

COVID Mitigations for BDS:

QMUL announced a set of University Covid Mitigations in early February 2021 for assessments in the 2020-21 academic year. However, some of these were not directly applicable to the BDS programme. Barts and The London Students' Association, the Dental School, QMSU and QMUL have therefore been in discussions to develop a set of fair Covid mitigations for BDS students that satisfy professional standard and external regulator needs whilst also allowing for mitigation against the impact of the pandemic on students throughout the 2020-21 academic year. Below are the mitigations agreed so far. These measures apply in the **2020-21 academic year only**.

1. Assessment design and delivery:

1.1. All written examinations and assignments are online. Examinations will be 24 hour open book assessments. Assignments will be open for longer to allow the students to complete their work around their ongoing programme

1.2. Coursework deadlines: as per [QMUL Covid Mitigations policy](#), there will be more **flexibility for coursework deadlines where appropriate**. Many deadlines have already been extended in light of Covid but students should **submit extenuating circumstances for an extension if needed** (e.g. for SSCs or essays).

1.3. Written exams:

1.3.1. BDS Y1-4. If it is not reasonable to expect a topic to have been covered this year in light of the pandemic, it will not be included in the exam. However, all core content should have been covered in lecture or case -based teaching.

1.3.2. For BDS Y5, all core topics for competency will be included. Questions on such topics will be written to take account of how students' experiences have altered on account of the pandemic.

1.3.3. As is usually the case, for any question where a significant proportion of students struggled, the examination board will reassess such questions to see if they were appropriate in light of what students were taught and would have reasonably experienced in the past year. If a question is then deemed unreasonable it will be removed from the exam.

1.4. OSCE:

1.4.1. The OSCE in BDS Y2, 3 and 4 will be adjusted to reflect the student experience in light of the pandemic. This will not compromise our ability to confirm to the GDC that our students have achieved the required competencies because there will be opportunity to demonstrate the appropriate skills throughout the remainder of their programme.

1.4.2. A **list of topics that can be assessed will be sent to students in advance** so they know what to focus on. This list will be released no later than 2 weeks before the date of your OSCE. We intend that this practice will be for this academic year only.

1.4.3. All stations will be counted in the OSCE in order to calculate your grade for passing and 50% overall will be needed to pass.

1.5. Structured Clinical Reasoning / Unseen Cases:

1.5.1. These will be timed examinations delivered online

1.5.2. Students will have time to review the case immediately before entering their viva

1.5.3. The cases will be adjusted to reflect the student experience whilst maintaining the need to demonstrate that the student is safe to practise.

2. Extenuating Circumstances:

This section comes from the QMUL Covid Mitigations policy and has been included for reference. The **fit to sit policy will apply in the usual way** (if a student submits an assessment that assessment will count, except in rare cases where a student can show that they were unable to determine their fitness to sit). However, the E.C. policy has now been adapted (see below).

Please note **E.C.s** cannot be used to give additional marks or recognise a student's potential (as with all institutions); they are primarily a deferral mechanism, until a point where a student is in a position to undertake the assessment.

2.1. Self-certification will be expanded. There will now be **no limit** on the number of occasions on which a student can submit an **E.C. claim** for consideration **without evidence** (N.B., this is not the same as automatic approval).

2.1.1. Students will **need to submit a claim** to be considered. This will **help** with engagement and **to identify and address concerns**.

2.2. The definition of an extenuating circumstance has been temporarily expanded to recognise the effects of the pandemic on students' ability to engage in assessment. Typically, an E.C. relates to a circumstance which is both 'unforeseen and beyond a student's control'. This year, **students will also be able to submit an E.C. claim for circumstances outside their control arising from the long-term effects of the pandemic.**

2.3. We have updated the categories of E.C.'s to **ensure that sufficient account is taken of caring responsibilities, suitable study environments, and access** to the necessary **hardware/software** so that these will now be accepted as E.C.'s. Issues that have always been accepted as valid reasons for extenuating circumstances, such as domestic violence, but are (sadly) particularly likely to occur at this time, will continue to be accepted.

3. Standards and Examination Boards (applicable to all exams):

As usual, **the pass mark for exams is not set by the performance of students in the exam but by using professional Standard Setters.** The raw pass mark is therefore set in advance of the exam by standard setters and students' raw marks are adjusted accordingly before results are released. This means that **an individual's performance will not affect the pass mark or someone else's performance.**

3.1. Standard setting: The standard of the exam will be set **to reflect the teaching that has been delivered and/or the experience students will realistically have had.** Therefore questions on topics which may have been harder to cover or experience this year will have a lower pass mark than usual. That said, we are confident that all areas of required

competence have been covered and current events have only affected the balance of experience and thus of the exam.

3.2. Parts 1 – 4 Examination boards. The examination boards recognising the impact of the pandemic will assess students compassionately whilst ensuring that standards expected for registration with the GDC are maintained.

3.2.1. Results and Resits. The Part 1 – 4 examination boards recognising the impact of the pandemic, will assess students compassionately whilst ensuring that it maintains the standards expected for registration with the GDC. Someone who fails on their first sit will need to re-sit the failed exam. Failure in the 2nd sit would ordinarily lead to de-registration subject to appeal and extenuating circumstances. However if they also fail their second sit, the exam board would grant an automatic exceptional 3rd sit. The board will also review the student's individual circumstances to determine whether they should be offered the opportunity of a first take¹ in July 2022. The student would be expected to be in full attendance.

3.3. Part 5 Examination Board.

3.3.1. Results and Resits. The Part 5 exam board, recognising the impact of the pandemic, will assess students compassionately whilst ensuring that it maintains the standards expected for registration with the GDC. Someone who fails on their first sit will need to re-sit the failed exam. Failure in the 2nd sit would ordinarily lead to de-registration subject to appeal and extenuating circumstances. However if they also fail their second sit, the exam board would grant an automatic exceptional 3rd sit at the additional sitting of the examination in November / December 21 (see below). The board will also review the student's individual circumstances to determine whether they should be offered the opportunity of a first take¹ in July 2022. The student would be expected to be in full attendance.

3.3.2. Additional sitting. An additional diet of the Part 5 examination will be run in November / December 2021 for those who have insufficient experience or are not ready to sit the examination in June / July 2021. This will allow the students to gain additional experience and still be able to join the Spring 2022 Dental Foundation Training programme.

3.4. Merits and distinctions: the calculation of Merits and Distinctions will continue to be based on the overall performance in the Part.

3.5. Honours. The results for Part 4 2020 was suspended from the metric for Honours because of the first COVID lockdown. Therefore the award of Honours in 2021 will be based on the award of Distinction at the first sit of Part 5 alone provided the candidate received and merits or above in Parts 1 – 3.

¹A first take is defined in the Academic Regulations as

“The repeat of a module following failure at a previous attempt. This involves attendance and completion of all elements of the module, and submission of all assignments, whether assessed or not. First takes count towards the value of academic credit for which a student must normally be registered in an academic or developmental year. Module marks for first takes are not capped. First takes incur pro rata tuition fees.”