

## **Reduced Length of 2016/2017 Semester 1**

This paper proposes that courses running in 2016/2017 Semester 1 not schedule activities for Thursday or Friday of Week 11, to restore a full revision week before any possible exam sitting.

*Ian Stark*  
*2016-03-30*

### **Background**

Semester 1 usually lasts 14 weeks: a block of 11 teaching weeks, and then a further 3 weeks. In 2015/2016, and again in 2016/2017, this period is restricted. Semester 1 is almost a week shorter, the exam diet is compressed, and exams start on Thursday of Week 12. The “revision week” is now only 3 days.

Assistant Principal Alan Murray has asked all schools to “make every effort” to avoid scheduling teaching activity on Thursday and Friday of Week 11, thereby restoring a full week in which students are free to timetable their own revision. See Alan’s email, overleaf, for details.

Existing School policy on *Use of Semester Time and Coursework Deadlines* already means that this should be the case for almost all courses in Informatics. However, for completeness and clarity I propose that we make it a specific policy statement.

### **Proposal**

No course in the School of Informatics shall timetable any activity for Thursday 1 December 2016 or Friday 2 December 2016, Week 11 of Semester 1 in the 2016/2017 session. Any review lectures, tutorials, labs, or revision sessions that week must be scheduled Monday to Wednesday.

### **Notes**

Alan’s email suggests disregarding this for programmes in which none of the courses that students take involve examinations in Semester 1. However, I don’t believe that we have any such programmes: all of our degrees permit students to take courses from other schools, and many of those routinely place exams in Semester 1.

This proposal intentionally covers only one year. The situation in 2017/2018 is different again, and although one might imagine a conditional policy that computes permitted teaching days based on exam timing, I don’t plan to do so.

**From:** AAPS Academic Affairs <academic.services@ed.ac.uk>  
**Date:** 12 February 2016 13:39:00 GMT  
**To:** Directors of Teaching  
**Cc:** CSPC members, College contacts  
**Subject:** Academic Year Dates/Semester 1 December 2016 Revision Period

Sent on behalf of Professor Alan Murray, Assistant Principal, Academic Support and Convener of the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee

The 2016/17 semester dates will create challenges for the semester 1 December 2016 examination diet. In particular, there will be a reduced semester 1 formal student revision period (as there was in December 2015).

In line with what was previously agreed for the December 2015 revision period, Schools are asked to make every attempt to organise their provision wherever possible in order to avoid teaching activity on Thursday and Friday of week 11 in 2016 (e.g. if possible to avoid scheduling lectures, tutorials, laboratory sessions or other teaching activities on those days). For those Schools who are able to action this, it will lead to a possible revision period for students starting Thursday 1 December 2016, until the beginning of the examination diet on Thursday 8 December 2016. This will leave at least five working days free for revision.

Although this relates primarily to undergraduate provision, Schools are asked to take it into account for any postgraduate taught (PGT) provision where there were PGT students with December exams (and disregard this for programmes in which none of the UG/PGT courses that students take involve examinations in semester 1).

Semester dates 2016/17: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/semester-dates/201617>

Best wishes  
Professor Alan Murray  
Assistant Principal, Academic Support

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