

University of Birmingham

**Request for Exemption from Regulations Governing the Accreditation of Prior
Learning for a Number of Undergraduate Engineering Programmes in the
College of Engineering and Physical Sciences**

Topic and Purpose of the Paper

1. To request Exemption from Regulations concerning the accreditation of prior learning for the programmes listed in 2. below in order that marks attained by students of Taylor's University College in the second year of the programme, where the examinations have been set and marked by academic staff of the University of Birmingham, might be used in the calculation of the final award. This Exemption from Regulations shall last until the end of the 2009/10 session.
2. The programmes covered by this exemption are:
BEng Chemical Engineering
BEng Civil Engineering
BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering
BEng Mechanical Engineering

MEng Chemical Engineering
MEng Civil Engineering
MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering
MEng Mechanical Engineering

Consultation

3. Members of academic staff from the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences and Taylor's University College, and members of Academic and Student Administration.

Proposals/Recommendations

4. That the programmes listed in 2. above shall, in the case of students who have attained credit during their second year at Taylor's University College, and whose second-year examination were set and marked by academic staff of the University of Birmingham, be exempt from Regulation 5.1.2 (c), which reads as follows:
The marks awarded in assessment of pre-awarded credit do not count towards the final degree classification, which is therefore determined entirely upon marks taken from modules taken within the University of Birmingham.
5. That the programmes listed in 2. above shall take second year marks awarded at Taylor's University College into account in the calculation of the final award, where these marks are for examinations that have been set and marked by academic staff from the University of Birmingham.

6. That this Exemption from Regulations shall apply to all students covered by the Twinning Agreement between the University of Birmingham and Taylor's University College who sit second-year examinations set and marked by the University of Birmingham up to and including the 2009/10 session. The final cohort of students affected will therefore normally graduate in 2010/11 for BEng students and 2011/12 for MEng students.
7. Students who transfer onto the programmes listed in 2. above from an institution of higher education other than Taylor's University College shall continue to be subject to the Regulations as relevant to accrediting prior learning, that is their credits will be counted towards the requirement for the final award, but any marks awarded outside the University of Birmingham shall not be considered in calculation of the final award.

Background

8. A Twinning Agreement was signed between the University of Birmingham and Taylor's University College in 2004. This made arrangements for the University of Birmingham to accept onto programmes in the then School of Engineering cohorts of students from Taylor's University College after the completion of their second year of study. The students would then complete the requirements for their BEng or MEng programmes at the University of Birmingham. The award would be calculated and made by the University of Birmingham.
9. The two years undertaken by students at Taylor's University College were to be effectively the same as those undertaken by students at the University of Birmingham, with the University providing advice and guidance on the development of the teaching materials.
10. All assessment, other than final examinations in the second year, was to be marked by Taylor's University College and moderated by the University of Birmingham. Final examinations in the second year were to be marked and moderated by the University of Birmingham.
11. The University of Birmingham had the final decision on all academic matters, including marking and moderating work.
12. With the award of University College status to Taylor's, the University of Birmingham will relinquish academic control over programmes in an institution of equal status. An addendum to the Twinning Agreement will restrict the role of the University of Birmingham to that of external examiner; Taylor's University College may continue to draw upon University of Birmingham advice and guidance for the first two years of the programmes listed in 2. above. Future cohorts of students from Taylor's University College will therefore be accepted into the University of Birmingham on the same basis as any other students, with their credits being accepted as evidence of accredited prior learning, but their marks not being used towards calculation of the final award.

Arguments to Support Proposals/Recommendations

13. The Regulation that the University does not accept marks awarded by another institution of higher education is based on two principles, neither of which are applicable in this case:
 - a. firstly, that there is no quality control on the behalf of the University of Birmingham in the marking of another institution. This does not apply

in this case, as the University of Birmingham had effective control over academic quality as part of the agreement.

- b. secondly, that marks awarded at another institution do not reflect attainment of the University of Birmingham's learning objectives on that programme. This does not apply in this context, as Taylor's University College currently teaches the similar modules with the similar learning outcomes as the University of Birmingham. Furthermore the University of Birmingham moderates marking including ensuring that students at Taylor's University College are being assessed as reaching learning objectives in the same way as students at the University of Birmingham.
14. The Twinning Agreement between the University of Birmingham and Taylor's University College, signed in 2004, shows that the University of Birmingham had approved this process, although no Exemption to Regulations was officially recorded at the time. Therefore, this Exemption to Regulations is formalising an already approved existing practice.

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