

Bulletin

COMMON AWARDS - JUNE 2020

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Covid-19 Update – No Detriment

Reacting to the Covid-19 pandemic continues to be our priority and we will do everything we can to support TEIs and students. We hope our colleagues and students are keeping safe. Please continue to check the [FAQs](#), which outlines the advice and guidance from the Common Awards Team, as often as you are able. We would encourage you to review this resource before contacting us. Please note that the format of the FAQs has changed in order to make clearer the academic year the information pertains to (e.g. 2019/20 or 2020/21). A date confirming when the FAQs were last updated has also been added.

On Friday 19th June, we circulated [detailed information](#) regarding the implementation of the '**No Detriment**' policy for Common Awards and held an information session on Wednesday 24th June. The 'No Detriment' policy provides a safety net so that students can take assessments with the confidence that if their marks are worse than those they gained for work completed before the Covid-19 pandemic, it will not affect their degree classification. The Common Awards approach to 'No Detriment' was approved by the University on 17th June and aligns with the University's policy wherever possible.

The policy will work differently for different student groups (for example, continuing and graduating undergraduate students, taught postgraduate students etc.), but, wherever possible, the key principle behind 'No Detriment' will remain the same for all students: as long as students pass their modules, assessments undertaken while affected by Covid-19 can only raise (never lower) their AMW (arithmetic mean weighted mark), which is the key figure used in the classification of awards.

The Common Awards Team has worked very closely with the National Ministry Team on the 'No Detriment' model. In previous years as we have prepared for the Overarching Board of Examiners, the Common Awards Team and Ministry Team have been able to work with TEIs to resolve queries that have arisen during this process. Implementing the 'No Detriment' policy will pose new challenges for TEIs and the Common Awards Team as we prepare for our Boards of Examiners meetings. More so than ever, it will be imperative that data is shared with the University in the correct formats by the deadlines agreed (48 hours after the TEI Board of Examiners) so that the Team can process the additional information. Additional instructions on the ways in which Moodle can be used to support TEIs in providing additional information to the University will be circulated very soon. Please do not hesitate to contact the Common Awards team if you have any questions.

All communications, updates and changes regarding Covid-19 will be communicated on [this FAQ section](#) and through emails to TEI Key Contacts and Principals. The FAQs have also been updated to reflect the 'No Detriment' policy.

Please remember that the best way to contact the team is via the common.awards@durham.ac.uk email address. We continue to work from home and do not have access to the office phones.

Changes of Delivery and Covid-19

TEIs should have received joint communication from the Common Awards Team and National Ministry Team on the processes you will be asked to complete if you intend to alter your delivery or planned activity for 2020/21 in response to Covid-19. This process applies to *temporary* changes made in response to Covid-19, not longer term changes (which we might expect to be considered through the normal Curriculum Development processes).

Two forms will need to be completed, designed to capture the information the University and the National Ministry Team require to approve any variations to delivery for 2020/21. We ask that both forms are submitted to David Hanson (as with ASE returns: david.hanson@churchofengland.org). The Common Awards Team request that [TEIs complete the Durham form by 30th June](#). [Please submit the Ministry Team form 6 weeks ahead of any changes it includes](#).

Also attached is a [short guide to possibilities for collaboration between TEIs](#) during this exceptional period.

Upcoming Deadlines

30th June - Deadline: Common Awards Changes of Delivery and Covid-19 Form

6th July - The Annual Conference for Theological Educators (until 08/07)

17th July - Deadline: CIS Account Holders to complete extension request

17th July - Deadline: Registering interest in developing a new MA Programme

3rd August - Deadline: TEIs to submit Board of Examiners membership lists

3rd August - Deadline: TEIs to submit policies

TEIs are reminded that marks (and additional information required to implement the 'No Detriment' policy) considered by the TEI Board of Examiners must be submitted within 48 hours of the meeting taking place.

TEIs are also reminded to submit their programme documentation (programme regulations, module overview tables and curriculum mappings) for 2020/21 as soon as possible.

Assessment Criteria

TEIs should have received the revised Assessment Criteria documentation for use **from the start of the next academic year (2020/21)**. These have been developed by the Continuing Implementation Group with consultation with TEIs, and the development received the support of the Management Board in February. These have now been formally approved by the Chair of the Common Awards Management Board and will be uploaded to the Common Awards website, [here](#)

Please **continue to use existing criteria** until the completion of marking processes for this academic year (2019/20). Ken Farrimond will be producing appropriate Moodle templates ready for the autumn term.

Academic Progress Policy

Following a consultation process and feedback from TEIs, the Academic Progress Policy has been updated and approved by the University. Thank you for your contributions to the development of this policy.

The Academic Progress Policy will need to be **implemented by TEIs from 2020/2021**.

The new guidance and templates are now available on the Common Awards website, [here](#). Please review the information on the webpage carefully and contact the team if you have any questions.

Annual Conference for Theological Educators

Although this summer's Annual Conference for Theological Educators can't go ahead quite as planned, it is still happening. We will be meeting online, and you are welcome to join us for as much or as little of the conference as you can manage.

Theme: **Theological Reflection**

There is a lot of talk about theological reflection in theological education. Yet there are multiple understandings of what the phrase means, how valuable it is, what methods are appropriate to it, and how it can be taught. It can have something of a 'marmite' effect on students; some can't get enough of it; others pull a sour face the moment they smell it. In this conference, we are asking how theological reflection can best be understood, practised, and taught.

Dates: **Monday 6th July to Wednesday 8th July**

There will be an opportunity to hear from and engage with John Swinton (Aberdeen University), Helen Collins (Trinity College Bristol), Michael Jagessar (Council for World Mission) and Peter Ward (Durham University).

There will also be opportunities to meet in subject-area groups, to discuss the impact of Covid-19, to mingle informally, and to worship together. Whilst we hope some will attend the whole conference, it is deliberately designed as a drop-in, drop-out affair, so that people can fit it around their other responsibilities and involvements.

If you are interested in attending any part of the conference, please email common.awards@durham.ac.uk to let us know. We aim soon to email out a full timetable, joining instructions, and some material to view and read in advance.

MA Programmes

At the end of May, TEIs should have received communication circulated on behalf of Ian McIntosh and Mike Higton, regarding MA Programmes within Common Awards.

At present, the only MA programme available under Common Awards is the MA in Theology, Ministry and Mission. After considerable staff discussion, and a recent increase in the capacity of the staff team in Durham, we believe we now have capacity to add a very small number of new MA programmes to the Common Awards portfolio.

Please see the following webpage for detailed information on the process. Please note that TEIs are asked to register their interest in developing a new MA programme by 17th July. Please see the [webpage for details on how to submit a proposal](#).

Please do not hesitate to contact Ian and Mike with any questions at ian.mcintosh@churchofengland.org and mike.higton@durham.ac.uk

Student Survey

The 2020 Common Awards Student Survey ran from Monday 4th May until Sunday 31st May 2020, and was available to all students registered on Common Awards programmes in 2019-20 (as per the December census). 133 responses were received.

As communicated in a previous TEI Bulletin, the purpose of this year's survey was to give Common Awards students the opportunity to feed back on their Common Awards experience, particularly for final year students who will not have this opportunity when the survey runs again in 2021. The results will not be analysed in the same way as has been practice for the previous years' surveys, and in particular, statistics from this year's survey will not be considered by Management Board or form part of our reporting to TEIs. Notwithstanding this, there may still be a need to follow up with individual TEIs on any issues of concern raised by students. The next three years' of data will be collected from 2021-2023. Please do get in touch with us if you would like any further information.

TEI Forum

The next meeting of the TEI Forum has been scheduled for Wednesday 7th October 2020. Exact timings and the format of the meeting will be confirmed in due course although it is very likely that the TEI Forum will be held virtually.

TEI Forum Members can register their attendance using the form [here](#).

Canon Dr Steve Summers has also asked that any agenda items be sent to him directly. His email address is: Steve.Summers@cofeguildford.org.uk

Submission of Policies

TEIs are asked to submit any Common Awards policies, which may be amended over the summer, in anticipation of the new academic year, by 3rd August. Changes to Policies relating to matters such as Admissions, APL, Complaints and Appeals, Placements etc. require approval by the Chair of the Management Board. Please contact the Common Awards team if you are unsure if a policy needs consideration by the Chair of the Management Board.

CIS Account Access

TEI Key Contacts should have received an email regarding Durham CIS accounts that are due to expire soon. Action is required in order to extend accounts for 2020/21 academic year.

TEI staff need to **extend** their Durham email account via an **online** submission form.

TEI staff are able to use the online submission form with immediate effect. Please do this as soon as possible. The deadline for extending accounts is the 17th July. If this process is not followed, accounts will be suspended on 1st September 2020.

Please find [attached the process guide for completing](#) and submitting the online CIS continuation form.

If you have any questions about the process, please contact common.awards@durham.ac.uk in the first instance. Please note that if colleagues have forgotten their CIS password, the Common Awards team is unable to generate a new one; colleagues will be required to contact the CIS team on the IT helpdesk on: 0191 334 1515.

Concessions and Changes of Registration

TEIs are reminded that concession requests which require Durham approval must be requested in advance. This is to avoid a situation in which the Chair of the Common Awards Management Board is unable to approve the request, and a student is inadvertently disadvantaged by the process not being followed correctly.

Only when the request has been approved would we advise TEIs inform the student that they can proceed with the actions outlined in the concession.

It is also important that full details of the request are provided on the Concession Request form. Guidance about the appropriate supporting evidence for each type of concession request can be found on our website. Please click [here](#), and follow the links under the heading 'Concession Type'.

If the approval of a concession results in a change to a students' record, please ensure that a Change of Registration form is submitted as soon as possible. Change of Registration forms should be completed accurately and in full, and after the completion of the relevant concessions process.

We are looking at ways to improve the presentation and clarity of the concession information, but do not hesitate to contact the team with any queries.

Consultations

The following consultations have recently closed:

[Academic Misconduct](#) - This consultation closed on 29th May 2020. The Common Awards Team received one response. This consultation was designed to capture examples of good practice and resources which could be shared across TEI. This information will be disseminated in due course.

[Assessment Parameters](#) - This consultation closed on 5th June 2020. The Common Awards Team received one response. This response will be taken into account in the final version of the new documentation for Assessment Parameters guidance.

Curriculum Development

TEIs are reminded to submit their programme documentation for 2020/21 as soon as possible. These documents (programme regulations, module overview tables and curriculum mapping) should reflect any changes that have been made and approved by the TEI, in line with the assessment parameters and learning hours guidance. These documents will be published on the Common Awards website once reviewed.

Further Information

The full 19/20 academic calendar is available [here](#).

Please remember to check the [Covid-19 FAQs as frequently as possible](#). The information provided in these FAQs is updated regularly.

With thanks,

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