

**Academic Policy and Regulations Committee**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Report on Chair's Actions (July – October 2013)</b>
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<b>Executive summary</b>	The Committee is invited to receive a report on Chair's actions taken since its last meeting.
<b>Impact on current legislation / codes</b>	As indicated in the paper.
<b>Timing of implementation</b>	Amendments have already been approved and effected.



## **Report on Chair's Actions July- October 2013**

### Purpose of the Paper

To report to the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee the amendments to legislation approved by the Chair between July and October 2013.

### Proposals Approved

#### 1. Regulation 5.3 – Registration Status

5.3.1 (m) – to be revised as follows:-

- (i) *Any Student whose payment of tuition fees or repayment of any loan is in arrears shall be excluded from the University upon non-payment following the issue of appropriate reminder letters and further charged a default interest of £50 or 1.5% whichever is greater.*

A recent Office of Fair Trading letter to the Vice-Chancellor alerted the University to a review of the terms and conditions in contracts between students and their universities. The University of Birmingham does not prevent graduation or matriculation where there are outstanding accommodation fees. The Director of Legal Services advised that the above amendment would be prudent and ensure this fact is clear in our contract with students.

#### 2. Code of Practice on Admissions

A set of minor amendments has been approved clarifying responsibilities and procedures in advance of the 2014 admission cycle.

#### 3. Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech on Campus

The Code has been amended as follows:

- 1.5 It is a core right of the University's staff and students to work and study unhindered by hostility, offensive conduct or intimidation. This principle extends to conduct online and on social media.
- 1.8 The University Good Campus Relations Group, reporting to the Registrar and Secretary, will ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place in order to allow all its stakeholders to report any instance (direct or indirect) of alleged hate crime, harassment, threat and intimidation and then to have

their concerns investigated promptly and thoroughly, with the appropriate measures taken in response, including, where necessary, reference to the Police.

The amendments were proposed in the light of recent outcomes from investigations into critical incidents involving students.

#### 4. Code of Practice on Student Attendance and Reasonable Diligence

1.3 This Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with the following

- Section 7 of the University Regulations
- Code of Practice on ~~Student Development and Support in Schools~~ Personal Tutoring and Academic Feedback

1.7 Staff initiating the steps detailed in this Code of Practice are reminded that Registered Students failing to show reasonable diligence may be experiencing personal or academic difficulties. Staff are required at all stages in the process to document their communications and meetings and to strongly urge Registered Students to access appropriate advice and support. Staff with acute concerns over the behaviour or vulnerability of Registered Students should contact Student Services immediately.

These changes have been made so that staff referring to the Code remain aware of the support mechanisms available to students who may be experiencing difficulties.

#### 5. Regulation 5 - Registration

##### 5.2.2 Visa Requirements

(a) A Registered Student whose programme requires the Registered Student to study in the UK (on either a full-time or part-time basis or for a period or periods of time) must have the appropriate permission to enter the UK and right to study in the UK, which must at all times reflect the Registered Student's circumstances, programme and mode of study. The University is entitled to withdraw from the University a Registered Student whose permission to remain in the UK or whose right to study comes to an end or who is unable to provide appropriate evidence of such permission and/or right.

(with subsequent renumbering)

The amendment clarifies students' and the University's responsibilities in relation to UK immigration law.

#### 6. Regulation 6 – Programmes of Study

6.1.2(p) (vi) Each programme comprises a number of stages, at the completion of which a formal decision is taken as appropriate on progress to the next stage or on the award of the qualification. Each stage normally consists of modules amounting to 120 credits (taken, in the case of full-time Registered Students, within a single University session) except stage 3 of undergraduate masters programmes, which consists

of 240 credits (taken, in the case of full-time Registered Students, over two University sessions). A student failing to achieve a minimum of 70 credits in the first year of stage 3 of an undergraduate masters programme may be required to withdraw.

The amendment means that a student failing to achieve a minimum of 70 credits in the first year of stage 3 of an undergraduate Masters programme may be required to withdraw. This follows on from amendments to the Adjusted Regulations for Undergraduate Masters programmes approved by APRC in June.

7. Code of Practice on Leave of Absence

9. Failure to Return from a Leave of Absence

9.1 A Registered Student will be deemed to have withdrawn voluntarily from the University if he/she does not return to study by the approved end date of the Leave of Absence.

9.2 A Registered Student's voluntary withdrawal in these circumstances shall not affect their liability to pay any unpaid tuition fees or other fees or charges.

10. Deemed Leave of Absence

10.1 In exceptional circumstances, and only when it is considered to be in the best interests of the Registered Student, the University may decide to change a Registered Student's registered status to Leave of Absence. The University may do so without first consulting with or seeking the permission of the Registered Student. The University will notify the Registered Student of its decision and of the implications of the Leave of Absence as soon as practicable.

10.2 This provision shall not be used in circumstances when the Code of Practice on Suspension from Study on Health Grounds applies.

The amendments will permit a student to be placed upon a Leave of Absence without their application for such a change of status.

8. Code of Practice for the Assessment of Research Degree Theses

“Where no internal examiner can be appointed, for example in extremely specialised subject areas and for some jointly awarded degrees, two external examiners will be appointed (~~see paragraph 2.29 of the Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers~~). Note: In these cases, the chairperson, who should have some knowledge of the subject area of the thesis in general terms, should undertake the administrative duties of the internal examiner, in addition to chairing the oral examination. (See also Section 5 and Appendix A of this Code of Practice)”

The amendments reflect the award of joint degrees and delete references to the Section on Assessment in the Code of Practice for Supervision was removed from the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year.

9. Guidance to Students on Outside Employment

As an employer, the University currently operates the following limits in the hours of work it will offer to students:

Full-Time Undergraduates

15 hours a week during term-time; with no restriction during vacation periods or other periods where attendance is not required (for example upon completion of all scheduled examinations).

Full-time Postgraduates

15 hours a week throughout the year, except during holiday periods approved in line with the Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers. (This ~~limit~~ is in line with restrictions imposed by certain funding bodies, such as the Research Councils)

The amendment clarifies when the limits on working hours should apply.