**ACADEMIC UPDATE ONGOING STUDENTS 2016-17- 27.09.2016**

This is to update you on policy decisions made by Academic Management Group (AMG) for 2016-17 which affect all students.

1. **No more paper submissions of summative assessment**. There will be some exceptions to this (see module handbooks for guidance), but, on the whole, *you will not need to submit a paper copy of your summative assessment in 2016-17*. Your Moodle submission will be the final and only version.

2**. Online assessment feedback**. This year, we will be trialling a new system being developed for Common Awards partners that uses an online Moodle tool for the giving and return of feedback/marks. Your feedback therefore may be on a different format for some modules this year.

3. **Anti-plagiarism software**. Linked to the tool above is anti-plagiarism software Turnitin. Turnitin is software used by many higher education establishments; it reads your essay, and compares it to online books and journals, and to other essays for your submission from the previous 5 years at Queen’s, and from all other students who are linked to the system around the country. *You will see no difference in process as you upload to Moodle.* However, from now onwards, use of Turnitin will be rolled out; your essay will be submitted to Turnitin’s database for checking by Moodle, and a report will be returned highlighting all matched areas for inspection by marker, moderator and external examiner. Your essay will be retained by Turnitin for 5 years. You will not normally have access to this report.

4. **Referencing system and word count**. Following issues with different word count rules contained within different referencing systems, AMG have clarified that we continue to recommend use of the Oxford system. Whilst you may use another system if you have good reason to (as long as you do so consistently), the same word count rules applies to all students, as set out in the Academic Handbook. That is, footnotes may be used for references and do not count in the word count; similarly, coversheet, bibliography or appendices also do not count. However, in-text referencing WILL be included in the word count, as will all in-text quotations and headings, however long. See appendix B of the Academic Handbook, on producing work for assessment. See also <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/common.awards/AcademicConventionsfortheCommonAwardsMay2014.pdf> (note that this is a very useful resource, but we do not follow the rules indicated within it that footnotes are included within word count. In all other respects, this describes the Oxford/ MHRA system well).

5. **Extensions. Mitigation forms and ILPs** will no longer be used for extensions of more than 2 weeks or more than 7 weeks. All there forms remain but they will be used as follows for 3 distinct purposes:

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| Extension | To request an extension to the date of submission for summative assessment(s). Please, form the outset, request an extension that equates to the amount of time you have lost due to illness etc. If you need a longer period of time, put it straight on the form, attach evidence, and send it to your personal tutor (who may ask for additional guidance from your Director of Studies to approve this). If your personal tutor is away, contact Registry, who will find someone to stand in this role for you if a deadline is imminent. |
| ILP | To plan a whole year, or part of a year, if you have a long term condition or are ill for a significant period. Work this out with your personal tutor and get itapproved by your director of studies. You may request to amend this with your personal tutor though the year, as situations change. |
| Mitigation | If you have a penalty applied due to late or non-submission (with no extension in place), word count, plagiarism panel outcome etc. This lets the academic panel or exam board know the reasons for the problem (important if they are considering this in the wider context of your academic progress) and, if possible, to appeal the penalty being applied. The most obvious reason for appealing is non submission of an extension prior to the deadline, because you were seriously ill at the time of the deadline, and therefore not able to request an extension. |

If you are a Common Awards student, remember you have recourse to a “**Serious Adverse Circumstances**” form. If you have submitted work but feel that you were not performing to your best ability as a result of some external factor, or if you have several pieces of work not submitted or failed and wish to inform the exam board of the reasons why, ask Registry for this form. It would need to be submitted for the next exam board, which for undergraduates will be February and August, and for post graduates will be October (for the proceeding academic year). Speak to your personal tutor about your progress early on, and they will advise you about this process.

6. **Format of Summative Submission on Moodle**. For 2016-17, for reasons relating to the use of Turnitin, and to iron out issues pertaining to earlier formats of applications such as MS Word, it has been decided that all Moodle submissions should be in a pdf format.

If you are unsure how to save/create a pdf, please see the guidance for doing so on Moodle (<http://www.queens-vle.org.uk/course/view.php?id=348>). Please do not create a PDF by scanning a hard copy of your essay, as this is not text readable and will be rejected by Turnitin.

7. **Online module feedback.**  This term (*for Durham modules only*), we will be asking groups to review their module using an online feedback form. This collates results automatically (they have to be done manually at the moment), and makes them available to the external examiner later on in the year.

**8. Forms, Forms, Forms – and alerting Registry of an extension submission**

Cover sheets, extension forms etc. etc. have all been updated. On Moodle, go to Academic and Foundation Information/ Forms Forms Forms (<http://www.queens-vle.org.uk/course/view.php?id=694>) to download your 2016-17 versions of forms. The trays with paper copies have been updated.

You do NOT need to attach a cover of your extension form with your essay when you submit it. However, as per the instructions on the form, *it is your responsibility to email* *registry@queens.ac.uk* *to let us know that this has been submitted*. We process several hundred extension forms a year and it is not possible for us to monitor all of these, as we will no longer have a paper copy going to the tutor as a prompt. We will use your email to send an anonymous message to the marker, alerting them that student 123456 has submitted their essay TMM9876 by extension.

**9. Academic Handbooks**

Following QAA and AMG feedback, we have done some extensive editing of these and hope that information is more easily accessible. The contents are the same with the exception of the items we have pointed out above. However, if you wish to have a copy of this year’s Handbook, do download it (it’s easier to search for key words etc) or we have some hard copies in the corridor by the pigeon holes. To save paper, we will only print a few at a time. So if you reach a sheet which says “last one put this in Dave/ Katherine’s pigeon hole”, please do so (pigeon holes under whiteboard) and we will print some more.

**10. Emergency Contact Forms**

This year we are asking all staff and students to complete an emergency contact form to let us know who you would want to be contacted in the event of an emergency. This does not have to be your next of kin. Please download the form from Moodle (<http://www.queens-vle.org.uk/course/view.php?id=694>), complete it and return it to Registry at your convenience.