

Academic Regulations 2021-22: Summary of changes

1. This document summarises the changes to the Academic Regulations for the 2021-22 iteration. Minor changes (eg ordering, or to update numbering and dates) are not included in this document.

Section 1: Framework and Governance

2. Regulations **1.9-1.12** deal with the delegated powers of Senate to, respectively, the Education Quality and Standards Board (EQSB), the Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB), the Taught Programmes Board (TPB), and the Partnerships Board. Each regulation previously included a reference to further details on the associated processes being available “in the Education Manual, which is approved by the Senate”. The authority to approve the Education Manual sits with the Education Quality and Standards Board, and the regulations have been amended to reflect this. The Education Manual is a living document rather than a one that is presented for annual approval, and while some individual changes might require consideration and approval by the Senate on a case-by-case basis, the document itself does not.

Section 2: General Regulations

3. Regulations 2.4 and 2.5 deal with admission with accredited prior learning (APL) specifically for applicants who were formerly Queen Mary students. These have been added following a review of the APL Policy, which identified a gap for this category of applicants. The regulations are not new – they were included in the Academic Regulations until 2018-19, at which point they moved out into the Admissions policies, but – following consideration and approval by the EQSB in March 2021 – it was agreed that they should return to the Regulations:

2.4 An applicant who has been awarded an exit award from Queen Mary and who wishes to complete their studies may be considered for re-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.*

2.5 An applicant who has been awarded Queen Mary credits from modules, either taken standalone or as part of study toward an intended award, may be considered for readmission, subject to being in good standing with the university.

4. Regulation **2.11** deals with student behaviour. An explicit reference (and link) to Queen Mary’s values has been added. It is otherwise unchanged.

2.11 Each student must comply with the [Code of Student Discipline](#). Behaviour must not interfere in any way with the proper functioning or activities of Queen Mary or those who work or study at Queen Mary, and a student must not engage in actions that otherwise damage Queen Mary or that do not align with [Queen Mary’s values](#).

5. Regulation **2.26** is an existing regulation on fitness to study. Only the last sentence is new; this permits the placing of restrictions of activity upon students while assessments are ongoing, where a concern has been identified. That authority is delegated to the Dean for Education (or nominee). The pre-existing delegated authorities (deregistration or required interruption) are delegated to a Vice-Principal/Deputy Vice-Principal.

2.26 Queen Mary reserves the right to require any student to undertake a medical examination to determine fitness to study and/or fitness to practice; this may be required as a condition of admission, or at any time in a student’s studies. Queen Mary may require full disclosure of any report on a student’s fitness to study or practise. A student who is required to undertake a medical examination/assessment to determine fitness to study and/or fitness to practice may have placed restrictions on their activity while the assessments are ongoing. Failure to comply with any part of regulation may result in the student being deregistered from Queen Mary, or in a recommendation or requirement for the student to interrupt their studies.

6. Regulation **2.115** is the borderline classification policy. The EQSB, in March 2021, approved a number of changes in order to comply with new national principles established by UKSCQA (a group comprising UUK, the QAA and GuildHE). In summary, the discretionary elements of the policy that related to extenuating circumstances (expansion of the zone of consideration from 1% to 1.5%, or use of ECs as a proxy measure for credits at the higher level of achievement) have been removed. This is balanced by the expansion of the zone to a fixed 1.5% for all students. A clarification on the handling of advanced standing credits in the borderline policy (the new point iii) was also agreed by the EQSB. The change is not retrospective, and applies only to 2021-22 and later cohorts.

Additionally, a sentence on the role of dissertations and projects has been removed from point ii – this clarified that these modules were to be treated in the same way as other modules in this policy. This was included previously because some PGT classification rules had special requirements on the dissertation/project mark above and beyond the standard Classification Mark requirements. That provision has not applied for some time and it is now well established that all credits are treated equally, so the reference can be removed.

2.115 The borderline classification policy can only be used to recommend a higher classification where the following conditions are met. There is no discretion at the pass/fail border, as this represents a minimum standard of achievement for the award.

- i each student with a Classification Mark within 1.5 per cent of a borderline (except at the pass/fail border) is determined to fall within the 'zone of consideration' and will be considered as a possible case for application of the borderline policy;*
- ii a student falling within the zone of consideration and with at least half of their final year credits (half of 'all' credits for postgraduate taught awards) with marks at the level of the upper classification (or higher), will be raised to the higher classification.*
- iii Where the final year includes advanced standing credits from another institution, only Queen Mary credits will be considered in the borderline policy (ie at least half of the 'Queen Mary' credits must be at or above the level of the higher classification).*
- iv Where a student studies on a part-time basis, all modules comprising the full-time equivalent final year will be used in the borderline policy.*

Section 3: Assessment Regulations

7. Regulation **3.54** deals with self-certification in the extenuating circumstances process. This was a new regulation in 2020-21, and was intended to operate as a pilot. Although a full review has not been possible because the arrangements were superseded by the pandemic mitigation measures (which greatly increased the scope for self-certification for the year), it is recommended that the provision for limited self-certification should be retained. The regulation did not previously specify how long a period of time each self-certification could cover. It is proposed that – in line with the staff policy – each self-certification should cover up to seven calendar days. Other than that addition, the regulation is unchanged.

3.54 Students may self-certify up to three separate incidents of extenuating circumstances per academic year using the approved university self-certification form. This means that these claims will be considered without the submission of documentary evidence. Each self-certified claim can cover a period of up to seven calendar days. Self-certification may not be used where PSRBs prohibit their use; Schools must provide clear instructions to students where PSRB requirements prohibit the use of self-certification.

8. Regulation **3.55** is a (non-exhaustive) list of items that do not count as extenuating circumstances. With an increase in online assessments and submissions over the past year, there have been more queries on procedures where a student claims - after submission, and after the deadline has passed - to have submitted the wrong file (eg a draft, or a completely different document). This is not valid, under the fit to sit policy – the version submitted is the version that counts. While this is not a change to policy, it has been added here for quick reference.

3.55 The following are not considered extenuating circumstances, and a claim made solely on one or more of these grounds will be rejected. The list is not exhaustive. [...]
ix. submission of an 'incorrect' version of an assessment.

9. Regulation **3.57** details the possible outcomes of a successful claim for extenuating circumstances. The EQSB consulted upon and approved changes to this regulation in response to the UKSCQA's Principles for Effective Degree Algorithm Design, to remove the option of using ECs as a proxy for achievement when determining classifications. Specifically, provisions that allowed the use of ECs in the borderline classification policy (the old clause iv, the specifics of which were discussed above), and the discounting from the Classification Mark of up to 30 credits of modules affected by ECs (the old clause vi) have been removed. This ensures equality of opportunity, by providing additional assessment opportunities in which a student can evidence their level of attainment, without seeking to artificially achieve equality of outcome.

3.57 Where a Subject Examination Board approves a claim for extenuating circumstances it may approve or recommend one of the outcomes listed below; outcomes iii and iv require an additional level of approval, from a Degree Examination Board. The most common outcome is a first sit (outcome i).

i. award a first sit. This means that the missed assessment opportunity will not count, and a fresh attempt will be awarded at the next opportunity. The new attempt retains all characteristics of the missed attempt, including the attempt number and whether the module mark will be capped.

ii. discount the affected element of assessment from the module mark, if it counts for no more than 20 per cent of the module mark. This will only be considered if the Subject Examination Board is satisfied that all required module learning outcomes can be adequately tested through the remaining assessments – in most cases a student will be expected to take a first sit.

iii. award a first take (repeat the module, including the teaching, without penalty), where the specific grounds are met.

iv. where a final year student meets the minimum requirements for award, defer classification to let the student take any available first sits at the next available opportunity.

Section 4: Progression and Award – Undergraduate Programmes

10. Regulation **4.93** describes the grading scale for SSCs on the MBBS programme. The actual scale has not changed, but the description of the grades has (referencing 'satisfactory' performance for the passing grades). This has been included here for the sake of clarity, to confirm that the scale itself has not changed.

Previous text: 4.93 Performance in an SSC will be graded on the scale of A to E, where A to C are passing grades, grade D is a marginal fail, and grade E is a clear fail.

New text: 4.93 Satisfactory performance in an SSC will be graded on the scale of A+ to C-. Unsatisfactory performance is graded D as a marginal fail, and graded E as a clear fail.

Section 5: Progression and Award – Postgraduate Programmes

11. No changes other than addition of links to Section 6 for new programmes that have special regulations.

Section 6: Special Regulations

12. This section details exceptions to the standard regulations for individual programmes. These changes have already been approved by the Taught Programmes Board. They include:

- Addition of a standard progression hurdle for the new programmes MSc Tactical, Military, Operational and Austere Medicine, and MSc Paediatric Emergency Medicine.
- Addition of non-standard credit, progression, and award requirements for the new programmes MRes Economics and MRes Finance (approved by the EQSB in September 2019).
- Addition of conditions related to clinical placements and the Fitness to Practise and Professional Capability Regulations added for the MSc Physician Associate Studies.

Section 7: Special Regulations for Collaborative Programmes

13. Change to the degree classification algorithm for the BEng Materials Science and Engineering and the BEng Polymer Materials Science and Engineering with Northwestern Polytechnical University (NPU) to factor in 30 credits from developmental year one (which previously did not count towards classification).

Section 8: Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes

14. The permitted period for minor amendments has been amended. The normal period remains three months, but this can be extended to six months by agreement.