

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS A GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, 2021

NUMBER OF ATTEMPTS FOR STUDY-UNITS

Q. How can one know at which assessment attempt a student is for a given study-unit?

A. If one checks the SMR table on SIMS, one can find the current and completed attempts for each individual study-unit that the student followed.

For taught study-units, Attempt 1 is the end of the semester assessment session; Attempt 2 is the September assessment session.

If a student is allowed to refer one taught failed compulsory study-unit or one taught failed elective study-unit, which cannot be substituted by an alternative, at the end of the taught part of the programme of study, to the following year or to an additional year of study, as applicable, two other attempts are possible: at the end of the semester assessment of the following year or additional year; at the September assessment session of the following year or additional year. (PG Reg 47 (1) refers).

For study-units involving a work placement, clinical practice or any other study-unit which cannot be re-assessed in the same academic year, Attempt 1 is the end of semester assessment session; and Attempt 2 is, either (i) the end of semester assessment session in the following year, if the student was allowed to refer the failed study-unit to the next year (only allowed if with its inclusion in the following year's study programme the total number of credits does not exceed 72 credits), or (ii) the end of semester assessment session in an additional year of study. (PG Reg 51 refers).

Dissertations or work in replacement of the dissertation shall also have two attempts, that is, the first submission and if the student fails, a re-examination.

Q. If a student fails in the re-assessment (final attempt) of a taught elective study-unit, would the student still be required to withdraw from the course?

A. In the case of taught elective study-units failed after re-assessment, the Board, after consultation with the head of department and/or the Board of Studies, may allow students to register for alternative elective study-units (if available) to which not more than 12 credits are assigned from the list of elective study-units in the students' programme of study, either in an additional year of study or in the following year of the course to be assessed in addition to the study-units of that year.

If alternative study-units are not available, and the student has only one taught elective study-unit left in order to complete the taught part of the programme of studies, the student shall be allowed to refer it to the following year or to an additional year of study, as applicable. (PG Reg 47 (1) refers).

Q. What is the number of assessment attempts for a postgraduate student who is following undergraduate study-units, such as, supplementary study-units, or study-units in a preparatory programme in access to a postgraduate course?

A. Since such study-units are not part of the postgraduate programme of study and would be at undergraduate level, the number of assessment attempts should be the same as per undergraduate regulations, that is, four, or if no resit is available, two.

Q. Can a compensated pass be awarded to students following undergraduate study-units in a preparatory programme for a postgraduate course?

A. Yes, since a preparatory programme is governed by the General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards, 2019, if 60 credits have been completed and the student has at least a 50% year average, a compensated pass can be awarded. If the preparatory programme is less than 60 credits, and the student has at least a 50% average or above a compensated pass may be awarded at the discretion of the Faculty.

ABSENCE

Q. What happens when a student is absent from an assessment for a reason considered valid by Senate in the January or the June assessment session?

A. When a student is absent for a reason considered valid by Senate in the January or June assessment session, the student shall be allowed to take the assessment at the next available opportunity, normally in the September assessment session.

Q. What happens if a student is absent from an assessment for a reason considered valid by Senate in the September assessment session?

A. When a student is absent for a reason considered valid by Senate in the September assessment session, the student can refer the assessment to the following year, provided that the student does not lack more than 12 credits to complete the year, including credits for alternative elective study-units. If, however, the student lacks more than 12 credits, which include credits for alternative elective study-units, the student shall be required to complete the previous year's requirements in an additional year of study.

Q. What happens if a student is absent from an assessment in any assessment session without providing a valid reason?

A. In this case, the student shall be awarded a 0/F for the respective study-unit.

Q. If a student is absent for the entire end of semester assessment session without providing a valid reason, what should be done?

A. If the limit of eligibility for the September session is not exceeded, the Faculty Manager / Officer in Charge should ask the student about the student's intentions by generating the new template letter "UG/PG No work submitted – Exam Assessment Session" (SPR-LTR-SSCD).

If for example, the student is absent for all the assessments of the Semester 1 assessment session and no reply to the letter is received, the student should be withdrawn and the semester 2 registrations should be deleted. If the student has any incomplete study-units from Semester 1, the administrator needs to close these pending result records from the RAS table with a 0/W. If the student replies that s/he wishes to continue, the student can be allowed to sit for the semester 2 assessments.

If the limit of 20 credits is exceeded the student should be informed that s/he has been withdrawn.

Q. What should be inputted in SIMS when a student resigns from the course in the middle of the academic year and only a part of the study-unit is completed?

A. If a student sits for one (or more components) but not all the components, the result/s of the component/s shall be inputted, whilst the ones which the student did not sit for, due to having resigned, shall be inputted as 0/W.

If a student resigns before sitting for any of the assessments of the study-unit, the registration for the study-unit shall be deleted.

Q. Should extraordinary extensions of studies/suspension of studies due to Covid-19 pandemic continue to be granted?

A. As from September 2021, requests for extraordinary extensions of studies/suspension of studies due to the Covid-19 pandemic should be discussed individually and permitted only in exceptional circumstances when it is proven through evidence that the pandemic situation is really hindering the student's progress. In line with the evolving national and global situation, the University is directing its efforts to achieve normalcy and therefore extraordinary extensions or suspensions are to be reviewed in detail before these are granted as a matter of last resort.

ELIGIBILITY FOR SEPTEMBER ASSESSMENT SESSION (20 credit limit)

Q. What is the number of credits a student can resit for in the September assessment session?

A. Full-time students who fail taught study-units to which up to 20 credits are assigned shall be entitled to be re-assessed in the failed study-units in the September assessment session.

Study-units for which a student has a valid reason for absence shall not be counted as part of the 20 credit limit.

Q. What happens if a student fails in more than 20 credits during the semester 1 and 2 assessment sessions?

A. Full-time students who fail taught study-units to which more than 20 credits are assigned shall not be entitled to be re-assessed in the failed study-units and shall be required to withdraw from the course. (PG Regulation 48 refers)

Q. In a part-time postgraduate course, what is the limit of credits a student can resit for in the September assessment session?

In the case of part-time postgraduate courses, the limit a student can resit for in the September assessment session is always pro-rata, depending on the programme of studies. Therefore, if a part-time programme of study consists of 30 credits, the limit would be 10 credits.

Q. What happens when the students exceed the limit for the September assessment session since they had difficulties due to the Covid-19 pandemic?

A. Such cases shall be referred and considered individually by the Office of the Registrar/Rectorate. These cases are to be exceptional and documentary evidence is to be presented to sustain the case.

Q. If a student has an extension for the dissertation submission deadline until the end of September, should this count with the 20 credit limit?

A. No. An extension of the dissertation deadline should not count with the 20 credit limit and thus the student should be eligible to sit for the September assessment session if the 20 credit limit is not exceeded by the failed taught study-units.

Q. If a student has an extension for the dissertation submission deadline until the end of September, can a compensated pass be given for a study-unit and thus the study-unit will not count with the 20 credit limit?

A. If with the incomplete study-unit (due to an extended deadline) the student already has at least 50% average, the compensated pass can be awarded. If not, the student shall wait until the result of the dissertation is published.

Q. When due to an Assessment Disciplinary action the result of an another/additional study-unit is cancelled and the student has to re-do its assessment, would this count with the 20 credit limit?

A. No, the cancelled additional study-unit/s should not count towards the 20 credit limit (such cancelled results are to be processed by SIMS Office). This is unlike the study-unit which is given a O/F because of an irregularity, which is always counted as part of the 20 credit limit.

These conditions are made clear in the letter sent by UADB to students.

Q. If a student is not eligible for the September assessment session since the limit of 20 credits has been exceeded, can s/he still re-do the assessment for the other/additional study-unit being cancelled as an Assessment Disciplinary action?

A. Yes, in this case the student can still re-do the assessment for such study-unit. In such cases, the student's withdrawal cannot be processed so the administrator would need to close the resits results of the failed compulsory and elective study-units.

Q. Are Extra Study-Units part of the 20 credit limit that a student can resit for in the September assessment session?

A. Since Extra Study-Units are not part of a programme of study they should not count as part of this limit.

REFERRED STUDY-UNITS

Q. Can study-units be referred to the following year in a Postgraduate course?

A. Yes. Full-time students can **refer up to 12 credits** to the following year in the following cases:

- (i) **alternative elective study-units** (PG regulations 50 (1) and 50 (2) refer);
- (ii) **study-units involving work placement, clinical practice or those which cannot be reassessed during the current year** (PG regulation 51 refers);
- (iii) **study-units for which students are absent for a reason considered valid by Senate** (PG regulation 55 refers).

The limit for part-time students shall be calculated on a pro-rata basis in terms of regulation 83 (2).

If full-time students exceed the 12 credit limit or in the case of part-time students, the pro-rata limit, they have to refer these study-units to an additional year.

Furthermore, if a student has **sat for all the assessments and permitted re-assessments** of all the taught study-units in the programme of studies, and **lacks a pass grade in either:**

(i) only one taught compulsory study-unit; or (ii) only one taught elective study-unit (which cannot be substituted by an alternative elective study-unit), the student **shall be allowed to refer that one taught study-unit to the following year or to an additional year of study**, as applicable. (PG Reg 47 (1) refers).

Q. Is attendance obligatory when a study-unit is being referred to the following year or to an additional year?

A. Whenever a study-unit is being referred to the following year or to an additional year, attendance at lectures is not obligatory, unless the student is following an alternative elective study-unit or is required to do so by the F/I/C/S concerned. It is essential that students seek academic counselling and that a proper document trail is kept by the respective F/I/C/S.

ADDITIONAL YEAR

Q. When are students allowed an Additional Year?

A. Students are allowed an Additional Year of study:

- (i) if they are **absent for a reason considered valid by Senate** and after the September assessment session, they **lack more than 12 credits** to complete the year, including credits for alternative elective study-units (PG Regulation 55 refers);
- (ii) if they fail in the assessment of **study-units involving a work placement, clinical practice or any other study-unit which cannot be re-assessed in the same academic year** and it is **not possible to refer them to the following year** (PG Regulation 51 refers);
- (iii) if they fail in **not more than 12 credits assigned to elective study-units** and the Board **instructs them to register for alternative elective study-units in an additional year of study** instead of referring them to the following year of the course (PG Regulations 50 (1) and 50 (2) refer);
- (iv) if they are **absent for a reason considered valid by Senate (up to 12 credits)** and it is **necessary or recommended for the student to do it in an additional year** (PG Regulation 55 refers);
- (v) in mainly taught courses, if after they have sat for all the assessments and permitted re-assessments and after they have submitted their dissertation, they still lack a pass grade in **(i) only one taught compulsory study-unit; OR (ii) only one taught elective study-unit**, which cannot be substituted by an alternative elective study-unit, in order to complete the course (PG Regulation 47 (1) refers).

Q. If a student has to submit the dissertation in an additional year, due to an extension of studies or a re-examination, should the submission deadline be as extended, or as per the re-examination period, as applicable, OR should the student submit by the submission deadline of the cohort of that year?

A. If a student has an extended deadline or a re-examination, then the dissertation should be submitted by the extended / re-examination deadline and not by the submission deadline of the cohort of that year. Therefore, a specific individual deadline is to be set to the student concerned. The student would need to re-register for the dissertation.

WITHDRAWAL

Q. When are students deemed to have failed the course and are required to withdraw from the course?

A. Students are required to withdraw from the course:

- (i) if they **fail taught study-units to which more than 20 credits (or pro-rata in case of part-time courses)** are assigned (PG regulation 48 refers);
- (ii) if after re-assessment, they **fail in any compulsory study-units** (PG regulation 49 refers);
- (iii) if after re-assessment, they **fail in a number of elective study-units to which more than 12 credits (or pro-rata in case of part-time courses)** are assigned (PG regulation 49 refers);
- (iv) if **after re-assessment, they fail in a study-unit registered as an alternative to a failed elective study-unit** (PG regulation 50 (4) refers);
- (v) if they fail the re-assessment of more than one taught elective study-unit (and **there are no alternative elective study-units available** to which not more than 12 credits are assigned) (PG regulations 50 (1) and 47(1) refer);
- (vi) if **after an additional year, the programme of study for the subsequent year in the course plan is not on offer**, and students decide to resign as they do not want to suspend their studies until the year

of the programme is next offered or they do not want to transfer their studies to another course (PG regulation 56 refers).

(vii) if **after re-examination, they fail in the dissertation study-unit** (PG regulation 49 and 66 (7));

(viii) if the **Principal Supervisor does not submit a satisfactory progress report** and recommends, and the FICS Committee agrees, that the student terminates the studies prematurely, though in such a case the student may appeal the case before Senate within 15 days from the notice of termination (PG regulation 64 (1));

(ix) if **after being allowed to refer one failed taught compulsory study-unit or one failed taught elective study-unit** that cannot be substituted by an alternative study-unit to the following year or to an additional year, as applicable, they would **fail again** the two attempts allowed. (PG regulation 47 (1) refers).

Students may also resign/withdraw from a course of their own accord. In any circumstance, all efforts are to be undertaken by the F/I/C/S concerned to salvage the situation and to assist the student. A student withdrawal is a matter of last resort and because it is ultimately enforced by the Postgraduate Regulations. If there is an instance where the situation can be remedied, the F/I/C/S is to take that route.

CONSEQUENCES OF WITHDRAWAL FROM A COURSE

Q. Are students eligible for any award when they withdraw from a postgraduate course?

A. When students withdraw from a course either by choice or because ineligible to proceed further in terms of the postgraduate regulations, if they would have obtained the required number of credits for taught study-units, they shall be granted either exit awards in a specified area as indicated in the respective course bye-laws or, if not provided, they shall be granted exit awards in General Studies in terms of PG regulation 73.

If the required number of credits for taught study-units is not obtained, then the student is only eligible for a transcript, indicating the grade and mark obtained for each registered study-unit.

DISSERTATION

Q. Can student progress to the research component if the taught study-units are not successfully completed yet?

A. Yes, students on both mainly taught courses and mainly by research programmes can still progress to the research component if the taught study-units are not successfully completed yet, provided that Master's by research students will not be able to submit their dissertation.

Q. Can the dissertation be replaced by any other work?

A. Yes, when the nature of the study so requires, the dissertation may be replaced by other research work as specified in terms of PG regulation 60 (1), but must still be assigned not less than 30 credits in total. In such cases, the supervision and assessment of the work shall be governed by the guidelines issued by the Board or as detailed in the respective course bye-laws.

Q. When should the dissertation be submitted?

A. The dissertation should be submitted by the deadline announced by the F/I/C/S.

Q. Can students submit their dissertation if they have not completed all the taught study-units?

A. For mainly taught programmes, yes, students can still submit their dissertation at the same time when the assessments for taught study-units are still being held, or before the students sit for any re-

assessments, or before the results for taught study-units are published. The dissertation can still be assessed if the results of the taught study-units are still pending.

For mainly by research programmes, no, students shall not be allowed to submit their dissertation before completing all the taught study-units. (PG regulation 60 (6) refers).

TRANSFER OF STUDY-UNITS

Q. Can a study-unit be transferred from one course to another?

A. A study-unit can be transferred from one course to another if the course from where the study-unit is to be transferred was not completed. For transfer of credits obtained at other recognised institutions of higher education the provisions in PG Regulation 38 shall apply.

A study-unit cannot be transferred from a successfully completed course to another course since such an instance would lead to double counting, except when the study-unit is compulsory in the second course, in which case, the proviso to PG Regulation 36 shall apply.

CHANGES IN THE PROGRAMME OF STUDY AND STUDY-UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

Q. When is the appropriate time to effect changes to the Programmes of Study and Study-Unit Descriptions?

A. Changes to the Programmes of Study and Study-Unit Descriptions shall be effected before the registration process of students and when the list of study-units are sent to APQRU for review and necessary updates. No changes are allowed after, especially throughout the academic year, except for exceptional circumstances. As a matter of principle, all changes are to be considered by the respective Board of Studies during the Annual Programme Review.

CHANGE IN A METHOD OF ASSESSMENT IN CASE OF A REFERRED STUDY-UNIT

Q. When a study-unit is referred to the following year or to an additional year of study and the method of assessment changes from the original assessment, by which method of assessment should the student be assessed?

A. Students shall be assessed by the assessment method current during the Academic Year in which the assessment is held.

CHANGE IN LECTURER IN CASE OF A REFERRED STUDY-UNIT

Q. What happens if there is a change in the lecturer for a study-unit being referred to the following year or to an additional year of study?

A. The FICS should draw the attention of such students and advise them accordingly especially if there are changes in the study-unit description and the student would need to attend lectures. A change in the lecturer does not necessarily lead to a change in the study-unit description and in the corresponding learning outcomes. If that is the case, such a change is to be considered by the Board of Studies.

EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES (ERASMUS)

Q. Should students going on an exchange programme (Erasmus+) be given a special exemption from assessments of study-units done in the semester before their leaving, or will they be considered as absent for the assessment attempt if they go away before taking the assessment?

A. Students leaving for an exchange programme should always try to make arrangements to leave after having sat the assessments of the previous semester. If this is not possible, arrangements should be made with the FICS either for alternative methods of assessment, or for them to sit for the examination at the host institution. If no arrangements can be made, and the student unilaterally decides to proceed anyway, then he is to be considered absent without a valid reason.

Q. Can students on an additional year go on an exchange programme (Erasmus)?

A. No, students shall only go on an exchange programme if they have been progressed to the following year of the course as regular students. In such cases there is no programme of study that can be followed in its entirety, hence why it does not make sense academically for students to proceed for an exchange programme during an additional year of studies.

Q. If a student fails in more than 20 credits whilst on an exchange programme (Erasmus), which regulations shall apply, ours or those of the host Institution?

A. Our regulations should always apply for our students. Thus, if a student fails in more than 20 credits, the student shall be required to withdraw from the course in terms of the PG regulations (PG regulation 48 refers).

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