



Senate

Paper Title	Suspension of Regulations: Annual Summary Report 2017
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to note the report and to consider approaches for the reduction of situations resulting in suspensions.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	A summary of suspensions of regulations requested during the period October 2016 to September 2017.
Questions for Senate to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are members concerned by the number of suspensions? • How can the number of suspensions be reduced? • Do members feel that the suspension decisions are appropriate?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	The paper concerns exceptions granted to the normal application of the <i>Academic Regulations</i> , the main regulatory document for the management of quality and standards in relation to our academic provision.
Strategy and risk	Security of academic standards and quality relies upon the approved frameworks being applied consistently. There should be no exceptions. This paper details action taken to address those exceptions that did arise.
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Senate only.
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Suspension of Regulations: Annual Summary Report 2017

Background

A report on suspensions of regulations is submitted annually to Senate. Suspension may be requested where a situation arises in which the normal application of the Academic Regulations would either be manifestly unfair to one or more students, or where a situation has arisen that was not foreseen by the regulations (that is, where a change to the regulations is needed, but action is required on behalf of the current cohort). These cases should be extremely rare, and the situations leading to them are normally avoidable.

To obtain a suspension requires support from the appropriate Subject and Degree Examination Boards and Vice-Principal (SETL or Research) for assessment issues, or from the Head of School/Institute/Directorate and Vice-Principal for other issues. All requests are passed through ARCS, and screened at that stage, so the vast majority of cases reached the stage of a formal request were approved.

This report covers the period of October 2016 to September 2017. Tables showing a breakdown of requests by faculty and school/institute are provided, and a brief summary of each suspension and its cause is given in the appendix.

Annual summary data 2016-17

The tables below detail the suspensions granted in the 2016-17 academic year as a whole. Bracketed figures denote the 2015-16 totals.

Numbers are on a par with those from 2015-16 (from 54 to 52 – though there are two further cases in process; and there were 64 in 2014-15, and 91 in 2013-14). It is disappointing that the downward trend has stalled.

Numbers in S&E remain fairly static, while SMD has returned to a more usual figure following a spike in 2015/16. Cases in H&SS have increased significantly, following several years of decreases; there were cases in every H&SS school, with only two schools (History and SEF) seeing a fall in numbers. Many cases related to incorrect advice that had been issued to students – it is important that measures are taken to address this issue.

Faculty	Upheld	Rejected	Total
Humanities and Social Sciences	33 (22)	1 (0)	34 (31)
Science and Engineering	12 (13)	0 (0)	12 (27)
Medicine and Dentistry	4 (18)	0 (0)	0 (9)
Other (Educational Development)	2 (1)	0 (0)	0 (1)
Total	51 (54)	1 (0)	52 (54)

School or Institute	Upheld	Rejected	Total
Business and Management	7 (2)	0 (0)	7 (2)

Politics and International Relations	7 (1)	0 (0)	7 (1)
Physics and Astronomy	6 (2)	0 (0)	6 (2)
Geography	4 (2)	0 (0)	4 (2)
Law	4 (1)	0 (0)	4 (1)
Languages, Linguistics and Film	3 (4)	0 (0)	3 (4)
Institute of Health Sciences Education	3 (1)	0 (0)	3 (1)
Centre for Commercial Law Studies	2 (3)	0 (1)	3 (3)
History	2 (5)	0 (0)	2 (5)
Biological and Chemical Sciences	2 (4)	0 (0)	2 (4)
Mathematical Sciences	2 (3)	0 (0)	2 (3)
Economics and Finance	2 (3)	0 (0)	2 (3)
Engineering and Materials Science	2 (2)	0 (0)	2 (2)
English and Drama	2 (1)	0 (0)	2 (1)
Educational Development	2 (0)	0 (0)	2 (0)
Dentistry	1 (2)	0 (0)	1 (2)
Electronic Engineering and Computer Science	0 (2)	0 (0)	0 (2)
Blizard Institute	0 (16)	0 (0)	0 (16)
Barts Cancer Institute	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
William Harvey Research Institute	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Wolfson Institute	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Common themes

Assessment

Eighteen suspensions were required to validate unapproved schemes of assessment that had been delivered to students. In the vast majority of cases, either a school had intended to make an official change but had not done so and had delivered the new scheme in any case, or else module organisers had simply given students incorrect information on assessments or their weightings. Four cases required suspension to exclude one or more elements of assessment where students had completed the correct assessments but these had been lost by the schools.

Suspension of assessment regulations remains the most common suspension request, accounting for 35 per cent of cases this year. While the degree of severity in these suspensions can vary, any situation in which an institution does not deliver its own approved assessments suggests a lack of control over quality and standards. The issue has been raised repeatedly at Senate in the past, and measures such as reminders from ARCS for schools to check the approved schemes before communicating information to students have had little impact. Suggestions for further measures to address this persistent issue would be welcomed.

Progression

QMUL introduced new, more stringent, undergraduate progression rules in 2015/16; these were required to keep students on track to be able to achieve the intended award at the end of the programme. 2016/17 was the first year in which the new regulations for the year two to year three progression point were exercised. In seven cases, schools gave students explicit incorrect advice on the requirements and in many cases the students did not take up all of the available resit opportunities, thinking that they did not need to pass them to progress. This is a standards issue, and other students with the same mark profiles but who were not given incorrect advice have been (correctly) deregistered. It is vital that schools and institutes ensure that academic advisors are properly briefed on the regulations and that, if in doubt, they refer directly to the regulations.

Appendix – suspensions of regulations 2016-17 (grouped by type of suspension)

Ref.	Regulation	Desired outcome	Reason for request	Upheld	Avoidable	School
2016-39	Programme: Diet	Take alternative modules in place of those specified.	Other (over-recruitment)	Yes	Yes	SBM
2016-20	Module: Assessment	Remove qualifying mark from assessment components.	Error	Yes	Yes	Geography
2016-06	Module: Assessment	Remove qualifying mark from assessment components.	Error	Yes	Yes	SBCS
2016-29	Module: Assessment	Remove qualifying mark from assessment components.	Error	Yes	Yes	SBM
2016-05	Academic 6.4	Remove progression hurdle from PGT SBM programmes	Error	Yes	Yes	SBM
2016-50	4.62ii (2015/16)	Progress despite having failed more than 30 credits in one year.	Error	Yes	Yes	SED
2016-51	4.62ii (2015/16)	Progress despite having failed more than 30 credits in one year.	Error	Yes	Yes	SED
2016-42	4.62iii (2015/16)	Permit progression despite not having an average mark of ≥ 40.0 .	Error	Yes	Yes	SMS
2016-45	4.62iii (2015/16)	Permit progression despite not having an average mark of ≥ 40.0 .	Error	Yes	Yes	SPiR
2016-46	4.70iii (2016/17)	Permit progression despite not having an average mark of ≥ 40.0 .	Error	Yes	Yes	SPiR
2016-48	4.62iii (2015/16)	Permit progression despite not having an average mark of ≥ 40.0 .	Error	Yes	Yes	SPiR
2016-49	4.62iii (2015/16)	Permit progression despite not having an average mark of ≥ 40.0 .	Error	Yes	Yes	History
2016-28	Academic 4.9	Permit early completion of programme	Error	Yes	Yes	CAPD
2016-38	Programme: Diet	Make awards despite students not having met the diet requirements	Error	Yes	Yes	CAPD
2016-23	Programme: diet	Make award despite student not having met the diet requirements	Error	Yes	Yes	SEF

Ref.	Regulation	Desired outcome	Reason for request	Upheld	Avoidable	School
2016-26	Programme: Diet	Make award despite student not having met the diet requirements	Error	Yes	Yes	SPA
2016-33	Academic 4.181 and 4.185ii	Grant exceptional third attempt as a resit rather than a retake.	Student's circumstances	Yes	No	IHSE
2016-35	4.26	Give an additional attempt.	Error	Yes	Yes	Law
2016-36	4.26	Give an additional attempt.	Error	Yes	Yes	Law
2016-37	4.26	Give an additional attempt.	Error	Yes	Yes	Law
2016-43	Academic 4.11 (2012/13)	Extend maximum permitted duration of study by one year.	Student's circumstances	Yes	Possibly	SPIR
2016-02	Programme: Diet	Change status of modules from core to compulsory	Error	Yes	Yes	Dentistry
2016-32	Programme: Diet	Change order of module delivery	External factor	Yes	No	IHSE
2016-44	Academic 4.69i (2015/16)	Award and classify on fewer than 360 credits	Error	Yes	Yes	SPIR
2016-17	Academic 4.96	Award and classify on fewer than 360 credits	Error	Yes	Yes	SPA
2016-31	Academic 5.129	Award an MSc as an exit award for the Euromasters	Other (regulations will be amended)	Yes	N/A	SPA
2016-27	Module: credits	Artificially create a 15 credit version of a 30 credit module.	Student's circumstances	Yes	Possibly	SEMS
2016-01	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	SBM
2016-04	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	SBM
2016-07	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	SPA
2016-08	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	SLLF
2016-09	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	SLLF

Ref.	Regulation	Desired outcome	Reason for request	Upheld	Avoidable	School
2016-10	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	SPA
2016-12	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	Geography
2016-13	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	CCLS
2016-16	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	CCLS
2016-18	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	Geography
2016-19	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	History
2016-21	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	SBM
2016-22	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Students' circumstances	Yes	No	SPiR
2016-24	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	SEF
2016-30	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	SBCS
2016-40	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	SEMS
2016-41	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	Geography
2016-52	Module: Assessment	Apply unapproved assessment weightings	Error	Yes	Yes	Law
2016-34	Module: Assessment	Apply standard rather than synoptic reassessment	Error	Yes	Yes	SBM
2016-11	Academic 4.14 (16/17)	Allow over-registration in one year and under-registration in another.	Error	Yes	Yes	SMS
2016-15	Academic 4.14 (16/17)	Allow over-registration in one year and under-registration in another.	Error	Yes	Yes	SPiR
2016-25	Academic 4.14	Allow over-registration in one year and under-registration in another.	Error	Yes	Yes	SLLF

Ref.	Regulation	Desired outcome	Reason for request	Upheld	Avoidable	School
2016-47	Academic 2.16ii	Allow entry with advanced standing beyond permitted time limit	None	No	Yes	CCLS
2016-14	Academic 2.16ii	Allow entry with advanced standing beyond permitted time limit	Error	Yes	Yes	IHSE
2016-03	Academic 5.117 (15/16)	Allow additional discretion in MSc Euromasters progression	External factor (regulations have been amended).	Yes	No	SPA