

# Bulletin

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## Covid-19 Update

Following the Government's latest advice regarding the Covid-19 outbreak, the Common Awards team have been advised to work from home until further notice.

Reacting to this fast changing situation has become the priority for the team and we will do everything we can to support TEIs and students. We are in the process of building a 'Frequently

Asked Questions' section on the Common Awards website devoted to Covid-19. We would encourage you to review this resource before contacting the team. Where appropriate, responses to questions we receive from colleagues' will be shared with all TEIs. Please check the FAQs as frequently as you are able.

If you need to contact the team with any queries, please use our dedicated mailing address: [common.awards@durham.ac.uk](mailto:common.awards@durham.ac.uk). This ensures all team members can access all communications remotely. Unfortunately, it will not be possible for the team to take phone calls while away from the office.

All communications, updates and changes regarding Covid-19 will be communicated through emails to TEI Key Contacts and Principals as well as the [dedicated FAQ page on the website](#).

Please note that some planned activity will likely change in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. For instance, in-person attendance at TEI meetings by University Liaison Officers or members of the Common Awards team has been cancelled. Instead, we will join scheduled meetings via Skype (or similar). Similarly, the April TEI Forum will now be conducted remotely and via Big Blue Button.

Thank you for your understanding and patience at this difficult time. We hope our colleagues and students are keeping safe.

## March and April Deadlines

We would be very grateful if TEIs would note the following upcoming deadlines for submission of data or information relating to student records and curriculum development processes.

20th March: Deadline for registering attendance at TEI Forum

31st March: Deadline for TEIs to pay invoices

1st April: Deadline for new student programme registration submissions (late entrants)

2nd April: TEI Forum - Virtual Meeting

24th April: Deadline for APL Credits data submission

24th April: Deadline for Module Registration data submission

Further deadlines can be found in our [2019/20 calendar](#).

## Seedcorn Grants - Call for Applications

We are pleased to announce that the 'Call for Applications' is open for the seventh round of Seedcorn grants.

In this round priority will be given to projects that have a focus on **inclusion and diversity**.

To find more information on Seedcorn grants, the application process, this year's focus and to download the application form please [click here](#).

The closing date for applications is **15th May 2020**.

## TEI Forum 2020

TEIs are advised to note that due to the ongoing uncertainties regarding Covid-19, the TEI Forum will now run virtually through Big Blue Button. It is scheduled to take place on April 2nd 2020. The deadline for registration is 20th March. Please register your attendance [here](#).

Due to the change in format, attendees are urged to send any correspondence regarding agenda items to Canon Dr Steve Summers at [steve.summers@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:steve.summers@cofeguildford.org.uk) as soon as possible.

We appreciate some may have already booked travel arrangements for this - please do not make any further arrangements regarding travel to this event, and try to obtain refunds for travel if and where possible. If you have any issues regarding reimbursement, please contact the team.

Further information regarding the use of Big Blue Button for the Forum will be shared in due course.

## Common Awards Management Board Student Representative Elections

The elections for student representatives on the Common Awards Management Board closed on February 29th.

Six candidates stood this year, and the deadline to submit election results was the 9th March. We will use a Single Transferable Vote system to identify the candidates with the highest number of votes across all TEIs. The results of the election will be announced on 20th March.

## New Student Registration (late entrants)

The deadline for TEIs to submit new student registration data (for late entrants) is 1st April.

To create student records in Banner, TEIs need to provide programme registration data in a specific format. For those TEIs using Moodle, you should be able to download the data straight from Moodle and send the CSV or Excel file to the Common Awards Team via an encrypted or password-protected file. More detail about the process is available [here](#).

## Campus Cards

Following the registration process for late entrants, the next campus card production will take place in May. The deadline for TEIs to submit student photographs for campus cards is 4th May. Campus cards can be produced only after student records have been created in Banner, and student Banner IDs have been generated. The photographs must be submitted to the University with the student's Banner ID and surname as the file name (e.g. SURNAME\_000123456). Please also ensure that the photos provided are in the [dimensions requested](#).

In response to feedback from TEIs, the Common Awards team have worked with the University CIS team to create a new [tool](#) which enables TEIs to verify that photographs meet the formatting requirements. Upload a photo using the "select image" button. Once you've uploaded a photo, use the slider at the bottom to increase or decrease zoom. Use the buttons on the right to "rotate left" or "rotate right" as needed. Once happy with the photo, click "download image" to save the file in the correct format.

For further information, [please visit the campus card web page](#).

## Module Registration and APL

The deadline for TEIs to submit data relating to module registration and APL credits is 24th April. TEIs are asked to submit data for all Common Awards students (including late entrants) by this date.

When submitting APL credits, TEIs are also now asked to submit the TEI-level approval documentation relating to the APL request. Please be advised that this request is not adding an additional approval process where TEIs have already approved APL claims within the parameters set. Instead, having this documentation on file will help the team better prepare for the Overarching Board of Examiners processes.

Further information on the process for submitting this data is available on the [APL registration page](#) and [Module Registration page](#).

## Consultations

TEIs are encouraged to participate in the following consultations, which are live on the Common Awards website:

[Student Survey \(2020\) Consultation](#) - The Common Awards Student Survey has run annually for the last three years. Whilst the survey has been available to all students registered on Common Awards programmes each year (as per the December census), not all TEIs have chosen to participate. Now that three years' worth of data has been collected and analysed, there is an opportunity to make changes to the process and the survey questions. Feedback has been sought from the Common Awards Management Board, and suggested changes have been incorporated into the latest draft of the survey. We are now seeking final feedback on the questions which will be asked as part of the survey. We would be grateful if TEIs could encourage both staff members and students to complete this consultation.

[Academic Misconduct](#) - Following feedback from some TEIs, the Overarching Board of Examiners discussed the provision of materials to support students in understanding and avoiding academic misconduct. It was recommended that TEIs be invited to share their experiences in this area, and collect examples of practice across TEIs, with the intention of creating a bank of resources which could be shared between all TEIs.

TEIs are also asked to note that a consultation regarding Campus Cards is being drafted and will be available shortly.

The following consultations have recently closed:

Academic Progress Notice (APN) - This consultation closed on Friday 13th March. Four responses were received. The feedback submitted will be considered, and any action will be communicated to TEIs. The revised policy will be considered at the next meeting of the Common Awards Management Board.

International Entry Requirements - This consultation has closed. One response was received and was in support of the proposed changes. This will now be recommended to the Quality and Standards Committee for approval.

## The Annual Conference for Theological Educators 2020

We are delighted to confirm that the Annual Conference for Theological Educators 2020 will take place between 6-8 July at College Court: Conference Centre and Hotel, Knighton Road, Leicester, LE2 3UF. TEIs are advised to make a note of the date and venue. Further information will be provided in due course.

## Continuing Student Marks

TEIs were required to submit module marks data for any 2018/19 continuing students by January 17th 2020. Thank you to those who submitted data before the deadline. Unfortunately, the Common Awards team received a high proportion of submissions that were incomplete or inaccurate, with the team encountering over 750 queries on the data. Queries predominately related to missing marks (either where students were incorrectly registered on a module or module marks not being returned for modules students were registered on).

TEIs are therefore reminded that all student records data sent to the Common Awards team must be complete, accurate and timely.

## Serious Adverse Circumstances (SACs)

Serious Adverse Circumstances (SACs) can be considered for circumstances beyond a student's control - for example, illness, a family crisis, bereavement - which has seriously affected his/her work. Although the University does not permit TEIs to amend student marks in light of such circumstances, it does permit Board of Examiners to take SACs into account when making decisions on a student's progression to the next year of their studies, or (at the overarching Board) on the award and classification of their final qualification.

The Common Awards Team have noted, following the inputting of the continuing marks for 2018/19 students, that the SAC process is not widely used by TEIs. The overarching Board of Examiners has also previously noted this. This may be the result of successful mitigation undertaken in year. However, TEIs are reminded that SACs can be used where, despite earlier mitigation, a student has still been adversely affected during their assessments.

Please see the [SAC guidance page](#) for further information, and do not hesitate to contact the team if you have any further questions.

## Training Resources for TEI Staff: Unconscious Bias

Following the positive feedback from a session delivered at the Annual Staff Conference 2019, the Common Awards team are pleased to confirm that training resources are currently being developed by the University's HR Training Team for Common Awards staff on the topic of "Unconscious Bias". This will be available through Durham University Online (DUO) using the Durham University username and password provided to each member of staff on application. In the meantime, the Training Team have advised that the following [Royal Society clip is an excellent summary](#).

## Conversion of Marks

TEIs are reminded that where assignments, such as multiple-choice tests, produce quantitative scores, *those scores are not the marks* for that assignment. In principle, they will always need to go through some process of conversion - where conversion involves making qualitative judgements about which is meant by different levels of achievement in a quantitatively scored test, and then translating those qualitative judgements into numerical marks in the normal way. For further information, [please refer to the online guidance](#).

## TEI Staffing

The Common Awards Management Board have requested that TEIs are reminded of the following obligations in relation to staffing changes.

- a) The contractual obligation to inform the University of advertisements to fill job vacancies and the invitation to ULOs to serve on any appointing committee for new staff appointed to the TEI who will be teaching or examining on the Programmes;
- b) The contractual obligation of the Management Committee to monitor the quality and standards of learning and teaching, which includes the consideration of the quality of learning resources (including staffing resource).
- c) TEIs are also asked to immediately inform the University of any changes in staffing that materially affects or could materially affect the TEIs quality of staffing resource.

## Common Awards Staffing

Interviews took place on 6th February to appoint the role of Assistant Quality Manager in the Common Awards Administrative team. The team are pleased to announce that Ms Rhianne Jones

will be returning to the team in May. Rhianne previously covered the role of Assistant Quality Manager during a period of maternity leave within the team.

## Common Awards Website

We have previously advised that the Common Awards website is under review and due for significant developments. TEIs are advised the University has taken the decision to move to an alternative platform for its website, which means this work has been delayed. As a result, the Common Awards team are unable to make significant changes until the redevelopment is complete. In the interim, TEIs are advised to contact the Common Awards team with questions or queries relating to the website.

## Further Information

The full 2019/20 academic calendar is available [here](#).

We'd also appreciate your feedback on the new Bulletin! Contact us at [common.awards@durham.ac.uk](mailto:common.awards@durham.ac.uk) to let us know!

With thanks,

Mike, Frances, Eve, Alyson, Emma, Deborah and Adam