

21<sup>st</sup> May 2009

University of Birmingham

**LLB for Graduates – Two Year Programme**

**Topic and Purpose of the Paper**

1. APRC is invited to **consider** the following request, which has been made by the Birmingham Law School, for effect in 2009/10, relating to Adjusted Regulations and 30 credit modules on the LLB for Graduates two year programme.

**Proposal(s)/Recommendation(s)**

2. That, in accordance with Regulation 7.3.1 (b) (iii), which states that:

*Principal Academic Units who wish to use Adjusted Regulations as detailed in the Code of Practice on Adjusted Regulations and Bachelor's Degrees and the Code of Practice on Adjusted Regulations and Undergraduate Master's Degrees may do so with the permission of Senate.*

APRC recommends to Senate that the Birmingham Law School be allowed to use Adjusted Regulations in respect of its LLB for Graduates Two Year Programme.

**Background to the Paper and Consultation**

3. At its meeting on 24 May 2007, APRC considered a request from the Birmingham Law School that the Two Year LLB for Graduates programme be subject to Adjusted Regulations indefinitely, due to the second year 30 credit module structure, which would not be re-designed in the foreseeable future. The Birmingham Law School also requested that the then transitional arrangements be applied for students graduating in 2006/07 and 2007/08, in circumstances where students might be disadvantaged in the award of a classified honours degree.
4. APRC Minute 07/15 records the decision from that meeting, which was:  
*That the exemption request for the LLB (2 year) programme not be approved. That the School be asked to review the structure of the programme to ensure that students were not disadvantaged, under regulations, by the inclusion of 30 credit modules.*
5. Further to a recent enquiry from Academic and Student Administration regarding the implementation of the APRC decision and the outcome of a review of the programme's structure, the Birmingham Law School has requested that APRC reconsider its decision in the light of the rationale set out below.

## **Argument in Support of the Proposals**

6. The Birmingham Law School opted into the former transitional arrangements in 2005/06 because the design of the final year of the three year LLB programme was such that some modules (including one compulsory one) were 30 credits in size. The structure was modified in 2007/08, with the new programme being comprised of 30 credit modules in years one and two, and 20 credit modules (including options) in the final (third) year.
7. The LLB for Graduates is a two year programme that has to include core modules in both years due to the shorter time period over which study takes place. Therefore, the final (second) year has continued to employ core 30 credit modules in order to satisfy the professional requirements for a qualifying law degree.
8. Whilst the transitional arrangements were withdrawn from 2006/07, they have continued to apply to the four year degree programme up to and including the 2009/10 academic year. However, they cease to be needed for post 2006 entries, except for the LLB for Graduates programme, thereby prompting the Birmingham Law School's request to APRC in May 2007 for the use of Adjusted Regulations to resolve the problem whereby any final year student on the LLB for Graduates programme who failed one 30 credit module would also fail to achieve the qualification.
9. However, as there was no change in the LLB for Graduates programme structure in 2007/08, it is understood that the Birmingham Law School continued to use the transitional arrangements to ensure that its students were not disadvantaged by the operation of 30 credit modules in terms of the students being awarded a classified honours degree.
10. In reviewing the position, the Birmingham Law School's view is that APRC's decision can only be applied to the LLB for Graduates from 2009/10 when a new structure will be introduced. From 2009/10 there will cease to be any 30 credit modules in the final year of the three and four year LLB degrees, so the problem lapses after this academic year (with the exception of any fourth year students still being assessed under the old structure in 2009/10).
11. Therefore, in view of this information, the Birmingham Law School has requested that APRC reconsiders its 2007 decision, with the recommendation that the LLB for Graduates Two Year programme be allowed to utilise Adjusted Regulations during the academic year, 2009/10.
12. The Code of Practice on Adjusted Regulations and Bachelors Degrees, which is attached as Appendix A, provides that the Adjusted Regulations model uses a sliding scale based on volume of credit achieved to decide degree classification; the classification obtainable being limited by the number of Level H credits achieved.

Paul Fantom  
Policy Officer  
Academic & Student Administration  
(p.a.fantom@bham.ac.uk/ 48471)

**1. Principles**

The Adjusted Regulations model uses a sliding-scale based on volume of credit achieved to decide degree classification. The model limits the classification obtainable on the number of Level H credits achieved.

**2. Methodology for Applying Adjusted Regulations to a Student on a Bachelor's Degree**

- 2.1 Confirm that the student has sufficient credit at Levels C and I as under existing Regulations (minimum of 100 credits at Level C and a minimum of 100 credits at level I).
- 2.2 Establish the number of credits at Level H and the maximum degree classification possible. If the student has 100 or more Level H credits then profiling can apply and the degree classification determined using this methodology. [Note that under Adjusted Regulations the "usual" minimum total credit requirement for a Class I or Class II (i) is 300 credits.]
- 2.3 If the student has less than 100 credits at Level H, then calculate the weighted average and determine the degree classification to be awarded from the table below. Explicitly, under the Adjusted Regulations, profiling does not apply for students with less than 100 Level H credits.

Weighted average	Total Level H credits		
	90	80	70
70 or above	<i>Class II (ii)</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Pass</i>
60 - 69	<i>Class II (ii)</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Pass</i>
50 - 59	<i>Class II (ii)</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Pass</i>
40 - 49	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Class III</i>	<i>Pass</i>
35-39	*	*	<i>Pass</i>
34 or below	*	*	*

\* Lower alternative qualification may apply according to number of credits against at levels C and I.

- 2.4 For students on 4 year Bachelors degrees (eg BSc programmes with a Year Abroad), the credits accrued from the Year Abroad (120) are not counted, and the sliding scale above applied as for 3 year programmes. However, the average mark from the Year Abroad will contribute to the calculation of the overall weighted average.