University of Essex Online
(Kaplan Open Learning)
Principles behind the variations for University of Essex Online courses

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

The following principles have been approved for existing variations, and would be applied to all undergraduate University of Essex Online courses, unless otherwise specified.

1. The Rules of Assessment in place at the time the Exam Board meets are applied for all students, regardless of when they started their course, as long as any revisions would not negatively impact students. This was approved by Academic Board due to the complexity of applying varying versions of the rules for courses which offer flexibility of study patterns, course starts and length of course as they do at KOL. The rules will account for the recent changes to degree classifications, and will differentiate between students who started prior to the change ensuring that the transition arrangements continue to be applied where relevant.

2. References to repeating a stage will be removed where this would lead to a student repeating modules they have already passed. To ensure Exam Boards retain the ability to withdraw a student who is not meeting minimum progression requirements, students will still be required to withdraw if they score less than 20% for a Stage.

3. The 20% threshold will be used for dictating whether a student has to re-take a module, or only assessment components. A score of less than 20% requires the module to be re-taken. A score of 20% or above and the student need re-take only the failed assessment components. These Rules replace the credit limits dictating whether a student re-sits/re-submits or has to repeat a Stage.

4. References to timescales for repeating modules or stages will be removed. KOL has a leave of absence policy which allows students to take study breaks, which means students may not undertake re-assessment at the next available opportunity. Students are required to complete within the maximum periods of study.

5. In line with the University's Rules, students are required to withdraw if they fail a core module 3 times. Where a student has failed an optional module 3 times but there are alternative options, students are allowed to take another module. Due to the frequency of re-sit opportunities, and the difficulties of enforcing the credit limits dictating when a student has to repeat a stage, no limits will be imposed on how many modules can be failed and re-assessment undertaken at any stage (other than the maximum of 3 attempts on any one module).

6. To maintain momentum of study, particularly with the maximum period of study in mind, students must attempt a minimum of 30 credits in any 12-month period of study, unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances.

7. Clarification will be provided where a student can be considered for an exit award, to incorporate the named or non-standard exits awards as they have been validated.

8. Due to the flexible study patterns and module start dates, and to avoid causing unnecessary delays to students' studies, students are allowed to progress to the next stage of their course on a provisional basis, as long as:

   - the internal examiners are satisfied that their provisional marks would allow them to proceed with full credits for the stage, and

   - a minimum of 60 credits have been approved by an Exam Board.

   If, after the Exam Board meets, the student has not met the requirements to progress, the student's later stage studies will be suspended pending successful completion of the previous level. Any later stage credits which have been completed would be presented to the Exam Board at which the completed lower level credits were to be considered.

9. KOL has a leave of absence policy which allows students to take study breaks. If a student starts a new module and subsequently has a leave of absence approved the module will not be considered by a Board of Examiners if it is substantially incomplete (usually no more than 4 weeks completed study). Marks earned in the first 4 weeks of the module cannot be re-instated when the module is started for the second time nor can previous work be re-submitted.

10. As the first module to be taken on UG courses the Fundamentals of Effective Learning (FEL) is key to enabling students to demonstrate their academic readiness for the course before progressing to any subject specific modules. In order that students who fail the module are not delayed in their studies and not in a position to potentially breach the requirement to attempt 30 credits per year they will be allowed to commence reassessment prior to their fail mark being presented at a Board of Examiners. All marks, including marks for initial attempts at assessment and following reassessment, will be ratified by the earliest scheduled Board of Examiners following completion of the reassessment.

This will prevent students from breaching point A.4.1 of the UG Rules of Assessment; it will also prevent those students who are accessing a student loan from incurring a disproportionate loan if they fail the module and are unable to progress on the programme.

POSTGRADUATE COURSES

The following principles have been approved for existing variations, and would be applied to all postgraduate University of Essex Online courses, unless otherwise specified.

1. The Rules of Assessment in place at the time the Exam Board meets are applied for all students, regardless of when they started their course, as long as any revisions would not negatively impact students. This was approved by Education Committee and Senate due to the complexity of applying varying versions of the rules for courses which offer flexibility of study patterns, course starts and length of course as they do at KOL.

2. KOL has a leave of absence policy which allows students to take study breaks. If a student starts a new module and subsequently has a leave of absence approved the module will not be considered by a Board of Examiners if it is substantially incomplete (usually no more than 4 weeks completed study). Marks earned in the first 4 weeks of the module cannot be re-instated when the module is started for the second time nor can previous work be re-submitted.