



Senate

Paper Title	Suspension of Regulations Report: October-December 2013
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to note the report and 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-December 2013, and the outcomes.
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	N/A
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Suspension of Regulations Summary Report
October – December 2013

Background

A report on suspensions of regulations is submitted to each meeting of Senate. Examination boards may request a suspension 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 the Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning) for regulatory issues associated with assessment, or from the Head of School or Institute and the Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning) for other regulatory issues (such as admissions regulations). All requests are passed through ARCS, and screened at that stage.

This report covers the period October - December 2013. Tables showing a breakdown of requests by faculty and school/institute are provided, and a précis of each suspension and its cause is given in the appendix.

Summary data: October - December 2013

There were 16 requests for suspension in this quarter. In the preceding quarter there were 55 suspensions, and in the equivalent 2011/12 quarter there were also 16. The summer period always has the highest number of suspensions, as this is when all undergraduate and many postgraduate examination boards meet, so it is unsurprising that there has been a decrease since the preceding quarter.

School or Institute	Upheld	Rejected	Total
Electronic Engineering and Computer Science	3	-	3
Politics and International Relations	3	-	3
Blizard Institute	2	-	2
Dentistry	2	-	2
History	2	-	2
Biological and Chemical Sciences	1	-	1
Business and Management	1	-	1
Engineering and Materials Science	1	-	1
Languages, Linguistics and Film	1	-	1

Faculty	Upheld	Rejected	Total
Humanities and Social Sciences	7	-	7
Science and Engineering	5	-	5
Medicine and Dentistry	4	-	4
Other	-	-	-
Total	16	-	16

Common or resolvable problems

Reweighting assessment schemes

Two suspensions, both in SMD, were needed to reweight assessment schemes to match what had been taught rather than what had been approved. This was also raised as a common problem in the previous quarter, where 13 suspensions of this nature were needed (15 per cent of the total). One of the suspensions this quarter needed to be applied to both the 2011/12 and 2012/13 cohorts, as the issue had remained unidentified for some time. For the second case, the same suspension was required at the same time last year, and was approved then on the understanding that a module amendment would be processed for the 2012/13 cohort. However, this did not happen, hence the need for a repeat suspension.

As noted in the previous quarter, suspensions of this type are a perennial issue, but are entirely avoidable. The cases described above occurred not because academic staff taught the 'wrong' assessment scheme, but rather because the assessment scheme was changed without the formal approval process being followed. It is crucial that colleagues are made aware of the appropriate processes for management of quality and standards so that suspensions of this type can be avoided. Senate may wish to consider further measures that could be taken to avoid such suspensions.

Transfers from full time to part time study

One suspension was needed this quarter to allow a student to transfer from full time to part time study. There is an increasing trend for suspensions to grant transfers of this nature this should be monitored, with consideration given to a solution not requiring suspension.

Kate Ruffell
Academic Governance Administrator
13th November 2013

Appendix – all suspensions 2012- 2013

Ref.	Regulation	Desired outcome	Reason	Upheld?	Unavoidable?
2013-01	Module (assessment)	Allow students from two previous cohorts to graduate despite having been assessed by previously unapproved methods.	School error	Y	N
2013-02	Academic 4.75 (12/13)	Allow student to progress on 165 credits despite no remaining resits/first sits.	School error	Y	N
2013-03	Programme (diet)	Take DENM004 in place of the core module DENM009.	Individual student's circumstances	Y	Y
2013-04	Academic 8.97-8.98 (12/13)	Strike out an attempt at the examination and grant a first attempt (research).	External examiner error	Y	Y
2013-05	Academic 7.32ii and iii	Confer BA despite not meeting all award requirements (pass all final year modules and pass at least 150 credits of history modules).	School error/Individual student's circumstances	Y	N
2013-06	Programme (diet)	Change part time structure from 75/105 credits (Y1/Y2) to 60/120.	School error	Y	N
2013-07	Programme (diet)	Allow to progress despite not passing a core progression module.	Individual student's circumstances	Y	?
2013-08	Academic 6.51 (12/13)	Award MSc with CM of only 49.7	School error	Y	N
2013-09	Academic 3.55 (12/13)	Strike out an attempt at the project and grant a first attempt.	Individual student's circumstances	Y	?
2013-10	Programme (diet)	Treat a core module as compulsory to allow condoned failure.	School error	Y	N
2013-11	Academic 5.11 (12/13)	Extend maximum duration by one year.	Unforeseen situation in regulations - change in regulations required	Y	Y
2013-12	Academic 5.11 (12/13)	Extend maximum duration by one year.	Unforeseen situation in regulations - change in regulations required	Y	Y
2013-13	Programme (module load)	Take 60 credits in year one and 120 in year two.	School error	Y	N
2013-14	Module (assessment)	Change weighting of assessment components from 100% essay to 40% viva, 60% essay.	School error	Y	N
2013-14	Programme	Change structure from 2 year MCLinDent + 1 year PGDip to 3 year MCLinDent.	School error	Y	N
2013-14	Programme	Permit part time study	Student's individual circumstances	Y	Y