

**University of Birmingham**  
**Exemption from Regulations for the LLB for Graduates**

**Topic and Purpose of the Paper**

1. APRC is invited to **consider** the following request for Exemption from the Regulations, which has been made by the Birmingham Law School, to last during 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 during the 2009-10 session, during which time a review of the programme will be undertaken to avoid the current difficulties.

**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 requested that APRC reconsider its decision in the light of the rationale set out below. That request was received as APRC.09.05.03.
6. APRC affirmed its decision from 2007, and recommended that if the current structure of the programme made it impossible to successfully complete the programme having failed any one module that the programme be redesigned.

7. The Birmingham Law School accepted APRC's advice to redesign the programme, but sought permission to apply Adjusted Regulations during 2009-10 whilst redesign was undertaken.
8. This proposal was circulated to members of APRC and received support from some members. No member expressed any opposition to the proposal.

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

9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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).
14. 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.

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