

**Assessment Regulations Review: continuation of work already agreed by Senate for consistency of operation of the Regulations**

Further to the completion of the first stage of the Assessment Regulations Review during 2014/15 and discussion at the Education and Student Committee in September 2015, a sub-group reconvened to consider and prioritise the scope of the second stage of the review. The sub-group comprised Associate Deans (Education), the Academic Lead for Assessment and the Dean of Validation, and representatives from Student and Academic Services.

At the November meeting of Education and Student Committee it was agreed that Boards of Studies and the SU would be consulted on proposals relating to:

- **Rounding of marks/dealing with borderline marks (use of discretion)**
- **Compensation**
- **Resits/repeat years (following the previous consultation in 2014/15)**

The outcome of the Board of Studies and SU consultation is attached at **Appendix 1**. The sub-group is also preparing to consult with Boards of Studies on proposals relation to:

- **AP(E)L**
- **Academic misconduct**

for which a paper will be circulated to Education and Student Committee with further details.

Education and Student Committee has agreed that further work will be undertaken on the following areas to inform updates within the Regulations and associated policy and guidelines to improve clarity and consistency:

- **Late participation and extensions**
- **Panels supporting Assessment Boards**
- **Discretion on scaling of marks**
- **Module assessment components – minimum qualifying marks**

Work is continuing to

- redraft the Regulations to use more accessible language and terminology and to include a glossary of terms
- reposition policy and guidance outside of the Regulations
- review the current list of exceptions to the Regulations and include them as an Appendix of Programme Regulations
- review the Assessment Regulations against other Senate Regulation and Policy to ensure consistency and overall coherence

Education and Student Committee is asked to:

- (i) **note** the summary of Boards of Studies and SU responses to the consultation and **approve** their incorporation into the proposed revised regulations for 2016/17 approval by Senate
- (ii) **note** the other preliminary work being undertaken and the next steps.

## **Changes to the Assessment Regulations: continuation of work already agreed by Senate for consistency of operation of the Regulations**

Since the last meeting of Education and Student Committee, Boards of Studies and the SU were consulted on proposed changes to the Assessment Regulations in the areas below. A summary of the consultation responses for each School, LEaD and the SU is included at **Appendix 1**.

The consultation responses have indicated broad consensus in each area. Proposals for how they are incorporated within the revised Assessment Regulations are set out below.

### **1. Rounding of marks/dealing with borderline marks – use of discretion**

It is proposed that rounding-up should only take place at an Assessment Board and a Board should only be able to round up at one level, at the point of classification of the award where a classification falls on a borderline, within 0.5% of the boundary. The use of rounding up for borderline classifications would need to be applied consistently by the Assessment Board across the student cohort to ensure fairness and transparency, i.e. all students within 0.5% of the boundary would be rounded up.

It is proposed that rounding-up at assessment component level and/or for a module aggregate and/or at the end of a year of study (other than the final year) should not be permitted to prevent any undue inflation of marks. A student's performance in components/modules/previous year of study would not be taken into account.

### **2. Compensation**

Compensation is the award of credit for failed module(s) on account of good performance in others.

Responses to the consultation in this area suggested that if core modules could not be compensated, an additional designation of a 'compulsory' module would be required. This would be to distinguish between a module that was core to the learning outcomes and could not be compensated, and a module which needed to be taken but could be compensated. This would be similar to the current position where eligibility for compensation for a module is set out in the programme specification.

In light of broader discussions currently taking place regarding assessment, including how assessment links to learning outcomes, it is proposed the current compensation regulations are retained for 2016/17. Further work by programme teams to articulate the link between assessment tasks and learning outcomes would be undertaken through any review of assessment arising from current discussions.

### **3. Resits/Repeat Years**

#### **3.1. Resits where students have not participated at the first attempt and there are no extenuating circumstances**

It is proposed that, where a student has not participated in an assessment component or module at first attempt and does not have extenuating circumstances, a resit opportunity should be offered. Assessment Boards would no longer have the discretion not to offer a resit opportunity in these circumstances. The mark at the resit attempt would be capped.

Any exceptions (e.g. due to professional body requirements) would be subject to a rationale and approval as a separate programme regulation.

Some Boards of Studies requested that definitions of 'non-participation' and 'non-engagement' be provided to ensure consistency and it was noted that this will be addressed within the context of broader work around student support, in particular the work on personal tutoring.

### 3.2. Repeat options where there are no extenuating circumstances

It is proposed that, to support students with multiple failed assessments, an Assessment Board should be able to offer either resits or a partial repeat year. Boards of Studies recommended that Assessment Boards should have the discretion to determine whether to offer a resit opportunity or a partial repeat year based on the nature and number of assessments that had been failed. It is proposed that students should be able to opt whether to (i) take up a partial repeat year or (ii) sit the resits at the next opportunity, and consideration should be given to the year of study, financial and legal implications. Guidance would be developed to enable a consistent approach to offering partial repeats rather than resit attempts.

A student would not be able to progress to the next year of study or part of the programme until they had successfully completed the outstanding assessments.

- If a student resits modules as a second attempt during a partial repeat year, the module marks would be capped.
- If a student is permitted to repeat a whole year (re-accessing all learning and taking assessments as a first attempt) module marks would not be capped. This would normally only apply where a student had approved extenuating circumstances.

### **Next Steps**

Further to discussion by the sub-group, a paper is being prepared with regard to proposed revisions to the academic misconduct and accreditation of prior learning regulations. This will be circulated for approval by Education and Student Committee and consultation will be undertaken with Boards of Studies and the SU.

The draft updated Regulations, which will include amendments recommended by Education and Student Committee following consultation with Boards of Studies and the SU, are being prepared for consideration by the sub-group. They will be circulated to Education and Student Committee and stakeholders for feedback. It is intended that the final version will be submitted to Senate for approval in May 2016 to provide sufficient time for implementation prior to 2016/17.

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February 2016

APPENDIX 1 - Assessment Regulations Consultation November 2015/16 – Summary of Responses

	<p><b>ROUNDING OF MARKS/DEALING WITH BORDERLINE MARKS (USE OF DISCRETION)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you agree that rounding should only take place at an Assessment Board and at the point of classification unless the marks have been rounded at module level?</li> </ul>	<p><b>COMPENSATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you agree that it should not be possible to compensate modules that have been designated as core within a programme, as their core status indicates that they are integral to the programme learning outcomes being met?</li> </ul>	<p><b>RESITS/REPEAT YEARS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should students who have not participated in an assessment component or module at first attempt (and who do not have ECs) be offered a resit opportunity?</li> <li>Do you agree that               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a student who has failed both a first attempt and resit attempt should be withdrawn (and not offered a further repeat attempt) and</li> <li>any programme that wishes to offer a further repeat attempt in these circumstances would need to provide a rationale for consideration as a Programme Regulation (i.e. approved exception).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Do you agree that a student who fails several assessment components or modules at first attempt should be offered the opportunity of a partial repeat year as a second attempt instead offering multiple resits in the current academic year.</li> </ul>
<b>SU</b>	No issues raised	No issues raised	<p>Consider that a capped resit is sufficient for a student not to tactically avoid first attempts.</p> <p>Caution that preventing a second attempt if the student has not participated in the first could increase the likelihood of students attempting to make their situation fit ECs. There may be situations that warrant their continuation which are not ECs.</p>
<b>Cass</b>	<p>Rounding should be only at one level only and at the same time for all students to provide a consistent and equitable approach to student results.</p> <p>(Note - rounding should be at classification level not be 'either at module or classification level' - see comments about difficulties in deciding and recording the number/volume of modules to be rounded)</p>	<p>Labelling a module as core does not always follow that it is integral to the learning outcomes of the programme; if it's not an elective there is no other option for an alternative label in SITS.</p> <p>Recommendation to create a further designation for modules in addition to core and elective to enable a module to be 'compulsory but compensatable' for those not integral to the learning outcomes of the programme</p>	<p>Recommend that a resit <b>will</b> be offered if a student has not participated in assessment at the first attempt (with no ECs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If first and resit attempt failed, student would be required to withdraw - (Note individual programme regulation to be approved for EMBA)</li> <li>Agree that students with multiple fails could be offered resits or partial repeat at Assessment Board's discretion.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Law</b></p>	<p>Rounding should only take place at classification level</p> <p>(Note PSRB requirements)</p>	<p>Compensation should not be applied to core modules but clarification required on what should be designated as core or non-core - there is some justification for all modules to be treated equally.</p> <p>Note PSRB regulation for GDL</p>	<p>Recommend that a resit <b>will</b> be offered if a student has not participated in assessment at the first attempt (with no ECs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If first and resit attempt failed, student would be required to withdraw - (Note individual programme regulation to be approved for some programmes)</li> <li>• Agree that students with multiple fails could be offered resits or partial repeat at Assessment Board's discretion (Note students could opt which to take up and consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial implications of partial repeat year (fees/accommodation etc)</li> <li>• Tier 4 implications</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>(Note CLS resources implemented to support students prior to re-sit examinations and positive impact on retention)</p>
<p><b>SASS</b></p>	<p>Rounding should only take place at an Assessment Board at the point of classification</p>	<p>Compensation should not be allowed for core modules but that this could be changed subject to professional body requirements.</p> <p>BoS suggested that there might be two categories of 'core' modules; 'core' and 'compulsory' and that these could have different compensation rules.</p>	<p>Recommend a resit <b>will</b> be offered if a student has not participated in assessment at the first attempt (with no ECs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If first and resit attempt failed, student would be required to withdraw</li> <li>• Agree that students with multiple fails could be offered resits or partial repeat at Assessment Board's discretion</li> </ul>
<p><b>SHS</b></p>	<p>Rounding should only take place at an Assessment Board at the point of classification</p> <p>(Note comments relating to marking boundaries to avoid rounding at module level)</p>	<p>Compensation should not be applied to core modules but clarification required on what is classed as core.</p> <p>Clarification required if compensation can be applied between modules if it has been applied within a module</p>	<p>Recommend a resit <b>will</b> be offered if a student has not participated in assessment at the first attempt (with no ECs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark at second attempt would be capped</li> <li>• Definition of non-participation required</li> <li>• Majority agreed that if first and resit attempt failed, student would be required to withdraw but note concerns re LETB ratings and attrition</li> <li>• Request third attempt for theoretical modules in third year subject to attainment (programme regulation approval)</li> </ul> <p>Agree that students with multiple fails could be offered resits or partial repeat at Assessment Board's discretion (but note LETB and practice requirements)</p> <p>Agree that students with multiple fails could be offered resits or partial repeat at Assessment Board's discretion. Considerations re offering resits or partial repeats – standard credit threshold - UG or PG and volume of proportion of</p>

			failed modules, programme structure etc, financial implications therefore complicated to quantify (Note guidance and consistency required and transparent to students)
<b>SMCSE</b>	Rounding should only take place at an Assessment Board at the point of classification (Note comment relating to marking – use of integer module marks to avoid rounding at component level) (Note comment relating to avoidance of rounding at module level so students treated equally in terms of rounding at point of classification)	Specifying that a module is core does not indicate that it is the only place where a learning outcome can be met.	Recommend a resit <b>will</b> be offered if a student has not participated in assessment at the first attempt (with no ECs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark at second attempt would be capped</li> <li>• Board should have discretion to withdraw a student for non-engagement (Note definition required)</li> <li>• If first and resit attempt failed, student would be required to withdraw</li> <li>• Agree that students with multiple fails could be offered resits or partial repeat at Assessment Board's discretion</li> </ul>
<b>LEaD</b>	No issues raised	No issues raised	No issues raised