

LTC15D078

**Title:** *Review of Support for Students Between Assessment and Reassessment 2014/15*  
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### **Issue**

In January 2015, University Learning & Teaching Committee approved a set of recommendations regarding the future support provided to students undertaking reassessment (normally scheduled for August).

The Guidance to Advisers on supporting students between assessment and reassessment can be found [here](#)

It was agreed that LTC should review the implementation of the guidance after the first year of operation

### **Recommendation**

Recipients are invited to consider the Faculty reports.

### **Resource Implications**

Not applicable

### **Risk Implications**

Not applicable.

### **Equality and Diversity**

Not applicable.

### **Timing of decisions**

Not applicable.

### **Further Information**

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### **Discussion**

Some good practice is identified in the Faculty reports and some issues which require further consideration at School, Faculty and University level.

## **Support offered to students between assessment and reassessment in the Faculty of Science**

The approach taken by the Science School's is outlined below. Teaching directors have been asked to reinforce with advisers that it is their responsibility to make contact with any of their advisees referred to reassessment.

A personal view (of the Associate Dean) is that while the Hubs informed academics of advisees who were referred to reassessment they received no information as module organiser. Given that support, particularly at higher levels, is best provided at the module level this is a failing of the process for information flow.

### **School of Biological Sciences**

Support is provided at both the adviser and module organiser level. The adviser takes the lead in contacting a student. Students are reminded of support provided by Dean of Students' Office, Learning Enhancement Service and are strongly advised to take advantage of this. Students are reminded of importance of reporting Extenuating Circumstances. Individual tutorials are available at request of the student. The Hub directs student enquiries to academic advisers. Feedback suggests that not all advisers have been aware when one of their students is referred for reassessment.

### **School of Chemistry**

Advisers will support reassessing advisees on request in accordance with the letter circulated to students by the hub. In chemistry our Blackboard pages have full sets of lecture notes as a minimum and will often include model answers to formative coursework, screencast and vignette resources. Some of us make revision session videos available. We provide generic feedback on all examination papers. Students can request personalised feedback by appointment with the module organiser. As in the run-up to first sits, academics will provide responses to emails from students. Where appropriate lecturers and module organisers will organise individual or group sessions.

### **School of Computing Sciences**

Response outstanding due to unexpected absence of CMP Director of Learning and Teaching.

### **School of Environmental Sciences**

Students are free to contact module organiser for guidance / tutorial meeting but is not explicitly offered. We point students explicitly to the (existing) option to meet with their advisor to receive feedback on their assessments (incl. exams). We have taken steps to ensure module content on Blackboard remains available to reassessment students.

### **School of Mathematics**

Advisers contacted students who required reassessment offering a meeting. Students who fail the initial assessment can request tutorials/meetings with module organiser or lecturers on the failed modules. General exam feedback is posted after the initial exam on Blackboard. At least one member of staff (on a rota basis) was

available in the summer, before and during reassessment, to help students who need face-to-face meetings.

### **School of Natural Sciences**

Nearly all the NAT teaching is carried out by one of the other science schools so the NAT students requiring reassessment will receive whatever is on offer on a module basis. Following the summer examination board any NAT students requiring reassessment were contacted and advised to make an appointment with their advisor.

### **School of Pharmacy**

All faculty were reminded of the UEA policy when exam results were announced. Most advisers send emails to advisees to offer support (which is part of the above policy). Students requested feedback from module organiser and one-to-one meetings with module organiser to go through exam papers. Some staff offered tutorials for bigger number of students.

## **Support for students between assessment and reassessment**

AD (L&T) FMH Report for LTC January 2016

### **Summary:**

This item was tabled for discussion at Nov 15 FLTQ and followed up by Teaching Directors in their respective Schools.

It would appear there is comprehensive provision of proactive and remedial mechanisms in place across FMH which are relevant to the support of students working towards reassessment.

Teaching Directors from both MED and HSC report that varying but *equivalent* support is provided as outlined in the policy in relation to all full-time pre-qualifying programmes.

It is recognised that provision to part-time students undertaking post qualifying study is less consistent and more complex and there is agreement that a further review and subsequent enhancement of this aspect is particularly important.

It was identified that LTS processes to support provision are not consistent with the policy with some discrepancy noted in provision to students and academics across the faculty. Some students are not routinely notified of reassessment deadlines/ dates these are pre-published – advisers therefore are not notified of the individual students undergoing reassessment.

In relation to the specific recommendations from LTC:

### **‘Advisers to offer an advising session to students referred to reassessment....’**

It is noted that there is some variance in the management involved (i.e. it may be a ‘year lead’ / ‘theme lead’/MO / senior adviser or PA – terminology and structures vary) who meets with an individual for a tutorial or leads on a remedial group tutorial.

It may be therefore that not all students are routinely offered an individual advising session with their Adviser but would be offered at least one type of face-to-face reassessment support session.

The timing of some reassessment activity and diversity in the academic community in FMH makes this flexibility necessary and would not appear to compromise student experience.

There was confidence that in all f/t pre-qualifying programmes (UG and PG) additional revision resources/ remedial formative sessions or ‘feedback clinics’ were additionally available.

It was noted that Advisers were not always seeking out individuals for one-to-one tutorials where they might do so –advisers are not routinely receiving notification on some courses – reassessment letters are not issued to all students for all summative activity (only exams/ events) and therefore support/ prompting as outlined in the policy is not in place to facilitate this.

### **Advisers should be provided with a guidance sheet on ‘Academic failure and how best to support students going to reassessment’**

All academics have been provided with this resource via established communication channels (daily/ weekly school bulletin) with additional direction offered within staff development sessions hosted within HSC for new advisers

All feedback received would suggest they are generally supportive of the strategies advised and suggest that sentiments within are consistent with established practice

**Examples of wider FMH activity & best practice:**

- ✓ All HSC have timetabled access to PA within week 1 – includes sharing of expectations; role of PA framework citing reassessment support and development of reasonable adjustments pack where SpLDs
- ✓ All HSC induction timetables include sessions on LET, ECs, assessment/ reassessment process
- ✓ We have no fixed 'assessment period' therefore all HSC students are provided with an academic year assessment schedule via HSC Bb (inc. provisional result publication/ reassessment dates/ EC panel dates) at the beginning of their academic year
- ✓ All FMH courses make extensive use of BB with assessment information, marking criteria, formative resources. Many include exemplar materials, 'mock' assessments, peer/ self assessment materials.
- ✓ Most modules already included cohort timetabled reassessment/ formative remedial sessions prior to reassessment – all are charged with doing so this academic year.
- ✓ Proactive measures are in place- progression is rigorously managed via Adviser reviews and SEWSIS (student early warning support and intervention) screening mechanism utilised in HSC (assessment performance is a domain where more than 1 reassessment triggers action)
- ✓ Strong relationships are established with DoS with use of shared resources and participation in the exemplar pilot project for 'challenging' assignments underway

**FMH additional considerations and work to do:**

- Consistency needs to be established re LTS notification of students and academics of reassessment
- It was noted that there is inconsistent use of terminology with the policy referring to Adviser /Academic Adviser and in FMH the term Personal / Senior Adviser is used.
- The adoption of 'Fit to Sit' in MED may preclude routine discussion of ECs in some instances.
- FMH students work across an extended academic year with multiple admission points and do not work to a fixed 'reassessment period' as such the risks of adviser miscommunication/ multiple reassessment dates/events and students slipping through the net are increased
- Students spend up to 60% of the programme in practice across the region- attendance at located formative remedial events in this period is not therefore straightforward (financial cost/ shift patterns/ PSRB regs re hours etc.)
- Certain remedial activities require specific rooming which is already pressured.
- We are less confident in the consistency of experience and opportunity of our part time post qualifying students.
- All have an allocated adviser but the relationship is often not established
- Consistency is not yet established and engagement with students is historically challenging (Very p/t, working as clinicians, many are geographically dispersed)

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS UNDERTAKING REASSESSMENT WITHIN THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES (2014-15)**

Reports from the Teaching Directors of each of the Faculty's Schools of Study and the Interdisciplinary Institute for the Humanities indicate that each complied with the new guidance on supporting students undertaking reassessment for the year 2014-15.

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/8551351/supporting-students-undertaking-reassessment.pdf/8e1489bc-0f20-490f-936c-5d62e540b0ed>

Members of Faculty were informed in the Spring Semester (following discussion at the Faculty's LTQC) by individual Teaching Directors of the new guidelines and these were then executed once students had been informed by the Hubs that they were being offered a reassessment opportunity. In particular the relevant Module Organisers and Academic Advisers contacted each student (via e-mail) to offer face-to-face meetings/tutorials where possible and phone/e-mail/Skype support where not. Students were also pointed to online materials if available.

There appears to have been disappointingly low uptake of the support offered across the Faculty. This may partially be a function of the timing of the process with many students having already left the Institution for the summer. For example, it is not always clear that students are accessing their University e-mails during the vacation and they may miss messages sent by the Module Organiser/Academic Adviser; it would be worth adding a note to the Hub letter that the student will be contacted regarding academic support and that they should regularly check. [It may also be worth adding in something to the effect that if they have not been contacted within x days, that they should contact the School (Teaching Director/Senior Adviser?) to find out what is causing the delay.] It may also be worth exploring whether students who have failed Autumn Semester modules could not be offered support well before the Progression Boards. It was also noted by some Teaching Directors that there are inherent difficulties in supporting students whose reassessment have been triggered by previous poor engagement and may equally not be willing to engage with reassessment support processes.

It may be worth noting that the Faculty's Appeals and Complaints Panel dealt with one case where the student failed to be offered support due to the Module Organiser having left and the Academic Adviser being away from the University during the relevant period. This appears to have been an isolated case.

Clive Matthews  
HUM Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching Quality  
January 12<sup>th</sup> 2016

## **SSF Overview**

In 2014/15 SSF schools have made considerable effort in improving provision of support between assessment and reassessment for their students and in full compliance with the university policy.

ADLTQ would like to highlight the following as evidence of good practice:

1. Module Organisers in a particular school were encouraged to offer a feedback and feed forward session lasting one hour where the requirement was that the lecturer details and clearly explains (a) common mistakes made by students that sat the first paper (this draws from the generic exam feedback that Module Organisers post to the module's Blackboard site) and (b) the format and requirements of the forthcoming resit exam. The aim was to enhance the chances of the student achieving a higher mark in the resit exam. This session/s took place between 2-3 weeks before the resit so that students had plenty of time to absorb the advice that was given.
2. For coursework students who were being reassessed offer of a tutorial was made by the module organiser or a person decided by the module organiser (usually the person who marked the first essay and/or will mark the reassessment). They brought a plan to the tutorial and discussed what needed to be done to pass the reassessment. Most students took up this opportunity and attended the tutorial. b) For students who failed an exam a group tutorial was offered and there was again good take up of this opportunity.
3. Use of a tutorial/workshop format to provide a more interactive environment. This created an environment which enabled a greater diffusion of information across the reassessment cohort.
4. One-to-one sessions to ensure that support was tailored to individual student needs. These were often time-intensive, with one module convenor reporting sessions lasting up to 4 hours. Developments to the virtual learning environment to ensure a more rapid dissemination of support information.
5. All advisors offering individual advising sessions for students referred to reassessment.

## **Student Take-Up**

There was a significant range in the extent that students took advantage of the support systems provided - but generally it has been positive. It is as is expected a mixed story with some students not taking up the offer of support but possibly more effort can be made to ensure the take up is close to 100% particularly if a clear link is shown between support taken and passing at reassessment. There has been some discussion within the staff team about consistency to ensure that we are equitable in the support offered to students.

**Concerns raised**

The need to avoid imposing a more unified approach to support was mentioned. There were some concerns over the unequal impact this period can have on staff workloads. Some misgivings also over potential inequalities of access at a module level for example, amongst students requiring summer assessment where some international students and 'travelling' students were not in Norwich, but also some students can be on internships who were in the department and able to meet individually with advisers and module leaders.

Ratula Chakraborty  
SSF Associate Dean for Learning, Teaching and Quality