use of professional essay writing services or work drawn from the internet.

- 2.10 The unauthorised use of the work of another student (whether by taking a hard copy without permission or through access to another electronic format such as a memory stick)
- 2.11 The representation of work produced in collaboration with another person or persons as the work of a single candidate
- 2.12 The inclusion in a piece of assessed work (other than an examination or test) of material which is identical or substantially similar to material which has already been submitted for any other assessment within the College
- 2.13 Making false declarations in an attempt to obtain special examination arrangements or special consideration (eg of extenuating circumstances).
- 2.14 The presentation of data in projects etc based on work purporting to have been carried out by the student but which has been invented, copied, altered or otherwise falsified.
- 2.15 Attempting to persuade another member of the College (student, staff, or invigilator) to participate in any way in actions which would be in breach of this Regulation
- 2.16 Being party to any arrangement which would constitute a breach of this Regulation.

3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 All students must ensure that they are aware of, and comply with, College and programme requirements and that they are not party to any behaviour which could be construed as an examination or assessment offence.
- 3.2 Students authorised to work in pairs and/or groups will normally be required to complete a cover sheet declaring whether the work was undertaken alone or as part of a team. Students may be required to name other students with whom they worked and/or identify individual responsibility for component parts.
- 3.3 Students submitting an individual assignment must confirm that the work is entirely their own and has been completed in accordance with College and Programme Regulations.
- 3.4 Module Leaders must ensure that students receive written guidelines clearly identifying the parameters of acceptable practice for the modules for which they are responsible. Where students are authorised/required to work collaboratively, the module leader must specify the boundaries of collaboration at the outset. Information on the presentation of written assignments in order to avoid allegations of an assessment offence (eg information on acceptable referencing etc) should be reinforced in lectures, seminars and tutorials as appropriate.
- 3.5 The College has established a pool of individuals who could be called upon to join any Panel of Investigation. This pool is made up of those in the programme areas who have not taught the student(s) in question, and members of the Academic Board.

4 College Panel of Investigation

- 4.1 A College Panel of Investigation will comprise three members in total. These will be drawn from those in the programme areas who have not taught the student(s) in question, and members of the Academic Board. A member of the Academic Board will Chair the Panel, and the HE Quality Assurance Administrator or nominee, will act as secretary to the Panel. The Secretary to the Panel will ensure, as far as is possible, an appropriate gender balance in determining membership.

- 4.2 The panel will deal with cases by correspondence unless a student wishes to contest their case in person.
- 4.3 The dates of meetings of the College Panel of Investigation will be arranged as required.
- 4.4 When a member of teaching staff or an External Examiner considers that a breach of the Academic Regulations has taken place the relevant member of teaching staff will provide the student with a copy of this Regulation together with a standard letter outlining the allegation, explaining the part of the regulation it is alleged the student has breached and requesting her/him to confirm in writing on a standard pro-forma to the HE Quality Manager, within 5 working days, whether
- s/he accepts the charge to be laid against her/him and understands that the case will be considered by a Panel of Investigation. The candidate may submit evidence in mitigation, in the form of a written statement, for consideration by the Panel if s/he so wishes. Should correspondence not be received from the candidate by the deadline for a response (five working days), it will be assumed that s/he has accepted the allegation made and the case will be forwarded to the Panel.
 - s/he wishes to contest the allegation in which case the panel will either
 - review the case by correspondence and take into account any written statement that the student submits in defence of his/her case. Or
 - hold a hearing of the panel of investigation attended by the student in person with the opportunity to bring witnesses to support his/her case. The dates of the meeting of the Panel will be confirmed in the letter. A student will not have the right to demand a revised date for the Panel to meet. The student will be required to indicate whether s/he wishes to bring a friend (who may be a fellow student, staff member, SU officer or other party) and the identity of any such individual. S/he will also be required to indicate whether they will be calling any witnesses and if so the identity of those individuals. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for the attendance of their own witnesses.

4.5 A Hearing of the College Panel of Investigation

- 4.5.1 Where a student wishes to contest the allegation in person, the HE Quality Manager (or their nominee), will on receipt of the written confirmation by the student:
- i) acknowledge the letter from the student, confirming that their case will be referred to the Panel of Investigation and the timing of their hearing
 - ii) confirm the membership of the Panel of Investigation, being three members drawn from those in the programme areas who have not taught the student(s) in question, and members of the Academic Board. A member of the Academic Board will Chair the Panel. The Secretary to the Panel will ensure, as far as is possible, an appropriate gender balance in determining membership.
 - iii) confirm the identity of any witnesses called by the College
 - iv) ensure that all relevant evidence is collected and made available to the Panel
 - v) call any relevant witnesses on behalf of the College
 - vi) obtain information about any previous proven examination or assessment offences
- 4.5.2 The Panel is required to examine all the evidence relevant to the circumstances of the alleged offence and to interview the student and any witnesses in order to establish the facts of the case. The student will also have the right to question witnesses. Should the student be unable to attend s/he has the right for her/his case to be heard in absentia and to submit a written statement but will not have the right to demand a revised date for the Panel to meet.

- 4.5.2.1 The Panel may decide that the student be subject to a viva voce examination as a means of determining whether an offence has occurred. The viva voce examination will be conducted by the Lead Tutor or nominee together with one member of the Panel who will be considering the case.
- 4.5.2.2 If the Panel decides that there is no case to answer, the Lead Tutor (or nominee) will be required to ensure that all records relating to the allegation are removed from the student files.
- 4.5.2.3 The outcome of the Panel hearing will be reported to the student and the relevant Lead Tutor (or nominee) in writing within five working days of the meeting.

5 Alleged Examination Offence (Formal Written Examination)

5.1 Procedure to be followed when the suspected offence is identified

- 5.1.1 Where an invigilator or examiner suspects that a student may have committed (or be attempting to commit) an offence during an examination, s/he should
 - i) where possible call another invigilator/staff member to act as a witness
 - ii) confiscate any unauthorised material/device in the possession of the candidate
 - iii) endorse the candidate's script/paper on the front cover with a note of the time the alleged offence was discovered
 - iv) note on the script/paper the point the candidate had reached when the alleged offence was discovered
 - v) allow the candidate to continue with the examination but at the end of the examination provide him/her with a copy of this Regulation together with a standard letter outlining the allegation, explaining the part of the regulation it is alleged the student has breached and requesting her/him to confirm in writing on a standard pro-forma to the HE Quality Manager, within 5 working days, whether
 - s/he accepts the charge to be laid against her/him and understands that the case will be considered by a Panel of Investigation (see paragraph 4.) The candidate may submit evidence in mitigation, in the form of a written statement, for consideration by the Panel if s/he so wishes. Should correspondence not be received from the candidate by the deadline for a response, it will be assumed that s/he has accepted the allegation made and the case will be forwarded to the Panel.
 - s/he wishes to contest the allegation in which case the panel will either
 - review the case by correspondence and take into account any written statement that the student submits or
 - hold a hearing of the panel of investigation attended by the student in person with the opportunity to bring witnesses to support his/her case. The dates of the meeting of the Panel will be confirmed in the letter. A student will not have the right to demand a revised date for the Panel to meet. The student will be required to indicate whether s/he wishes to bring a friend (who may be a fellow student, staff member, SU officer or other party) and the identity of any such individual. S/he will also be required to indicate whether they will be calling any witnesses and if so the identity of those individuals. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for the attendance of their own witnesses.
 - vi) make a full written report to the HE Quality Manager enclosing any confiscated device/materials.
- 5.1.2 The HE Quality Manager (or their nominee) will, within 24 hours, forward a copy of the written report and any confiscated device/materials to the Curriculum Area Manager or nominee for comment by the module leader and Lead Tutor.

The module leader will be requested to comment on the relevance to the examination/student performance of any confiscated material.

- 5.1.3 Should an allegation of an examination offence come to light after the examination has been held, e.g. during the marking process, the person who has identified the alleged offence should consult the module leader/Curriculum Area Manager. If, following discussion, the curriculum team considers that there is a case to answer, the module leader/Curriculum Area Manager will then notify the HE Quality Manager of the nature of the allegation. The HE Quality Manager (or their nominee) will then send a standard letter by recorded delivery to the student's home and local addresses, and email a copy to the student's email address. Should there be no reply it will be assumed that the student does not wish to contest the allegation. The case will proceed to a Panel of Investigation as described in section 4.

6 Alleged Coursework Offence (Including Tests)

- 6.1 The College will convene a Panel of Investigation for coursework offences (including tests) as and when required. Membership will be drawn from the College pool (see 3.5). The procedure for the Panel will be the same as identified in section 4.

6.2 Initial action by internal or external marker

- 6.2.1 Where an internal or external marker suspects that a candidate has breached the Regulations in respect of assessed work, s/he should advise the module leader for the work in question. The curriculum team will review the evidence and decide if there is a case to answer. If the team decide that there is a case to answer, the module leader, in consultation with the Lead Tutor, must advise the student in writing following the procedure outlined in section 4.4
- 6.2.2 The module leader must refer the matter to the Lead Tutor, Curriculum Area Manager and the HE Quality Manager. The Lead Tutor/Curriculum Area Manager and HE Quality Manager must be provided with a copy of the letter to the student, a written statement of the grounds for the allegation, the student's work, and any other evidence in support of the allegation.
- 6.2.3 In the case of a first year undergraduate student who has committed a technical breach of the Regulations (e.g. poor referencing) in respect of a piece of work worth no more than 25% of the module mark, the module leader, in consultation with the Lead Tutor/Curriculum Area Manager or Director for Curriculum (Higher Education, International and Adults) may at the same time offer the student the opportunity to have the work marked in the usual way rather than go through the formal procedures. The student retains the right to contest the allegation and for the matter to be referred to a Panel of Investigation (as described in section 4). Where the procedure outlined in this paragraph is followed, this must be recorded on the student file and reported formally to the Panel of Investigation and subsequently to the Award Assessment Board.

7 Recommendation of penalty to Award Assessment Board

- 7.1 If an offence has been committed, the Panel of Investigation will recommend an appropriate penalty to the Award Assessment Board as sanctioned through the College's Disciplinary Policy and under the authority of the Academic Board. The recommendation will take account of the seriousness of the offence, the student's intent or otherwise and, where relevant, any previous offences of which the student has been found guilty, together with custom and practice across the College. The recommendation may be:

- i) that no further action be taken but the offence recorded on the student's file
- ii) that a mark of zero be recorded for the work in question

- iii) that a mark of zero be recorded for the module of which the assessment formed a part
- iv) that a mark of zero be recorded for the module of which the work forms a part and the student be barred from taking that module again
- v) that the student be required to transfer from their present programme to an alternative programme, subject to the agreement of the new Lead Tutor
- vi) that in the case of a Final Level student, his/her final average mark be reduced by 10%
- vii) to recommend to the Award Assessment Board that the matter should be referred for action under the College's standard disciplinary policy which may ultimately lead to exclusion.

7.2 Exceptionally, the Board may conclude that an offence is so serious that it should be referred to the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

8 Award Assessment Board

8.1 The Lead Tutor must ensure that all recommendations from Panels of Investigation are notified to the relevant Award Assessment Board.

8.2 An Award Assessment Board must formally consider all cases of proven examination or assessment offences and either endorse the recommended action or agree to substitute an alternative (in which case it must provide a full rationale). All discussion must be recorded fully in the minutes.

8.3 A student found guilty of an examination or assessment offence the penalty for which is such as to make them ineligible for the award on which they are registered (or to result in their exclusion from the College under the Student Disciplinary Procedure) is nonetheless eligible for any intermediate award for which s/he has legitimately met the academic requirements, and any such award must therefore be conferred.

8.4 Where the recommendation of the Panel of Investigation has been changed by the Board, the student must be informed in writing of the change, and the rationale for the change must be forwarded to the Chair of the Panel of Investigation

9 Allegations made at or after the Assessment Board

9.1 Exceptionally, an alleged offence may come to light at or after the meeting of an Assessment Board. Allegations made at a Board must be investigated as soon as practicable thereafter. In the meantime the decision on the student must be deferred.

9.2 Where an offence is discovered after an Award Board has met and results have been published, the allegation must be referred directly to the Lead Tutor, who will consult with the HE Quality Manager or Director for Curriculum (Higher Education, International and Adults) module leader and Chair of the Award Assessment Board. They will take account of the nature of the evidence presented; the seriousness of the offence; the time which has elapsed; the reasons why it was not discovered earlier; and the regulations of any professional validating and accrediting body in determining whether or not to take action.

9.3 The Open University has the power to rescind an award or distinction made by the College if it considers that there is due cause. The College will notify the Open University if it considers there is due cause to take this action.

10 Appeals

10.1 The final decision on the penalty for an assessment/examination offence will rest with the Award Assessment Board and a student has the right to appeal by the deadline date indicated in the Appeals Procedure (see Appendix 1).

10.2 A student may only appeal on the grounds that:

- i) there has been a material administrative error

- ii) the assessments/examinations were not conducted in accordance with the current regulations for the programme or special arrangements formally agreed
- iii) some other material irregularity relevant to the assessments has occurred
- iv) ***in most exceptional circumstances*** the candidate has established to the satisfaction of the Academic Appeals Committee that performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or factors which the candidate was unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to divulge before the Award Assessment Board reached their decision. The candidate's request must be supported by medical certificates or other documentary evidence acceptable to the Academic Appeals Committee.

11 Report to the Academic Board

- 11.1 At the first Academic Board meeting of the new academic session, the HE Quality Manager must report on the number of cases considered by the Panel of Investigation, detailing the number where the allegation was found to be true, the nature of the allegation in each such case and the penalty invoked. The report shall not name individual students.

SOMERSET COLLEGE

Authority of Award Assessment Board

1. The Award Assessment Board is appointed by the Academic Board and is accountable to the Academic Board for the fulfilment of its terms of reference.
2. The Award Assessment Board is authorised by the Academic Board to assess students in accordance with the programme regulations and to recommend the conferment of a validated award of the Open University upon a student who in the judgement of the Board has fulfilled the objectives of the approved programme of study and achieved the standard required for the award.
3. The Award Assessment Board is responsible for all assessments that contribute to the recommendation of an award. These responsibilities include establishing arrangements for the approval of assessment tasks and project titles both for initial assessments and any potential reassessments and ensuring that they are moderated by appropriate external examiners.
4. No other body has authority to recommend conferment of an award, nor to amend the decision of an approved and properly constituted Award Assessment Board acting within its terms of reference and in accordance with the regulations for the programme of study. An Award Assessment Board may, however, be required to review a decision in the event of an appeal.
5. Assessment arrangements for students with special requirements should be reported by the Curriculum Area Manager to the Award Assessment Board.
6. The Award Assessment Board will be informed by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee of any valid cases of Extenuating Circumstances. The Award Assessment Board will take such valid cases into account in determining its decisions.
7. The Award Assessment Board will be informed by the Panel of Investigation of proven cases of Academic Offences together with a recommended penalty. The Award Assessment Board will then determine on academic grounds the extent of any penalty or mitigation. The Award Assessment Board will normally endorse the recommended penalty but may agree to substitute an alternative (in which case it must provide a full rationale). All discussion must be recorded fully in the minutes.
8. The Award Assessment Board shall not unreasonably withhold permission for a student to be reassessed in accordance with programme regulations.
9. The approved Award Assessment Board may agree arrangements for delegating responsibility for assessment to a subsidiary Board of Examiners with designated responsibility for a cognate group of subjects. Such a sub-group, must include at least one external examiner. Subsidiary Boards will exercise full responsibility for assessing students but will not make decisions on progression or awards. These will remain the responsibility of the parent board. (Refer to section F4.6 of the OU Handbook for Validated Awards)

Refer to Appendix 2 of these Regulations for Operational Instructions for Award Assessment Boards.

SOMERSET COLLEGE

The Exclusion of a Student on the Grounds of Unsatisfactory Progress (either Academic or in Terms of Professional Development)

A student who is considered by the Chair of an Award Assessment Board, in consultation with the Lead Tutor, to be making unsatisfactory progress (either academic or in terms of professional development) or whose conduct is unethical or unprofessional or dangerous may be required to withdraw from a programme of study. Under such circumstances the following action will be taken:

Either:

- (a) a written formal warning will be issued by the Chair of the Award Assessment Board after consultation with the Lead Tutor indicating the grounds for the warning. If the problem is not resolved an interim Award Assessment Board meeting will be held to discuss the case and take appropriate action which may be referral for action under the College's standard disciplinary procedure or,
- (a) if the circumstances are of a serious nature, the Chair of the Award Assessment Board, following consultation with the Lead Tutor, may refer the matter for action under the Serious Misconduct section of the College's Disciplinary Procedure which may result in the student being suspended pending investigation. In the event of such a referral, action will be taken in accordance with the College's Disciplinary Procedure.

The External Examiner(s) will be involved in the discussion with the Award Assessment Board.

SOMERSET COLLEGE

Payment of Fees and Withholding of Student Awards in Cases of Outstanding Fees or Other Debts

1. Students are required to ensure that the relevant fees for their programme of study are paid by their Local Education Authority, the Student Loans Company, other sponsor or by themselves by the due date(s) in each level of their programme of study. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all relevant application and renewal forms are submitted to the Local Education Authority or Student Loans Company, as appropriate, by the required date and at the required frequency. Students who are sponsored may be required to provide a letter confirming financial support.
2. Students must settle all other College accounts presented to them promptly.
3. The result for any student who has outstanding fees or debt of any other nature to the College will appear on the results list. However, students will be notified in writing that their award documents will not be available to them, nor requested from any external body until the debt is cleared in full.
4. Continuing students must clear their debt or agree a staged payment with the College Finance Office before being permitted to re-enrol for a subsequent level of their programme of study.

NOTE: If a sponsor subsequently fails to pay or withdraws from a sponsorship agreement, the student will be personally liable for the fee debt.

SOMERSET COLLEGE

Appendix 1

Academic Appeals

PLEASE READ THESE NOTES AND THE ATTACHED REGULATIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU COMPLETE YOUR APPEAL FORM

DEADLINES

Appeal Against the Decision of an Award Assessment Board

If you are on a **standard undergraduate programme**, you must submit your appeal to reach the Quality Improvement Coordinator by no later than **31st August** if you are appealing against the decision of a summer Award Assessment Board.

If you are appealing against the decision of a September (**re-sit**) Assessment Board, you must submit your appeal no later than **3 weeks before the publication of results**.

Please read the attached appeal regulations carefully before submitting your appeal. You may also need to refer to the assessment regulations for your programme, which are available on the programme pages of Scoodle, (the College Virtual Learning Environment).

It is in your best interests to submit your appeal as soon as possible. Although the College will do what it can to expedite matters, there is no guarantee that your case will be resolved prior to any re-sit dates. The later you appeal, the less likely it is that you will get a decision in time. You will be expected to complete re-sits as usual unless your appeal has by then been resolved and the initial decision reviewed. Please note that if your appeal is not submitted in time or with all relevant documentation, in the event that the appeal is upheld, it may not be possible for the College to implement an immediate reassessment opportunity.

Please note that it is very unlikely that the Board would decide to award you additional marks or upgrade your degree classification because of extenuating circumstances.



MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE			
Curriculum/Service	All Curriculum Areas		
Subject	Academic Appeals Procedure for Open University students	Date	September 2012
		Revision/Issue	3 Issue 4
Procedure No.	SQP 3.16	Next Review	September 2015

Purpose - This document sets out the procedure to be followed in the event that an Open University (OU) student at Somerset College wishes to make an academic appeal.

Scope - This procedure is used by OU students who wish to make an academic appeal; for example, against an Admissions decision; Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL); Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL); the decision of an Award Assessment Board. This procedure can only be used if the grounds for appeal are applicable.

Responsibilities - The overall responsibility for the effective and efficient handling of an appeal lies with the **Principal & Chief Executive** who delegates this responsibility to the **Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality (VP C&Q)**. The VP C&Q is responsible for the control and monitoring of this procedure and for ensuring the appeal is handled in accordance with the QAA Code of Practice. The **Academic Appeals Committee** is responsible for considering the validity of an appeal. Where the appeal relates to the decision of an Award Assessment Board the **Academic Appeals Committee** is responsible for making the decision to bring this to the attention of the relevant **Award Assessment Board**. Acting under the authority of the **Academic Board** the **Academic Appeals Committee** also has the authority to annul decisions of the Award Assessment Board, (refer to point 6.3). The **Quality Improvement Coordinator** is responsible for ensuring the process is completed, the database is updated and reports are produced for the appropriate committees and the Open University.

Procedure -

1. Is this the right procedure to use?

- 1.1 In the first instance, the student must establish whether this appeals procedure is the most appropriate route. Refer to section 3.2.
- 1.2 A complaint is defined as 'the expression of a specific concern about the provision of a course/module or a programme of study, or a related academic service'. In which case, the student should refer to the College's Management Procedure 'Formal Customer Complaints Procedure'.

2. Appeals process - general

- 2.1 Somerset College will ensure that:
 - 2.1.1 This appeals procedure and that of the Open University are made public to all OU students, electronically and by other methods that are suitable to individuals needs who have a declared disability.
 - 2.1.2 All appeals will be handled in a timely manner in order to minimise the disruption to a student's progression on a programme of study and will be treated in the strictest confidence.
 - 2.1.3 OU students are dealt with in accordance with the College's Equality and Diversity policy statement No. 1f and the Safeguarding Children, Vulnerable Adults and Young People policy statement No. 1L.

- 2.1.4 Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate students needs during the appeal process; however, should a student choose not to reveal any medical or other problem, he/she will not normally be able to use that information as grounds for an appeal.
- 2.1.5 OU students will not be disadvantaged if they raise an appeal.
- 2.1.6 The appeal is adjudicated impartially, and staff dealing with the appeal do not act in any manner in which they have a material interest or any potential conflict of interest.
- 2.1.7 There is suitable briefing and support provided for all staff and students involved in handling or supporting the appeal.
- 2.1.8 A student can withdraw their appeal without prejudice.
- 2.1.9 Appeals will normally be dealt with by written correspondence.
- 2.1.10 Under the College's Data Protection policy statement No. 1c students may have access to information held on them.
- 2.1.11 During the process students will be kept informed of the progress made in relation to their appeal; they will be informed in writing of decisions and the outcome of the appeal.
- 2.1.12 The final decision of the appeal is upheld.
3. Grounds for Appeal against the decision of an Award Assessment Board for OU students
- 3.1 The Academic Appeals Committee will identify the grounds on which it is asking the Award Assessment Board to reconsider its decision if it decides that there are reasonable grounds for review.
- 3.2 The Open University is quite clear in that **No circumstances shall constitute grounds for an appeal against an Award Assessment Board decision apart from the following:**
- 3.2.1 that the Academic Appeals Committee is satisfied on the evidence produced by the candidate or any other person that:
- there has been a material administrative error
 - the assessments/examinations were not conducted in accordance with the current regulations for the programme or special arrangements formally agreed
 - some other material irregularity relevant to the assessments has occurred
 - ***in most exceptional circumstances*** the candidate has established to the satisfaction of the Academic Appeals Committee that performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or factors which the candidate was unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to divulge before the Award Assessment Board reached their decision. The candidate's request must be supported by medical certificates or other documentary evidence acceptable to the Academic Appeals Committee.
- 3.3 Disagreement with the academic judgement of an Award Assessment Board in assessing the merits of an individual element of assessment cannot constitute grounds for an academic appeal.
- 3.4 The Award Assessment Board will reach decisions based on marks or grades and other information related to student performance, and students' disagreement with such decisions cannot constitute grounds for an appeal.
4. **Appeal Process – initial request by a student**
- 4.1 The student must submit their appeal to the Quality Improvement Coordinator and not to their tutor or programme administrator.

- 4.2 In the first instance, the VP C&Q will make an initial assessment of the validity of the case and advise the student. The student then has the right to choose to take the matter further or not.
- 4.3 If feasible the appeal should be resolved informally at an early stage. If the matter cannot be resolved then the formal appeal process will be invoked.
- 4.4 Student's requesting a review of an Award Assessment Board's decision must state their case clearly in writing using the correct Appeals Proforma (SQF3.16) supported by as much evidence as possible and within the deadlines as stated in the Regulations.

5. Appeal Process – consideration by the academic appeals committee

- 5.1 The Academic Appeals Committee will consist of three members of the Academic Board or their representative and will normally include the VP C&Q or another senior manager. The Academic Appeals Committee must exclude any persons who have direct involvement with the student, the programme or the Award Assessment Board concerned.
- 5.2 After considering all of the evidence the Academic Appeals Committee will make a decision to either uphold or dismiss the appeal.
- 5.3 Where a decision in relation to an Award Assessment Board is upheld a recommendation will be made for reconsideration by the Award Assessment Board.
- 5.4 Where an appeal for another academic reason is upheld, the Academic Appeals Committee will inform the relevant parties and ensure that their decision is applied.

6. Appeal Process for decisions made by the Award Assessment Board

- 6.1 The Award Assessment Board will consider the evidence and either agree to amend or confirm its original decision.
- 6.2 In cases where the Award Assessment Board agree to amend their decision but are uncertain about the most appropriate alternative recommendation, additional evidence of the student's performance will be sought. The additional evidence will either be through reassessment at the next opportunity, through a viva voce examination, or through another form of assessment which is appropriate to the student's circumstances and requirements of the programme.
- 6.3 In cases where the Award Assessment Board does not modify its decision after reconsideration, the Academic Appeals Committee may annul that decision if in its opinion due and proper account had not been taken of the relevant factors specified in the request. This could be where the student had produced satisfactory evidence to the Award Assessment Board that his/her performance had been affected by illness or another valid cause. In these circumstances the Academic Appeals Committee can make new arrangements for the assessment of the student.

7. Appeal Process – procedural irregularity

- 7.1 In cases where procedural irregularity has been established as a result of an appeal, the Academic Appeals Committee will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate follow-up action is taken and all procedural irregularities are discussed with The Open University.

8. Appeal Process – completion

- 8.1 On conclusion of the appeal, the VP C&Q will write a report of the findings to the student. The report will state the decisions made and the rationale behind these. The report will also

advise the student that they may submit a formal appeal direct to the Open University if they remain dissatisfied with the decisions.

- 8.2 Included with the report will be a formal 'Completion of Procedures' letter which the College is obliged to do under the terms of its agreement with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator(OIA).
- 8.3 The VP C&Q will produce an annual report to the Open University providing an analysis of any academic appeals, including the nature and outcome of the cases.
- 8.4 The Open University may require a further report from the Academic Appeals Committee; this will be provided within the timescales set by the Open University.

9. Reports

- 9.1 Reports will be produced in each semester, and presented to the Academic Board.

Formulation – This procedure was originated by the HE Quality & Development Manager, in consultation with appropriate academic staff, the Quality Improvement Coordinator and the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality. It was reviewed as a result of the Open University Validation process.

Documentation

- Appeal Proforma SQF3.16

Review - This management procedure will be reviewed within three (3) years of the approval date or as required in response to changes in college organisation or legislation.

Please provide additional information to support your appeal. Provide as much information about your case as you can - this may help speed up the process (continue on a separate sheet if necessary). In particular tell us **why you believe you have grounds for appeal:**

and, **if you are appealing on the basis of extenuating circumstances, explain why you were unable to reveal these before the Award Assessment Board met (if this is your appeal)** (remember that these can only be considered as grounds for appeal in **exceptional** circumstances)

Please **attach** the evidence you have to support your case and any documents you are relying on (you may wish to consult the College's regulations on late coursework and extenuating circumstances for more information about acceptable evidence). Claims of extenuating circumstances must be accompanied by corroborating evidence.

Say what outcome you would wish your appeal to achieve.

Signed:

Date:

This form must be submitted to:
The Quality Improvement Coordinator
Somerset College
Wellington Road
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 5AX

Please note that appeals will normally be dealt with by written correspondence only.

SOMERSET COLLEGE

Appendix 2

Operational Instructions for Award Assessment Boards: Undergraduate Programmes of Study

1 Constitution

The membership of the Award Assessment Board will be as follows:- Chair (normally the Director for Curriculum (Higher Education, International and Adults) or nominee from the Senior Leadership Team not involved with the assessment of students whose results are being considered), Lead Tutors, the Award External Examiner(s), Curriculum Area Administrator to act as secretary to the Board (non-voting member).

The membership of the Award Assessment Board may be extended to include Subject External Examiners and other Internal Examiners where this is a requirement for professional accreditation. In such cases the membership of the Award Assessment Board must be clearly specified in the current Award definitive document.

The Award External Examiner must be present at the Board. Any difficulties in the External Examiner attending must be discussed with the Open University and an agreed contingency put in place.

2 Responsibilities of the Board

The responsibilities of the Award Assessment Board are as follows:-

- (a) To make decisions on progression and awards for all students registered for the named award(s) for which the Board is responsible.
- (b) To ensure that decisions are arrived at fairly and democratically and in accordance with the "Regulatory Framework for Undergraduate Awards" (and any approved modifications for the particular award stated in the definitive document), that justice is done to the individual student and the standard of the College award is maintained.
- (c) To decide on recommendations on the form of referral for individual modules.
- (d) To ensure that in making decisions all corroborated extenuating circumstances relating to individual students confirmed by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, have been fully taken into account before a decision is reached.
- (e) To take account of the recommendation of the Panel of Investigation concerning any examination or assessment offence/breach of the Regulations and take appropriate action.

3 Extenuating Circumstances

It is the responsibility of the Award Assessment Board to take into account the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel relating to any fully documented extenuating circumstances evidence relating to the student.

It is recommended that each Programme should have a summary of the facts relating to the Extenuating Circumstances for each student including the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, the name of the student, the dates during which the student's performance was affected and the tests/examinations/ presentations missed and any late coursework submitted.

All extenuating circumstances will have been reviewed by the formal College "Extenuating Circumstances Panel" prior to the meetings of the Award Assessment Board to determine whether the circumstances

- (a) fall within the definitions established in the "Regulations on Extenuating Circumstances"
- (b) are valid and occurred at a time to have had a material effect on a student's performance.

Where extenuating circumstances have been deemed valid for the submission of late coursework, the actual mark achieved will have been entered on the official record.

Lead Tutors should obtain, where appropriate, for the Award Assessment Board, a report detailing extenuating circumstances which affected the student's performance.

The Award Assessment Board must ensure the minutes specifically include details of students who have claimed extenuating circumstances and the resulting decisions approved.

4 Problems Affecting the Assessment of all Students in a Module

Any problems affecting the assessment of all students in a module (for example power failure during an examination) should be reported to the Board before marks in that module are considered. It would be good practice for the Lead Tutor to have a clear remedy for the problem formulated ahead of the meeting – if possible on which has been discussed with the Award External Examiner responsible for the programme and the Chair of the Board.

5 Examination and Assessment Offences

Where an examination or assessment offence is suspected, it is important that the procedures outlined in the Regulations have been followed step by step in order that it is clear whether the case is proven. The case should have been considered by the College Panel of Investigation which will forward a recommendation to the Award Assessment Board on the penalty to be applied. Where the recommendation of the College Panel of Investigation has been upheld or changed by the Award Assessment Board, the student must be informed in writing of the change and the rationale for the change must be forwarded to the Chair of the Panel of Investigation. The Award Assessment Board will normally accept the penalty recommended by the College Panel of Investigation. Exceptionally an alleged offence may come to light at or immediately after the meeting of the Award Assessment Board. Such allegations must be investigated as soon as practicable thereafter and in the meantime the decision on the student must be deferred.

A student found guilty of an examination or assessment offence the penalty for which is such as to make them ineligible for the award on which they are registered (or to result in their exclusion from the College under the student Disciplinary Procedure) is nonetheless eligible for any intermediate award for which s/he has legitimately met the academic requirements, and any such award must therefore be conferred by the Award Assessment Board.

6 Before the meeting of the Board

Broadsheets of marks, together with the minutes of Award Assessment Boards which previously considered the students' results, should be available for the Chair of the Award Assessment Board and the Lead Tutor to peruse before the Board meeting in order that:-

- (a) marks are correct, validated and signed off by the Lead Tutor.
- (b) where marks are missing for a particular candidate, this is the correct position.
- (c) where time permits, the initial Honours Classification can be written on the broadsheets prior to copying for the meeting for those students whose marks are within 1% of a borderline and where the Level 6 average mark is to be used or where the grade profile needs to be invoked. For Foundation Degree programmes the broadsheet will need to show the students' average mark

across all modules in Level 5 to enable the Board to make awards with Merit or Distinction.

- (d) overall student performance can be reviewed in the light of the extenuating circumstances which have been identified as 'valid' by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. To enable Boards to easily identify those students for which information has been submitted the notes column on the spreadsheet must be annotated to indicate for which modules extenuating circumstances have been agreed.
- (e) any 'problem' students can be identified and discussed with the Award External Examiner.

7 The Meeting

7.1 At the beginning of the meeting

The Chair should check the membership of the Board and ensure that the meeting is quorate (a quorum is one-third of the specified membership and must include the appropriate External Examiner(s)) and should subsequently ensure that the meeting remains quorate.

The Chair should also check that documents or information indicated on the standard agenda, together with relevant minutes of previous Board meetings and the College's Academic Regulations, are available to the Board. The Board should formally receive the written annual report for the previous academic year of the Award External Examiner(s) together with any formal response, and consider any matters arising.

7.2 Criteria for progression and Awards

(NOTE: the Award Assessment Board may not alter the marks agreed by the Lead Tutor except in exceptional circumstances (i.e. where there has been an error in transcription of the marks or an omission))

7.2.1 Progression

The rules for progressing, compensation in exceptional circumstances and referral are indicated in the standard regulations for undergraduate programmes.

Students are expected to complete all modules before progressing.

7.2.2 The Use of Higher Level Credits to complete the number of Credits required for a Previous Level

In the award of an interim qualification, Boards may accept the completion of a module at a higher level to satisfy the credit requirements for an earlier level, provided of course that there is no double counting of modules, and that all programme specific requirements have been met.

7.2.3 Final Level Bachelors degree with honours

Honours classifications are determined in line with the regulatory framework.

Boards may not use criteria such as vivas or performance on projects as a means of determining honours classification.

7.2.4 Decisions

The decisions reached for individual students must be very clearly recorded. All decisions relating to students with particular extenuating circumstances and discussion of cases of examination and assessment offences, together with other instances where a Board has used its discretion, should be very carefully minuted.

7.2.5 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

The Regulations for consideration of extenuating circumstances are given in the standard regulations for programmes. The screening of extenuating circumstances by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel will ensure the Board is directed to those cases which are deemed to be valid.

Where a Board has agreed that a student is to be offered an appropriate award with the option of taking further assessments as a first attempt, the Board must formally decide on which modules must be retaken and the form of assessment. This must be clearly recorded on the Results List.

Three principles should guide an Award Assessment Board in considering extenuating circumstances:

- (a) equity, ensuring that all students are given equal consideration
- (b) confidentiality, ensuring that personal information is disseminated only as widely as is strictly necessary for the Board to be confident with its decision.
- (c) verification of the evidence presented.

Equity can only be achieved by all students being given an equal opportunity for their case to be heard and by the Board being consistent in its treatment of individual students. In practice this means that 'special pleading' on behalf of a student with whom a member of the Board happens to be familiar cannot - and must not - be permitted. Internal Examiners who have a particular knowledge of the circumstances relating to individual students may submit a written statement, although this should be in support of documentary evidence and not a substitute for it.

Award Assessment Boards must accept the professional recommendation of a doctor or counsellor regarding the effect on a student of a particular condition or problem.

Should a student submit a medical certificate on the basis of which an Award Assessment Board feels unable to make a decision, the decision should be deferred. The Chair of the Award Assessment Board should subsequently seek clarification of the extent to which a particular medical problem would have affected a student's performance from the doctor concerned. In such a case the Programme concerned may well be required to pay for a further extended report.

7.2.6 'Chair's Action' with respect to Awards

Award Assessment Boards operate under delegated authority from Academic Board. The Award Board chair cannot agree standards and therefore the phrase 'Chair's Action' should not be used.

7.3 At the end of the Meeting

The date of the Re-sit Assessment Board and the composition of that Board should be agreed. The Award External Examiner(s) will be asked to indicate how much involvement s/he should have in the referral process for all programmes. The Award External Examiner(s) will be required to formally endorse re-sit results and confirm recommendations for all final awards prior to results lists or transcripts being issued.

The Chair and Secretary to the Board must ensure that the appropriate declaration form is signed by the Award External Examiner(s).

AWARD ASSESSMENT BOARD
(UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES)

STANDARD AGENDA

1. **Membership**
 - a. To note the membership of the Board and to welcome members
 - b. To receive apologies
 - c. To receive any declarations of interest

2. **Confidentiality**

To note the confidentiality of all the proceedings of the Board – all in attendance must not share any discussions outside of the meeting.

3. **Minutes of the Board meetings held in the previous academic year**
 - a. To receive the minutes of the Summer Award Assessment Board
 - b. To receive the minutes of the September and January (Re-sit) Award Assessment Boards
 - c. To consider any matters arising from the minutes
 - d. To receive the written annual reports for the previous academic year of the Award External Examiner(s) together with any formal response and to consider any matters arising.

4. Decisions made on progression and awards following the last meeting of the Board.

To receive a report on any decisions made on progression and awards as a result of amended/deferred results and the outcomes of appeals.

5. **Award Assessment Board Regulations**
 - a. To receive a statement of the purpose of the Board:
 - i) To make decisions on progression and awards for all students registered for the named award(s) for which the Board is responsible.
 - ii) To ensure that decisions are arrived at fairly and democratically and in accordance with the Regulatory Framework for Undergraduate Awards (and any approved modifications for the particular award stated in the definitive document), that justice is done to the individual student and the standard of the College award is maintained.
 - iii) To decide on recommendations on the form of referral for individual modules.
 - iv) To ensure that in making decisions all corroborated extenuating circumstances relating to individual students (confirmed as valid by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel) have been fully taken into account before a decision is reached.
 - v) To consider and discuss any examination or assessment offences and take appropriate action.
 - b. To receive an outline of the Assessment Regulations for Awards considered noting any modules which are essential for an award or progression.
 - c. To agree, in accordance with the Operational Instructions for Award Assessment Boards, guidelines for the treatment of marks/grades obtained at other institutions (e.g. exchange programmes).

6. **Results**
 - a. To receive the individual module marks and decide on the form of referral
 - b. To receive the assessment broadsheet and consider individual student's performance
 - c. To report and discuss any cases of corroborated extenuating circumstances

- d. To report any cases of extenuating circumstances to be brought forward from the previous year
 - e. To report and discuss any examination or assessment offences
 - f. To agree decisions on individual student progression and award
- (Decisions relating to students with corroborated extenuating circumstances and discussion of examination and assessment offences must be carefully minuted)

7. Referral

- a. To decide the form of referral and dates for resubmission
- b. To agree the date of the Re-sit Assessment Board (NOTE: the Award External Examiner must agree how much involvement s/he will have in the referral process).

8. Prizes and Awards

9. Award External Examiner Matters

- a. To receive the Award External Examiner's Report
- b. To obtain the signature of the Award External Examiner on the declaration form
- c. To record thanks to the Award External Examiner (particularly where their term of office is ending)

Note: The Award External Examiner will be required to endorse re-sit results and confirm recommendations for awards prior to results lists or transcripts being issued.

10. Confidentiality

To remind the Board of the confidentiality of the proceedings and the procedures governing publication of results.

11. Date of next meeting of the full Award Assessment Board

12. Any Other Business

The following documents should be available at the meeting for reference purposes:-

- Definitive programme document(s)
- Regulations for passing specific modules
- Summary list of personal circumstances relating to students to be considered by the Board (including previous years where relevant) and Guidelines on Extenuating Circumstances
- Minutes from College Panel of Investigation if appropriate
- Minutes from Boards held in the previous academic year
- Operational instructions for Award Assessment Boards

Appendix 3

Certification of Awards and Supplementary Certification

1 Certification – Current Students

1.1 Certificate of Award

The Certificate of Award will record:

- a The name of Validating Institution and where appropriate the name of Somerset College;
- b the student's name;
- c the award, including classification if appropriate;
- d the title of the validated programme;
- e date of the award
- f The certificate will be produced by the Validating Institution.

1.2 Diploma Supplement

A Diploma Supplement will be issued to all students who successfully complete their award, after each Assessment Board meeting.

The Diploma Supplement will contain:

- a information about the student;
- b information identifying the qualification undertaken;
- c information on the level of qualification undertaken;
- d information on the contents of the qualification and mode of study;
- e transcript of results (see 1.3 for contents);
- f information on grading criteria;
- g information on function of the qualification;
- h any additional information;
- i information on HE qualification levels in England, Wales & Northern Ireland;
- j description of HE in England, Wales & Northern Ireland

Diploma Supplements will be produced from MIS and issued by the Curriculum Area Administrator.

1.3 Transcript

A Transcript will be issued to all students who successfully complete any elements of an approved programme of study, after each Assessment Board meeting.

The Transcript will indicate:

- a the name of the student;
- b the academic year of study to which the Transcript refers and date of issue;
- c the elements of study successfully completed, with details of level and mark/grade achieved, together with the Credit points awarded.
- d The Transcript will incorporate a brief explanation of the Credit System scheme and may be used to negotiate admission with credit to another approved programme of study either within the College or at another institution of higher education.

Transcripts will be produced from MIS and issued by the Curriculum Area Administrator.

2 Certification – Former Students

2.1 Duplicate Certificate of Award

A student who has lost a certificate of award should contact the MIS Department for the appropriate form of application for a duplicate. The College reserves the right to charge a fee for such provision.

2.2 Transcripts (Historical)

Official (historical) transcripts are produced by the Curriculum Area Administrator for former students applying for entry to, for example, postgraduate courses, or for exemption from the requirements of professional bodies. Transcripts will be signed by the Lead Tutor.

3 Certificate of Achievement

3.1 The College may award a Certificate of Achievement for:

- students failing to qualify for an award but having successfully completed modules worth at least 20 credits (for whom the recommendation Award Certificate of Achievement rather than Fail or Withdraw would be a more positive outcome)
- students studying modules worth at least 20 credits without an award (provided that the module assessments were successfully completed)

3.2 The Certificate of Achievement will normally record

- a The full name of the student
- b The fact that he/she has successfully completed Modules
- c Details of modules/what has been studied
- d Dates attended/duration of training

- e The date of completion or production of the certificate

Under no circumstances may the certificate imply that the student has gained a named award, hence the word 'certificate' must always be followed by 'of achievement'.

- 3.3 The Certificate of Achievement may be signed by the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) or the Principal as appropriate.
- 3.4 The MIS Department must keep a record of certificates issued and periodic monitoring of the issue of certificates of achievement will be undertaken to ensure adherence to the standards set out above.

**COLLEGE POLICY STATEMENT****Policy Number: No. 7d****Issue Number: 2****Policy Title: Admissions Policy for Higher Education programmes****Date of Next Revision: September 2014**

Scope- The aim of this policy is to provide a clear, transparent and equitable admissions process for all Higher Education programmes at the College.

Policy Statement-

1.1 Somerset College aims to:

- create a student body that is balanced and diverse in terms of cultural background and experience;
- recruit students who have the ability to successfully complete their chosen programme, whatever their background.

1.2 The College will achieve these aims through:

- encouraging applications from all those with the motivation and academic ability to thrive at the College, whatever their background
- assessing each application on an individual basis
- offering places to applicants who have the potential to successfully complete their programme
- ensuring transparency in the admissions process.

1.3 The admissions policy complies with relevant legislation and is guided by the principles outlined by the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (Schwartz Review) and by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's Code of Practice for recruitment and admissions.

1.4 All applications for full-time Higher Education programmes must be made through the UCAS system. Applications for part-time Higher Education programmes should be made direct to the College.

Entry requirements

2.1 It is the policy of the College only to admit students who are able to demonstrate the potential to benefit from, and the ability to successfully complete their programme of study.

2.2 The minimum entry level for the College is set by Academic Board and reviewed annually.

2.3 Applicants are expected to attend an interview. Potential Art and Design students are expected to demonstrate examples of their existing work through the presentation of a portfolio.

2.3 Details of entry requirements for each programme are provided in the prospectus, on the College's website and on the UCAS website.

- 2.4 Students whose first language is not English will be required to demonstrate their proficiency in written and spoken English; this will normally be by the English language requirement recommended in the minimum entry requirements.
- 2.5 Mature applicants are considered to be those who will be aged 21 or over at the start of the programme. Where applications from mature candidates are based on prior experience rather than standard qualifications the previous study or work experience must be cognate with the programme applied for.
- 2.6 If an application is successful the applicant will be made one of two types of offer:
- Conditional offer
 - Unconditional offer

The College reserves the right to refuse admission to applicants who have not met the conditions of their conditional offer in full.

- 2.7 Applications, offers and recruitment are monitored by age, gender, ethnicity, disability and relevant widening participation factors.
- 2.8 The College is committed to eliminating unfair discrimination and to promoting equality of opportunity.
- 3.0 **Appeals**
A student may use the College's Academic Appeals Procedure to appeal against an Admissions decision. For Open University students, reference should be made to the Academic Regulations for Open University Validated Awards, appendix 1.

Formulation – This policy statement was formulated by the Head of Information and Funding, in consultation with the Senior Management Team.

Review – This policy statement will be reviewed within three (3) years of the approval date or as required in response to changes in college organisation or legislation.

Appendix 5



Somerset College

MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE			
Curriculum/Service Area	All College		
Subject	Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure for Somerset College Students	Date	September 2011
		Revision/Issue	10 Issue 12
Procedure No.	SQP5.8	Next Review	September 2014

Introduction

All members of the Somerset College student community are expected to act reasonably at all times; to show respect for the wishes and views of others; to comply with college rules; to attend classes regularly; and to apply themselves appropriately to their studies.

This management procedure is in place to provide a clear mechanism by which the College will deal with the small minority of students who do not behave appropriately, or who fail to show the expected level of commitment to their studies.

All members of staff have the authority to bring lapses in behaviour to the attention of the student(s) concerned. The College supports all staff in challenging unacceptable behaviour.

The procedure also aims to protect the student by ensuring fairness in the disciplinary action and that proper warning is given of the outcome of continuing to behave in an unacceptable manner.

Purpose - This document sets out the procedure to be followed in the event that disciplinary action is to be invoked.

Scope - This procedure applies to all students enrolled on Further Education (FE) and Open University (OU) courses within Somerset College. Other Higher Education (HE) students may only be disciplined for non academic misconduct, through this procedure their academic performance issues must be addressed through the procedure of their validating University.

General principles

The Disciplinary procedure will reflect and support the College Student Code of Conduct.

All students will be informed about the disciplinary and appeals procedure at their induction.

Every effort will be made to avoid the use of disciplinary action where alternatives are appropriate.

The College expects its staff to have regular contact with their students; to make them aware of the standards expected of them and to provide support, guidance and advice where needed.

The College is committed to resolving each stage of the procedure as soon as reasonably possible, taking into account the need to investigate any alleged misconduct fairly and adequately.

Students have the right to be accompanied at any stage of the formal procedure. Students are required to inform the College if they intend to bring a companion. If under 18 the companion should be the parent/guardian. Other companions may be a friend, care worker, mentor, or Student Support Officer. The companion is for support only. The companion does not take any formal role in the proceedings. If it is thought the companion would prejudice the hearing by their attendance, the student will be asked to make alternative arrangements.

Canonsgrove Halls of Residence

This procedure does not apply to a breach of the College's Residents Licence at Canonsgrove Halls of Residence. The disciplinary procedure for Canonsgrove is covered in Management Procedure SQP 5.8.2 'Canonsgrove Halls of Residence Disciplinary Procedure'. In exceptional circumstances only (and with the authorisation of the Director of Student Services), the College's Disciplinary Procedure (SQP5.8) will be invoked, i.e. if a student attacks a member of staff at Canonsgrove.

Discipline of 14 – 16 year old Students

14 –16 Students in breach of Somerset College's code of conduct will be subject to their school Disciplinary Procedures.

It is the responsibility of the school to keep parents/guardians/carers informed of any disciplinary action.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each individual student to acquaint themselves with the Code of Conduct and to comply with it. Full-time 16-19 students are required to sign that they have done so. Details are contained in the Student Diary available on the College Virtual Learning Environment (Scoodle) and displayed at reception areas.

All members of staff have the authority to bring lapses in behaviour to the attention of the student(s) concerned and give Informal warnings.

The student is the responsibility of the Curriculum Area at all times. If an alleged offence is committed in communal areas of the college the investigation will be lead by the Curriculum Area with whom the student studies.

Role of the Personal Tutor

The Personal Tutor, unless a witness to the allegation, should take a pastoral care and supportive role to the student. If the Personal Tutor is a witness to the allegation and therefore cannot take a pastoral role to the student, the student must be advised of another member of staff to whom he/she could seek advice and guidance.

The student may seek advice from any member of staff but in particular the Student One Stop or the Student Union (SU).

Disciplinary Process

Suspension in the event of alleged serious misconduct

Where a student is alleged to have committed an act of Serious Misconduct it may be appropriate to suspend pending an investigation and any subsequent disciplinary hearing. This decision will be made by any member of the Curriculum Area Managers (CAM) team or the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) – other than the Principal.

Very short term (Day) suspension may be used to defuse a situation with a student. This may not necessarily be part of the disciplinary process.

Suspension is a neutral act and will not be used as a sanction before the disciplinary hearing and decision.

The reasons for the suspension will be confirmed in writing to the student normally within 5 working days of the suspension taking place together with the date of the Hearing. The suspension should be kept to the shortest time possible.

Investigations

No disciplinary action will be taken against any student until the alleged misconduct has been fairly and adequately investigated.

Investigations will be undertaken in a timely manner without undue delay.

An investigation carried out following another student's complaint, staff complaint, or grievance, or any of the College's procedures, may form all or part of an investigation under this procedure, where appropriate.

Stage 1 – Informal process/Oral Warning

The intention of the informal warning stage is to give students a chance to put things right before anything goes on record. The purpose is to encourage improvement in a student whose conduct is below an acceptable level.

During teaching sessions the lecturer/supervisor has immediate authority for student discipline.

All staff have immediate authority to take action to maintain discipline in the common areas of the College.

Any member of staff observing a student behaving in a manner that could lead to a breach of the Code of Conduct should warn the student their behaviour is inappropriate. The student should be reminded that a breach of the Code of Conduct could lead to disciplinary action.

Initial Oral warnings need not be recorded.

If the students' conduct or performance does not improve the Curriculum Area Manager will repeat the oral warning and a note of the oral warning will be issued and placed on the student's personal file/EILP (Electronic Individual Learning Plan). The note must be dated and signed by the student and the member of staff.

Stage 2 - Formal Process/Written Warning

Should the problem persist, there will be further discussion with the student regarding the issue. This discussion will involve the Tutor/Teacher and the Curriculum Area Manager.

A written warning may be issued which will identify the problems, action required on the part of the student, the time in which improvements must be made and the consequences of failure.

A copy of the letter will be sent to the parents/guardians of students under 18 years of age with a covering letter inviting the parents/carers in to the College for a meeting to discuss the warning and improvement actions.

A copy of the letter will also be sent to any organisation or individual sponsoring the student regardless of age if the sponsors are paying the student's fees.

Stage 3 - Final Written Warning/Panel Hearing

A final written warning will be issued where there is a continued breach of discipline following steps 1 and 2.

A final written warning can only be issued following a Panel Hearing.

The final written warning will be issued by the relevant Curriculum Director (or delegated member of staff).

A copy of the warning will be sent to the parents/guardians of students under 18 years of age with a covering letter inviting the parents/carers in to the College for a meeting to discuss the warning and improvement actions

A copy of the warning letter will also be sent to any organisation or individual sponsoring the student regardless of age if the sponsors are paying the student's fees.

Stage 4 – Dismissal/Panel Hearing

Allegations of repeated misconduct or serious misconduct will be heard at a Disciplinary Hearing set up by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Only a member of the Senior Leadership Team, other than the Principal, can dismiss a student.

Stage 5 - Appeal

Once the written outcome letter has been received by the student, if he/she is unhappy with the outcome, the student has the right to appeal the decision in writing addressed to the Principal up to fifteen working days after receiving the outcome. The purpose of an appeal is not to re-hear the case, but to review the severity of the punishment in proportion to the offence, or the fairness of the handling of the case.

The Appeal hearing will be chaired by the Principal and the panel will comprise of another member of the Senior Leadership team (not previously involved) and a member of the Student Services Team. Any documents considered at the original hearing will be available for the purposes of the appeal, together with any new evidence supplied by the student.

The decision of the Principal should be notified in writing to the student normally within 5 working days of the hearing.

If the appeal is upheld, the Appeal panel may decide that disciplinary action lesser than that recommended by the Disciplinary panel should be taken or that no further disciplinary action be taken.

If the Appeal is dismissed, the recommendation of the original disciplinary panel will stand. The Appeal panel may not impose any greater sanction against the student than that recommended by the Disciplinary Panel.

There will only be one appeal and the decision will be final.

Written confirmation of the appeal decision will be sent to the student normally within 5 working days.

Summary of roles and responsibilities in relation to the level of alleged offence

Alleged Offence	Investigating Officer	Who leads	Maximum sanction	Communication
Minor misconduct	None	Any member of staff	Informal note on EILP	Student and Personal Tutor
Repeated minor misconduct	CAM to direct	Curriculum Area Manager	Oral Warning (in writing) First Written Warning	Student, Family, Personal Tutor, CAM, Relevant Curriculum Director
Misconduct	CAM to direct	Relevant Curriculum Director	Final Written Warning	Student, Personal Tutor, Family, CAM, Relevant Curriculum Director
Continued Misconduct or Major Misconduct	SLT instructs the relevant CAM	SLT Member of Staff (Other than the Principal) leading the Panel	Permanent Exclusion	Student, Personal Tutor, CAM, Relevant Curriculum Director, SLT

Duration of Sanctions

Sanctions will contain a time period for review, depending on the nature and seriousness of the offence and the student's previous record. Other than permanent exclusion the time periods are at the discretion of the member of staff leading the Disciplinary procedure.

As a guide, the following may apply:

Oral warning	1 term
First Written Warning	2 terms
Final Written Warning	The remainder of time on the course
Exclusion	The student may be considered for re entry to the College in the next academic year
Permanent Exclusion	The student may not return to the College

When the time limits have expired, the sanction will be considered invalid for the purposes of progressing further disciplinary action. Warnings for additional disciplinary issues can, however, run concurrently.

Definitions of Misconduct may include (*This is not an exhaustive list*)

Persistent lateness or unexplained absences from class;

Disruptive behaviour in class or any other area of the College, or work experience;

Failure to submit assignments or other assessed work by the agreed deadlines;

Oral abuse of other students or staff, or use of language likely to cause offence;

Causing obstructions within College thoroughfares;

Academic offences including breaches of the relevant Academic Regulations, plagiarism, copying and other forms of cheating;

Inviting any non-students into College or associating with any non-student inside the College, except for legitimate purposes;

Contravention of the IT regulations and eSafety policy;

Actions, which disrupts the legitimate activities of other students, visitors and staff;

Refusal to comply with any reasonable requests from College staff;

Intentional damage to college property or the property of staff, other students and visitors;

Smoking on the College campus;

Serious Misconduct

Serious misconduct is conduct regarded as sufficiently serious to warrant suspension which may lead to dismissal from the College.

This may include but is not limited to:

Physical assaults, threats and intimidation against other students and/or staff;

Racial or sexual harassment of students or staff;

Intentional damage to College property or the property of staff, other students and visitors;

Intentional damage to college, students or work placement property;

Theft or unauthorised possession of property belonging to the College or any employer or student;

Dealing in illegal substances or any other illegal activity;

Academic offences including breaches of the relevant Academic Regulations, cheating or plagiarism in an examination/assignment/assessment;

Any action which threatens the health and safety of students and staff;

Refusal to carry out a reasonable request from a member of staff;

Any activity deemed to pose an immediate threat to the security and operation of the IT facilities;

Misuse of email, the internet, including downloading or transmission of material, which is defamatory, offensive, obscene, malicious, sexist or racist;

The outcomes of Disciplinary actions will be recorded for statistical purposes.

The Hearing

The procedure for the Disciplinary Hearing is as follows:

1. Inform the student, using any means of communication, but confirmed in writing of the allegation, time and place of the Hearing.
2. The Chair will ensure that all written evidence is given to the student prior to the Hearing.
3. The Chair will ensure the student understands the nature of the allegation and is aware that he/she can be accompanied by another person. The companion is for support only and takes no part in the Hearing.
4. The Panel will consist of the Chair (this will be member of the Senior Leadership Team) and another member of staff from an area of the College not directly connected with the student.
5. A note taker must be present but have no formal role in the proceedings.
6. At least one member of the Panel must be the same gender as the student.
7. In setting up the Hearing the Chair must consider all accessibility and disability aspects relevant to the student and panel members.

8. The Chair of the Panel will begin by introducing all present including their relevance to the Hearing.
9. The Chair will ask the student “Why they think they are being asked to attend the Hearing”.
10. The student must be given the opportunity to state their case, including the inviting of witnesses to the hearing.
11. The Investigating Officer will be given the opportunity to present their evidence.
12. Once all evidence is received the Panel will adjourn for the Chair to consider the outcome.
13. The outcome is the decision of the Chair of the Panel only.
14. Where possible the student should be informed of the outcome the same day although this may take longer given the nature of the case.
15. On delivering the outcome the Chair will remind the student of the Appeal process.
16. If the outcome of the Hearing is exclusion (where the student may be considered for re-entry to the College in the next academic year), or permanent exclusion (the student may not return to the College), the Chair will ensure the college information system is updated.

Referral of Open University (OU) students by an Award Assessment Board for disciplinary action

1. An Award Assessment Board may refer an OU student for disciplinary action under this procedure if a breach of the Academic Regulations for OU validated awards has taken place.
2. Recommended penalties are stated in the Academic Regulations for OU validated awards.

Formulation The Director of Student Services and the HE Quality and Development Manager reviewed this procedure in consultation with the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality and the Senior Leadership Team in light of changes to college organisation and the Open University validation process.

Documentation

- Student Code of Conduct
- Academic Regulations for Open University validated Awards

Review – This procedure will be reviewed within three (3) years of the approval date or as required in response to changes to legislation or college organisation.