



Senate

<b>Paper Title</b>	<b>Suspension of Regulations: December 2015 to February 2016 Summary Report</b>
<b>Outcome requested</b>	Senate is asked to <b>note</b> the report and consider approaches for the reduction of situations resulting in suspensions.
<b>Points for Senate members to note and further information</b>	<p>A detailed summary of suspensions of regulations requested during the period December 2015 to February 2016, and the outcomes.</p> <p>A new working group will make recommendations to Senate on means to reduce the numbers of suspensions, and to consider whether (and what) penalties should be introduced for those suspensions that do occur. The group will shortly meet for the first time.</p>
<b>Questions for Senate to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are members concerned by the number of suspensions?</li><li>• How can the number of suspensions be reduced?</li><li>• Do members feel that the suspension decisions are appropriate?</li></ul>
<b>Regulatory/statutory reference points</b>	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.
<b>Strategy and risk</b>	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.
<b>Reporting/consideration route for the paper</b>	Senate only.
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## Suspension of Regulations December 2015 to February 2016 Summary Report

### Background

A report on suspensions of regulations is submitted to each meeting of 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.

This report covers the period December 2015 to February 2016. 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.

### Summary data: December 2015 to February 2016

There were 16 requests for suspension in this quarter. In the equivalent quarter in 2014/15 there were nine, and in 2013/14 there were 12. This increase, while relatively small, is of note; numbers had been dropping fairly consistently in recent years in all quarters. 10 of the 16 suspensions concerned the Blizzard Institute.

School or Institute	Upheld	Rejected	Total
Blizzard Institute	10	-	10
History	3	-	3
Law (Centre for Commercial Law Studies)	1	-	1
Geography	1	-	1
Other (Assessment Offences Panel)	1	-	1

Faculty	Upheld	Rejected	Total
Humanities and Social Sciences	5	-	5
Science and Engineering	-	-	-
Medicine and Dentistry	10	-	10
Other	1	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16</b>

### Commentary

In this quarter, 12 of the 16 suspensions were made to resolve issues caused by the delivery of unapproved programme and/or module content, including assessment. Suspensions of this type have been an ongoing issue, but the high number in this quarter – and particularly the fact that 10 of the 12 came from one department, the Blizzard Institute – is unprecedented. Three of those covered multiple programmes or modules, and could equally be viewed as being 15 suspensions rather than 10.

Failure to deliver a programme or module in accordance with the approved regulations is a risk to academic standards, and consequently to QMUL's reputation. Senate may wish to consider whether the Blizzard Institute has sufficient control of the delivery of its academic provision and its quality assurance processes. In light of recent guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority, it is more important than ever that QMUL provides clear and correct information on programme and module content.

All of these suspensions were approved. The module and programme organisers had already delivered or communicated details of the unapproved methods to students. Approving a suspension is the only way to avoid disadvantaging students in this situation. There are currently no consequences for schools/institutes.

The majority of the cases from the Blizzard Institute were reported as being changes that had been intended, but which had failed to meet the deadlines in the previous academic year for changes to programmes or modules (or which had not gone through that process at all). This was also the case in one suspension of this type from the School of History. Reinforcement of the proper processes and deadlines is important. The new Suspension of Regulations Working Group will consider, among other matters, how this might best be achieved.

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## Appendix – suspensions of regulations December 2015 to February 2016

Ref.	Regulation	Desired outcome	Reason for request	Upheld?	Avoidable?	School/institute
2015-05	Module: assessment	Apply unapproved assessment pattern.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	History
2015-06	Programme: diet	Deliver an unapproved diet of modules.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard
2015-07	Programme: diet <sup>1</sup>	Deliver an unapproved diet of modules.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard
2015-08	Module: assessment and content <sup>2</sup>	Apply an unapproved assessment pattern and deliver unapproved syllabus content.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard
2015-09	Module: assessment and content <sup>3</sup>	Apply an unapproved assessment pattern and deliver unapproved syllabus content.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard
2015-10	Academic 5.63	Impose a non-standard and unapproved progression hurdle to move from the taught element to the project.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard
2015-11	Programme: diet	Deliver an unapproved diet of modules.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard
2015-12	Module: content	Deliver unapproved syllabus content.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard
2015-13	Module: content	Deliver unapproved syllabus content.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard
2015-14	Module: content	Deliver unapproved syllabus content.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard
2015-15	Module: assessment	Apply unapproved assessment pattern.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	CCLS
2015-16	Academic 2.137	Apply a non-standard assessment offence penalty.	QMUL error and panel choice	Yes	Yes	N/A
2015-17	Programme: diet; Academic 4.76	Take the compulsory year abroad out of sequence, and weight the developmental years accordingly.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	History
2015-18	Academic 8.90	Appoint both PhD examiners from within the University of London.	External factor	Yes	No	Geography
2015-19	Programme: diet	Deliver an unapproved diet of modules.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard
2015-20	Programme: diet	Deliver an unapproved diet of modules.	School/institute error	Yes	Yes	Blizard

<sup>1</sup> Affecting five separate, but related, programmes.

<sup>2</sup> Affecting two separate, but related, modules.

<sup>3</sup> Affecting two separate, but related, modules.