



Senate

Paper Title	Assessment Governance Review 2013/14: final recommendations
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to consider and approve the recommendations of the Assessment Governance Review.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	<p>This paper presents the final recommendations of the Assessment Governance Review, which considered a number of aspects of academic policy including eligibility for award, reassessment policy, and procedures for reviewing borderline classifications.</p> <p>The review was coordinated by the Assessment Governance Task and Finish Group, and included a consultation exercise with academic and professional services departments and the Students' Union, and consideration by the Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning)'s Advisory Group and previous meetings of Senate. This document presents 13 recommendations that Senate is asked to consider and, if appropriate, approve.</p>
Questions for Senate to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Senate satisfied with the detail of each recommendation? • If approved, when should each recommendation be implemented? • Is Senate satisfied for the Assessment Governance Task and Finish Group to coordinate the preparations needed for implementation of the recommendations throughout 2014/15?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	The recommendations, if approved, would affect large sections of the Academic Regulations and the Assessment Handbook (2015/16 and/or later editions in most cases).
Strategy and risk	Many of the recommendations touch upon questions of academic standards. Senate is asked to pay particular attention to the recommendations on eligibility for award; QMUL's current regulations are somewhat lenient in this regard, and it is important that the new regulations are seen as robust.
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Senate to approve.
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Assessment Governance Review 2013/14 Final Recommendations

Introduction

The Assessment Governance Review 2013/14 reconsidered a number of academic regulations and policies to ensure that these were broadly in line with sector norms. The central issue under review was eligibility for award, as benchmarking had shown that QMUL's requirements were rather lenient when set against those of comparable institutions. Other items included reassessment arrangements, and discretion in classification.

The Review was coordinated by the Assessment Governance Task and Finish Group ('the Group'). The Group completed a benchmarking exercise, and received agreement from Senate in December 2013 that a review was required. Initial recommendations were then sent for consultation with Schools, Institutes, the Students' Union, and Student Services. These were also considered by Senate (March 2014) and the Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning)'s Advisory Group (February and May 2014). More than 20 responses were received, and the Group used feedback to reconsider the proposals. This document presents revised proposals, which Senate is asked to **consider** and, where appropriate, **approve**.

The majority of proposals, if approved, would come into effect from 2015/16 as further work is required to prepare for the changes. Senate is asked to **approve** the continued operation of the Assessment Governance Task and Finish Group to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations. This would include the final phrasing of the amended regulations, which would be presented (as is standard) to Senate for approval in June 2015.

Further background on the consultation is available in papers [SE2013.29a](#) and [SE2013.41](#). A complete list of the final recommendations is given in Appendix B.

Eligibility for award, and progression (undergraduate)

The first recommendation concerned undergraduate progression and award requirements. At present, QMUL operates a rule under which students must pass three quarters of the credits taken (e.g. pass 270 for a 360 credit bachelors award). The remaining 90 credits can be failed outright provided that the final weighted average (the College Mark) is ≥ 40.0 . This had been flagged as out of line with the sector, and benchmarking demonstrated that QMUL had the most lenient regulations among the sample.

The LLB, MBBS, and BDS awards and the joint programmes with Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT) and Nanchang University (NCU) are not affected by these recommendations. These have existing regulations that are more stringent than both what is currently in use and what is now proposed.

Original recommendations

1A: Students must pass outright seven eighths of the credits that they take in order to be eligible for award, and achieve credits for all modules taken.

1B: To progress to the next developmental year, a student must complete and achieve credit for all modules taken during the previous developmental year.

For the outright failure in 1/8 credits system, students would have to fail no more than 30 credits in any one developmental year and no more than 1/8 of credits across the full programme, as well as maintaining a weighted average of 40.0+ (or higher, where specified for MSci/MEng) to progress)

2A: To condone a module at academic levels 3-6, a student must achieve a weighted average mark of 40.0 or higher (across all modules and years, weighted according to the scheme of the respective award), and a mark of 35.0 or higher in the failed module(s).

An alternative would be to condone from 30. Under the outright failure in 1/8 of credits proposal, this becomes irrelevant save for the need to maintain a weighted average of 40.0+ throughout.

2B: To condone a module at academic level 7 (UG or PG), a student must achieve a weighted average mark of 50.0 or higher (across all modules and years, weighted according to the scheme of the respective award), and a mark of 40.0 or higher in the failed module(s).

2C: A maximum of one eighth of the credits for an award may be condoned, and never more than 30 credits in any one developmental year. Individual award regulations may specify more stringent requirements.

Under the outright failure in 1/8 credits proposal, the restrictions on condoned credits instead apply to failed credits.

The vast majority of respondents supported or at least acknowledged the need to increase the requirements for award. The seven-eighths rule was generally felt to be appropriate.

Many respondents did not support the introduction of condoned failure at UG level (PG is treated separately, below). This was deemed (i) too great a change at the same time as increasing the credit requirements, (ii) an unnecessarily complex system, and (iii) unnecessary: allowing outright failure in one eighth of credits was not deemed inappropriate. The Group acknowledged this feedback, and removed condoned failure from the proposals. This created a need to specify that students must pass a minimum number of credits at the level of the award (QMUL was unusual in not doing this previously). Condoned failure would have made this unnecessary, as students would have needed to demonstrate a minimum level of competence in all modules. The Group deemed passing 90 credits at or above the level of the award to be appropriate and in line with sector norms, noting that 60 credits was the norm for an ordinary degree and that it would be inappropriate to set the threshold that low.

Three responses commented on the breakdown of credits that could be failed. For the majority of bachelors degrees, one eighth equalled 45 credits. This could be three 15 credit modules, or one 30 credit and one 15 credit module. Two queries were raised. Firstly, was it fair for some students to be able to fail two modules while others could fail three? The response noted that where a student failed a 30 credit first year module, that student could only fail a further 15 credits across the subsequent two years. The Group agreed that 30 credits represented two thirds of the maximum tolerance of failed credit, wherever in the programme this occurred. Secondly, one response noted that some 120 credit programmes did not include any 15 credit modules, meaning that students could not fail any modules (as no more than 15 credits could be failed under the 1/8 rule). The Group noted that programmes could be restructured during 2014/15 to include 15 credit modules; were changes not made, students would be required to pass the full 120 credits.

Recommendation A: Eligibility for award (UG)

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

To achieve the intended award, a student must meet any programme or pathway requirements, and:

- **take the specified number of credits;**
- **pass a minimum of seven-eighths of those credits;**
- **achieve a College Mark of ≥ 40.0 (≥ 50.0 for level seven awards and where otherwise specified);**
- **pass a minimum of 90 credits at or above the level of the award (individual award regulations may specify higher requirements).**

Full details of eligibility for award on an award-by-award basis are given in appendix A.

Recommendation B: Progression (UG)

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

To progress to the next developmental year, a student must meet any programme or pathway requirements, and:

- **Fail no more than 1/8 of credits across the programme;**
- **Fail no more than 30 credits in any one developmental year (15 for ≤ 120 credit programmes and integrated masters);**
- **Maintain a weighted average mark (weighted according to the relevant award's year weightings) of ≥ 40.0 (or higher where specified, e.g. integrated masters).**

There would no longer be discretionary progression on less than the standard number of credits, and the weighted average of ≥ 40.0 would be a clear cut-off point; there would be no discretion for (e.g.) a student with a weighted average of 39.9.

Full details of progression on an award-by-award basis are given in appendix A.

Implementation notes

Changes to some programmes would be required during 2014/15 if Schools/Institutes wished to allow for failure (by creating 15 credit modules).

Schools/Institutes should review their module diets during 2014/15 to ensure that students take sufficient credits at level of the award to allow them to meet the award requirements (see also recommendation E).

Discussion on the weighted averages necessary for progression on integrated masters programmes is needed. Currently, individual schools can choose where to set hurdles; there must be at least one hurdle of ≥ 60.0 . Clarity is needed on the hurdles at other progression points. It may be advisable to adopt a single policy for all such awards rather than retaining variation by programme.

Condoned failure (postgraduate)

Original recommendation

2B: To condone a module at academic level 7 (UG or PG), a student must achieve a weighted average mark of 50.0 or higher (across all modules and years, weighted according to the scheme of the respective award), and a mark of 40.0 or higher in the failed module(s).

There was general agreement with the proposal to increase the point at which a level seven module would be condoned from 30 to 40, bringing it in line with sector norms and better reflecting the fact that a condoned fail is intended to reflect a borderline mark.

Some respondents disagreed with the proposal to use condoned failure at undergraduate level (including UG L7); this was acknowledged and, as above, that proposal has been withdrawn. The revised recommendation applies only to PGT.

A small number of respondents opined that the same system should be used at both UG and PG levels, i.e. we should use condoned failure for neither or both. The Group noted that while consistency was always desirable, the credit structure of PGT programmes made it inappropriate to allow any outright failure (30 credits at PGT level generally equated to 25 per cent of the taught element).

The LLM (which condoned from 45.0) would remain an exception as it was taught in blocks of 45 credits. Up to 45 credits could be condoned (rather than 30 for other awards), so it was appropriate that the threshold would be higher. The MClintDent did not permit condoned failure of any sort. The MSc programmes in Mathematics and Astrophysics had subject benchmarks and special regulations that permitted condoning from zero where the average mark was 50.0 or higher – those would be retained.

Recommendation C: Condoned failure (PGT)

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

Examination boards may normally condone failure in the taught component of modules up to the value of 30 credits (or 15, for PGCert), where:

- i. the failed module is not designated as core; *and*,**
- ii. the student has achieved a module mark of 40.0 or higher; *and*,**
- iii. the average mark achieved across all modules is 50.0 or higher.**

Exceptions: LLM, MClintDent, MSc Mathematics, MSc Astrophysics.

Implementation notes

Programmes with special regulations that differed from the pre-existing condoned failure rules should be asked to adopt the new standard rule (except where subject benchmarks make this appropriate).

Resit registration

Original recommendation

2D: A module can only be condoned once a student has attempted a resit.

Resits are compulsory, irrespective of whether a condoned failure system is used.

Feedback favoured automatic registration for resits, but not a system under which students were compelled to take up those resits. Students should be able to decline the resits. The Group adjusted the recommendation accordingly.

Respondents queried whether students would be required to pay resit fees if they were automatically registered. The Group noted that this did not seem equitable and supported the view that there should be no charge. It was however noted that, without fees, resits could not be delivered under the existing budget.

A small number of respondents asked whether finalists could resit failed modules where they already had sufficient credits for award. The Group noted that these students would not be offered resits, and that there would be no change from the current policy.

The Group noted that an automatic registration system posed some challenges. This had been trialled in August 2013. Relatively few students formally declined, and venues had been booked to accommodate all students who remained registered. Turnout had been extremely low (less than 50 per cent). With more students resitting in the late summer QMUL may need to use external venues, and there is a risk that overbooking could waste resources. Most, if not all, resits should be accommodated on campus, however.

Recommendation D: resit registration

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

Students should be automatically registered for resits, but should have the option to decline these resits.

Where a student declined a resit, a non-submission mark would be recorded and the student would have no further attempts at the module (as is current policy).

Postgraduate students may elect to decline resits and accept an award by condoned failure (where eligible). However, the default recommendation shall be for students to take up resits.

Students should not be charged additional fees for resits.

Implementation notes

Additional budget would be required to support resits if the fees were waived.

Locking academic levels to developmental years

Original recommendation

3: Lock academic levels to developmental years.

This recommendation, which would have allowed students to take only modules at the equivalent level to their developmental year, received mixed feedback.

Several respondents, including the Students' Union, fully supported the proposal. One school noted that it was introducing the same rules through its programme diets for 2014/15. Another strongly supported the academic rationale behind the recommendation, noting that it had observed an increase in strategic module selection with students taking easy options in their heavily weighted final years. The Group noted that one 30 credit final year module counted for 15 per cent of a standard bachelors award.

Other respondents disagreed with the proposal, opposing it on the grounds that the flexibility in the current system was pedagogically desirable. Many responses commented on the Language Strategy, and fact that the original recommendation would prevent final year students from taking beginners language options.

A few respondents suggested that students should be able to take credits at *or above* the level of the relevant academic year. The Group accepted this point.

The option to run modules at more than one academic level was explored by a number of respondents, all of whom felt that it would be difficult to ensure that these really addressing learning outcomes at both levels.

A small number of responses noted that a number of existing programmes – primarily, but not exclusively, joint honours programmes – included more than 120 compulsory credits at level four. The Group noted this point, but queried whether it was appropriate in all cases.

One response made a suggestion for a compromise arrangement, under which a fixed number of credits would be locked, but free choice would be reserved for the remainder. The Group welcomed this suggestion, and used it as the basis for its revised recommendation.

Without a system of complete level-locking and condoned failure, QMUL would need to introduce new rules for the minimum amount at each level that students must take and pass. Condoned failure would have ensured that students had to demonstrate a minimum level of attainment in all modules.

Recommendation E: locking academic levels to academic years

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

In each developmental year, students should be required to take at least 75 per cent of their credits at or above the academic level equivalent to that developmental stage.

Exceptions (with higher requirements): MSci/MEng final years, where students must already take 120 credits at level 7.

Recommendation F: minimum credits passed at the level of the award

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

In the past, QMUL only specified that students must take a minimum number of credits at the level of the award (90, for a bachelors award). This was out of line with the sector. In the absence of a system of condoned failure, the Group recommended that:

Students must pass a minimum of 90 credits at the level of the award in order to be eligible for award. Individual award regulations may specify other requirements*.

*Notably PGT programmes, and programmes with developmental years of less than 120 credits. PGT has pre-existing rules that exceed this recommendation. The GradCert is the only award with developmental years of less than 120 credits (60 credits). This is only used as an exit award, and it is recommended that students must pass the full 60 credits at the level of the award to achieve it.

The Group felt strongly that it would be academically inappropriate to set a lower threshold than 90 credits. The standard in the sector for an Ordinary Degree was 60 credits.

Implementation notes

In 2014/15, Schools would need to ensure that module diets required students to take at least 90 credits at the relevant academic level in each developmental year.

The level locking recommendation specifies that final year bachelors award students must take at least 90 credits at level six. The minimum credits recommendation specifies that students must pass 90 credits at level six. Therefore, if a student took only the minimum 90 credits at level six then they would *have* to pass all of those modules. Schools and Institutes may wish to review their final year programme diets with this in mind, and include more than 90 credits at level six. MSci and MEng students are already required to take 120 credits at level seven.

Ordinary Degree

Original recommendations

4A: Introduce a new exit award, the Ordinary Degree.

4B: Set the award requirements for an Ordinary Degree at 'Achieve 300 credits including 60 or more at level 6 (the 300 and the 60 include condoned failures, operating on the rules set out in 2A-C).

Or at 'Pass 270 credits including 60+ at level 6', if condoned failure is not used.

There was relatively little comment on this recommendation. The vast majority of respondents supported the introduction of a new exit award to sit between the DipHE and the intended award. One school saw no need for such an award. Two respondents questioned the recognisability of such an award to employers, relative to the DipHE.

The Panel noted that changes to the recommendations on credit requirements for award had reduced the 'drop' to the DipHE for students who failed to achieve their intended awards, but also noted that the Ordinary Degree was commonly used at UK institutions.

All comments on the proposed Ordinary Degree requirements deemed these appropriate.

Recommendation G: Ordinary Degree

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

Introduce a new undergraduate exit award, the Ordinary Degree, with award regulations requiring students to pass a minimum of 270 credits including a minimum of 60 at level six.

Classification of exit awards

Original recommendation

4C: All exit awards, including the new Ordinary Degree, should be unclassified, and awarded on a pass/fail basis (excepting cases where the exit award is an honours degree in its own right – BEng and BSc for integrated masters programmes, and BSc (Eng) for the BEng).

This recommendation was supported, with no comment other than that equal attainment should be equally recognised, whether as part of an intended award or an exit award.

The Group felt strongly that the Ordinary Degree should not be classified (beyond pass/fail). With this in mind, it recommended that all undergraduate exit awards should be unclassified and that all postgraduate exit awards (which were, unlike UG exit awards, often available as legitimate programmes on their own merits) would continue to be classified.

Recommendation H: classification of exit awards

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

Undergraduate exit awards should be awarded on a pass/fail basis, with the exception that where exit awards are honours degrees (BSc, BEng, BSc (Eng)) these should be classified as usual.

All postgraduate exit awards should be classified.

Foundation Degree exit award

Original recommendation

4D: The standard exit award for the FdA and FdSc should be the CertHE rather than the FdCert.

Respondents supported this proposal, commenting that it was a logical change.

Recommendation I: Foundation Degree exit award

Suggested implementation date: 2014/15

The standard exit award for the FdA and FdSc should be the CertHE rather than the FdCert.

Foundation Degree and Diploma of Higher Education weightings

Original recommendation

5: Change the FdA, FdSc and DipHE (as intended award) year weightings from 1:2 to 1:3.

Respondents supported this proposal, commenting that it was a logical change.

Recommendation J: FdA, FdSc, and DipHE year weightings

Suggested implementation date: 2014/15

Change the FdA, FdSc and DipHE (as intended award) year weightings from 1:2 to 1:3.

Late summer resits

Original recommendation

6: All programmes should operate late summer resits as standard for all students.

This proposal generated a range of opinions. Of the 20 responses that addressed this question, nine strongly supported the proposal in its current form, eight gave mixed views or reported divided opinions in their areas, and three directly opposed the proposal (all three of which currently use late summer resits for first and/or second year undergraduate students).

Arguments in favour of late summer resits included:

- a positive impact on the student experience;
- students could resit while still engaged with the material;
- keeping student cohorts together, and reducing the overall duration of study;
- student and QMUL knowing the progression decision within the same year;
- fewer students resitting out of attendance. The Advice and Counselling Service in particular noted that it saw many such students with numerous problems, particularly around engagement and retention;
- retention benefits;
- Many students struggle financially while waiting for the resit exams the following May – casual employment is harder to find and home undergraduates are not eligible for loans and grants from Student Finance England during this period. Most students are not eligible to claim welfare benefits such as Job Seeker's Allowance and Housing Benefit during this period, so if they can't find adequate paid employment or are unwell then this can inhibit their ability to return to their studies;
- immigration legislation prevents students from remaining in the UK while they are not actually required to attend QMUL. Students have to return overseas and can face

difficulties with immigration applications to return the following May. This affects engagement and retention as well as the student experience;

- allowing students with extenuating circumstance or long term conditions to have late summer assessments will better accommodate students who apply for special examination arrangements or extenuating circumstances late into their final year;
- “The Careers & Enterprise team see students every year who, because of the current rules, are effectively wasting a year in terms of their employability development. They cannot yet access the graduate job market, so end up taking casual employment for a year. They also have to explain this ‘dead year’ to future employers”;

Arguments against late summer resits included:

- students had insufficient time to relearn the material following the failure in May (especially at level 6);
- impact on staff research time;
- additional workload (setting an extra paper, marking);
- additional SEBs (June for PG where not already used, more substantive September boards for UG);
- August given over to dissertations and other activities;
- some students on years abroad or placements are away in August. *This is already the case, and those students are certified absent for August and take the resit at the following opportunity.*

Other comments included:

- specifics of the late summer SEB were needed;
- late summer first sits (caused by extenuating circumstances) should be made available to all students, including finalists, even if universal late summer resits were not approved;
- if the proposals on resitting passed modules and uncapping resits were approved, more schools would oppose this recommendation (*those proposals were withdrawn*);
- support for late summer resits for finalists would only be given if the existing policy that students were awarded as soon as they had sufficient credits was retained (i.e. there would not be a large increase in resits for finalists, whether in August or the following June). *There was no proposal to change that policy; students would still be awarded as soon as they achieved sufficient credits.*

The Group noted all of these comments, and was strongly influenced by those concerning student welfare and the student experience.

The Group noted the view from some schools that students could not adequately remediate failure in the period between May and August. The majority, though not all, of schools making this point confined it to level six modules. The Group noted that late summer resits were already used successfully for a number of PGT level seven modules, and considered that in most cases where a student needed a longer period of revision the problem was insufficient engagement with teaching. A longer period to revise what had never properly been learned would be of very limited benefit.

The Group noted the comments on additional workload, and welcomed the suggestions of respondents on how to minimise this, including a requirement to prepare two papers early in the academic year to confine all approval processes within the existing period (and to provide a back-up paper in case of problems in the May exam period). Comments in respect of the constitution of late summer SEBs were also noted, and the Group agreed that this

should be as light-touch as possible while still maintaining proper oversight of academic standards.

Considering all of the points put forward, the Group felt that the advantages outweighed any potential disadvantages, and recommended full implementation of late summer resits.

Recommendation K: late summer resits

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

Introduce late summer resits for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

Exceptions: MBBS and BDS, which follow a different academic calendar.

Semester-based examinations

Original recommendation

7: Adopt a system of semester based examinations.

Feedback was mixed, with only three schools and the Students' Union giving the proposal full support. Several other schools noted that semester based examinations could bring benefits, but the majority opposed the proposal outright.

Points in favour of semester based examinations included:

- reduction of the gap between learning and assessment;
- increased student satisfaction;
- clarity of submission and assessment points;
- a clear 'engagement point' to check on students' progress;
- students have the chance to try an examination before the end of the year;
- reduction in pressure on students at one point in the year.

Points against semester based examinations included:

- compartmentalisation of learning;
- impact on staff time;
- impact on the teaching calendar (extending semester two past Easter);
- the current gap between learning and assessment could be countered by increased use of coursework assessment for semester one modules.

Other points included:

- A-levels were moving away from January exams, and students would be used to end of year examinations;
- January exams would cause an increased demand for student support services in semester one, but a commensurate reduction in semester two and the possible reduction of stress levels for students needing special arrangements as they would be used to them by May;
- possible reduction in students' engagement with non-academic activities (e.g. employability initiatives) if they were focused on assessment throughout the year;
- the Students' Union noted that it had repeatedly campaigned in favour of semester based examinations. In their most recent survey, 72 per cent of students favoured semester based examinations;
- a number of respondents noted that additional benchmarking with a more pedagogic focus and a measure of impact on research would be desirable if the proposal was to be further considered.

The Group acknowledged that the prevailing opinion was against January examinations. It was not possible to use a mixed system to allow January examinations for those schools that wanted them due to the impact on the teaching calendar, and particularly for students on joint honours programmes who might otherwise have teaching and examination commitments at the same time. The Group agreed to withdraw the original proposal, but remained concerned that many students would have no experience of university level examinations until the end of their first years of study (and similarly in subsequent years for examinations at the next academic level).

Three schools noted their efforts to introduce coursework-based assessment schemes for the majority of semester one modules, and these initiatives were welcomed. This did not extend to many schools, however, and the Group believed that a formal test of students' examination skills should be introduced. For each module assessed by examination, students would be given an assessment in the same format as the final examination (though not necessarily of the same length) during the teaching of the module, in reading week or later. This could be summative or formative, and could be marked by the standard processes or (if formative) through group marking in class to allow students to understand the marking process. Where in-class tests or similar were already in place, and were sufficiently similar to the final examination, no change would be required. The Group noted that this had not been consulted upon, and agreed that the issue should be explored further in 2014/15.

Recommendation L: consultation on practice examinations

Suggested implementation date (of consultation): 2014/15

A consultation exercise to explore ways to familiarise students with examinations and marking schemes in advance of the May examination period.

Uncapped resits

Original recommendation

8: Remove the cap on resits for all modules.

This proposal was put forward as a suggestion for mitigating against the effect on retention and completion of tougher progression and award rules. All schools and institutes opposed the proposal. The Students' Union's vote narrowly (56 per cent) supported uncapped resits. Student Services noted that, in addition to the effects on retention and completion, uncapped resits could improve students' experience of assessment and incentivise them to work and study harder to gain the marks that their underlying ability allowed.

Arguments against removing the cap included:

- removal of the incentive to complete work the first time around. Passing on the first attempt, within the normal timeframe, was part of the test, and there should be a penalty for not doing so;
- it encouraged game playing, as students could deliberately fail the first attempt to spread their workloads;
 - this was especially true where synoptic reassessment was used, as students might prefer the compressed and alternative form of reassessment.
- students who narrowly passed a module at the first attempt would be disadvantaged vis-à-vis those who narrowly failed (and received a resit) unless the proposal on resitting passed modules was adopted (*that proposal was also widely opposed*).

The Group accepted these points, and withdrew the proposal. Resits would remain capped to the minimum pass mark except where individual programme or award regulations already specified otherwise (notably the LLB and LLM awards, and the MSc in Mathematics).

Resitting passed modules

Original recommendation

9: Permit students to resit passed modules, up to the maximum number of attempts.

This was a second suggestion for mitigating against the effect of tougher progression and award rules on retention and completion. It was almost universally opposed, largely for the same reasons as the recommendation on uncapped resits. Responses also noted that it could encourage a culture of perfectionism, bringing unnecessary stress to students, and unnecessarily increasing the assessment and marking workload for staff.

The Group accepted these points, and withdrew the proposal.

Additional retake provision

Original recommendation

10: Permit undergraduate students to retake one year of study (excluding the final year) at their discretion and without penalty.

This was a further suggestion for mitigating against the effect of tougher progression and award rules on retention and completion. A small number of respondents saw some merit in increasing or reviewing retake provision, but only one supported the recommendation and the vast majority were opposed. The only argument given in favour of the proposal was that it would bring educational benefits in embedding learning where students did not apply themselves at the first attempt.

Arguments against the proposal included:

- encouraged strategic learning;
- passing within a standard timeframe is part of the challenge of the programme;
- students knowing that this provision was available could encourage disengagement on the first attempt;
- resource implications;
- risk of over-recruiting, and fines from HEFCE;
- disadvantaged students who could not afford the additional fees or loan repayments (plus additional accommodation and maintenance costs);
- disadvantaged students who might not get visa clearance for the additional year;
- not all years could be easily repeated (including years in industry and abroad);
- employers might look negatively at the extra year.

Other comments included:

- if retake provision was increased, it should not be at students' discretion to request it. QMUL should make the offer, and students should choose whether or not to accept;
- there could be some benefits in automatically offering retakes to students who failed half or more of an academic year;
- the current first take provision (for students with severe extenuating circumstances) remained appropriate and sufficient;
- it was clarified that home students were entitled to one extra year of funding, though this was still a loan and added considerably to student debt. If this was used for a discretionary retake, further funding for a situation in which something genuinely went wrong would be difficult to obtain. Other students would still be self-funding.

The Group noted the views of respondents, and withdrew the proposal.

Borderline classification policy

Original recommendation

11A: Adopt a 'borderline' policy rather than a 'discretion' policy.

There was agreement that QMUL should move to a rigid borderline policy for determining classification, rather than the existing discretion policy. Many responses noted the need to ensure that common rules were applied across the institution in order to ensure fair outcomes for students.

Original recommendation

11B: Adopt the following borderline policy for all programmes.

- 1. Students with College Marks within one per cent of a borderline (except at the pass/fail border) shall be determined to fall within the 'zone of consideration';*
- 2. Students with College Marks within 1.5 per cent of a borderline and with significant extenuating circumstances not taken into account elsewhere may be determined to fall within the zone of consideration. However, if this approach is taken then the extenuating circumstances may not also be used as a reason to raise the classification itself;*
- 3. All students falling within a zone of consideration shall be considered as possible cases for application of discretion;*
- 4. Students falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of all credits at PG level) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), shall normally be raised to the higher classification;*
- 5. Students falling within the one per cent zone of consideration and not meeting the requirements of point 4, but with significant extenuating circumstances not taken into account elsewhere shall normally be raised to the higher classification provided the SEB is confident that – without the effect of the extenuating circumstances – the student would have achieved the higher classification.*
- 6. (Discretion is not an automatic process, and in addition to the criteria detailed above, SEBs should ensure that the remainder of a student's profile is also consistent with the recommended classification.)**

**Point 6 had been removed from the recommendation, but a number of respondents suggested its reinstatement.*

All respondents agreed that a clear and fair policy was desirable. The vast majority supported the proposal as it stood. Exceptions, and common queries, are detailed below:

The zone of consideration should not be reduced from two to one per cent at UG level.

Three responses made this argument. One supported the reduction, but asked that it only be instituted once the new award rules and separate work to increase the use of marks above 70 had bedded in. The second noted that it would prefer to retain the two per cent zone as it counterbalanced a lack of marks given above 70. A third noted that there had already been a reduction to two per cent in the previous review of discretion, and that further narrowing the zone was of concern (n.b. few if any other schools ever had zones larger than two per cent).

The Group noted the need for consistency, and also noted that problems in using the full range of marks should be addressed not through a borderline policy but through targeted

work to increase the range of marks used. The zone of one per cent was deemed sufficient to reflect that only borderline cases were under consideration. Senate may wish to consider the deferral of implementation until one year after the new award rules come into use, though this would mean leaving the current policies, which have been deemed unsatisfactory, in place until 2016/17. Implementing for 2015/16 would give schools an additional year to work on using the full range of marks.

The final year is already heavily weighted in classification; the borderline policy should look at performance across the programme of study.

Two responses made this point. The Group felt that while there was merit to this argument, it was important to ensure that any borderline policy was very clear and simple to apply; existing examples using credits from all years did not tend to meet these criteria. The Group noted that the proposal could be further justified by the final year credits under consideration being at the level of the award. As 18 respondents had either supported or not objected to this part of the proposal, the Group did not amend the recommendation.

There should be a requirement for the project or dissertation to be among the 50 per cent of credits at the higher level of attainment.

Four responses made this argument. The Group noted that the importance of a project or dissertation was already taken into account in its increased credit value, particularly at postgraduate level, and was not inclined to amend the requirement. The majority of comments came from Science and Engineering, and the joint SMD PGT response; Senate may consider allowing the inclusion of this additional stipulation on a DEB by DEB basis.

If PGT students are required to achieve 50 per cent (90 credits) at the higher level, very few students would be raised. 60 credits would be more appropriate

The Group did not accept this point, made in one response, and noted that where too few students were achieving the higher classification this was an issue either of student performance or of marking. Where a borderline student achieved only 60 credits at the higher level, both the College Mark and the majority of module marks were in the lower banding, indicating that the lower classification was more appropriate.

It is unclear how extenuating circumstances can be taken into account in classification without either double counting or breaking the fit to sit rules.

The Group noted that such cases should be rare. In the existing system, the provision tended to be used where a student had suffered long term issues that were unanticipated and disrupted their achievement, such that the impact was clearly visible in their results. If Senate was of the view that extenuating circumstances should be entirely removed from the borderline policy then the Group had no objection, though their inclusion was part of established practice.

One response queried whether the additional 0.5 per cent zone of consideration for students with extenuating circumstances was sufficient. No other response commented upon this, and the Group judged that it was generally accepted as appropriate.

One response commented that only final year extenuating circumstances not taken into account elsewhere should be considered in the borderline policy; the Group agreed.

The use of the word 'normally' in points 4 and 5 requires clarification. In what circumstances could a student who met the borderline criteria 'not' be raised? If there were no such circumstances, the word should be removed.

The Group noted that the borderline policy would become entirely rigid, as a secondary classification system, without that 'normally' to imply some discretion. It did not deem this necessarily problematic, however, and could not think of circumstances in which a student would not be raised. The Group therefore recommended that the word 'normally' should be

removed from points 4 and 5, and that point 6 should be removed again, as it became irrelevant with the removal of discretion. The 'may' in point 2 remained in place to indicate that not all cases of extenuating circumstances would be deemed sufficient to warrant the wider zone of consideration.

Several responses also noted that the word 'discretion' still appeared in point 3. This was an error, and was corrected to 'borderline policy'.

Recommendation M: borderline policy

Suggested implementation date: 2014/15, 2015/16, or 2016/17

Adopt a borderline classification policy, as follows, in place of the existing discretion policies:

- 1. Students with College Marks within one per cent of a borderline (except at the pass/fail border) shall be determined to fall within the 'zone of consideration';**
- 2. Students with College Marks within 1.5 per cent of a borderline and with significant extenuating circumstances in the final year not taken into account elsewhere may be determined to fall within the zone of consideration. However, if this approach is taken then the extenuating circumstances may not also be used as a reason to raise the classification itself;**
- 3. All students falling within a zone of consideration shall be considered as possible cases for application of the borderline policy;**
- 4. Students falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of all credits at PG level) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), shall be raised to the higher classification;**
- 5. Students falling within the one per cent zone of consideration and not meeting the requirements of point 4, but with significant extenuating circumstances in the final year not taken into account elsewhere shall be raised to the higher classification provided the SEB is confident that – without the effect of the extenuating circumstances – the student would have achieved the higher classification.**

Implementation notes and questions

- SEBs should continue to work to use the full range of marks, including those above 70. With use of the full range and full confidence in marking, a borderline policy would be unnecessary.
- The new policy could be brought in from 2014/15, from 2015/16 (with the new award rules), or from 2016/17 (once the new award rules were firmly in place). Senate is asked to determine which would be the most appropriate (the Group recommends 2015/16).
- Senate is asked to agree whether or not it would be appropriate for each DEB (not SEB) to have a policy stipulating whether or not the dissertation/project module had to be among the 50 per cent of final year credits at the level of the higher classification.

Appendix A

New undergraduate award rules

LLB, MBBS, BDS

No changes to the regulations on progression or eligibility for award.

BA, BSc, BSc (Econ), BSc (Eng), BEng

Progression

To progress from one developmental year to the next, a student must:

- i. meet all programme and pathway requirements;
- ii. fail (after resit) no more than 30 credits in any one developmental year;
- iii. maintain an average mark of 40.0 or higher, calculated across all credits taken to date and weighted to the appropriate point on the scale 1:3:6 (years one:two:three);
- iv. take and pass modules as follows:
 - a. foundation year to year one (where applicable): take 120 credits, including a minimum of 90 at level 3. Pass modules to the value of at least 105 credits.
 - b. years one to two: take 120 credits, including a minimum of 90 at level 4. Pass modules to the value of at least 90 credits.
 - c. years two to three: take 120 credits, including a minimum of 90 at level 5. Pass modules to the value of at least 195 credits.

For programmes with a compulsory year abroad or placement year, the progression requirement from the year abroad or placement year to the next developmental year shall be to take and complete modules to the credit value prescribed in the appropriate programme regulations. Individual programme regulations may specify exceptions to this rule.

Eligibility for award

To be eligible for the award of BA, BSc, BSc (Econ), BSc (Eng), or BEng, a student must:

- i. meet the requirements for the approved programme for which they are registered;
- ii. meet the requirements for the duration of registration;
- iii. take the required total credit value for the award (see below);
- iv. meet the minimum credit value at the level of the award (see below)
- v. not exceed the maximum credit value at the lowest level for the award (see below);
- vi. meet the progression requirements at the end of each developmental year, and be in the final developmental year;
- vii. achieve a minimum College Mark of 40.0 or higher.

Academic credit requirements for award

To be eligible for the award of BA, BSc, BSc (Econ), BSc (Eng), or BEng, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 360 credits, equivalent to 120 credits per developmental year;
- ii. take modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at each of levels 4, 5 and 6;
- iii. take modules to a maximum value of 150 credits at level 4 or lower;
- iv. take modules to a maximum value of 30 credits at level 3;
- v. pass modules to a minimum value of 315 credits (excluding modules at level 3)
- vi. Pass modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 6 or higher.

To be eligible for the award of BA, BSc, BSc (Econ), BSc (Eng), or BEng for programmes with a compulsory year abroad or compulsory placement year (except in the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film, and the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science), a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 480 credits, equivalent to 120 credits per developmental year;
- ii. take modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at each of levels 4, 5 and 6;
- iii. take modules to a maximum value of 150 credits at level 4 or lower;
- iv. take modules to a maximum value of 30 credits at level 3;
- v. pass modules to a minimum value of 420 credits (excluding modules at level 3)
- vi. pass modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 6 or higher.

To be eligible for the award of BA for programmes with a compulsory year abroad in the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 480 credits, equivalent to 120 credits per developmental year;
- ii. take modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at each of levels 4, 5 and 6;
- iii. take modules to a maximum value of 150 credits at level 4 or lower;
- iv. take modules to a maximum value of 30 credits at level 3;
- v. pass modules to a minimum value of 315 credits (excluding modules at level 3 and the compulsory year abroad module)
- vi. pass modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 6 or higher.

To be eligible for the award of BSc, BSc (Eng), or BEng for programmes with a compulsory placement year in the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 390 credits, equivalent to 120 credits per developmental year with the exception of the placement year (valued at 30 credits);
- ii. take modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at each of levels 4, 5 and 6;
- iii. take modules to a maximum value of 150 credits at level 4 or lower;
- iv. take modules to a maximum value of 30 credits at level 3;
- v. pass modules to a minimum value of 315* credits (excluding modules at level 3)
- vi. pass modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 6 or higher.

** This may require review, and will be followed up with EECS in 2014/15. The existing requirement of 270 is actually less than three quarters. Seven eighths would be 341.3 credits, so 330 or 345 may be more appropriate in future.*

Intercalated BSc and BMedSci

Eligibility for award

To be eligible for the award of BSc or BMedSci for an intercalated programme, a student must:

- i. meet the requirements for the approved programme for which they are registered;
- ii. meet the requirements for the duration of registration;
- iii. take the required total credit value for the award (see below);
- iv. meet the minimum credit value at the level of the award (see below)
- v. not exceed the maximum credit value at the lowest level for the award (see below);

- vi. meet the progression requirements at the end of each developmental year, and be in the final developmental year;
- vii. achieve a minimum College Mark of 40.0 or higher.

Academic credit requirements for award

To be eligible for the award of BSc or BMedSci for an intercalated programme, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 120 credits in one developmental year;
- ii. take modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 6;
- iii. take modules to a maximum value of 30 credits at levels 4 or 5;
- iv. pass modules to a minimum value of 105 credits;
- v. pass modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 6 or higher.

MEng, MSci

Progression

To progress from one developmental year to the next, a student must:

- i. meet all programme and pathway requirements;
- ii. fail (after resit) no more than 15 credits in any one developmental year;
- iii. maintain an average mark as designated in the table below, calculated across all credits taken to date and weighted to the appropriate point on the scale 1:3:6:6 (years one:two:three:four);

School	Foundation to Y1	Y1 to Y2	Y2 to Y3	Y3 to Y4
EECS; SEMS; SMS; SBCS: Pharmaceutical Chemistry with Year in Industry only	*	60.0+	60.0+	60.0+
SBCS; SPA	*	*	60.0+	60.0+
Geography	*	*	60.0+	*

** agreement on these thresholds is needed, and will be sought in 2014/15. The 'default' of ≥ 40 does not seem appropriate.*

- iv. take and pass modules as follows:
 - a. foundation year to year one (where applicable): take 120 credits, including a minimum of 90 at level 3. Pass modules to the value of at least 105 credits.
 - b. years one to two: take 120 credits, including a minimum of 90 at level 4. Pass modules to the value of at least 105 credits in year one.
 - c. years two to three: take 120 credits, including a minimum of 90 at level 5. Pass modules to the value of at least 210 credits across years one and two.
 - d. years three to four: take 120 credits, including a minimum of 90 at level 6. Pass modules to the value of at least 315 credits across years one, two, and three.

For programmes with a compulsory placement year, the progression requirement from the placement year to the next developmental year shall be to take and complete modules to the credit value prescribed in the appropriate programme regulations. Individual programme regulations may specify exceptions to this rule.

Eligibility for award

To be eligible for the award of MEng or MSci, a student must:

- i. meet the requirements for the approved programme for which they are registered;
- ii. meet the requirements for the duration of registration;
- iii. take the required total credit value for the award (see below);
- iv. meet the minimum credit value at the level of the award (see below)
- v. not exceed the maximum credit value at the lowest level for the award (see below);
- vi. meet the progression requirements at the end of each developmental year, and be in the final developmental year;
- vii. achieve a minimum College Mark of 50.0 or higher.

Academic credit requirements for award

To be eligible for the award of MEng or MSci, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 480 credits, equivalent to 120 credits per developmental year;
- ii. take modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at each of levels 4, 5 and 6;
- iii. take modules to a minimum value of 120 credits at level 7;
- iv. take modules to a maximum value of 150 credits at level 4 or lower;
- v. take modules to a maximum value of 30 credits at level 3;
- vi. pass modules to a minimum value of 420 credits (excluding modules at level 3)
- vii. pass modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 7.

Intercalated MSci

Eligibility for award

To be eligible for the award of MSci for an intercalated programme, a student must:

- i. meet the requirements for the approved programme for which they are registered;
- ii. meet the requirements for the duration of registration;
- iii. take the required total credit value for the award (see below);
- iv. meet the minimum credit value at the level of the award (see below)
- v. Not exceed the maximum credit value at the lowest level for the award (see below);
- vi. meet the progression requirements at the end of each developmental year, and be in the final developmental year;
- vii. achieve a minimum College Mark of 50.0 or higher.

Academic credit requirements for award

To be eligible for the award of MSci for an intercalated programme, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 120 credits in one developmental year;
- ii. take modules to the value of 120 credits at level 7;
- iii. pass modules to a minimum value of 105 credits.

CertHE

Eligibility for award

To be eligible for the award of CertHE, a student must:

- i. Meet the requirements for the approved programme for which they are registered;

- ii. meet the requirements for the duration of registration;
- iii. take the required total credit value for the award (see below);
- iv. meet the minimum credit value at the level of the award (see below)
- v. not exceed the maximum credit value at the lowest level for the award (see below);
- vi. meet the progression requirements at the end of each developmental year, and be in the final developmental year;
- vii. achieve a minimum College Mark of 40.0 or higher.

Academic credit requirements for award

To be eligible for the award of CetHE, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 120 credits in one developmental year;
- ii. take modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 4;
- iii. take modules to a maximum value of 30 credits at level 3;
- iv. pass modules to a minimum value of 105 credits (excluding modules at level 3)
- v. pass modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 4 or higher.

DipHE, FdA, FdSc

Progression

To progress from one developmental year to the next, a student must:

- i. meet all programme and pathway requirements;
- ii. fail (after resit) no more than 30 credits in any one developmental year;
- iii. achieve an average mark of 40.0 or higher, calculated across all credits taken to date);
- iv. take and pass modules as follows:
 - a. Years one to two: take 120 credits, including a minimum of 90 at level 4. Pass modules to the value of at least 90 credits.

Eligibility for award

To be eligible for the award of DipHE, FdA, or FdSc, a student must:

- i. meet the requirements for the approved programme for which they are registered;
- ii. meet the requirements for the duration of registration;
- iii. take the required total credit value for the award (see below);
- iv. meet the minimum credit value at the level of the award (see below)
- v. not exceed the maximum credit value at the lowest level for the award (see below);
- vi. meet the progression requirements at the end of each developmental year, and be in the final developmental year;
- vii. achieve a minimum College Mark of 40.0 or higher.

Academic credit requirements for award

To be eligible for the award of DipHE, FdA, or FdSc, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 240 credits, equivalent to 120 credits per developmental year;
- ii. take modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at each of levels 4 and 5;
- iii. take modules to a maximum value of 150 credits at level 4 or lower;
- iv. take modules to a maximum value of 30 credits at level 3;
- v. pass modules to a minimum value of 210 credits (excluding modules at level 3)

- vi. pass modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 5 or higher.

FdCert

Eligibility for award

To be eligible for the award of FdCert, a student must:

- i. meet the requirements for the approved programme for which they are registered;
- ii. meet the requirements for the duration of registration;
- iii. take the required total credit value for the award (see below);
- iv. meet the minimum credit value at the level of the award (see below)
- v. not exceed the maximum credit value at the lowest level for the award (see below);
- vi. meet the progression requirements at the end of each developmental year, and be in the final developmental year;
- vii. achieve a minimum College Mark of 40.0 or higher.

Academic credit requirements for award

To be eligible for the award of FdCert, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 120 credits in one developmental year;
- ii. take modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 3;
- iii. pass modules to a minimum value of 105 credits;

GradCert

Eligibility for award

To be eligible for the award of GradCert, a student must:

- i. meet the requirements for the approved programme for which they are registered;
- ii. meet the requirements for the duration of registration;
- iii. take the required total credit value for the award (see below);
- iv. meet the minimum credit value at the level of the award (see below)
- v. not exceed the maximum credit value at the lowest level for the award (see below);
- vi. meet the progression requirements at the end of each developmental year, and be in the final developmental year;
- vii. achieve a minimum College Mark of 40.0 or higher.

Academic credit requirements for award

To be eligible for the award of GradCert, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 60 credits in one developmental year;
- ii. take modules to the value of 60 credits at level 6;
- iii. pass modules to the value of 60 credits at level 6;

GradDip

Eligibility for award

To be eligible for the award of GradDip, a student must:

- i. Meet the requirements for the approved programme for which they are registered;

- ii. meet the requirements for the duration of registration;
- iii. take the required total credit value for the award (see below);
- iv. meet the minimum credit value at the level of the award (see below)
- v. not exceed the maximum credit value at the lowest level for the award (see below);
- vi. meet the progression requirements at the end of each developmental year, and be in the final developmental year;
- vii. achieve a minimum College Mark of 40.0 or higher.

Academic credit requirements for award

To be eligible for the award of GradCert, a student must:

- i. take modules to a total value of 120 credits in one developmental year;
- ii. take modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 6;
- iii. take modules to a maximum value of 30 credits at level 5 or lower;
- iv. pass modules to a minimum value of 105 credits (excluding modules at level 3)
- v. pass modules to a minimum value of 90 credits at level 6 or higher.

Appendix B

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation A: Eligibility for award (UG)

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

To achieve the intended award, a student must meet any programme or pathway requirements, and:

- take the specified number of credits;
- pass a minimum of seven-eighths of those credits;
- achieve a College Mark of ≥ 40.0 (≥ 50.0 for level seven awards and where otherwise specified);
- pass a minimum of 90 credits at or above the level of the award (individual award regulations may specify higher requirements).

Recommendation B: Progression (UG)

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

Full details of eligibility for award on an award-by-award basis are given in appendix A.

To progress to the next developmental year, a student must meet any programme or pathway requirements, and:

- Fail no more than 1/8 of credits across the programme;
- Fail no more than 30 credits in any one developmental year (15 for 120 credit programmes and MSci/MEng);

Maintain a weighted average mark (weighted according to the relevant award's year weightings) of ≥ 40.0 (or higher where specified, e.g. MSci and MEng).

Recommendation C: Condoned failure (PGT)

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

Examination boards may normally condone failure in the taught component of modules up to the value of 30 credits (or 15, for PGCert), where:

- i. the failed module is not designated as core; *and*,
- ii. the student has achieved a module mark of 40.0 or higher; *and*,
- iii. the average mark achieved across all modules is 50.0 or higher.

Recommendation D: resit registration

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

Students should be automatically registered for resits, but should have the option to decline these resits.

Postgraduate students may elect to decline resits and accept an award by condoned failure. However, the default recommendation shall be for these students to take up their resits.

Students should not be charged additional fees for resits.

Recommendation E: locking academic levels to academic years

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

In each developmental year, students should be required to take at least 75 per cent of their credits at or above the academic level equivalent to that developmental stage.

Exceptions (with higher requirements): MSci/MEng final years, where students must already take 120 credits at level 7.

Recommendation F: minimum credits passed at the level of the award

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

In the past, QMUL only specified that students must take a minimum number of credits at the level of the award (90, for a bachelors award). This was out of line with the sector. In the absence of a system of condoned failure, the Group recommended that:

Students must pass a minimum of 90 credits at the level of the award in order to be eligible for award. Individual award regulations may specify other requirements*.

Recommendation G: Ordinary Degree

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

Introduce a new undergraduate exit award, the Ordinary Degree, with award regulations requiring students to pass a minimum of 270 credits including a minimum of 60 at level six.

Recommendation H: classification of exit awards

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

All undergraduate exit awards should be awarded on a pass/fail basis. Where honours degrees were used as exit awards (BSc, BEng, BSc (Eng)) these should be classified as usual.

All postgraduate exit awards should be classified on the Pass/Merit/Distinction scale.

Recommendation I: Foundation Degree exit award

Suggested implementation date: 2015/16

The standard exit award for the FdA and FdSc should be the CertHE rather than the FdCert.

Recommendation J: FdA, FdSc, and DipHE year weightings

Suggested implementation date: 2014/15

Change the FdA, FdSc and DipHE (as an intended award) year weightings from 1:2 to 1:3.

Recommendation K: late summer resits

Suggested implementation date: 2014/15

Introduce late summer resits for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

Exceptions: MBBS and BDS, which follow a different academic calendar.

Recommendation L: consultation on practice examinations

Suggested implementation date: 2014/15

A consultation exercise to explore ways to familiarise students with examinations and marking schemes in advance of the May examination period.

Recommendation M: borderline policy

Suggested implementation date: 2014/15, 2015/16, or 2016/17

Adopt a borderline classification policy, as follows, in place of the existing discretion policies:

1. Students with College Marks within one per cent of a borderline (except at the pass/fail border) shall be determined to fall within the 'zone of consideration';
2. Students with College Marks within 1.5 per cent of a borderline and with significant extenuating circumstances in the final year not taken into account elsewhere may be determined to fall within the zone of consideration. However, if this approach is taken then the extenuating circumstances may not also be used as a reason to raise the classification itself;
3. All students falling within a zone of consideration shall be considered as possible cases for application of the borderline policy;
4. Students falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of all credits at PG level) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), shall be raised to the higher classification;
5. Students falling within the one per cent zone of consideration and not meeting the requirements of point 4, but with significant extenuating circumstances in the final year not taken into account elsewhere shall be raised to the higher classification provided the SEB is confident that – without the effect of the extenuating circumstances – the student would have achieved the higher classification.