

University of Birmingham

Title	<b>Report of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee</b>
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Purpose	Senate is invited to <b>receive</b> the attached Report and to <b>note</b> the Committee's action.
Executive Summary	<p>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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The creation of a unified Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment, replacing the separate Assessment Protocols for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.</li><li>2. The creation of a Code of Practice on Student Attendance and Reasonable Diligence, replacing the current Code of Practice on Reasonable Diligence.</li><li>3. The amendment of Regulations governing Professional Doctorates.</li><li>4. The revision of Regulations by the more explicit incorporation of intercalated programmes.</li><li>5. The clarification to Regulations concerning the calculation of an award where programmes involve modules marked as pass/fail.</li></ol>
Timing	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2009

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**Report from the meetings of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee  
held on 24 April and 21 May 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.*

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.

1. Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment

The Assessment Protocols took the form of two sets of discrete standalone documents, dealing with undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes respectively. The Protocols were lengthy documents that featured a significant number of common sections and clauses. The Committee approved a review of the Protocols at its meetings in 2008 and this led to proposals to rationalise the regulatory provision through the adoption of a new and unified Code of Practice. Members of the University Progress and Awards Board were consulted on the changes.

2. Code of Practice on Student Attendance and Reasonable Diligence

The existing Code of Practice on Reasonable Diligence was derived from a document that had been in existence for a number of years, and whilst it had been periodically updated, was judged to be due for extensive revision to take account of feedback from across the University.

In addition, at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009, the Learning and Teaching Committee received a paper on Attendance Monitoring and the implementation of the Points-Based System (Minute 09/10 refers), and resolved that:

- (i) The monitoring requirements for non-EEA students should be written into the revised Code of Practice on Reasonable Diligence.
- (ii) Schools and Colleges be permitted to identify contact points for their own programmes as appropriate, with the requirement that for each full programme year (or length of programme if shorter than an academic session), there must be at least ten identifiable contact points.

This recommendation was subsequently endorsed by University Executive Board on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.

Accordingly, work was commenced to develop a revised Code of Practice and to assist in this process, a working group was convened, including academic, administrative and student members.

Initial feedback from across the University was fed into working group and the existing Code of Practice was reviewed systematically to identify those aspects of the document that were useful and which should be retained, together with those that were deemed to be either unwieldy and in need of modification or replacement.

Following this process, the Committee approved a new Code which incorporated UEB's decision. The Committee acknowledged that this was a sensitive issue, but one that was required to ensure that the University was able to comply with government requirements.

### 3. Professional Doctorates

The University had ten programmes leading to the award of distinct professional doctorates. These were regulated under a Regulation (6.1.3 (a) (vii)) which predated 1997/8, when it was first encoded in the Research Postgraduate Regulations that came into force in that year for the whole University, under the title 'hybrid doctorate'. No changes had been made to this Regulation since, although it had been renumbered as part of the wholesale revision of Regulations undertaken in 2007/8.

Following a review, including consultation with the relevant programme directors in Schools, the regulations have been amended to reflect current practice and national guidelines by increasing the number of credits for taught modules within these programmes from 120 credits to 180 credits.

### 4. Intercalated Programmes

The University offered a number of intercalating programmes, i.e. programmes where a student, normally between second and third year, suspended their registration on the programme on which they were registered in order to follow a programme of study which developed new practical or academic skills. Following a review of existing legislative provision, the Committee approved amendments to ensure the provision was made more explicit in the Regulations, but which continued to reflect current practice within this suite of programmes.

### 5. Modules marked as Pass/Fail

The Committee approved a clarification of Regulations to ensure that marks awarded for credits taken at other Higher Education institutions and accepted by the University under Accreditation of Prior Learning, and any nominal marks attributed to a module that was pass/fail, would not be included in the calculation of the final award.

All changes to academic policy and regulations would be available from <http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/study/support/governance/> and notified to Schools, Colleges and students by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009.