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**SENATE**

**Subject: Change in minimum requirements for passing an UG Programme Part**

**Origin: Learning and Teaching Committee, 3 June 2010**

**Senate action required:** Senate approval is sought for an increase in the minimum requirements for passing a Part of an undergraduate programme, and associated amendments to Regulation XX *Undergraduate Awards.* The change is for introduction on a phased basis (to avoid impacting on students already on course) with effect from the start of 2010-11. A report from Programme Quality Team to LTC follows below, together with the relevant Regulation changes.

At its meeting on 11 February 2010, in its consideration of the report on use of ‘condonement’ for undergraduate students in 2008/09, LTC noted:

The use of condonement was bound up with the interplay of programme regulations and University regulations (i.e. Regulation XX) in setting the criteria for progression, as well as with the core or optional status of individual modules within programmes. There was considerable variation across the University in the criteria for progression and for the award of a degree and the University had been advised to review procedures in this area at the last Institutional Audit.

It was agreed in the light of this discussion to consult departments on a proposal that the minimum requirements in Regulation XX for passing a Part of an undergraduate programme should be raised *from* 100 credits anda minimum of 20% in all modules *to* 100 credits and a minimum of 30% in all modules (plus, as now, fulfilling any additional requirements for the specific programme). It was noted that this change would have to be phased in if it was agreed. The AD(T)s were asked to take initial soundings at their next Directorate meetings.

The AD(T)s took soundings as requested and reported back to Programme Quality Team. The Directorates had been supportive, although Science had added a rider to its response, that the change was likely to lead to an increase in the use of condonement.

Before concluding its discussions on the issue, PQ Team asked the Student Records & Examinations Office to provide relevant student performance data from 2008-09. The data indicated that 239 of 9781 successful UG students who were registered for 120 credits in 2008-09 would have failed if the new minimum requirements had been in force, 167 of these in Science departments.

It was accepted that the number of SAP reassessments as well as the use of condonement might increase, at least in the short term, but it was felt that student behaviour would adapt to the higher requirement, and the numbers of students eventually failing would be considerably fewer than the data might seem to suggest. PQT felt it should be reiterated, however, that condonement should continue to be used only in cases of marginal failure - to ‘rescue’ students who failed to achieve the requirements for progression or the award of a degree because of a poor performance in one or two modules that was out of line with the rest of their mark profile.

The majority of undergraduate programmes already had above-minimum requirements for progression or the award of a degree, and it was felt the introduction of a higher minimum, which would affect only a minority, would increase consistency in programme requirements across the institution.

**PQ Team resolved to recommend to LTC that the proposed increase in the minimum requirements be approved, for introduction on a phased basis (to avoid impacting on students already on course) from the start of 2010-11. LTC has endorsed this recommendation which is now presented for approval by Senate.**

This change will necessitate an amendment to Regulation XX *Undergraduate Awards*, para.26, as set out below. The change will also necessitate changes to programme regulations for 2010-11 if they currently specify criteria for passing Part A that are lower than the new minimum standard.

### Criteria for Passing a Part

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| 26. | Students shall be deemed to have passed a Part of a programme if they have:  accumulated a minimum of 100 credits from the Part  and  fulfilled any additional requirements (as detailed in paragraph 27 hereof) for their specific programme  and  (for students commencing Part A or joining a cohort commencing Part A from 2004/5 to 2009/10 inclusive) achieved a module mark of at least 20% in all modules in the Part  or  (for students commencing Part A or joining a cohort commencing Part A from 2010/11 onwards) achieved a module mark of at least 30% in all modules in the Part. |