



4th August 2020

Masters dissertations: special circumstances and additional measures

To: Postgraduate Taught Students who will complete their studies on 31 August

Dear student,

I am writing to update you on measures the University is taking to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on students' performance in postgraduate taught programmes.

You will hopefully already be aware of steps we have taken to ensure that any taught courses you took in Semester 2 this year were treated on a non-detrimental basis, with your performance in these courses having only a positive impact upon your final average for your programme.

Where a postgraduate programme includes a dissertation or research project, the dissertation is considered to be crucial to the outcome for the programme and cannot simply be discounted from the programme average or result. However, the University is committed to ensuring that students receive an academically fair result in acknowledgement of the challenges posed by Covid-19, and we have put in place some additional measures to address this. These are outlined below:

Additional measures the University is taking

a) Resubmission

In normal circumstances, students who have marginally failed the dissertation at the first attempt – i.e. receiving a mark of 45-49 – have the right to resubmit their dissertation in order to attempt to achieve a pass. For the current session, we have extended resubmission eligibility to cover students receiving a mark of 40-49 in the dissertation at the first attempt.

Regulation 58 in our [Taught Assessment Regulations](#) provides further information about resubmission.

b) Marking of dissertations and research projects

Schools and Deaneries will seek to take account of the impact of the pandemic on students' ability to complete the dissertation to the best of their ability during the marking process. The pandemic will have impacted different types of dissertations and projects in different ways, so Schools will consider what approach is most appropriate to each discipline. Your School or Deanery will be able to provide advice as to the specific approach it is taking.

Special circumstances

These measures will be used in addition to the standard mechanisms available, which include the ability for you to submit special circumstances. If you feel you have been uniquely affected by Covid-19, or other significant adverse circumstances, while completing your dissertation or research project, you may wish to submit a [special circumstances request](#). The email we sent to you in [April](#) explains what would be regarded as “unique” impact, as well as the evidence you would be asked to provide with a request. Where your request is accepted by your School or Deanery, it may be possible for you to resubmit your dissertation.

Support and advice

If you have any questions about your dissertation or research project, or anything else related to your studies, please contact your School or Deanery in the first instance.

Further advice and support for students is available on our [student webpages](#).

Best wishes,

Sue MacGregor
Director, Academic Services