

**University of Birmingham**

Title	<b>Report of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee</b>
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Senate "sponsor"	Professor A J Randall, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Students)

Purpose	Senate is invited to <b>receive</b> the attached Report and to <b>note</b> the Committee's action.
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Executive Summary	<p>1. The Academic Policy and Regulations Committee <b>reports</b> the following substantive amendments/revisions to academic and student related legislation to come into effect in 2009/10:</p> <p>(a) The revision of the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment, with respect to student access to and retention of scripts, to clarify an ambiguity and ensure consistency with Regulations.</p> <p>2. The Academic Policy and Regulations Committee <b>reports</b> the following other amendments/revisions to academic and student related legislation to come into effect in 2010/11:</p> <p>(a) Revisions to Regulation 6.2.1 (a).</p> <p>(b) Revisions to the existing Code of Practice on Student Attendance and Reasonable Diligence and to the Code of Practice on the Conduct of Centrally Co-ordinated Formal Written Examinations.</p> <p>3. The Academic Policy and Regulations Committee <b>reports</b> the approval of its Terms of Reference and Membership.</p> <p>4. The Academic Policy and Regulations Committee <b>reports</b> the consideration of a paper on the provision of awards leading to the Degree of Master of Philosophy and the approval of the establishment of a working group to consider issues and concerns identified in respect of the University's MPhil provision.</p>

Timing	<p>1(a) to come into effect from 2009/10</p> <p>2(a) and 2(b) to come into effect in 2010/11 (unless otherwise stated)</p>
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University of Birmingham

**Report from the meeting of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee  
held on 8 October 2009**

**ITEMS FOR REPORT**

The Committee's Terms of Reference state:

*To consider and, if thought appropriate, approve on behalf of the Senate proposals for amendments to, exemptions from and creation of new academic and student-related Regulations and guidance / policies / Codes of Practice below the level of Regulation.*

1. Accordingly, under delegated authority, the Committee **reports** that it has approved substantive revisions to academic and student legislation, to come into effect in 2009/10.

(a) Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment

The Committee **reports** that it considered a paper seeking amendment of the Code of Practice to clarify an ambiguity relating to student access to and retention of scripts. It was noted that there were contradictions between Regulation 7.2.3 (e) (ii), which states that *all answer books and other papers shall remain confidential to the Examiners*, and the Code of Practice, which states that *all written examination answer books and other papers shall **normally** remain confidential* (Clause 7.1) and that *principal academic units may, at their discretion, allow Registered Students to view their examinations scripts* (Clause 7.2).

The Committee agreed that the principles concerning student feedback from examinations and possible access to examination scripts should be considered by APRC, via circulation or a working group. However, until such time as the principles have been agreed and any amendments to Regulations and the Code of Practice approved, APRC also agreed that the current Code of Practice Clause 7.1 should be amended to more accurately reflect the Regulations and that the current Code of Practice Clause 7.2 should be suspended.

2. Accordingly, under delegated authority, the Committee **reports** that it has approved other revisions to academic and student legislation, to come into effect in 2010/11.

(a) Revision to Regulations

The Committee **reports** that it considered and approved the proposed amendment to Regulation 6.2.1 (a) to ensure that the minimum duration of the Bachelor of Nursing (BNurs) in Regulations is in accordance with practice.

(b) Revision to Codes of Practice

The Committee **reports** that it considered and approved revisions to the following existing Codes of Practice (deletions struck through, insertions underlined):

- The Code of Practice on Student Attendance and Reasonable Diligence, to clarify an ambiguity concerning the Points Based System.

(i) Clause 2.3.1 to read:

*Points-Based System*

*Under the Points-Based System, the University is required to define a series of specific ~~40~~ contact points to verify the attendance of non-European Economic Area (non-EEA) Registered Students; non-contact from non-EEA Registered Students ultimately requiring the University to make a report of the non-EEA Registered Student's non-attendance to the UK Borders Agency. The nature and definition of these contact points may vary between programmes of study and research, and will be determined by individual Schools.*

(ii) Clause 3.1.2 to read:

*Where a non-EEA Registered Student has missed ~~the~~ 10 specified contact points, as determined by the School, the School will inform Academic and Student Administration, who will notify the UK Borders Agency, regardless of whether the Reasonable Diligence procedure has been invoked.*

- The Code of Practice on the Conduct of Centrally Co-ordinated Formal Written Examinations, to ensure consistency of approach.

(i) Clause 3 to read:

*The rubric of each examination question paper must: comply with the Guidance provided by Academic Services.*

(ii) Clauses 2.3.1 to 2.3.3 to be deleted:

~~2.3.1 Provide clear and unambiguous information as to what is permitted and is not permitted in an exam.~~

~~2.3.2 Identify any permitted texts.~~

~~2.3.3 Specify whether calculators may be used (and any restrictions relating to these).~~

(iii) Clause 6.5 to read:

*Where a School is not represented through the Senior Invigilator in a venue, or where the appointed Senior Invigilator could not reasonably be expected to resolve any student queries which may arise in connection with the School paper(s), the School will arrange for a competent person to attend the examination venue for the initial fifteen minutes of the sitting for the purpose of resolving any queries. If a query arises after the initial fifteen minutes the School should arrange for a competent person to attend the venue to resolve*

*the query. Where a number of different examinations from a School are taking place in a single venue, this duty may involve more than one person. This requirement does not apply to overseas sittings.*

- (iv) Having regard to the proposed additional clause requiring students to leave all question sheets and answer books provided during an examination sitting in the venue when they left, some members expressed the concern that this prevented students from discussing the questions with their peers (an important part of the learning process) and felt that those students who might require a question sheet at a later stage to assist them should wish to lodge an appeal, could be potentially disadvantaged. Therefore, the Committee requested that the Examinations and Congregations Office provide the following further information:
- The costs and benefits of providing additional copies of question sheets to be made available to those students requiring them immediately after the end of the examination and outside of the examination venue.
  - The costs and benefits of publishing an electronic version of the question sheets immediately after the end of the examination period.

3. Terms of Reference and Membership

The Committee **reports** that it considered and approved revised terms of reference and membership of APRC, attached as Appendix A, and that all vacancies on the Committee had now been filled.

4. The provision of awards leading to the Degree of Master of Philosophy

The Committee **reports** that it considered a paper arising from a request from U-QAEC, which had identified a number of concerns raised by external examiners with regard to the University's MPhil provision. The Committee approved the establishment of a working group, with terms of reference to be approved by APRC, to consider and formulate a strategy for resolving the issues and questions identified.

Paul Fantom  
Secretary to Academic Policy and Regulations Committee  
November 2009

**Academic Policy & Regulations Committee**

Secretary: Mr Paul Fantom (Academic and Student Administration)

**Terms of Reference**

- To keep under review policy and academic regulations for the operation of taught and research programmes.
- To monitor national and international developments in relation to academic policy and to recommend appropriate actions and responses. This includes policy developments related to academic provision and experience, including student complaints and discipline.
- To consider and, if thought appropriate, approve on behalf of the Senate proposals for amendments to, exemptions from and creation of new academic and student-related Regulations and guidance / policies / Codes of Practice below the level of Regulation.
- To consider and make recommendations to the Senate and the Council regarding proposals for amendments to, exemptions from and creation of new academic and student-related clauses of Statute, Charter and Ordinances.
- To monitor strategic risks relevant to the work of the Committee as determined by the Strategic Risk Register.
- Acting as a Progress and Awards Board:
- To determine recommendations made notwithstanding regulations (where special or mitigating circumstances have not been considered by the School) received from Boards of Examiners for taught programmes.
- To determine decisions concerning the progress and status of individual research students, within and notwithstanding regulations.
- To approve, for research students, recommendations relating to the non-standard appointment of supervisors, examiners and Chairs.
- To identify quality issues related to teaching, student progress, and examination processing, and to forward exception reports as appropriate to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.
- To receive annually, for taught programmes:
  - Reports of Schools' examination procedures, including those for special or mitigating circumstances;
  - Summary data of Primary Appeals Committee cases referred back to Boards of Examiners.
- To receive annually, for research programmes:
  - A report on completion and submission rates;
  - A report on examiners' recommendations;
  - A report on student statuses;
  - A report on the non-standard appointment of supervisors, examiners and Chairs.

## Constitution and Membership for 2009/10

		Term of office (to 31 July)
Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Quality Assurance and Student Affairs)	Professor Jeff Bale	2011
Vice-President (Education and Access) of the Guild of Students	Ms Brigid Jones	2010
One representative from Directors of Research & Knowledge Transfer	Professor Glyn Humphreys, College of Life and Environmental Sciences	2011
One representative from Directors of Education	Dr Cillian Ryan, College of Social Sciences	2011
Two representatives from Heads of Schools	Professor Achim Jung, College of Engineering & Physical Sciences	2011
	Professor Ken Dowden, College of Arts & Law	2011
One Representative from HoAPs or equivalent	Mr Nick Ross, College of Medical & Dental Sciences	2011
Director of Legal Services	Ms Carolyn Pike	<i>Ex officio</i>
Assistant Director (Academic Policy and Quality)	Ms Clare McCauley	<i>Ex officio</i>

### In Attendance

Representatives from Corporate Services (where appropriate): Student Life, Academic Quality Unit, Hospitality and Accommodation Services, Corporate Relations, Academic Services.

### Reporting Relationship

Reports to Senate and provides advice and reports to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee on academic policy and regulations and on general issues that may arise.