

Academic Regulations 2016-17: Summary of major changes

QMUL articulates the processes for the management of its academic provision through the Academic Regulations. This document details the significant changes made for 2016-17.

Minor changes to wording, terminology, or format that do not affect meaning are not included in this document, but the full set of regulations, with track changes, is attached as an appendix to the electronic version. The regulations for research programmes (section eight) will be considered under separate cover and merged with the other sections prior to publication.

1: Framework and governance

Intercollegiate examiners (throughout)

An intercollegiate examiner is/was an external examiner from another college of the University of London. Historically, each Subject Examination Board was required to have at least one such external, and these had a particular duty to comment on standards and processes at QMUL in comparison to their home colleges. The requirement no longer applies and all externals are in any case required to comment on standards and processes in reference to their home institutions. All reference to intercollegiate examiners has been removed. This is purely a change in terminology.

2: General Regulations

Fitness to study (2.10)

If, after a required medical examination, a student is deemed unfit to undertake or resume study or practise then their enrolment and registration may be terminated or the student may be advised or required to interrupt their studies.

The underlined section is new, providing an alternative to deregistration in some cases in which a student is expected to become fit to study in the relatively near future. The delegation framework has also been updated – these deregistrations and interruptions will be authorised by the relevant Head of School, Director of Institute, or equivalent.

Readmission of withdrawn students (2.15)

Applicants who have already been awarded an exit award from QMUL and who wish to complete their studies may be considered for admission subject to the following conditions:

- i. the exit award was not made as a result of failure to meet the requirements for progression or award;*
- ii. no more than five years have elapsed since the award of the exit award;*
- iii. the applicant returns the certificate for the exit award prior to the award of a higher qualification being made.*

A new regulation, to formalise the arrangements for students who withdrew for reasons other than failure, but wish to return to complete their studies. Typically, this occurs where a student is unfit to study for medical reasons and withdraws, but is able to return to complete the programme in the future. The conditions of the regulation ensure that students who are deregistered cannot seek readmittance by these means.

Permission to study in the United Kingdom (2.42)

All international students must provide documentary evidence of their immigration status. Any changes to immigration permission must be notified immediately to QMUL and supported with official documentation (changes include those that mean students no longer require visas). 'QMUL' here refers specifically to Academic Registry, the Research Degrees Office or the Student Office at Whitechapel; it is not sufficient for a student to inform their school or institute only. Students are not required to inform QMUL of changes that result from a decision taken by the institution, such as deregistration. All international students must also be able to present evidence of current, valid permission to study in the UK upon request. Any student who fails to comply with these requirements shall have their registration and enrolment terminated, and cease to be a student.

The only change is that the 'shall' in the final sentence previously read 'may'. It has been amended in accordance with QMUL's obligations to UK Visas and Immigration.

Intercollegiate module registration (2.46)

Students may substitute QMUL modules with modules from another college of the University of London, to a maximum value of 60 credits (across the whole programme of study), with the permission of the Academic Registrar (or nominee) and the host institution.

The only change is the addition of 'across the whole programme of study'. This had always been the intention and the actual practice, but it had not been explicitly stated.

Fitness to study on return from interruption (2.83)

QMUL may require a student due to return from interruption to produce medical evidence of their fitness to study. If this evidence is not produced, or is found unsatisfactory, the student shall not be permitted to return. In such cases a student may be permitted to extend the interruption of study (where an interruption allowance remains), or else the student may be deregistered from the programme of study.

A new regulation. Intended to ensure that all returning students are fit to study.

Permitted points of return from interruption (2.84)

Students returning from interruption shall only be permitted to enrol at the start of a semester, as designated in the Academic Calendar (not applicable to research programmes). Exceptions to this regulation shall only be granted under the provisions of the Equality Act (2010).

Only the final sentence is new; QMUL has approved three suspensions of regulations on those grounds in recent years – these will no longer be necessary.

Deregistration from a programme of study (2.96)

Heads of Schools and Institutes (or nominees) must, in accordance with the stated procedure, give a student a formal, written warning, and a specified period in which to improve one or more of attendance, participation, and submission of assessment, before deregistering them from a programme of study. In cases where a student holds a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa, QMUL is obliged to report non-engagement to UK Visas and Immigration, and may terminate enrolment and registration without this formal warning process.

Only the final sentence is new. It has been added to ensure compliance with UKVI requirements.

Failure to attend an Assessment Offence Panel (2.138)

2.138 If a student, having been given proper notice, fails to attend a hearing of the Assessment Offence Panel without a reasonable explanation, the hearing shall proceed as planned. In the event that the student is not able to attend a meeting or hearing, for good reason, it shall be rearranged.

A new regulation, establishing formal procedures for when a student fails to attend.

Reporting assessment offence penalties to external bodies (2.143)

2.143 In all cases, penalties applied for an Assessment Offence shall be reported to the Professional Capability Committee, or other professional body, such as the Law Society.

A new regulation, making explicit QMUL's reporting obligations.

Referral of appeal cases back to an examination board (2.168)

2.168 For appeals where the decision is referred back to the examination board, the Chair of the examination board shall consult with the relevant internal examiner and the Assistant Academic Registrar (Student Casework). Chair's action may be employed for this purpose.

Previously, Chair's action could only be employed where a decision was beneficial to a student. This was out of line with the standard usage of exam board Chairs' actions (which are employed for any relevant purpose), and caused delays to appeal outcomes for students while full boards were assembled. Relevant input would still be sought under the new provision, including endorsement from an external examiner in cases where that was appropriate.

3: Regulations for the Conduct of Assessment

Alternative assessment (3.8)

Exceptionally, QMUL may use its discretion to use alternative methods to those stated in the module specifications for individual candidates, either when making assessment arrangements for students with registered disabilities (on the advice of the Disability and Dyslexia Service), or when setting a resit or first sit assessment, subject to the following conditions:

- i. The alternative assessment must involve some additional assessment activity that constitutes a justifiable and efficient assessment of the intended learning outcomes;*
- ii. A full statement of the alternative assessment methods and the reasons for their use is made in a Chair's action form from the SEB Chair, submitted to the Academic Secretariat.*

A new regulation that replaces a less detailed paragraph in the Assessment Handbook. The text provides a clearer framework for the use of alternative assessment, limitations on its deployment, and a method for recording its usage. It also removes the need for the suspension of regulations to make reasonable adjustments to assessments where required under the Equality Act.

4: Regulations for Undergraduate and Graduate Programmes

Retakes (4.44-4.53)

A retake is a capped reattempt at a module, with teaching, awarded in place of a resit following failure (distinct from first takes, which relate to extenuating circumstances). Retakes are not currently available for UG students, and did not appear in the UG regulations. It had been deemed that they were not necessary, as there were no modules in which failure would require reattendance rather than a simple resit. It is not anticipated that retakes will be widely used, but the change reintroduces the possibility of their use. A small number of suspensions have been approved in recent years to use retakes for UG students, and the change will remove that necessity. Retakes can be used as a standard means of reassessment for all failures on specified modules, but that decision requires careful consideration, as (unlike resits) they attract tuition fees. The regulatory text has been taken from the postgraduate regulations – there are no changes to the nature or use of retakes other than that they would become available for undergraduates.

Approval of first takes (4.55)

Approval for a first take shall be given by the relevant Degree Examination Board or the Academic Registrar & Secretary to Council (or nominee), on the recommendation of a Subject Examination Board.

A first take is the repeat of one or more modules, with teaching, when a student misses a significant part of the original attempt due to severe extenuating circumstances and there is good reason why the student did not interrupt. The change relates to the approval mechanism. Previously, first takes were awarded only on the recommendation of an SEB (or Chair) and the approval of a DEB (or Chair). A large and increasing proportion of first takes arise from successful academic appeals, outside of the exam board process and cycle and not requiring academic judgement. It is proposed that approval could be given either by a DEB Chair (for cases that arise at the DEB itself, or that require academic judgement) or by the Academic Registrar (principally for cases arising from successful academic appeals – this would be similar to the existing powers delegated to the Academic Registrar to approve non-standard interruptions, or for students to study on a part-time basis where that mode of study was not normally available).

These changes are reflected at PGT level (5.52). The text of the surrounding regulations on retakes and first takes has also been reviewed to harmonise wording at UG and PG level, but there are no other policy changes.

Maximum duration of study for undergraduate Law programmes (4.121)

The maximum permitted duration of study for the undergraduate law programmes shall be twice the normal duration of study, as specified for each of the programmes.

This special regulation has already been approved by the Taught Programmes Board. The standard maximum duration is the normal duration plus one year. This exception has been granted as the LLB gives students two (rather than one) resit, meaning that students would still resit out of attendance with some regularity (the introduction of late summer resits has meant that this is no longer the case for students with one resit opportunity).

Input of the General Dental Council into the BDS regulations (4.148)

The BDS degree is awarded by Queen Mary University of London, however it is also governed by the General Dental Council (GDC) to ensure that the graduand meets the criteria for registration. The programme may therefore be amended / altered to reflect changes in the GDC guidelines as well as QMUL expectations of a graduate programme.

Replaces this regulation: *These regulations shall also be approved by the General Dental Council.* Amended in line with general guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority, making clear to applicants and students that there is the potential for changes that are beyond QMUL's control.

Maximum duration of study for the BDS award (4.150)

The maximum permitted duration of study for the BDS shall be seven years (the normal duration, plus two years).

This special regulation has already been approved by the Taught Programmes Board. The standard maximum duration is the normal duration plus one year. This exception has been granted in line with PSRB guidance from the General Dental Council.

Maximum duration of study for the MBBS award (4.176)

The maximum permitted duration of study for the MBBS shall be seven years (the normal duration, plus two years).

This special regulation has already been approved by the Taught Programmes Board. The standard maximum duration is the normal duration plus one year. This exception has been granted in line with PSRB guidance from the General Medical Council.

5: Regulations for Postgraduate Programmes

Proportion of dissertation/project credits for MRes programmes (5.13-14)

5.13 *The term ‘taught component’ refers to those elements of postgraduate programmes that comprise approved modules that are not research projects or dissertations. The taught component shall normally comprise modules to the value of 120 credits. The MRes is a specialised or advanced study master’s degree during which the student develops a deeper understanding of the core principles of research as well as the ability to conduct research; the proportion of modules forming the taught component may vary for this award.*

5.14 *The terms ‘research project’ and ‘dissertation’ refer to the approved modules of postgraduate programmes that comprise independent study and the production of projects or dissertations. The project or dissertation module shall normally have a value of 60 credits. The MRes is a specialised or advanced study master’s degree during which the student develops a deeper understanding of the core principles of research as well as the ability to conduct research; the proportion of modules forming the research project/dissertation component may vary for this award.*

The underlined sections are new, replacing text that indicated that the dissertation/project element would normally be weighted at 120 credits (5.13) and the taught element at 60 credits (5.14). Guidance from the QAA has changed in recent years; it makes no mention of relative credit values, and instead indicates that research and research skills are key elements throughout the entire programme, meaning that no fixed divisions are required. The sentence, “*The MRes is a specialised or advanced study master’s degree during which the student develops a deeper understanding of the core principles of research as well as the ability to conduct research,*” is taken from the QAA’s award characteristics statements. All programmes in QMUL’s MRes portfolio are already in line with the change; the amendment simply removes an unnecessary obstacle from the programme development process.

Approval of first takes (5.52)

See 4.56, above.

Progression hurdle to reach the project (variant) (5.68)

5.68 *Individual programme regulations may specify that, where the taught component must be taken and passed before a student progresses to the dissertation or project, the following variant scheme shall apply (programmes using the hurdle are listed in the Special Regulations). This variant scheme shall normally only be used for programmes with larger than usual dissertation/project modules. Where this is the case, progression shall be considered and agreed by the relevant Subject Examination Board. In such cases, a student must:*

- i. take modules to the value of 60 credits; and,*
- ii. pass modules to the value of at least 45 credits; and,*
- iii. achieve an average mark of at least 50.0 across all taught modules; and,*
- iv. achieve module marks of at least 40.0 in all modules.*

A new hurdle introduced at the request of programmes with large dissertation/project modules (mainly MRes), for which the ‘standard’ progression hurdle could not be used. The standard rule, where a hurdle is used, is that students must take 120 credits and pass 90 (points iii and iv are the same as above) before progressing to the dissertation/project. Where the dissertation/project itself exceeds 60 credits, a student cannot take 120 credits before progressing onto it.

Removal of the regulation on the classification of MSc/MA/MPA/MBA/MRes programmes where the dissertation/project is valued at fewer than 60 credits

The following regulations appear in the 2014/15 Academic Regulations:

5.74 (2015/16) *The classification of the degree shall be made according to the following scale:*

College Mark	Dissertation or project module mark	Classification
70.0 – 100.0	65.0 or higher	Distinction
60.0 or higher	60.0 or higher	Merit
50.0 or higher	N/A	Pass

5.75 (2015/16) *A variant classification scheme applies to certain programmes with a dissertation or project valued at fewer than 60 credits. These programmes are detailed in the Special Regulations, and shall be classified according to the following scale:*

College Mark	Classification
70.0 – 100.0	Distinction
60.0 – 69.9	Merit
50.0 – 59.9	Pass

5.75 was introduced as part of a wider review of PG classification in 2013/14, at the request of two programmes that used 30 credit dissertations. Both ultimately opted for 5.74, to recognise the importance of their dissertations, and 5.75 was never used. A separate programme asked to use 5.75 from 2016/17. TPB referred the matter to EQB, to reconsider the appropriateness of the regulation. EQB determined that the dissertation/project was a central and distinctive part of a QMUL masters award, and that performance in the dissertation/project should be a very significant factor in determining a student's classification, even where the dissertation/project counted for a smaller than usual number of credits.

Education Quality Board recommended the removal of regulation 5.75 (2015/16), with the result that all MSc/MA/MPA/MBA/MRes programmes would be classified on the standard regulations.

MCLinDent award regulations 5.95-5.111

These regulations concern the progression and award requirements for the Master of Clinical Dentistry award. The regulations have been updated in liaison with the Institute of Dentistry (which is the only school/institute to use the award) to reflect current practices. The amendments mainly relate to changes in terminology, and in particular the removal of the mentions of 'Parts' (the programmes now use a standard credit structure). One change of note is the progression hurdle. The MCLinDent is a two year, full time, 360 credit programme. As such, the standard progression hurdles used elsewhere cannot apply – a new hurdle to pass from developmental year one to developmental year two is required, and the following scheme (developed as far as possible in accordance with the principles of other progression rules at QMUL) has been proposed:

5.98 *To progress from developmental year one to developmental year two, a student must meet any programme and pathway requirements, and:*

- i. take modules to the value of at least 90 credits; and,*
- ii. pass modules to the value of at least 90 credits; and,*
- iii. have resit or first sits attempts remaining in any failed modules.*

Inclusion of dissertation/project credits in PGCert exit awards (5.139)

5.134 As an intended award, a Postgraduate Certificate shall normally consist entirely of taught modules, while a Postgraduate Diploma may consist entirely of taught modules, or a combination of taught modules and dissertation/project modules. These restrictions do not apply to exit awards.

This replaces:

For the Postgraduate Certificate, all modules taken shall form part of the taught component. and,

For the Postgraduate Diploma, the modules taken may comprise either the taught component of a master's programme or a combination of taught modules and the research project or dissertation.

QMUL's current policy is that dissertation/project credits cannot be used towards a PGCert exit award, and therefore a student who failed to achieve the intended award but passed 60 or more credits might not receive any exit award at all (potentially, a student might pass 105 credits and be in that position). The External Member to the PG DEBs queried this policy, suggesting that all credits should be treated equally. Education Quality Board considered the matter, and agreed with the External Member, recommending that dissertation/project modules should in future be used in the calculation of PGCert exit awards.

6: Special Regulations

These regulations comprise exceptions that apply to specific, named programmes. All changes for 2016/17 have been individually considered and approved by Taught Programmes Board, and do not require further consideration.

7: Special Regulations for Collaborative Programmes

These regulations are largely self-contained, and relate to QMUL's joint, dual, and double award provision. Additions and changes for 2016/17 have been reviewed in detail by Taught Programmes Board, Partnerships Board, and the equivalent committees at the partner organisations. General points of note include:

- Regulations for the new LLM in Commercial Law: Singapore and London, with Singapore Management University.
- Statement of the regulations applicable to the programmes run by the University of London Institute in Paris (these programmes are not collaborative, but QMUL will be responsible for their management from 2016/17).
- Regulations for the new postgraduate Law programme with the Sorbonne.
- Amended regulations for the joint programme with Nanchang University.