Online learning and assessment

Frequently Asked Questions

Glasgow Caledonian University

University for the Common Good

GCU fully understands that many staff, as well as students, will be anxious at this time and have other competing priorities in their life. The University is here to provide you with help and advice where possible. Please visit our web page on who to contact both at GCU and in the wider community for support and advice.

Staff are reminded to keep in touch with their colleagues and line manager and to seek help whenever they need it.

For Guidance on providing online learning, online delivery, tools to support online delivery and top tips for online learning – go to the new Learning and Teaching Sharepoint.

Online training will continue to be offered to support Microsoft Teams, GCU Padlet, working remotely and collaboratively with OneDrive, and training on editing, enhancing and managing images. Details on accessing these online webinars is available in the weekly Online Training Schedule on the Learning and Teaching Sharepoint.

Online staff learning and teaching forum – for discussion around our challenges and issues, and for sharing your ideas and solutions on the new online community forum for teachers in GCULearn. On the GCU landing page, under My Communities, look for the Learning and Teaching Forum and select to open.

Text in red denotes a recent update.

Examination and Assessment scheduling

1. **Q. Are students expected to submit planned course work?**
    A. Yes, students have been advised to submit coursework assessments as per normal processes, unless they have no access to wifi or a computer. Students in these circumstances have been asked to alert their programme and or module leaders. If students have coursework due in now or in the next few weeks, they should go ahead and submit as normal through the usual channels. Students have been advised to check GCULearn on a regular basis for any assessment updates from Module Leaders.

2. **Q. Will the set assessment/submission deadlines be altered for coursework currently due in?**
    A. Yes, recognising this unprecedented situation will create challenges for all students and staff. All current coursework deadlines have been extended by one week from the original submission date published in the student handbook. Where a local extension had already been intimated to students prior to the University announcement, it is not anticipated that the University announcement would add to the first extension. In addition, Module teams should agree deadlines for alternative assessments and online submissions.

3. **Q. In addition to the one-week extension given to all students, can I grant a further extension?**
    A. Yes, in these unprecedented times, students may have experienced COVID-19 or other issues, just at the final stage of completing their assessment and a further extension would allow them to complete. Module Leaders can, in these circumstances, grant extensions of up to two weeks to help facilitate individual students completing this trimester. Should a Module Leader wish to give an additional one-week extension (in addition to the blank one-week extension) to the entire cohort, the Module Leader should discuss with Programme Leaders and the Programme Team.

4. **Q. I understand all coursework assignments have been given a one-week extension, but if a student wishes to submit on or before the original deadline, should I facilitate this?**
    A. Yes, please set up your submission box to run from before the original deadline (as currently) to the new one-week later submission deadline, to allow students to submit as soon as they are ready.

5. **Q. Will Tri B formal examinations go ahead for Levels 1 and 2 students?**
    A. No, the University, in line with others in the sector, has decided to cancel all formal examinations for Level 1 and 2 students unless the examination is a requirement for registration with Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Body (PRSB). Module teams

will offer an alternative assessment if the proposed assessment would meet PRSB requirements. Students are being advised that they will be asked to sit this alternative in the assessment period as planned. Where no alternative is acceptable to PRSB students have been informed, the examination will be scheduled for a period when the campus is open. Module Leaders should inform students via GCULearn whether their examination falls within the PRSB category and if an alternative or rescheduled current examination is being delivered.

6. **Q. What if my Level 1 or Level 2 module only had a single formal examination as the assessment, what should I do?**

   A. Where a level 1 or 2 module is only assessed by a single formal exam, this should be replaced (subject to conditions relating to PRSB above) with an online alternative assessment. Module Leaders should provide details to students via GCULearn.

7. **Q. If first and second-year students do not sit their formal examinations, are we stopping them progressing?**

   A. No, we will make a judgement on the student passing or failing the module based on the assessment they have already completed. Module teams should consider whether or not additional learning sessions are necessary to ensure all learning outcomes have been met and should look at when these would be delivered in future years. Should a student fail the module based on the assessment already submitted, they will be required to retake the assessment as per normal practice.

8. **Q. What if my student is a Level 2, 3 or 4 student and is carrying a level 1 or 2 formal exam and is due to resit in Tri B?**

   A. In these exceptional circumstances, they will not be expected to retake this component, no matter what attempt the student is on, as all Tri B formal examinations have been cancelled for Levels 1 and 2 modules unless required by a Professional, Regulatory or Statutory body. Other forms of assessment will go ahead as planned eg coursework.

   As with others taking a Level 1 or 2 module exam in TriB, the student's overall module decision will be based on assessment components already considered or already due for submission, and a pass/fail for the module will be given.

9. **Q. Will I continue to run class tests?**

   A. You may choose to stop class tests, practical lab tests etc where it is not possible to run these assessments online. You may retain them if you feel these can be delivered online. You may wish to consult with your School Learning Technologist in making this decision. Please inform students via the announcements page of your module on GCULearn what you plan to do.

Assessments: Levels 3, 4 and Masters/ Taught Doctorate

10. **Q. Are students being expected to submit course work as planned?**

    A. Yes, all course work should be submitted in the usual way.

11. **Q. Have Level 3, 4 and M students formal examinations for Tri B been cancelled?**

    A. As previously intimated, formal centrally timetabled examinations scheduled for the assessment period will not go ahead. Module teams a have been asked to design an alternative which can be undertaken while students and staff are off campus eg online examination, open book through the VLE (GCULearn), coursework etc.

    Students will be required to complete the alternative assessment unless the centrally timetabled examination currently scheduled is a requirement for registration with the Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Body. Where this is the case, and no alternative is acceptable to the PSB, the examination will be rescheduled for a period when the campus is open. Staff are asked to notify students via GCULearn if their examination is going to remain outstanding until the campus reopens, to meet PSB requirements.

12. **Q. If I have developed an alternative assessment, should I share the details relating to this on GCULearn?**

    A. Yes, please post details of alternative assessment on GCULearn, once this has been agreed with your module team and you have alerted your Programme Leader or Head of Department, as agreed locally. Students have been advised to check their modules on GCU Learn regularly for information regarding assessment changes. Due to the exceptional circumstances, additional time to complete should be given for all modes of assessment. Additional time may vary (from, for example, twice the original exam duration to students having several days to complete) and the total duration will be as deemed appropriate for the particular type of assessment and recognising any professional body requirements. For 'open book' exams, 48 hours is recommended. For any assessments which commence on a Friday, a submission deadline of the following Monday at noon should be considered, rather than a Sunday deadline. Additional time should take into account stress and anxiety of the students, as well as design and delivery method of the assessment Module Leaders should ensure that the assessment and completion time available to students is explained for each Module on GCULearn.

13. **Q. Where I am unable to deliver labs or practical classes what should I do?**

    A. Please guide students via GCULearn to the underpinning learning you need them to undertake and use the announcements page to alert students to the fact that practical classes and or labs etc will be delivered during the catch-up period when the campus reopens.

14. Q. When will my exam-alternative online assessment take place?

A. to move the exam period back by one week, to allow staff and students more preparation time. The assessment period will now commence Friday, May 1, 2020. Please note, we have just been notified that language exams, as organised by City of Glasgow College, have been rescheduled for Thursday, April 30, 2020.

15. Q. What have students been told about open-book exams?

A. The following has been provided to students to help them understand this mode of assessment in case they have not experienced it before. ie An "open book examination" is an assessment which allows you to refer to either class notes, textbooks, or other approved sources while answering questions.

In some open book exams students are provided with the questions prior to sitting the exam and in others students can attempt the exam at home and submit their completed assessment online. If your assessment is open book it is important to check the details for the module in GCULearn, particularly the information given on time allowed to complete and the materials approved as sources.

16. Q. What if a student is unable to complete the alternative assessment?

A. If a student is unable to complete the assessment eg if they do not have access to technology, they have been advised to contact their Module Leader to inform them of the particular circumstances, which means that they are not able to complete an alternative assessment. If the University is unable to assist the student to complete, they will be scheduled to take the assessment when the campus reopens. If the circumstances are in line with our Mitigating Circumstances Policy students should be advised to complete the online MITs form.

Dissertation projects: Levels 4 Masters/Taught Doctorate

17. Q. How should I support my dissertation students?

A. You should reach out to your dissertation students and agree how and when you will be available to continue their supervision - Skype, zoom, telephone etc.

18. Q. Will students submit dissertations via Turnitin and to the current deadlines?

A. Students should be encouraged to submit online by the deadline (with the one-week blanket extension) set by the programme. Module Leaders are to ensure that the new deadline is made clear to students via GCULearn. Further extensions may be granted, as stated earlier.

19. Q. My student still hasn't collected data for a dissertation project, what will happen?

A. You should discuss with your student(s) whether an alternative desk-based project is possible, do they have enough data to use to lay out how they would analyse etc. Do you feel an extension is required or will they need to suspend until the campus is open?

20. Q. Students keep asking about placements?

A. Refer students to the placement FAQs, which should be updated in response to changes intimated to Head of Departments or programme leads by the placement provider.

Assessment regulations

21. Q. Will special consideration be needed in relation to assessment regulations and these assessment boards?

A. Yes, it is anticipated that we will need temporary amendments to the application of the regulations for these examination diets.

Assessment Feedback and Results

22. Q. Given the current situation, what if I cannot achieve the three-week turnaround for assessment marking and feedback?

A. While we will endeavour to continue to meet the three-week turnaround for assessment marking and feedback, under these unique circumstances it is recognised that this will be unlikely in some instances. As soon as staff are aware that the three-week timeline will not be met, they should inform students of this and, if at all possible, give a date when feedback will likely be provided.

23. Q. Given the situation and potential staff ill health, will there be guidance issued regarding running assessment boards?

A. Yes, guidance will be issued to staff and Assessment Board Chairs in due course. Unratified results should be returned to students as soon as the marking of their assignments has been completed as per normal practice. It is likely, however, that due to extensions to deadlines already stated, the current deadline of June 11 for communicating all formal results is unlikely to be met.

It is anticipated that quoracy requirements for Assessment Boards will be amended, and Assessment Board Chairs and programme teams will have flexibility in scheduling Boards.

Should there be any changes required to timescales, students should be notified via your programme team. Further information and guidance will be issued in due course.

Mitigating Circumstances ("MITs")

24. **Q.** Will there be any changes to Mitigating Circumstances for this trimester?

A. Yes, in light of current circumstances, the University will be updating the Mitigating Circumstances (MITs) process for this trimester. We are in the final stages of introducing a streamlined process and online form for Mitigating Circumstances and details will be provided shortly.

Students should not use the MITs process to acknowledge the disruption caused by COVID-19. We will take this into account for all students. Extensions to assessment deadlines should be granted where appropriate by the module or programme leader as per normal practice.

If a student wishes to apply for MITs, there will be an online form with an impact statement to complete. Students will not be required to submit evidence this trimester, but will provide an impact statement. Progression and Award Boards will be asked to take the extra ordinary circumstances into account when considering marks and progression/award decisions and have the necessary academic judgement available when considering final award levels and preserving attempts for any resubmissions required.

Further details on the revised MITs process will be provided shortly.

Catch-up Period

25. **Q.** What if students cannot engage with my module over the remainder of the teaching period for Tri B?

A. In order to support students who, for whatever reason, have been unable to engage with teaching being delivered online, module teams will need to consider what material would be covered in a catch-up period once the campus has reopened. Information on 'catch up' should be provided by module teams and will be developed locally to meet programme and module-specific needs.

The catch-up period will also be used where specific areas of teaching cannot be delivered online eg labs or practical classes. Discussions across the University and within Schools regarding 'catch-up' period(s) are continuing, recognising that at this time when the campus may reopen is unknown. Further information will be provided when available.

Online learning

26. **Q.** When should I plan to deliver teaching online?

A. Staff and students should stick to the timetabled slots they have been issued for Trimester B as this will ensure there are no clashes with other 'classes'. Module tutors should endeavor to use these slots to deliver teaching or facilitate a discussion forum, or direct students learning etc. Outside these slots, module tutors will also be able to respond to student questions through discussion board, using other technologies or by email.

27. **Q.** What if students cannot engage with my module over the remainder of the teaching period for Tri B?

A. In order to support students who, for whatever reason, have been unable to engage with teaching being delivered online, module teams will need to consider what material would be covered in a catch-up period once the campus has reopened. Information on 'catch up' should be provided by module teams and will be developed locally to meet programme and module-specific needs. The catch-up period will also be used where specific areas of teaching cannot be delivered online eg labs or practical classes.

28. **Q.** How can I communicate with my students?

A. The GCULearn Announcements function and email function can be used to maintain regular communication. Each week, you should issue clear guidance on the work required for each module using GCULearn Announcement and email. You should include the timeframes for work students should complete and information on where in the module site students can access the relevant materials. Try to reduce these guidance communications to one per week for each module (being mindful of email overload for students). Students have been asked to check the module announcements every day, so that they keep up to date with module information and guidance here.

29. **Q.** Have students been given any information regarding learning on line?

A. Yes, the student FAQs gives students some guidance on engaging with learning on line and where to find additional help and resources.

Difficulty in delivering online module content

30. **Q.** What will I do if my module or part of my module cannot be delivered online?

A. Working with your programme leader, you will need to plan what and how material will be delivered in a catch-up period once the campus reopens.

31. Q. Where I am unable to deliver labs or practical classes, what should I do?

   A. Please guide students via GCULearn to the underpinning learning you need them to undertake and use the announcements page to alert students to the fact that practical classes and or labs etc will be delivered during the catch-up period when the campus reopens.

32. Q. What do I do if I become ill?

   A. Your Head of Department/line manager will be able to advise you on local processes. The central hub for all staff information related to Coronavirus is Caledonian Connected or the Coronavirus information page on the GCU website.

Learning catch-up period

33. Q. What if students cannot engage with my module over the remainder of the teaching period for Tri B?

   A. In order to support students who, for whatever reason, have been unable to engage with teaching being delivered online, module teams will need to consider what material would be covered in a catch-up period once the campus has reopened.

   Information on 'catch up' should be provided by module teams and will be developed locally to meet programme and module-specific needs. The catch up period will also be used where specific areas of teaching cannot be delivered online e.g. labs or practical classes. Discussions across the University and within Schools regarding 'catch-up' period(s) are continuing recognising that at this time when the campus may reopen is unknown. Further information will be provided when available.

Contact

34. Q. What should I do to keep in touch with my team?

   A. Supporting each other and keeping in touch through these times will be important for us all. You could use email, phone, Skype with video or audio only, or any of the tools noted below. It is advisable to check what plans are in place locally for your team to support and communicate with each other. Your Head of Department/line manager can advise on local arrangements.

35. Q. How do I access information related to how to deliver online learning and teaching?

   A. There are dedicated resources available on GCULearn by accessing the Staff Help tab. Additionally, there are resources available through a new Learning and Teaching Sharepoint site, which Academic Development have set up and will be further developing.

   This is available here: https://www.connected.gcu.ac.uk/sites/AcademicDevelopment

The GCU Academic Development Blog will also share tips and share resources in due course, and you can follow it on Twitter (@GCUAcadDev) where we share resources on an ongoing basis.

36. Q. What are the minimum expectations related to the online teaching that I will provide?

   A. As a minimum, teaching staff are asked to ensure all teaching materials, handbooks, reading lists etc are in GCULearn and guidance for students on learning outcomes and what is expected of them on a week-to-week basis. Scheduled timetabled slots should be used to engage with students and deliver teaching material. Outside these slots, students may post questions or raise points for discussion, which you can answer through GCULearn or by using other technologies.

37. Q. How regularly should I be available online?

   A. You should set 'office hours' for your availability. Set these out clearly for students. This will not only give them clarity of when you will be available, but importantly will help you to protect times for breaks that are important for your own wellbeing.

38. Q. How do I get quick tips on managing my online teaching?

   A. There is a section titled 'GCULearn Quick Start' within the Staff Help tab on GCULearn. In this area, you can find links to videos and other resources that can help you manage your online teaching. The Learning and Teaching Sharepoint site has many resources and tips also.

39. Q. What is a discussion board and how do I use it?

   A. Online discussions provide many and unique benefits. Students can take time to reflect and post their ideas for sharing. You can observe as students demonstrate their grasp of the material and correct misconceptions and provide feedback. Further information about Blackboard Collaborate including how to use it, can be found in the Staff Help tab of GCULearn. There is guidance on the Staff Help Tab on GCU Learn. In addition, we have made a short recording that covers the basics of using CollaborateUltra. There is detailed guidance available on the Learning and Teaching Sharepoint site: https://www.connected.gcu.ac.uk/sites/AcademicDevelopment

40. Q. What is Blackboard Collaborate for and how do I use it?

   A. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra is a real-time video conferencing tool that lets you add file, share applications, create online polls, group breakout rooms, real-time chat facility and use a virtual whiteboard to interact. All sessions can be recorded and accessed at any time after the event has concluded. Collaborate can be accessed in a web browser, so users don't have to install any software to join a session and the links for access are already setup in each GCULearn module. Further information about Blackboard Collaborate including how to use it, can be found in the Staff Help tab of GCULearn.

There is guidance on the Staff Help Tab on GCU Learn. In addition, we have made a short recording that covers the basics of using CollaborateUltra.

41. **Q. How can I use PowerPoint for online delivery?**

A. You can use your PowerPoint slides in a number of ways. Some examples include:
- Narrating an audio accompaniment, creating a set of written notes to support content within the slides, and making these available as resources for your students to access at their own pace.
- Sharing PowerPoint slides as part of a Collaborate Ultra session.

Information on how to create a narration to accompany your PowerPoint slides, and how to share content using Collaborate Ultra is available in the Staff Help tab of GCULearn. Additional online training sessions are also being developed to provide guidance – please consult the Online Training Schedule on the Learning and Teaching Sharepoint site.

42. **Q. What is the difference between synchronous and asynchronous teaching?**

A. Synchronous teaching is delivered 'live', in real time (for example a live online lecture). Asynchronous teaching allows students to work at their own pace (for example activities posted for students to work on and contributions made, in student's own time). Given the unknown demand on the infrastructure external to the University, a combination of asynchronous and synchronous delivery should be deployed

43. **Q. What are the alternatives for assessment by group reports?**

A. You could encourage students to collate material and submit one report:
- One group member submits through Turnitin.
- Completed feedback and marking sheet can be emailed to all students in the group (including names of all group members).

If it is not possible for students to collate work and submit one report:
- A group Wiki could be used; each student uploads their own 'section'.
- Group mark and feedback provided via wiki comments.

NOTE: Module leader would have to set up groups and create a group wiki in GCULearn. If the module team are already familiar with Blackboard group assessments, then you may want to continue using this.

44. **Q. What are the alternatives for assessment by group presentations?**

A. You could encourage students to collate material and submit one file per group to Turnitin. One group member submits through Turnitin, the group PowerPoint with notes/narrative/Word document with notes/script. If you are asking students to upload a PowerPoint and a Word document as notes, then

two assessments should be created on Turnitin. Completed feedback and marking sheets can be emailed to all students in the group (including names of all group members). If the module team are already familiar with Blackboard group assessments, then you may want to continue using this. Alternatively, you could redesign as an individual reflective assignment on a groupwork assignment.

45. **Q. What are the alternatives for assessment by individual presentation?**

A. You could encourage students to collate material and submit a PowerPoint with notes/narrative/Word document with notes/script. If you are asking students to upload a PowerPoint and a Word document as notes, then two assessments should be created on Turnitin. Marking and feedback can be completed using Turnitin/email. Alternatively, you could ask students to deliver their presentation (and record this) using Collaborate Ultra. Again, marking and feedback can be completed using Turnitin/email.

46. **Q. What is the purpose of the coloured meter icons that have suddenly appeared on GCULearn?**

A. From March 23 onwards, GCULearn has an integrated feature called Blackboard Ally that helps you to gauge the accessibility level of the most common content formats. You can watch a short video about the feature here: youtube.com/watch?v=FmUTPI4sujo

All content in GCULearn will be given an accessibility rating, indicated by a coloured meter icon. By clicking on the icons you can see the accessibility rating of your files and then follow the feedback provided to make changes and improve the accessibility rating.

This is only visible to staff and will not prevent you from using GCULearn as normal. The beauty of Ally is that, at the same time as supporting you to make your content more accessible, it also enhances the student experience in terms of flexibility and inclusivity. When students access a file they will be given the option to download it in five different formats, giving them more control and personalisation over their learning experience. If you want more information about Ally, speak to your learning technologist in the first instance. You can also access more information including fact sheets and guidance via the Delivering Digital Accessibility site available at connected.gcu.ac.uk/sites/DDA

Placements

47. **Q. Students keep asking about placements?**

A. Refer students to the placement FAQs which should be updated in response to changes intimated to Head of Departments or programme leads by the placement provider.

Equipment

48. Q. What do I do if a student tells me they have no access to a computer and or wifi ?

A. GCULearn can be accessed through a mobile phone if the student has a mobile phone. The University has a limited number of laptops, which can be loaned to students in need. Dongles are also available where a student may not have stable wifi access. Whilst we cannot guarantee we will be able to provide equipment for every student who requests it, please contact scholarships@gcu.ac.uk for further information and advice.

Help

49. Q. Are there any resources available to help me with remote/ online learning?

A. Yes, Academic Development and School teams have collated an expanded range of resources to help staff and have located them in a single Learning and Teaching Sharepoint site for ease of access by staff https://www.connected.gcu.ac.uk/sites/AcademicDevelopment

50. Q. What support is available to students while we are delivering remotely?

A. Student Support Services at the University will be operating remotely. The Students Association are also running a series of keeping in touch events to support students.

51. Q. Should I contact my tutees over this period?

A. Yes, personal tutors should reach out to their tutees and maintain contact with them over this period.

52. Q. How should I support my dissertation students?

A. You should reach out to your dissertation students and agree how and when you will be available to continue their supervision - Skype, zoom, telephone etc.

Students with disabilities

53. Q. Will disabled students be able to continue to access support and is there anything else I should be considering?

A. The Disability Team is available remotely and can be accessed via the contact details online. Students with a disability have been advised of this. Module leaders should review any RAPs for students with a disability on your module to consider whether any additional support might be required for learning and assessment. The Disability Team and your school disability lead can also advise. Staff are reminded to refer students to the help that is available to all students at the Help tab in Blackboard, and that Blackboard Ally helps students make content more accessible to their needs.

The links to RAP "look ups" are as follows
• RAP look up – my students (for all modules you are attached to)
• RAP look up – by module code
• RAP look up – by individual student ID

There is also a further guidance including a video on this webpage. A top tips on accessible and inclusive online assessment has been circulated to HoDs and is also available on the Learning and Teaching Sharepoint

Campus Access

54. Q. Will any part of the campus be open during this period of remote working?

A. In line with Government direction, the campus (including the Learning Café, on the ground floor of the CEE building) is currently closed until further notice.