

**MANUAL OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS  
AND PROCEDURES 2023-24**

**INTRODUCTION**

**(APPLICABLE FROM OCTOBER 2023)**

Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct

Student and Education Services

MARP 2023-24

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## **MANUAL OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES (MARP)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **SCOPE OF MARP**

The Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures (MARP) contains the University's academic regulations, policies and procedures. These are designed to help assure the quality and standards of the University's awards and programmes and the student academic experience. Non-academic policies, regulations and procedures are published elsewhere on the University's website.

MARP applies to all categories of student, all academic programmes, and all types of award (teaching partnerships may require separate or varied regulations). It covers the following range of awards validated by the University, including those delivered on a collaborative teaching basis with partner institutions:

- (a) undergraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates (including foundation degrees)
- (b) postgraduate taught degrees, diplomas and certificates
- (c) postgraduate research degrees.

[MARP](#) is divided into separate sets of regulations, and quality assurance and enhancement processes:

- [Introduction to the Manual](#)
- [Portfolio of Awards](#)
- [Admissions](#)
- [Recognition of Prior Learning](#)
- [Study Regulations](#)
- [General Regulations for Assessment and Award](#)
- [Undergraduate Assessment Regulations](#)
- [Medical Degree Assessment Regulations](#)
- [Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations](#)
- [Postgraduate Research Regulations](#)
- [Academic Integrity Regulations and Procedures](#)
- [External Examiner Procedures for Taught Programmes](#)
- [Academic Appeals](#)
- [Management of Standards and Quality](#)
- [Course Design, Development and Approval](#)
- For Course Evaluation & Review, please see the [relevant section of the AQSC website](#).
- [Collaborative Teaching Partnership Provision](#)

#### **STATUS OF MARP AND COMPLIANCE**

The autonomy of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with degree awarding powers is enshrined in legislation, and mediated by external regulations, codes of practice and guidelines. Lancaster University regulations and procedures, including those contained in MARP, are therefore informed by, and comply and align with, the following:

- (a) principles of good practice, including those in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#);

- (b) national legislation, including advice provided by the [Competitions and Markets Authority \(CMA\)](#);
- (c) the English higher education regulator, the [Office for Students](#) and its conditions of registration, and other relevant government bodies and agencies;
- (d) professional, statutory and regulatory body ([PSRB](#)) requirements.

The University's policy on compliance with the CMA guidance on consumer law as it relates to higher education students is [published on the web](#).

MARP must be complied with at institutional, faculty, departmental and individual levels. Where there is any flexibility in the implementation of a regulation or procedure, this will be indicated within, or be apparent from, the text, and the procedures for approving any variation will be stated. Failure to comply with MARP may:

- (a) put the University at unacceptable risk;
- (b) significantly threaten the quality and standards of University programmes and awards;
- (c) run counter to principles of natural justice;
- (d) breach legislation; or
- (e) jeopardise the quality of the student experience.

## LOCAL PROCEDURES

Working procedures may be devised and implemented at local level by professional services units, faculties, departments, institutes, and colleges. Where these pertain to academic matters, such local procedures must be consistent with the overarching regulations and principles as described in MARP.

## SENATE SCHEDULE OF DELEGATIONS

In certain places MARP contains references to decisions taken by "the body or officer/s with delegated authority from Senate". The [Senate Schedule of Delegations](#) details the body or officer with delegated authority to approve specific matters on behalf of Senate.

## MAINTENANCE AND REVIEW OF MARP

The [Academic Standards and Quality Committee \(ASQC\)](#) has oversight of MARP and is responsible, on behalf of [Education Committee](#), for the development, implementation and review of institution-wide quality assurance policies, and procedures. ASQC is also responsible for the approval of the University's academic regulations governing all taught and research programmes leading to Lancaster University awards, whether delivered in Lancaster or elsewhere. The Standing Committee on Academic Regulations (SCAR) is a sub-committee of ASQC and is responsible for the detailed consideration of proposals for new and revised regulations, making recommendations to ASQC as appropriate.

A designated administrative officer (currently the Head of Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct) is responsible for ensuring that MARP is updated annually, that it reflects any approved changes, and

that it continues to meet the requirement that MARP is accurate, fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Significant new regulations, policies and procedures are generally reviewed after one operational year and thereafter at regular intervals to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. In addition, on occasion, a major development or project undertaken by the University may result in a requirement to review and amend associated regulations, policies and procedures contained in MARP, with SCAR making recommendations to ASQC on any such amendments.

#### **APPLICATION OF MARP TO APPLICANTS AND STUDENTS**

MARP is published on an annual basis and the regulations and procedures contained in it apply to **all** students currently registered with the University, or with a collaborative teaching partner (CTP) where the programme of study leads to an award of the University. Where approved changes to the regulations are applicable only to new cohorts entering the programme this will be indicated at the appropriate point in the regulations. Changes which may be disadvantageous to students will not normally be implemented for existing students - see further information in the Academic Regulations Management Protocol (attached). The **Academic Regulations Management Protocol** provides details of how approved changes apply to applicants and registered students.

## ACADEMIC REGULATIONS MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

This protocol covers the University's standard academic regulations for programmes of study and regulations for specific programmes of study which are approved variations to the standard regulations. Changes to the University's academic regulations are approved by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) on behalf of Education Committee. Programme-specific regulations are approved as part of the programme approval process for new and amended programmes.

### VERSIONS OF MARP: NAMING, PUBLICATION AND ARCHIVING

1. MARP is updated and re-published on an annual basis on 1 September. Publication is via the University web site. For the sake of the integrity of the regulations, there is one published version of MARP only (called the "Current Version"). All previous versions (called "Annual Versions") are unpublished. The "Current Version" applies to the academic year which typically starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October each year.
2. Each Annual Version is named and archived according to the academic year for which it was published; on 31 August each year the Current Version reverts to its annual publication reference (e.g. "MARP 2019-20"). The Annual Versions are archived and held by Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct on behalf of the University.

### APPLICATION OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS: APPLICANTS AND STUDENTS

3. The Current Version of MARP forms part of the contractual relationship between the University and:
  - a) all students currently registered with the University, irrespective of year of course, year of entry and their registration status;
  - b) all applicants who have accepted a formal offer of a place by the University (and are therefore potential students).
4. The University formally enters into a contract with an **applicant** from the point at which an applicant accepts an offer of a place at the University. The University's academic regulations contained in MARP and published on the web at the time of acceptance of offer form a part of this contract.
5. The regulations applicable to **students** will be those published at the time of registration onto the programme. These regulations are the Current Version.

6. Normally, new or amended academic regulations are applied to the next and subsequent cohorts of students<sup>1</sup> entering the programme and not to currently registered students. **Exceptionally**, changes may be applied to current students (whether to all current students or to a particular cohort of current students) where:
- a) they are deemed to be to the advantage of students and where not to apply them would be manifestly unfair;
  - b) they are required for the purposes of continuing PSRB accreditation for the programme;
  - c) not making an amendment could be deemed to threaten the standards of the University's award(s).

**Amended regulations that are applicable to different cohorts of students are differentiated within MARP at the appropriate place.<sup>2</sup>**

#### AMENDMENTS TO THE ACADEMIC REGULATIONS – RELATED PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

7. Amendments may be made to MARP which impact on applicants between the offer and registration stage, and which represent a change to the University's terms and conditions and therefore the contract with the applicant. In accordance with the CMA guidance on consumer law in relation to Higher Education,<sup>3</sup> the University will inform applicants of any significant changes to the academic regulations since they first applied.
8. Irrespective of when a new/amended academic regulation is introduced, current students are consulted on any significant amendments through the student representation on the relevant University committees.
9. The application of new/amended regulations to particular cohorts of students will be agreed as part of the approval process for the change.
10. Notwithstanding paragraph 7 above, wherever possible, applicants should be provided with the version of the academic regulations which will be in place when they enter the programme. New/amended academic regulations should then have been approved by 1 September in the year prior to them taking effect (e.g. by 1 September 2020 for introduction from October 2021).

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<sup>1</sup> 'Cohorts' here also refers to all postgraduate research students entering in a particular academic year irrespective of the month of entry.

<sup>2</sup> Separate regulations applying to different cohorts will be removed from MARP as and when the differentiation between cohorts has been worked through in terms of students' progression through the programme.

<sup>3</sup> Competition & Markets Authority. [Higher Education Providers: Consumer Law](#).

## PAST VERSIONS OF MARP

11. While a student is registered with the University, the Current Version of MARP published on the Lancaster University website will apply as this will always reflect the regulations applicable to them regardless of year of entry, including any regulations which apply only to specific cohorts. For students who have graduated, the Annual Version of MARP applicable at the point of graduation should be referenced. This will reflect the regulations applicable to them over the course of their registration with the University. Annual Versions are available from Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct on request. **Note:** For postgraduate taught students, where exam boards typically take place outside of the academic year in which students completed their final assessment for the award, the version of the Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations which were published in that academic year will apply (and will remain on the MARP website for the Michaelmas Term for reference).

## SUMMARY OF TIMINGS AND REQUIREMENTS

12. The attached table provides a summary of this protocol in table format for ease of reference.



## ACADEMIC REGULATIONS MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

### SUMMARY OF TIMINGS AND REQUIREMENTS

Applicant/Student stage	Version of MARP which applies	Relevant period	Amendments to the regulations	Notes
Applicants – pre-offer stage	Current Version as published on the University’s web site. <b>MARP is available for information.</b>	Any time prior to the formal offer being made.	The University may change the regulations without any impact on its relationship with the applicant and without informing applicants at the pre-offer stage. <u>However</u> , the University may wish to inform these applicants of any substantive changes which may influence their choice of programme/institution.	There is no formal contract with the applicant at this stage.  MARP is part of a set of ‘pre-contract information’.
Applicants – at and following the offer stage	Current Version as published on the University’s web site. <b>MARP has a contractual status for these applicants.</b>	1 September onwards in the year prior to entry, e.g. September 2020 for 2021-22 entry.	Applicants who have been made an offer must be informed of any substantive amendments made to the academic regulations since the point of offer	1 September is the earliest potential point at which offers may be made for entry in the following academic year. Once an applicant has accepted an offer, the University has entered into a contractual relationship with the applicant.

Applicant/Student stage	Version of MARP which applies	Relevant period	Amendments to the regulations	Notes
Registration stage	Current Version as published on the University's web site. <b>MARP has a contractual status for these new students.</b>	At the point of entry to the University, when the student registers on the programme of study and explicitly signs to confirm that they accept the rules and regulations of the University	Amendments to the regulations will not be made to the version of MARP published on 1 September except in exceptional circumstances.	<u>Exceptionally</u> , amendments to the regulations may be made where: a) they are deemed to be to the advantage of students and where not to apply them would be manifestly unfair; b) they are required for the purposes of continuing PSRB accreditation for the programme; c) not making an amendment would be deemed to threaten the standards of the University's award(s).
Study stage	Current Version as published on the University's web site. <b>MARP has a contractual status for these students.</b>	Maximum period of study permitted for the programme	Amendments may not be made except in exceptional circumstances.	Ditto as above for Registration stage
Post-study	The Annual Version of MARP in place for the academic year of study in which the student graduated. This Annual Version is available for reference purposes.	Following completion of study		The Annual Version at the point of graduation would reflect the regulations as they were applied to the student throughout their period of study. Any changes made over this period which are applicable to different cohorts are differentiated within the Annual Version.