



UCL Academic Manual 2023-24

Chapter 6: Student Casework Framework

Revised Annex 6.6.2

Managing the Impact of Industrial Action on Assessment, Progression, and Award

This annex details the procedures for managing the impact of industrial action by university staff on assessment, progression, and award. The impact of industrial action varies across UCL; therefore, different situations will need to be considered on their merits in line with the regulations set out in the UCL Academic Manual. The key principles informing UCL's approach are fairness to students and maintenance of academic standards.

1 Regulatory Principles

1. In the event of industrial action that impacts assessment, progression, and award, Education Committee will establish an Examinations and Assessments Contingency Panel (EACP).
2. UCL will maintain the value of its academic awards by ensuring that all students demonstrate achievement of programme learning outcomes across the assessment marks that are available.
3. UCL will ensure that individual students are not disadvantaged in their assessments and examinations as a result of industrial action, while ensuring any mitigating action does not lead to disproportionate academic advantage.
4. UCL acknowledges that the effects of industrial action will fall disproportionately across different student groups on different programmes and modules, and on those with a shorter programme duration such as those following taught postgraduate programmes.
5. As far as is possible, UCL will ensure that any mitigation decisions are taken in consultation with the relevant PSRBs, to ensure that accreditation requirements continue to be met.
6. Students wishing to complain about industrial action should use the Student Complaints procedure.
7. The Material Irregularities procedure will be used to deal with any impact on assessment. Faculty Boards of Examiners are responsible for ensuring that all mitigating actions follow this procedure; students must not be asked to submit extenuating circumstances requests for mitigations arising from industrial action.

2 Applying Mitigation

2.1 Operating Principles

1. Module and Programme Leaders are best placed to reach a judgement as to whether their modules have been sufficiently affected by industrial action to require mitigation.
2. Faculty Boards of Examiners, through their Chairs, are responsible for the application of the Material Irregularities procedure in mitigating for the impact of industrial action on examinations and assessments. They may delegate responsibility to individuals, or bodies at Department level if appropriate. However, a clear allocation of delegated authority must be reported to EACP and clear guidance must be provided to the individuals or bodies with delegated authority so that the procedure is applied consistently.
3. Faculty Boards of Examiners, where appropriate, can agree to take decisions through Chair's action to ensure manageability of decision making.
4. Should the impact on individual students on a module vary, mitigation should be applied consistently to all students, regardless of whether they were directly affected, to ensure parity of treatment for all students.
5. Students must be informed promptly and proactively about the mitigation and the rationale for its application.
6. Students who wish to complain about the mitigation applied should do so when they are advised of the mitigation and before they have received their marks. Complaints must be submitted using the Students Complaints Procedure.

2.2 Rescheduling In-class Tests

1. Where an in-class assessment has not taken place because of industrial action it should be rescheduled. If it is impossible to reschedule the assessment, then the remaining assessments should be reviewed and adjusted in line with the guidance below to ensure that students are still achieving programme learning outcomes.

2.3 Adjusting Exam Papers and Assessment Tasks

1. The Material Irregularities procedure permits the adjustment of an existing exam paper or assessment as mitigation. Options include adjusting a question, removing certain questions, removing entire sections, or adjusting the marking rubric. Where it is agreed that the most appropriate mitigation for missed teaching is to adjust questions or tasks in an assessment/examination it must be applied to all students on the module.
2. Adjustments to examination papers must be made in line with the operational guidance detailed in Section 3 of this document.

2.4 Changing the Method of Assessment

1. It is anticipated that the vast majority of cases (where not already mitigated by the actions above), can be handled by an adjustment to the module assessment pattern that enables the students to evidence achievement of the majority of the module learning outcomes. A check will need to take place across the Programme to ensure that programme learning outcomes have been met.
2. Adjustments to the assessment pattern could include changes within the existing breakdown of components and/or the introduction of new assessment tasks.
3. For logistical reasons it is not possible to introduce new centrally-managed examinations as a mitigation.
4. If the method of assessment is changed from a centrally managed examination to another form of assessment, the SRS Central Assessment Team must be notified so that the assessment can be

removed from the timetable. It will be the responsibility of the department which owns the module to notify students of changes to the methods of assessment.

5. If the preferred option is “Offering the student another opportunity to take the assessment as if for the first time and without penalty (deferral)”, this must be agreed before students submit assessments or sit an exam. This option can only be used with the authorisation of EACP who will require an assessment of the impact on students.

2.5 Component and Module Exclusions

1. In exceptional circumstances where the option ‘exclusion of the affected component/module from completion, progression, award or classification decisions’ of the Material Irregularities procedure is required, the following approach must be followed:
 1. Components worth 10% or less of the final module mark can be excluded by the programme board of examiners.
 2. Components worth between 10% and 50% of the final module mark can be excluded by the programme board of examiners, should the faculty board of examiners choose to delegate that authority.
 3. The decision to exclude components worth 50% or more of the final module mark, or exclusion of the whole module, must be made by the faculty board of examiners.
2. The cumulative impact of component and module exclusions must be reviewed by the programme board of examiners.
 1. Module exclusions and component exclusions above 50% in up to 30 credits can be signed off by the programme board of examiners.
 2. Module exclusions and component exclusions above 50% in between 30 and 60 credits must be escalated to the faculty for scrutiny.
 3. Module exclusions and component exclusions above 50% in more than 60 credits must be escalated, via the faculty, to EACP for scrutiny.

3 Operational Guidance for Exam Board Chairs and Exam Liaison Officers

3.1 Changes to examination papers

1. In the event of industrial action affecting the Central Assessment Period, the deadline for the submission of assessment papers to the Central Assessment Team will not change.
2. Any adjustments to assessment papers should be made before they are submitted to the Central Assessment Team. However, if there is a paper where it is expected there may need to be a change due to industrial action, the Programme Administrator or Examination Liaison Officer responsible should notify the Central Assessment Team when the assessment paper is submitted by emailing examinations@ucl.ac.uk indicating the affected modules.
3. If a replacement paper is required, this must be submitted to the Central Assessment Team no later than three weeks before the start of the Central Assessment Period. If a replacement paper is not submitted by this date the original paper that has been submitted will be used.
4. When submitting a revised paper this must be indicated by stating 'Revised Paper' on the coversheet. This is to ensure that the correct version is presented to students for their assessment.
5. Any assessment papers delivered after this date risk being cancelled, and not run during the Central Assessment Period. Any assessments that are cancelled will need to be run by the academic Department responsible for the module.
6. Exam sittings that are removed from the central assessment timetable may be converted to an alternative method of assessment if this method will enable a measure of the same module learning outcomes.
7. Changes cannot be made to assessment papers on the day of assessment.
8. The Central Assessment Team can only accept a replacement paper where it is a consequence of industrial action.

3.2 Monitoring cohort level outcomes

1. Programme Boards of Examiners should review the mark profiles of students in the usual way to monitor academic standards and ensure the rigour and fairness of assessment, marking and moderation. Where further mitigation is required, the Faculty Board of Examiners should be consulted.

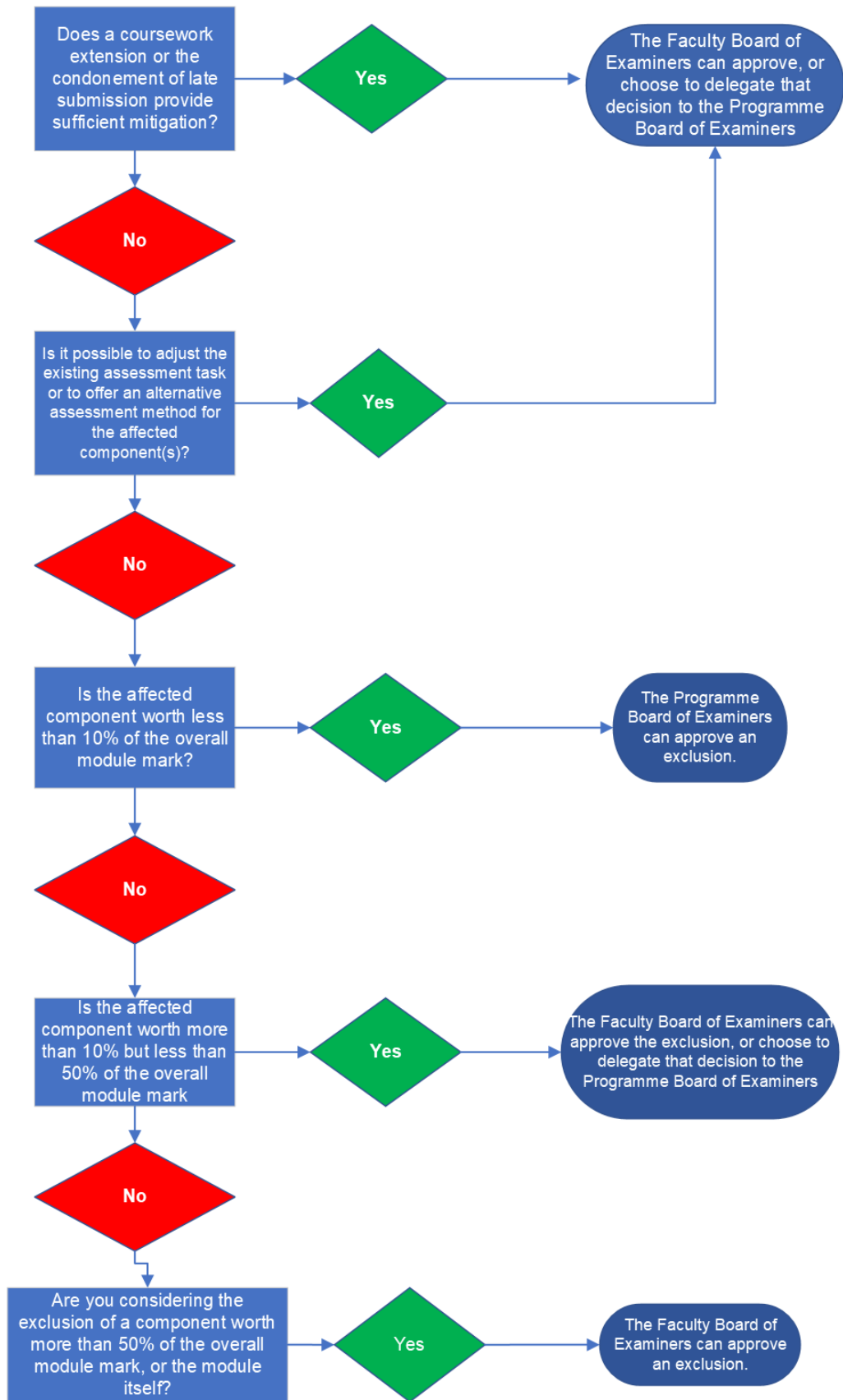
3.3 Communication with External Examiners

1. Programme Boards of Examiners are not required to consult external examiners on specific actions that they are taking to mitigate for the impacts of industrial action. UCL will contact all external examiners to inform them of the policy position, and to invite them to provide their feedback on the approach as part of their annual report.

3.4 Recording and reporting mitigation

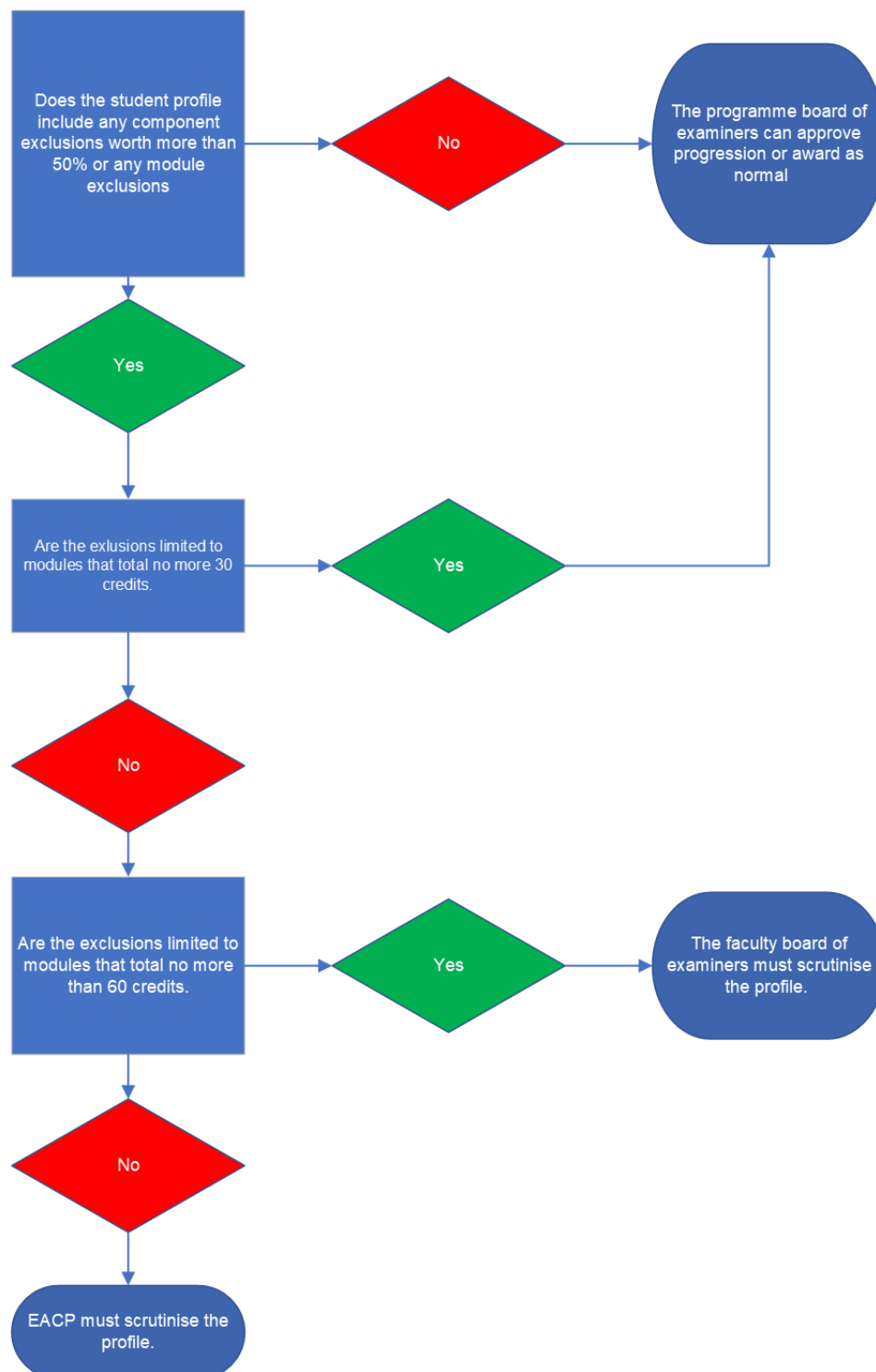
1. Departments must use the process and timeframes agreed for their faculty and published by SRS to report changes to assessments in line with this framework. This record is required for the purposes of updating student records, monitoring (e.g. by Programme Board of Examiners) and complaints handling.
2. Faculty Boards of Examiners must report decisions about component and module exclusion to EACP to ensure consistency of decision making across the university through monitoring the cumulative effect of mitigations on awards. Further information on how to manage the process for your faculty will be provided by SRS.

3.5 Industrial Action Mitigation flowchart



3.6 Industrial Action Mitigation Cumulative Effect flowchart

In order to reassure students and manage the assessment process effectively, mitigation will need to be applied before a Board of Examiners meets to make decisions about progression, completion, awarding and classification. In order to safeguard academic standards, a Board of Examiners will need to assure itself that the cumulative impact of any mitigation does not undermine academic standards.



4 Further Questions

1. Please contact academicregulations@ucl.ac.uk if you have further questions about industrial action and its impact on assessment, progression, and award.