COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Overseas resit examinations: supplementary College guidance in cases where exams cannot be taken at the same time as the Edinburgh cohort

The University now permits students to take resit exams outwith Edinburgh providing they meet specified criteria. These are set out in the Student Administration web page:
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/exams-faq-overseas

There may be occasions where it is not possible to schedule the overseas exam contemporaneously with the exam at Edinburgh (e.g. if the British Council Office in the overseas country is shut at the time that the examination is held in Edinburgh). In such cases Student Administration will contact individuals within a School to liaise on possible exam arrangements. This could lead to an unwelcome range of practice across the College, or indeed across a School.

The College has therefore issued the guidance below on the criteria when such exams should be approved and, if so, what arrangements must be in place. This will promote consistency across the College and ensure the robustness and fairness of overseas resit exam arrangements.

GUIDANCE

(i) Schools will NOT be expected to produce a separate exam for students resitting overseas. They should take the same paper as students resitting at Edinburgh.

(ii) Exams will be scheduled at the same (actual) time as the exam for the main cohort in Edinburgh unless circumstances prevent this (e.g. British Council Offices not being open at that time). If it is not possible to schedule them at the same time then:

(a) The exam overseas should be scheduled as soon as possible AFTER the exam at Edinburgh. No exam overseas should be scheduled before the start of the exam of the main cohort in Edinburgh. The maximum difference between the University based examination and overseas examination is 20 hours. (Therefore there is NO overseas exams availability for any examination to be sat on a Friday in the UK).

(b) Everything should be done to minimise the possibility of students gaining knowledge of the exam beforehand; this will include requiring the student to arrange to be chaperoned during the time difference period to ensure that they are not in a position to be in contact with anyone about the exam questions prior to their taking the exam overseas. In addition where an examination is being taken by a candidate overseas, examination papers CANNOT be removed from the University examination hall (or any other venue with a different start time);

(iii) It should be the default position that all requests for non-honours examination resits are permitted unless there are circumstances where it is not possible (see (a) above). It should be exceptional for a School to support a resit of an HONOURS exam (e.g. resit at first attempt) at a time different from the main cohort because any advantage may have a significant impact on the student’s overall outcome. (Note that Visiting Students and Ordinary degree students are, by definition, not studying for an Honours degree so that this condition does not apply.)
(iv) For the School to support a request for an exam overseas after the exam at Edinburgh, the School should be confident that prior-knowledge will be likely to convey limited advantage in the exam (this may of course include seen papers). This may include:

- being confident that the School can fairly assess the exam whether or not prior knowledge had been obtained;
- being sure that the School could deal with accusations of unfairness from other students;
- being confident that the possibility of any advantage has a minimal impact on the student's overall outcome.

(v) If a School receives a request for a resit examination overseas which cannot be taken at the same time as the examination at Edinburgh, then this should be considered by the Director of Teaching (or his / her nominee) in the School which owns the course. Individual Course Organisers CANNOT approve a resit overseas. If the Director of Teaching supports the request, considering that it is in accordance with the guidance above, then he/she forwards the recommendation to the Dean of Learning and Teaching, via the Academic Affairs section of the College Office, for consideration and final approval.