

Royal Agricultural University Academic Regulations (2017-18)

Section 1

General Rules for Academic Assessment

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General Rules for Academic Assessment

1. Programme Specifications

The approved programme specification for each academic programme is available to download from the relevant programme pages on the University's website www.rau.ac.uk. Programme specifications contain the full information on the programme's modular structure, the development and acquisition of key skills and academic outcomes as well as the requirements for progression through, and satisfactory completion of the programme, or programmes, for which a student is registered.

2. Module Reference Sheets

Approved module reference sheets are also published on the University's website and provide the details of teaching contact, subject content, learning outcomes and the assessment activities for each module. Sheets also highlight key texts which will provide much of the background supporting information in the individual student's learning activities for the module. Each module also has a secure web presence on the University's virtual learning environment where lecture notes and additional relevant material in support of learning can be obtained.

3. Examination timetables

It is the duty of every student to be aware of the examination timetable, which is displayed on main notice boards and circulated electronically to all students in advance of the examination period. Details of oral and practical examinations are given by the staff responsible for teaching the particular subject. Examination timetables may, however, be subject to change at short notice and the University reserves the right to do so.

4. Other assessments

Written and oral assessments may contribute to the overall results of a module. Students must acquaint themselves with the arrangements for these and comply with them. Failure to comply may lead to failure in the module. Students are also advised to retain copies of all coursework submissions for re-submission to an External Examiner, if requested, at the end of the academic year.

All students should be aware that, in order to protect the integrity of awards made by the Royal Agricultural University, and those awarded at other UK HEIs, all written coursework assignments will be submitted via an external plagiarism detection site, Turnitin©, from which originality reports will be produced. Turnitin© retains all submitted work for future cross checking against other submissions, either at the RAU or at any other University or College subscribing to Turnitin©.

5. Coursework deadlines

All coursework must be submitted electronically via Gateway, or, where exceptionally approved, submitted to the Central Administration Office, by the time stated in the coursework brief and a receipt obtained. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that the correct version of their coursework is

submitted for assessment. Should a student inadvertently submit an initial draft of their assignment, this will be treated as a final submission and marked accordingly.

Students who are prevented from completing coursework by the due date by reason of illness or accident must submit a Mitigating Circumstances form, with appropriate supporting evidence, as detailed in paragraph 6 below.

Unless an extension has been granted as a result of a successful claim for mitigation for late submission, and the new date met, late submissions will incur a mark penalty as detailed below.

The maximum mark awarded for submissions received up to one week late will be the pass mark as specified in the University academic regulations, section 2 'Regulations for Assessment, Progression and Awards', paragraph 2.2.2, available on the University website at <http://rac.ac.uk/study/academic-policies-and-procedures/assessment-regulations-and-marking-criteria>. Submissions received after this date will receive a zero mark.

6. Mitigating circumstances

Students who miss an examination paper or coursework deadline, or who consider their performance in either examination or coursework to be affected, through mishap or ill-health must inform their Personal Tutor immediately and forward a completed 'Mitigating Circumstances' form to the Registry. This must be accompanied by a Doctor's certificate, in cases of ill-health, or other form of acceptable independent third-party evidence. Candidates who miss an examination for any other reason, without the prior written permission of the Chair of the University Examinations Committee will be deemed to have failed that examination.

All claims for mitigation will be considered by a Mitigating Circumstances Panel, chaired by the Academic Registrar, which will meet at intervals throughout the academic year. Dates of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel meetings, and deadlines for submission of claims, will be confirmed and communicated to students at least 10 days in advance of each meeting.

Claims for mitigation submitted after the relevant Examination Board has met to consider student results will not be accepted, and students who feel they have cause for retrospective mitigation must submit a formal appeal in line with the requirements of paragraph 10 below.

7. Examination procedures

- 7.1.** The examination programme will be published not less than seven days prior to commencement of the examination period. It is the responsibility of every examination candidate to make him/herself aware of the dates and times of all examinations.

- 7.2.** Candidates should be present when the doors of their examination room open at about ten minutes before the start of the examination, and should be seated not less than five minutes prior to the published start time. A candidate who is more than 30 minutes late for an examination will be allowed to sit the examination only in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the invigilator.
- 7.3.** Strict silence must be observed during examinations. Communication in any form between candidates is forbidden. The exchange of equipment or other materials is only allowed with the express permission of the invigilator.
- 7.4.** Smoking, eating and drinking, with the exception of bottled, un-carbonated mineral water and loose sweets, are not allowed in examination rooms.
- 7.5.** A candidate may not leave the examination room until 30 minutes after the start of an examination nor within ten minutes of the end, except at the discretion of the invigilator.
- 7.6.** A candidate who leaves the examination room during an examination without prior permission from an invigilator will not be allowed to return during that examination. A candidate who wishes to use the lavatory must first attract the attention of an invigilator by raising their hand, and receive permission to leave the room. No additional time will be allowed for toilet breaks.
- 7.7.** Candidates who leave their desk during an examination must cause as little disturbance as possible. Those leaving the examination room should vacate the vicinity of the examination building immediately and quietly.
- 7.8.** Examination answer books are provided on each desk. Additional books may be obtained from the invigilator. Rough working in the examination answer book should be neatly crossed out after completion of the question: loose paper is not allowed for rough working.
- 7.9.** Answers must be set out in an orderly and legible manner. They must be written in ink, but pencils and crayons may be used for diagrams and sketches. Candidates must provide their own pen, ink, ruler, pencil and eraser, together with any other necessary instruments. Certain examinations may require the use of tabulated information as specified in the relevant Module Handbook.
- 7.10.** No textbooks, dictionaries, notebooks, papers, or written or recorded information of any kind may be brought into the examination room, except where specified on the examination question paper.
- 7.11.** The use of calculators is permitted in examinations, provided that they are battery operated, pocket sized, silent in operation, and are not capable of using previously recorded programmes or information. The operation of calculators is the responsibility entirely of the candidate and no allowance will be made for errors or omissions arising from the malfunction of a calculator or its misuse by a candidate.

- 7.12. Candidates must put their student number, the module number, the module name, the date of the examination, the desk and room number and the question numbers of each question in the order in which they have been attempted on the front of each examination answer book. The candidate's name must not appear anywhere on the examination answer book submitted for marking.
- 7.13. Each candidate must leave their examination answer book on the desk before leaving an examination. When loose sheets are used, they must be pinned together in the top left hand corner with the pins provided. Separate sections of the paper must be kept separate, when requested, to facilitate marking.
- 7.14. Mobile phones must be switched off. A candidate found in possession of a mobile phone that is switched on may be considered in breach of examination regulations and subject to disciplinary action.

For further information see the University Code of Conduct for Examinations.

8. **Notification of results**

Examination results are published electronically via a password-protected website as soon as possible after ratification by the University Examinations Committee. **Results will not be given over the telephone.**

Individual transcripts detailing the marks for each module, final average and award will then be sent to whatever permanent home or alternative correspondence address is provided by students to the Registry. Students are reminded that progression within a programme or the receipt of a final award are subject to the satisfactory status of the student's financial account at the University. Students who are in debt to the University will receive (within 40 days of ratification by the University Examinations Committee) only an unsigned list of module marks, with no indication of final average or award classification.

9. **Re-sit examinations**

Students who are required to re-sit an examination will be permitted to do so at the next available opportunity. For examinations sat in January/February, re-sit examinations will be offered in May/June. For examinations sat in March, or in May/June, re-sit examinations will be offered in September. Students sitting during either of the re-sit periods as if for the first time (i.e. who have mitigation for missing an earlier examination), and who are unsuccessful, will be offered a re-sit examination at the next available opportunity, which will normally be during the following academic year. Candidates must ensure that they are available to attend the University on those days should they be notified of the requirement to re-sit one or more subjects when the first examination results are published. The detailed programme for re-sit examinations is posted online as soon as possible after results have been ratified.

10. Appeals against Examination Board decisions

10.1. A candidate for any University award who believes that he or she has been incorrectly failed, or has been awarded an incorrect class of degree or other award may appeal against the decision of an Examination Board.

Any such appeal must be made in writing and be received by the Academic Registrar, within ten working days of publication of final ratified results and must be based on one or more of the following grounds:

10.1.1. That there had been irregularities in the conduct of the examination or other forms of assessment, or of the Examination Board itself, including administrative error, of such a nature as to raise reasonable doubt that a properly conducted or informed Examination Board would have reached the same conclusion.

10.1.2. That there were circumstances which had affected the candidate's performance which could not, for valid reasons, be divulged before a decision had been reached.

10.1.3. That one or more of the examiners was prejudiced against the candidate or unreasonably biased in his, her or their judgement(s).

10.2. Dissatisfaction with the academic judgement of an Examination Board in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work or in reaching any decision in respect of an assessment progression or award based on the scores, grades and other information relating to a candidate's performance cannot in itself constitute grounds for appeal.

10.3. Where an appeal is made, the Academic Registrar shall consult the Chair of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) and they shall together ascertain whether the alleged grounds satisfy the regulations under 10.1. If they jointly determine that the appeal does not satisfy those grounds, the appeal shall be dismissed. If they jointly consider that the appeal is properly founded on the provisions of 10.1., the Chair of the AQSC shall convene an Examinations and Assessment Appeals Committee, with membership as set out in 10.4., which shall determine the appeal in accordance with 10.5.

10.4. The Examination and Assessment Appeals Committee shall comprise the following members:

The Chair of the AQSC as Chair

The Academic Registrar, in attendance, as secretary

A Head of Academic Centre other than that of the appellant

A member of the academic staff of the University, who has not taken part in the current assessment of the appellant's work.

10.5. The Examination and Assessment Appeals Committee shall meet ten working days following the last date for receipt of written appeal requests, to hear the appellant in person, with or without a supporter, and/or consider any representation made by the appellant or a friend speaking on the appellant's

behalf. It may invite other persons to provide verbal or written information relevant to the appeal. If the Committee finds the appeal is well founded, it shall either:

- (i) Determine the case there and then
- (ii) Refer the case back to the relevant Examination Board for reconsideration with, or without, recommendation.

In either case, if the appeal decision results in the granting of an award, the Chair of the University Examinations Committee shall have the power to approve the award on behalf of the University.

10.6. Minutes of meetings of an Appeals Committee and any documents or other evidence submitted to it shall be confidential, and members of the Committee shall respect the confidentiality of both papers and oral statements in the interests of both the appellant and the University.

11. The Credit Accumulation and Transfer System

11.1. Credits will normally be awarded on successful completion of a module. Each module represents a combination of class contact, private study and assessment time within a defined subject area. Fifteen credits are awarded for a module requiring 150 hours of total student work, 7.5 credits are awarded for a 75 hour module and 30 credits for a 300 hour module.

11.2. Credits are awarded at four levels as follows:

Level 4	First Year undergraduate/higher education certificate level
Level 5	Second Year undergraduate/higher education diploma level
Level 6	Final Year undergraduate/Honours degree level
Level 7	Taught Master's degree level

11.3. Students will not normally be expected to gain more than 120 credits in any one academic year. However, where timetabling permits, and where the Programme Manager and the Head of Academic Centre are confident that the student is capable, then the student may register for a maximum of 135 credits in one academic year.

11.4. To be eligible for an Honours degree, students will be required to achieve a minimum of 360 credits, normally to include 120 credits at each of levels 4, 5 and 6. However students studying for an Intercalated Degree, for example as part of their Veterinary Science degree studies, will be required to achieve a minimum of 360 credits of which a minimum of 90 must be at level 6 and a maximum of 120 at level 4.

11.5. Students who do not meet the criteria for Honours but who achieve a minimum of 300 credits, including at least 120 credits at levels 4 and 5 and at least 60 at level 6, will be eligible for an Ordinary degree.

- 11.6.** Students registered on a Foundation Degree are required to achieve a minimum of 240 credits, normally to include 120 credits at each of levels 4 and 5.
- 11.7.** An MSc or MBA will require completion of a dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project which will lead to the award of 60 level 7 credits to be added to the credits for the Postgraduate Diploma.
- 11.8.** A Postgraduate Diploma will require completion of 120 credits, of which at least 90 credits must be at level 7 with a maximum of 30 credits at level 6.
- 11.9.** A Graduate Diploma will require completion of 120 credits of which at least 75 credits must be at level 6. The remaining 45 credits may be taken at either level 4, 5 or 6.
- 11.10.** All credits awarded will be added to a student's personal study record. These may be transferred between comparable programmes, both at the University and other Higher Education Institutions, subject to normal Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) procedures. Once awarded, credits will remain on the student's record until their registration at the University is completed (either on successful completion of the programme or on transfer to another establishment).

12. Academic Misconduct

12.1. Definitions

Academic Misconduct is defined as the abuse of recognised academic conventions in order to gain an unfair advantage. This definition covers both plagiarism (which itself includes collusion), and cheating.

Plagiarism is defined as the representation of the work of others as one's own. Recognition of other people's work is through the accepted conventions as detailed in the Harvard Referencing system, and students who fail to comply with this system will be considered under the regulations as having plagiarised material. For the purposes of the University's academic regulations it means the inclusion in work submitted for assessment of significant material taken from the work (whether published or unpublished) of others (including other students) without acknowledgement or reference within the text and/or in the list of references. Examples of plagiarism are given in the table below. The University also uses a Plagiarism Tariff Rating which categorises each proven offence in relation to a series of criteria relating to the severity, academic level and extent of plagiarism confirmed and ensures consistency across individual cases and academic years in terms of the penalties applied. The tariff calculator is available to students via 'Gateway'.

Collusion is defined as the passing off of another person's work, with the clear knowledge and assistance of that person, for the purposes of deceiving a third party. Examples of collusion are given in the table below.

Cheating is defined as any attempt, by whatever means, to secure an unfair advantage in assessment. Examples of cheating are given in the table below.

The following provides an in-exhaustive list of activities that could be considered as constituting Academic Misconduct:

Plagiarism	Collusion	Cheating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraphrasing material and ideas from another source without acknowledging the author within the text and/or in the list of references. • Copying material, including text, maps, diagrams, photographs, for coursework from a book/other publication without acknowledging the source within the text and/or in the list of references. • Downloading from the web and not citing the origin of the material within the text and/or in the list of references. • Using verbatim the lecture notes from this or a previous institution for an essay without attribution within the text and/or in the list of references. • Using sources verbatim without acknowledging that the verbatim is a direct quote. <p>The following examples also fall under the category of cheating and will be considered as such in addition to plagiarism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using another’s whole piece of work and presenting it as one’s own. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally allowing your coursework to be copied by another student. • Doing another student’s coursework for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraudulent seeking of extensions, extenuating circumstances, etc. • Re-submitting previous work when an original submission is expected. • Library misconduct, making it difficult for others to acquire the necessary texts. • Copying from a neighbour during an examination without them realising. • Taking unauthorised material into an examination. • Holding onto/mis-shelving key library texts. • Making-up references. • Inventing data or altering data to strengthen a case. • Gaining prior knowledge of an examination or test. • Lying about medical / other factors to achieve special considerations. • Intimidating other students into assisting or completing the work for you.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing academic materials for submission as one's own. • Submitting jointly written coursework as one's own individual work. • Paying someone to write coursework for you (ghost writing). 		
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Proven cases of academic misconduct by students, in the form of either cheating, plagiarism or collusion, can lead to severe academic penalties, such as irredeemable failure in a module, and disciplinary penalties up to and including expulsion. Students found guilty of academic misconduct will have a record of the offence placed on their University files.

In all cases where an offence of academic misconduct is suspected, the student(s) concerned will be informed of the allegation and that steps will be taken to establish whether such suspicion is well founded. In cases of suspected academic misconduct academic staff reserve the right to conduct a *viva voce* with regard to coursework and dissertations.

For first year undergraduate and one-year programmes, module leaders will deal with issues of poor referencing verbally until Christmas, with students required to resubmit an assignment for a maximum mark equivalent to the pass mark for the level in question (i.e. 40%). After Christmas, such offences will be considered as plagiarism and will require submission to an Academic Misconduct Panel meeting.

12.2. The Academic Misconduct Panel

All offences of academic misconduct will be considered by an Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP) that will be convened as required to deal with suspected cases of Academic Misconduct as soon as practicable following the raising of concerns by a member of Staff. The membership of the AMP shall be:

- Chair: Head of Academic Quality and Development
- Secretary: Academic Registrar
- At least one senior members of academic staff not involved in the initial student assessment.

Until such time as an AMP has reached a conclusion, no mark or score can, or will, be awarded for the work concerned. In the event that an Examination Board is convened prior to a decision being made by the AMP, the Board's decisions in respect of the whole of the work of the student relating to the module in question will be deferred.

The Academic Misconduct Panel will:

1. Receive all information relevant to the case in question in advance of the meeting.
2. Accept both written and verbal evidence directly from the student(s) and staff involved in the alleged offence.

3. Remain impartial at all times.
4. Reach an agreed decision in all cases.
5. Apply the University's regulations for Academic Misconduct consistently and in an appropriate manner, giving due regard to all evidence received.
6. Communicate its decisions, and penalties to be imposed, in writing to the individuals involved in each case.
7. Produce an annual report of its activities for presentation to the Academic Board.

12.3. Procedure for Academic Misconduct

Following the detection of a possible case of academic misconduct, an invigilator, examiner or tutor will produce a concise written report setting out the nature and extent of the alleged offence and the supporting evidence available. In the case of plagiarism or collusion, the examiner will also identify and provide evidence of the original source material and a complete originality report generated through *Turnitin* plagiarism detection software where appropriate. This report will be submitted, with supporting material (and original source material in the case of plagiarism), to the Academic Registrar (AR). (Note in relation to potential cases of plagiarism, the AMP will only consider allegations where the extent of potential plagiarism either exceeds 5% of the total submission or where the total is below 5% but where critical ideas have been plagiarised).

On receipt of an allegation of academic misconduct, the AR will write to the student(s) concerned explaining the allegation and providing a copy of the report from the invigilator, examiner or tutor, at least five working days in advance of an AMP meeting, in line with the precepts of natural justice. The AR will also confirm the date of the AMP meeting to consider the allegation and ensure the student is aware of their right to submit a written response and to attend the AMP in person, should they wish to do so.

The student may attend the AMP meeting in person providing they have notified the AR of this intention at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The student may be accompanied by a friend, another student or a member of staff, but should again confirm this to the AR at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The accompanying person is not entitled to speak on behalf of the student but may counsel the student during the interview.

The AMP will consider each individual case presented to it in turn, taking due account of the evidence provided and any representation made by, or on behalf of, the student(s) concerned. The AMP will reach an agreed decision in all cases, including the penalty to be imposed. The decision of the AMP, and penalty to be imposed, will be confirmed in writing to the student(s) involved by the AR. All decisions of the AMP will be subject to the normal University appeals procedures.

In determining the appropriate penalty, the AMP will take into account each individual circumstance, including any briefing material set by the staff concerned, the extent of the offence, the level of the student(s) academic career and any previous history of plagiarism / cheating by the individual(s)

concerned. Normally, the higher the academic level the more serious the penalty.

The AMP may impose one or other of the following penalties for proven cases of cheating, plagiarism or collusion:

Plagiarism and collusion:

- The re-presentation of the plagiarised work, correctly referenced, for a maximum mark of 40%.
- The award of zero for the assessment in question, with the opportunity to undertake a referred assessment at the next available opportunity for a maximum mark of 40%.
- The award of zero for the work in question and no opportunity for referral.
- The loss of Honours should the offence relate to a BSc Honours dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project.
- The loss of MA/MBA/MSc award should the offence relate to a Master's dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project.
- Permanent exclusion from the University on the grounds of serious and/or repeated Academic Misconduct.

Full details of the penalties to be applied in relation to the nature of the plagiarism offence are contained in the Plagiarism Tariff Calculator available via 'Gateway'.

Cheating:

- The failure of the module in question and a requirement to re-register in the following academic year and complete all module assessments.
- The failure of the academic year and a requirement to re-register for all modules in the following academic year.
- The loss of Honours should the offence relate to a BSc Honours dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project.
- The loss of MA/MBA/MSc award should the offence relate to a Master's dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project.
- Permanent exclusion from the University on the grounds of serious and/or repeated Academic Misconduct.

In all cases where academic misconduct is proven, a record of the offence will be placed on the student's file.

The AMP will produce an annual report of its activities, including the numbers and outline details of cases considered, the numbers of students involved including their academic level, and the penalties imposed. This report will be presented to the Academic Board in December each year and will be placed, subject to Academic Board approval, on the RAU intranet for information. This report will also be made available electronically, should this be requested under the Freedom of Information Act, by any appropriate external agency.

12.4. Appeals against disciplinary decisions

A student may appeal against the outcome of a disciplinary decision, whether the original offence related to academic or non-academic misconduct. In order for the University to consider any appeal against a disciplinary decision, the student should write directly to the Director of Student Experience and must be able to demonstrate one or more of the following:

- That there was a procedural irregularity within the original misconduct process.
- That the penalty imposed by the University was unreasonable or unfair.
- That new evidence has become available that was not available at the time the original offence of misconduct was considered.

The grounds for the appeal will be considered by a senior representative of the University who has not previously been involved with the matter. Where grounds for appeal can be established, an Appeal Panel will be constituted. The Appeal Panel will be chaired by a member of the University's Senior Management and include two other senior members of academic staff who have not previously been involved with the matter.

The Appeal Panel will have access to all documentation concerning the case and to any written submissions the student or any other party wishes the Panel to consider. The Panel may instigate such additional enquiries as it considers appropriate.

The Appeal Panel may:

- Uphold the original decision.
- Set aside the decision and require that the matter is investigated afresh.
- In the event that new evidence has been made available, set aside the decision or revise the penalty imposed or require that the matter be considered afresh.

The Appeal Panel's decision will be communicated in writing to the student, together with the Panel's reasons. The student will be informed in writing that this is the final stage of the disciplinary procedure by means of a Completion of Procedures Letter. If the student believes there remains cause for complaint about the application of the disciplinary procedure or its outcome the student may raise the matter with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.