

## Academic Regulations 2011-12: What's New?

### Background

This document provides a brief summary of changes made in the *Academic Regulations 2011-12*.

Section 8, the *Regulations for Research Degrees* have been submitted to Senate under separate cover, and will be combined with these regulations after the meeting on 16 June 2011.

### General changes

The phrasing of the *Academic Regulations* has been adjusted throughout to improve clarity and consistency. A red-pen version will be provided online, but it should be noted that the majority of changes are not ones of substance.

The *Academic Regulations* have been reordered. The *Regulations for Research Programmes* now form Section 8 (the final section), rather than Section 6. The special regulations have been published together with the main regulations this year, and form Sections 6 and 7.

### Next available attempt

QMUL has always required that students take reassessments at the next available opportunity. The phrasing was previously somewhat inconsistent, sometimes adding to that requirement 'unless the SEB stipulates otherwise', and sometimes not. The latter phrase has been removed in all cases, for consistency. Reassessment shall always occur at the next available opportunity, unless regulations are suspended.

### Discretion

A clause has been added to both Sections 4 and 5 stating that a small degree of discretion is permitted in award classification, within the permitted scope of QMUL policy. This was previously covered in the terms of reference for examination boards in Section 1 (and remains there), but it was deemed helpful to be more explicit.

### Section 2: Framework and Governance

#### Suspension of regulations (1.20)

This regulation has been clarified to state that all suspensions related to examination board matters must be requested by the SEB and DEB Chairs concerned, and all suspensions relating to other matters by Heads of Schools or Institutes. Previously, the regulation implied that either set of individuals could request either type of suspension, which has never been the case.

### Section 2: General Regulations

#### Taking assessments while interrupting (2.69)

*"2.69 - A student who interrupts shall have the option of taking assessments for modules for which they completed the teaching and learning before the point of interruption. However, such students must elect either to attempt the assessments for all such modules, or for none of them."*

This is a new regulation, and is largely self-explanatory. It is intended to stop the practice of students picking and choosing certain modules for which to take the examinations during a period of interruption.

#### **Module deregistration (2.76-2.77)**

The regulations previously read that schools 'may' deregister students from modules when attendance, participation, or submission of assessment fell below the published requirements. It now reads 'shall', in keeping with the more stringent requirements of UKBA (2.76). Regulation 2.77 now states that, when a school warns a student of the possibility of deregistration from a module it shall also warn of the possibility of deregistration from the programme, where that would be a consequence.

#### **Taking a module (2.62)**

*"2.62 - A mark shall always be awarded for a module that has been taken in cases of deregistration or withdrawal. The mark awarded shall normally be the mark for any assessment completed up to the point of deregistration or withdrawal, or else zero. There shall be no right of resit where deregistration or withdrawal occurs."*

The regulation above previously permitted DEBs to award retakes (though not resits) where a student was deregistered. This provision has been removed. If, exceptionally, this is deemed appropriate, suspension of regulations may be sought.

#### **Regulations for Assessment Offences (2.86 – 2.124)**

Senate approved the recommendations of the Assessment Offences Task and Finish Group in March. These are reflected in the *Academic Regulations*. One point of note is that plagiarism has been redefined, and now explicitly includes self plagiarism.

#### **College Appeal Regulations (2.125 – 2.163)**

A time limit has been introduced for appeals on procedural grounds to the Principal's Nominee where a student is unhappy with the outcome of an appeal. There was previously no limit. A limit of four weeks from receipt of a Completion of Procedures letter has been introduced (2.159).

### **Section 3: Regulations for the Conduct of Assessment**

#### **Invigilation and the presence of internal examiners (3.17 – 3.18)**

The regulation that required an internal examiner to attend the first 30 minutes of each examination has been adjusted. It has now been divided, and reads as follows:

*"3.17 - An internal examiner familiar with the examination subject must normally be present for the first 30 minutes of each invigilated examination to provide any clarifications needed through the senior invigilator. Where no internal examiner is present (including after the first 30 minutes), students must log queries on Student Report Forms, which shall be attached to their answer scripts. Senior invigilators shall also note any queries in their reports."*

*"3.18 - The clarification of examination questions shall be limited to the correction of misprints or typographical errors, and shall be announced to all students. Under no circumstances shall examiners or invigilators seek to elucidate questions."*

The key difference is the addition of the word 'normally' in 3.17. The regulations exist to avoid situations where errors occur in papers and cannot be explained to students. Where a school or institute has previously demonstrated that this is not an issue with its papers, an internal examiner will not be required; ARCS will advise on where internal examiners are required in examinations.

### **Identity checking in examinations**

*“3.28 - Students must wear clothing that shows the full head and face, for the purposes of identity checks. There must be no head or face coverings unless these are worn for religious or medical reasons. Where head or face coverings are religious or medical, students still must prove their identity by checking against the Student ID Card upon request, in an appropriate manner.”*

This is an existing regulation, but the third sentence is an addition, for clarity. The need for the face to be visible during an identity check is already captured elsewhere in the regulations (e.g. 2.5), but it was deemed helpful to be explicit in this regulation.

### **Illegibility (3.42)**

The regulation on the marking of illegible examination scripts now reads:

*“3.42 - Students must write legibly. Illegible handwriting shall not normally be transcribed, nor shall students be permitted to dictate the contents. Any part of a script deemed illegible by an examiner shall normally be awarded no marks.”*

The only difference is the insertion of the word ‘normally’ in two places. QMUL will consider illegible scripts on a case by case basis, though the default position remains unchanged.

### **Fit to sit (3.55)**

QMUL’s longstanding ‘fit to sit’ policy has been codified as a regulation. This was covered previously, but was not explicit.

### **Extenuating circumstances (3.80 – 3.87)**

The recommendations of the Extenuating Circumstances Task and Finish Group, approved previously by Senate, have been incorporated. A new definition of extenuating circumstances has been included (3.80), and students must now submit claims at least three days before the meeting of an SEB’s EC sub-board, rather than one day before the SEB.

## **Section 4: Regulations for Undergraduate and Graduate Programmes**

### **Next available attempt for students studying abroad (4.39)**

Where a student has the opportunity to resit but is studying abroad as part of their programme of study during the next examination period, the next available opportunity shall be regarded as the first available opportunity upon their return.

### **Resits and retakes (4.23–4.30; 4.47–4.54, and throughout)**

The recommendations of the Resits, Retakes and Examination Scheduling Task and Finish Group have been built into the regulations. These affect wording and phrasing throughout Section 4, but the main changes are detailed below. A full report of the Group’s recommendations has been presented to Senate under separate cover.

#### *Number of attempts at a module (Regulations 4.23 – 4.30)*

The number of attempts for all undergraduate students enrolling from September 2011 except those on the LLB programme now stands at two, rather than three (MBBS, BDS and certain programmes on special regulations already had a limit of two attempts). These attempts comprise one first attempt (or first sit) and one resit. Current students retain the number of attempts available when they first enrolled.

#### *Retakes and first takes (Regulations 4.47 – 4.54)*

The Group recommended that retakes for undergraduate students should be discontinued (note: this does not affect first takes). The section on retakes and first takes has been heavily revised to reflect this change, and the sections on individual award rules have, where relevant, had the option of retaking in attendance to pass a module removed.

As a consequence of discontinuing retakes, one regulation has been removed in its entirety. This regulation read:

*“With the exception of BDS, LLB and MBBS, where a module is retaken the mark achieved in the retake stands and is a mark for the developmental year in which the retake occurs. The mark for the original take becomes 0 and counts for the developmental year in which the module was originally taken. The classification of the award includes both the mark of 0 for the original take and the retake module mark.” (Academic Regulations 2010-11, 4.44).*

The LLB, MBBS and BDS programmes use retakes in a slightly different form, so the word ‘retake’ has not been entirely excised from the 2011-12 *Regulations for Undergraduate and Graduate Programmes*. Where it does appear, it refers to those three named programmes. The retake/first take policy for postgraduate programmes is not affected by the change.

A change has also been made to the regulation that prevented a student awarded a retake/first take from taking a different module to that which was originally failed/discounted. In line with the above, it now only applies to first takes, but additionally it allows a first take in a different module where the original module is not running in the year of the first take (in addition to where a module has been withdrawn, or has been recoded or renamed, which were already given as exceptions). This is reflected in regulation 4.51.

## **Sections 6 and 7: Special Regulations**

The *Special Regulations* have been heavily edited, and are now ordered by School or Institute for ease of reference. These are programme regulations, and as such are approved by PMAB – there are no individual changes requiring explicit approval from Senate. However, Senate is asked to note the document, and in particular to note the large number of special regulations, and the variants *within* the special regulations.

ARCS has been working with individual schools to reduce the number of special regulations for some time, and will continue to do so. School and institutes are asked to ensure that all of their programmes with special regulations are included in the *Academic Regulations*, and that all of the special regulations listed in the *Academic Regulations* are still current.

The *Special Regulations* have been entirely reworked, but some of the main changes are as follows:

### **Entries removed**

- MSc in Freshwater and Coastal Sciences (joint with UCL) (*programme withdrawn and replaced by a new version on standard regulations*);
- GradCert in Economics and Finance (*actually standard regulations*);
- MRes in Materials Research (*actually standard regulations*);
- MA/MSc programmes in Geography: resit policy (*only applied to 2007/08 cohorts and earlier, none of whom remain*);
- MClintDent in Periodontology (*actually standard regulations*);
- MSc Biomaterials (*School advised that these regulations were incorrect*).

### **Entries added**

- MSc in Gastroenterology (6.81ff.) (*previously omitted by error*);
- MSci in Pharmaceutical Chemistry with a Year in Industry (*previously omitted by error*);
- MSci in Chemistry (*new addition*).

**Entries heavily amended**

- LLM in Computer and Communications Law by Distance Learning (6.20ff.) *(updated to reflect most recent regulations)*;
- MSci in Pharmaceutical Chemistry *(updated to reflect most recent regulations)*;
- SEFP *(updated to reflect most recent regulations)*;
- FdSc in Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation (7.3ff.) *(sections that match standard FdSc regulations removed)*;
- MSc programmes in SEMS *(classification adjusted following advice from School)*;
- MSc in Marine Ecology and Environmental Management (7.139ff.) *(sections that match standard MSc regulations removed)*.