

21st May 2009

**Clarification to Regulations Concerning the Calculation of Award where the
Programme Involves Modules Marked as Pass/Fail**

Purpose of Paper

1. To provide a clarification to the Regulations governing the determination of the award on bachelors and undergraduate masters degree programmes, ensuring that marks awarded for credits taken at another Higher Education Institution and accepted at the University of Birmingham under Accreditation of Prior Learning, and any nominal marks attributed to a module that is pass/fail are not used in the calculation of final award.

Consultation

2. These proposals have been consulted upon within Academic and Student Administration.

Proposal

3. That the following be added to Regulations as clause 7.3.1 (d) (iii) (with subsequent renumbering of clauses 7.3.1 (d) (iii)-(vii) as 7.3.1 (d) (iv)-(viii)):
Where a module has not produced a numeric mark, due to being classed as pass/fail or because the credit has been awarded for Accreditation of Prior Learning, then that module shall make no contribution to the calculation of the final degree classification.

Background

4. Regulation 7.2.1 (f) allows for the existence of modules where the final result is either pass or fail:
The assessment of each module shall generate a single mark between 0 and 100 except in cases specified by the Senate or a delegated authority where the mark shall be pass or fail...
This is to allow for modules assessing e.g. professional placements involving actual people as patients or clients, where performance was either satisfactory or not, and where any further degree of differentiation between performance would be inequitable due to the differing nature of the patients or clients.
5. Regulation 5.1.2 (c) addresses the contribution of Accredited Prior Learning credits to the calculation of the final degree, 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.

6. Normal practice within the University of Birmingham is to only use numerical marks awarded for modules delivered by the University in order to calculate the final award.

Arguments to Support Proposal

7. The proposed clause does not introduce any new processes or requirements into Regulations, merely repeating existing practices.
8. The Regulations allow for pass/fail modules to be approved, but give no indication as to whether they shall be allowed to contribute towards the determination of the award classification.
9. Although Accredited Prior Learning is disqualified from being used in the calculation of awards in Regulation 5.1.2 (c), it is unlikely that anyone consulting Regulations for information on classifying awards will consult Section 5, Admission and Registration, for such information. Therefore, the same message bears repeating in Section 7, Assessment, Progression and Award.