

University Centre Colchester

Frequently Asked Questions

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SECTION 1 - General Questions

What rules govern behaviour at University Centre Colchester? What is deemed as 'unacceptable behaviour'?

Students are required to respect the rights of other individuals. In line with its Student Disciplinary policy, University Centre Colchester regards intimidation and harassment of others as unacceptable, and those engaging in such behaviour will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action. Students are also expected to treat others with due care and respect the facilities provided, and abide by published rules and regulations.

For further details please see the **Student Disciplinary Policy** on the UCC website.

What attendance is required and what I do if I have to be absent?

On any programme of study, a learner's attendance is a key contributing factor in determining ultimate success. Your attendance for lecturers and seminars is measured (by such means as e-registers) and closely monitored (at Progress Boards). Students must attend all teaching sessions, tutorials, placements and other timetabled learning activities unless there is an agreed reason for absence. Students who plan to be absent should discuss this with the programme staff concerned to enable appropriate arrangements to be made.

If you are unavoidably absent without notice (e.g. if you are too ill to attend college) you must telephone the absence reporting line – **01206 712160**. In addition, you may also wish to contact your tutor to discuss the reason for absence or missed work.

Students who have to leave campus before the end of their final session of the day must notify their Programme Leader of their absence and give the reason.

What about punctuality?

Poor punctuality is detrimental to the learning of both the late learners and those who arrive on time and have their session disrupted. Learners should arrive on time for the start of the lesson. If the module tutor judges that your late arrival will prove disruptive, he or she may refuse you admission and you will be deemed to be absent from that session.

What is my Student I.D. card used for?

When you enrol at University Centre Colchester you will be given a student ID photocard. **You will not be allowed to access the campus without it. You must wear this card with you at all times while on the campus.** You will be asked to show it whenever you request personal information from offices. You must also have the card with you in all examinations; students without this photo ID will not be permitted to sit examinations. As well as your photograph and name, the card contains your Student Identification Number (your SID) and your user name. The user name from your ID card is used for your email. Your SID card will also be used when printing or copying.

What do I do if I want a personal reference?

All personal reference requests must be sent to the Data and Standards Officer. University Centre Colchester can only provide references to a third party, and the requesting

organisation must provide full name, date of birth of the student, and a signed declaration from the student for the release of the information. The information provided by Data and Standards Officer is factual, i.e. confirmation of attendance, dates of attendance, qualifications attained at University Centre Colchester. If character information is required the reference will be forwarded to the relevant Programme Leader who may provide the additional information.

Who do I inform if my personal details or contact details alter?

It is essential that you keep us informed of your current address and contact details. Please give details of changes of address and/or telephone number promptly to the Registry Office in person or telephone 01206 712555. This includes semester time or home addresses, phone numbers and email addresses and mobile telephone numbers. Please note that it is our policy not to divulge students' addresses or contact details to any third party.

Similarly, if your personal details change (for example, if you change your name upon marriage), you must inform the Registry Office.

What is the National Student Survey (NSS) and why is it important to me?

When you are in your final year of study, whether studying on a Foundation Degree or a Bachelors award, you will be contacted by an independent market research company who carries out yearly surveys with all higher education providers. The results of this survey are widely published and will be used within the new UCAS website and by national league tables such as The Times and The Guardian – therefore it is critical that we continue to respond to this survey to ensure that degree studies at Colchester Institute remain recognised at a national level.

The survey will ask you general questions about your time with us and we would ask that you please complete it with honesty.

Please note that if you are a Foundation Degree student who is progressing onto a Bachelors award you will not be surveyed twice.

What about special arrangements for examinations?

Special examination arrangements are available for students who have evidence of a disability. There are several types of arrangements offered, including extra time, use of a computer, accommodation in a separate room or modification of the paper.

The term 'disability' includes dyslexia and dyspraxia, as well as physical, sensory or mental health conditions.

If you would like to request special arrangements please contact UCC's Student Experience Officer on: 01206 712613 or by email: uccacademicservices@colchester.ac.uk at least 2 weeks before the examination.

SECTION 2 - Questions whilst studying

How do I hand-in my assignment work?

You will be given instructions by your module tutor on how to submit work. Usually work is electronically submitted into Moodle, on occasions a hard copy hand-in to your support office will be required. When handing in hard copies your assignment must include a front cover sheet (one should be completed for each piece of work handed in), which are available on the UCC Portal.

Submitting work electronically via Moodle

You will be shown how to submit work before you need to hand-in.

What are the deadlines for handing-in assignment work and what happens if I miss them?

There will be strict deadlines set for the submission of your assignments and it is the responsibility of the student to be aware of, and adhere to, the dates and times when assignments are to be handed-in. Students **MUST** ensure that their work is submitted on time. A system of date and time verification will operate. (Note: the time verification is computerised, so you ensure that you submit in good time.)

- **For full-time and part-time students, work must be handed-in by a cut off time of 12 noon on the allocated day.**

Work submitted late will incur a penalty. For students studying on University of Essex or University of East Anglia programmes, work submitted after the published deadline date, but no more than 7 days late, will be penalised and capped at a maximum mark of zero. For students studying on Pearson programmes, work submitted after the published deadline date, but no more than 14 days late, will be penalised and capped at a maximum mark of pass. (It should be noted that no allowance will be made for College closure due to statutory holidays.)

Can I submit my work by post?

It is neither normal nor desirable practice to submit assignments by post. However, work that has been posted with permission **MUST** be sent by recorded delivery and the receipt of posting kept. A copy of all posted work must be kept by the candidate.

Do I have to keep copies of my marked and returned assignments?

Yes. You should retain copies of all your marked and returned work. It may be necessary to hand back coursework at the end of the year so that it can be made available to external examiners. You will be informed of the details of this process nearer the time.

How do I collect my assignment work once it has been marked?

Hard copy marked work may be collected from your Student Support Office when your Student Support Office informs you (by e-mail) it is ready for collection. You will need to produce your Student ID Card to receive your marked work.

What are 'word limits' and what happens if I exceed the word limit for assignments?

A word target will be specified for all written assignments. You must declare the actual word count on the title page of the submission. Assignments may not be marked where an actual word count is not clearly indicated.

Please note, the following contents of a written document **are excluded** from the word count:

- title page;
- abstract (except undergraduate dissertation abstracts, which are included);
- contents page;
- headers and footers;
- headings of charts;
- appendices;
- reference list.

The following **are included** in the word count:

- citations (including 'indented quotes') and in text referencing;
- footnotes and/or endnotes;
- words contained within tables.

Please also note, appendices and footnotes/endnotes should only include material which markers are not required to read, but to which they may refer if they wish. Appendices therefore include information which supports the assignment, such as, for example, data sheets and anonymised survey feedback. Appendices must not be used as a device for extending the main text. Quotes from secondary sources can be used to illustrate or support the points of your assignments although you should indicate an awareness of the secondary source's status. Direct citations should not make up more than 10% of your total word count.

Word Targets

Students may submit assignments with a variation of the required word target by plus or minus 10% without incurring any penalty.

A specified word target serves two purposes. Firstly, the upper end of the available word count range requires a writer to be selective in the information included and concise in the manner in which it is presented. Secondly, the lower end of the word count range is indicative of the detail required to respond satisfactorily to the assignment task.

Should an assignment fall outside the permitted variables of the specified word target, the marker will be required to deduct 3 percentage points from the mark awarded. (e.g. a mark of 50% will be reduced to 47%).

Should the 3% reduction of a mark result in the assignment's mark being below 40%, the penalty will be capped at 40%.

Mood Boards/Mind Maps/Sketch Books/Artifacts/Other Annotated Creative Work in Non-Essay Format

Neither the word target policy, nor the 3% (out of 100%) reduction applies to work of this nature, because the establishing of such parameters runs contrary to an element of the

assignment itself, in which the identifying and applying of a format for a submission are deemed to be part of the assignment task.

How do I ensure that I am not accused of cheating or plagiarism?

Academic offences in examinations include: copying the work of another student or communicating with another student in an examination; and introducing any written, printed or electronically stored information into an examination, other than material expressly permitted in the instructions for that examination.

Academic offences in coursework include using the work of others (whether written, printed or some other form) without acknowledgement, whether this has been the result of serious negligence or of intention to deceive. One of the most serious of all academic offences is to make it seem that the work of others is your own. Students are required to reference their sources properly (see Section 4), and failure to do so can lead to a charge of an academic offence. It is therefore very important that you learn how to reference your work properly, and that you familiarise yourself with the guidelines on referencing. If, after having read the guidelines, you are still unclear about referencing, you must talk to your tutor before you submit your assignment. When submitting any piece of work (e.g. essay, report, portfolio or dissertation) you will be required to acknowledge any assistance received or any use of the work of others. Ignorance of the regulations will not be accepted as a defence against a charge of an academic offence or serious negligence in referencing.

You may also be responsible for an academic offence if you **repeat work previously submitted** for an assessed assignment without full acknowledgement of the extent to which that previous work has been used. In other words, if you hand in the same or a very similar essay or report to one that you have already submitted.

Academic offences are taken very seriously by University Centre Colchester and the penalties are severe. It can mean receiving a mark of zero for a piece of work, or, in certain circumstances, being required to withdraw from the course. It is not in your interest to cheat in any of your submitted work or in any examination.

You should note that it is also an offence for a student to knowingly assist another student to commit an academic offence, whether in an examination, or in any other piece of work. Sometimes students who have been working together end up submitting almost identical work and are accused of an academic offence. While we do not want to dissuade you from working with or discussing your work with another student, you must be careful that you do not collaborate too closely, and it would be wise to seek advice from your tutors on the limits of collaboration before you submit your work.

Details of Colchester University Centre Colchester regulations relating to academic offences and the procedure for dealing with allegations of academic offences are provided on the UCC Portal.

What do I do if I have to sit an examination?

The assessment instrument for a module may require you to sit an examination. Where this is the case, an examination timetable will be published in advance. You should make note of the date, start time and room of your examination(s). Please ensure that you report to the examination room at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time. There are general rules concerning conduct in examinations and specific rules applying to materials that can be brought into the examination. Check with your module tutor to see if, for example, the

examination is closed-book or open-book. For the latter, you may be allowed to consult specified printed materials. Mobile phones are prohibited in examination rooms.

How are assignments graded and what constitutes 'passing' an assignment?

Assignments are graded in percentages and a 'pass mark' for an undergraduate assignment is 40% or above. (For Masters modules, the pass mark is 50% or above.) Assignments are normally marked and graded by your module tutor.

Assignments are marked against defined assessment criteria (analysis, application, presentation, etc.) and grading against each criterion will be in line with general 'grade descriptors'. These grade descriptors are included in a grid contained in the assessment forms for your course.

Please note: There are some elements within modules (for example, recording placement hours), which will be marked on a Pass/Fail basis only and these elements will not carry an individual % mark.

What are 'credits', 'stages' and 'levels'?

Each module has a designated number of 'credits'. These credits constitute the 'weight' of the module. Most of your modules will be weighted with 15 or 20 credits, but some may be weighted with 30 or even 40 credits. Students need to 'pass' a module in order to gain the credits allocated to it. This means passing all of the assignment work associated with the module, but an aggregate mark may be sufficient. In order to be sure about the criterion for passing a module, you should read the module guide and check with the module tutor. Note that marks above a 'pass' do not affect the award of credit (though, beyond your first year of study, they do determine the award classification).

'Levels' are an expression of the intellectual demands or skills required at different 'Stages' of study. As a general rule your first year of study will be at Level 4; your second year will be at level 5; and, for BA/BSc (Hons) students, your third and final year of study will be at Level 6. (Note that formally Levels 4, 5 and 6 are sometimes called level C, I and H respectively.) Masters qualifications are at Level 7.

For HNC/D students please refer to Pearson regulations on the UCC website.

How many credits do I need to Pass my award?

Normally students will attain 360 credits for a BA (Hons) or BSc (Hons) award, and 240 credits for the award of a Foundation Degree. Masters degree require that 180 level 7 credits are passed. However, there is the possibility for students' work to be 'condoned' for some modules where a pass mark has not been attained. Please consult the Rules of Assessment of the validating university for details.

How do I successfully progress?

Your progress on your programme of study is closely monitored. It will not normally be possible for you to progress from one year of study to the next unless you have 'passed' all of the modules in a year (or, where applicable, received condonement) and your attendance has been acceptable.

At the end of Semester One, a Progress Board will convene to consider students' achievement. If the Progress Board deems that you have made 'unsatisfactory progress', your progression into the second semester is at risk, and you may be asked to attend a Colchester Institute Progress Board to explain your lack of progress. When considered necessary, the Progress Board will put support mechanisms in place that will help ensure that your progress improves.

What are 'degree classifications'?

Students studying on FdA/FdSc, BA/BSc (Hons) or Masters programmes will have their awarded degree classified according to the grades that they have received in the programme of study. Students studying on Foundation Degree programmes and on Masters programmes can gain a 'merit' or a 'distinction' in their award. BA/BSc (Hons) programmes, the classifications are: First Class, Upper Second Class, Lower Second Class, and Third. Decisions on the classification of a degree are made by an Examination Board according to a set means of calculation. Students should consult the 'Rules of Assessment' (on the Student Portal and in final section of this handbook) for details of the calculations that are relevant to your programme and your year of study.

HNC/D students can gain a 'merit' or 'distinction' in their award. HNC/D students are advised to read their rules of assessment for full details.

How do I receive records of my results?

Marks and feedback will be released to you using the ATS2 system, you will receive an email each time work has been marked and feedback is ready for you to collect. At the end of the academic year, once marks have been ratified by an Examination Board, you will receive a letter with your results for the year. In the case of a final year student you will receive an academic transcript at this point.

If I'm doing my own research, do I need to gain permission?

Colchester Institute will not allow 'unethical' research to procedure. In order to ensure that your research is ethical, it is necessary for you to submit a 'research ethics form' (form RE1) before embarking on your research. Your tutor will be able to supply you with this for (or, alternatively, a copy can be found on the UCC Student Portal). Once completed, follow the submission instructions printed on the form.

SECTION 3 - Possible Problems

What happens if I am ill, or other circumstances prevent me from completing assignment work on time?

If illness or other relevant circumstances prevent you from handing-in your assignment work on time, you will need to follow the correct procedure, or otherwise you will be penalised. It is required that students complete an [Extenuating Circumstances and Late Submission of Coursework Form](#) which is available on the Portal. The form must be returned to the UCC Academic Services office by the deadline date. Students who do not submit a form in advance will not be able to appeal later against the decision of an Examination Board.

What happens if I do complete my assignment work, but I feel that ill health or other circumstances have prevented me from performing to my full capability?

After completing an assignment or examination paper, you may feel that extenuating circumstances have prevented you from performing to your full capability, and you may wish University Centre Colchester to be aware of this. 'Extenuating circumstances' are formally defined as "circumstances beyond a student's control which could cause him or her to perform less well in coursework or examinations that he or she might otherwise have been expected to do and which affect the student for a significant period of time".

Extenuating circumstances will be considered ONLY if they are reported using the required procedure. Students who wish to report extenuating circumstances must complete an [Extenuating Circumstances and Late Submission of Coursework Form](#) which is available on the Portal. There are guidelines to accompany the extenuating circumstances form on the UCC website and these explain what kind of documentation you need to support your claim. The form must be returned to the UCC Academic Services office by the deadline date. Students who do not submit a form in advance will not be able to appeal later against the decision of an Examination Board.

What happens if I 'fail' an assignment or an examination paper?

Your overall grade for a module is normally calculated by means of an aggregation of your marks for each of the various modular assignments or 'elements of assessment'. If you fail an element of assessment (i.e. gain a mark of less than 40% on an undergraduate assignment, or 50% on a postgraduate assignment), and this brings your aggregated modular mark down below the pass mark you will normally be required to resubmit the assignment or resit the examination (though, in some cases, you may be required to pass all elements). For further information please see the rules of assessment of the validating university concerned.

What should I do if I want to appeal against an academic decision or make a complaint?

Decisions regarding ratified modular grades, progression and awards are the ultimate responsibility of the University of Essex Board of Examiners. If you want to appeal against the decision of a Board of Examiners must do so in writing on the Form of Appeal, stating fully and precisely the grounds for appeal. This form is available on the UCC Student Portal, and from the Colchester Institute main website or from the UCC Academic Services Office. To make a compliment or complaint please visit the Portal page. Appeals against the progress decision of a First or Second Year Board of Examiners must be submitted within two weeks

of the publication of results. In all other cases the appeal must be submitted within four weeks of publication of the results.

The main legitimate grounds for appeal are either:

- extenuating circumstances of which the Board of Examiners was unaware and of which the student could not reasonably have been expected to inform the Board of Examiners in advance;
- alleged procedural irregularities in the conduct of the Board of Examiners (including alleged administrative error)

Full details of the appeals and complaints procedures are found on the UCC website: <https://www.colchester.ac.uk/ucc/ucc-policies-and-procedures/>.

SECTION 4 - FINANCIAL

Where can I seek financial help and advice?

Colchester Institute has a number of staff available for confidential appointments to discuss your individual financial difficulties and can give advice about the sources of Financial Support that may be available to you. Please contact the UCC Senior Academic Services Officer for confidential advice.

What should I do if I need access to council tax certificates or information for benefits agencies or Student Loan Company queries?

If you are an enrolled student and require a Council Tax Certificate you will be asked to show a valid student identity card at the Registry counter and a certificate will be printed for you.

If you require details to be supplied to a third party please call in at the Registry Office, and ask for a 'Permission for the disclosure of Information' form. Once this has been completed and returned, a letter will be written to meet the requested criteria.

SECTION 5 - INTERMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL

What should I do if I need to withdraw from my studies?

If you wish to permanently withdraw from your studies at University Centre Colchester, you are required to notify your Head of School, giving the intended date and the reasons for withdrawal. Withdrawing students should complete a Withdrawal Form (which can be downloaded from the UCC Student Portal.) and send it to the relevant Head of School; preferably prior to withdrawal, but otherwise within a two weeks period subsequent to their last day of attendance. Section 6 of the UCC Regulations and Procedures provides full details of the withdrawal process. Please note that once a student has withdrawn from registration at University Centre Colchester, **he/she must inform the Student Loan Company** that they have withdrawn.

What should I do if I want to take time out from my studies?

If you need to withdraw temporarily during the course of a scheme of study, with a view to returning at a later date, it is possible to do so. There are regulations governing such 'intermission' and applicants must make written application to the relevant Head of School, providing acceptable reasons for their request. Section 6 of the Regulations and Procedures provides full details of the intermission process. The Intermission Form can be downloaded from the UCC Student Portal.