

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

Title	Classified Degrees for those not likely to complete
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Executive summary	<p>A small number of Registered Students of the University do not complete their studies due to exceptionally adverse circumstances.</p> <p>APRC has previously considered proposals from the Progress and Awards Board (PAB), but asked that Committee to review its proposals.</p> <p>The paper provides a further set of proposals from PAB, revised in the light of the comments from APRC.</p> <p>APRC is invited to approve the proposed changes to the Code of Practice.</p>
Impact on current legislation / codes	Amendments will be required to the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment
Timing of implementation	It is proposed that the changes be implemented with immediate effect as they clearly work to the benefit of students.

Classified Degrees for those not likely to complete

Topic and Purpose of the Paper

1. APRC is asked **to consider**, and if thought appropriate, **to approve** an amendment to the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment, with immediate effect.

Background

2. A small number of Registered Students of the University do not complete their studies due to exceptionally adverse circumstances. These circumstances may include the death of a Registered Student, the diagnosis of a terminal illness or other equally significant occurrence.

At its meeting in February 2013 APRC considered proposals from the Progress and Awards Board for a minimum threshold of final year credits to be completed, above which it would be appropriate to award a classified degree in these exceptional circumstances.

In the light of its discussion APRC requested that the Progress and Awards Board reconsider the matter, taking into account:

- (a) Whether the proposed requirement to achieve 60 credits in the final year was too high, particularly as many of the University's programmes are assessed on final examination only. (APRC noted that completion of 60 final year credits would be very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve if the programme was examined at the end of the academic year.);
- (b) Whether year 1 marks should be taken into account when reviewing the student's profile;
- (c) Whether work that has been completed but not yet submitted could be submitted on the student's behalf.

Proposals/Recommendations

3. The Progress and Awards Board, having reconsidered these matters, makes the following proposals to APRC:
 - (a) That for the award of a classified Bachelor's degree, students must normally have completed substantial work from the final year of a value equivalent to not less than 40 credits, including work that has been completed but not submitted, which may be submitted on the student's behalf.
 - (b) For the award of a classified Undergraduate Masters degree, students must normally have completed 160 stage 3 credits with at least 40 credits at Level M.

- (c) Year 1 marks should not be taken into account.
4. That the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment be amended as follows:

12.5.6

Where there is no prospect that a Registered Student will be able to complete their programme of study, for example because of death or significant illness, the Board of Examiners may recommend to the Progress and Awards Board the award of either a Certificate of Higher Education; a Diploma of Higher Education; an aegrotat degree; or a classified degree. For the award of a classified degree the Registered Student must have achieved both:

a) For a Bachelors degree:

- i) Successful completion of stages 1 and 2 of their programme, and any additional stages which form part of the programme requirements, for example a year abroad; and
- ii) At least 40 credits in the final stage of the programme.

Or

b) For an Undergraduate Masters degree:

- i) Successful completion of stages 1 and 2 of their programme, and any additional stages which form part of the programme requirements, for example a year abroad; and
- ii) At least 160 stage 3 credits, including at least 40 credits at Level M.

The weighted mean mark for the final stage will be determined by using the total number of credits achieved in the final stage as the “sum total of the credit values of the modules required” for that stage (Regulation 7).

These circumstances are likely to be rare and exceptional such that the Extenuating Circumstances and Fit-to-Sit procedure will not apply. The Head of School will make an appropriate recommendation to the Board of Examiners after receiving independent, third-party evidence confirming the circumstances. The Board of Examiners, having endorsed the recommendation, will further recommend the award to the Progress and Awards Board which has final authority on the matter.

Arguments to Support Proposal

5. The University is committed to offering a distinctive high-quality experience for its students by, amongst other things, enhancement of the student experience including student support facilities. The above proposal fits with this aim, and will provide Schools, Registered Students and their families with appropriate recognition of the ability and potential of those who are prevented, for quite exceptional reasons, from completing their studies.