**Review of Undergraduate Condonement 2009/10 Academic Year**

**1. Introduction**

This is the sixth annual report for the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) reviewing the use of undergraduate condonement. This report aims to illustrate trends in the use of condonement over the past six academic years and provide statistics for comparison.

**2. Background**

In June 2005, Senate approved changes to Regulation XX to permit students to progress to the next part of their programme, or to receive an award, without necessarily meeting all the requirements (i.e. to be condoned). Condonement may only be used under the following conditions:

* The module or modules involved have a total weight of not more than 20 credits in any Part of the programme.
* For students in Parts B, C and D, the condonement has the approval of the appropriate External Examiner, having regard to national standards in the discipline.
* The reasons for the exercise of discretion are recorded in the Programme Board report.

For non-finalist students to be considered for condonement, they must have already taken advantage of all their reassessment rights. Finalist students can be condoned without necessarily taking advantage of all their reassessment rights, providing this does not remove the opportunity of improving their degree classification by taking reassessment.

**3. Summary Findings**

* 1. Over the course of the main Summer and SAP Programme Boards 2009/10, a total of 149 students were condoned, this represents an 11% decrease on the previous year. It should be noted that the overall University undergraduate population decreased by 6% between the 2008/9 and 2009/10 academic years. 58 of these students were finalists of which 49 were not required to take reassessment (i.e. they would not have been able to improve their degree classification by taking reassessment).
	2. 17 of the students condoned in the 2009/10 academic year had been previously condoned in either the 2008/9, 2007/8, 2006/7, 2005/6 or 2004/5 academic years (exactly the same number as in 2008/09). No students in 2009/10 have been condoned more than once previously. This indicates that condonement is being used as intended (to condone marginal failure) and not being used to repeatedly progress underperforming students through their degree.
	3. In previous years it had been noted that the use of condonement had been steadily increasing within the Faculty of Science from 2.41% in 2004/5 to 4.42% in 2008/09, however the figures for 2009/10 show a decrease to 3.59%. The use of condonement within the Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities has remained reasonably consistent over the same period. Four departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities did not use condonement in 2009/10, it is recommended that these departments at least consider the use of condonement at their programme boards to ensure equitable treatment of students across the University. It would be important to be able to prove that condonement had been considered if a student was to appeal at a later date.
	4. There has been a significant year on year increase in the use of condonement within the Department of Chemistry from 2.66% in 2006/7 to 6.25% in 2009/10.
	5. Five academic departments condoned more than 3% of their total student population. These were Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Chemistry, Information Science, School of Mathematics and Physics.
	6. The average (mean) margin of condoned failure across the University has remained constant at 4% between 2008/9 to 2009/10, down from 5% (2007/8), 6.5% (2006/7), 7.4% (2005/6) and 8.2% (2004/5). This indicates that departments are using condonement to 'rescue' students who have failed to progress or qualify for an award due to poor performance in one or two modules which is out of line with an otherwise good profile of marks.

**4. Recommendations**

* 1. Condonement should continue to function in much the same form as in the 2009-10 academic year.
	2. Very few students seem to be condoned year after year, but it is still considered to be important to monitor the progress of all previously condoned continuing students. Departments should continue to ensure that they are meeting the intended learning outcomes of their programme of study
	3. All University departments should at least consider condonement at their programme boards, even if they do not actually use it, to ensure the equitable treatment of students across the University.
	4. Particular attention should be paid to departments where the use of condonement is high. For example, the School of Mathematics, Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Department of Information Science, Department of Chemistry and the Department of Physics.

Katie Isaac

Mark Lister

Meredith Coney

**APPENDIX I**

**Analysis of students condoned by Department and Faculty**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2004/5** | **2005/6** | **2006/7** | **2007/8** | **2008/9** | **2009/10** |
| **Academic Department** | **Students condoned 2004/5** | **Dept UG Pop 2004/5** | **% condoned 2004/5** | **Students condoned 2005/6** | **Dept UG Pop 2005/6** | **% condoned 2005/6** | **Students condoned 2006/7** | **Dept UG Pop 2006/7** | **% condoned 2006/7** | **Students condoned 2007/8** | **Dept UG Pop 2007/8** | **% condoned 2007/8** | **Students condoned 2008/9** | **Dept UG Pop 2008/9** | **% condoned 2008/9** | **Students condoned 2009/10** | **Dept UG Pop 2009/10** | **% condoned 2009/10** |
| **Aero/Auto** | 10 | 466 | 2.15% | 6 | 487 | 1.23% | 10 | 521 | 1.92% | 18 | 557 | 3.23% | 8 | 603 | 1.33% | 8 | 622 | 1.29% |
| **Chem Eng** | 3 | 176 | 1.70% | 7 | 193 | 3.63% | 4 | 215 | 1.86% | 3 | 238 | 1.26% | 2 | 270 | 0.74% | 7 | 286 | 2.45% |
| **Civil and Building** | 0 | 744 | 0.00% | 3 | 784 | 0.38% | 1 | 811 | 0.12% | 4 | 829 | 0.48% | 9 | 907 | 0.99% | 3 | 879 | 0.34% |
| **Electronic & Electrical** | 16 | 437 | 3.66% | 12 | 438 | 2.74% | 15 | 449 | 3.34% | 10 | 451 | 2.22% | 15 | 504 | 2.98% | 14 | 465 | 3.01% |
| **Wolfson School** | 6 | 806 | 0.74% | 3 | 803 | 0.37% | 10 | 748 | 1.34% | 4 | 778 | 0.51% | 5 | 885 | 0.56% | 4 | 815 | 0.49% |
| **Total Faculty of Engineering** | **35** | **2629** | **1.33%** | **31** | **2705** | **1.15%** | **40** | **2744** | **1.46%** | **39** | **2853** | **1.37%** | **39** | **3169** | **1.23%** | **36** | **3067** | **1.17%** |
| **Chemistry** | 6 | 249 | 2.41% | 13 | 277 | 4.69% | 8 | 301 | 2.66% | 15 | 349 | 4.30% | 21 | 395 | 5.32% | 23 | 368 | 6.25% |
| **Comp Sci** | 15 | 584 | 2.57% | 23 | 528 | 4.36% | 7 | 475 | 1.47% | 23 | 420 | 5.48% | 24 | 489 | 4.91% | 10 | 467 | 2.14% |
| **Ergonomics** | 1 | 469 | 0.21% | 2 | 504 | 0.40% | 0 | 554 | 0.00% | 5 | 583 | 0.86% | 5 | 148 | 3.38% | 0 | 134 | 0.00% |
| **Info Sci** | 3 | 384 | 0.78% | 3 | 396 | 0.76% | 7 | 415 | 1.69% | 10 | 403 | 2.48% | 5 | 421 | 1.19% | 14 | 374 | 3.74% |
| **Maths** | 18 | 420 | 4.29% | 20 | 484 | 4.13% | 29 | 532 | 5.45% | 32 | 549 | 5.83% | 37 | 616 | 6.01% | 18 | 572 | 3.15% |
| **Physics** | 13 | 158 | 8.23% | 14 | 184 | 7.61% | 7 | 189 | 3.70% | 3 | 169 | 1.78% | 18 | 211 | 8.53% | 15 | 195 | 7.69% |
| **Materials** | 2 | 143 | 1.40% | 3 | 170 | 1.76% | 4 | 174 | 2.30% | 9 | 173 | 5.20% | 0 | 206 | 0.00% | 3 | 203 | 1.48% |
| **Total Faculty of Science** | **58** | **2407** | **2.41%** | **78** | **2543** | **3.07%** | **62** | **2640** | **2.35%** | **97** | **2646** | **3.67%** | **110** | **2486** | **4.42%** | **83** | **2313** | **3.59%** |
| **Business School** | 0 | 1090 | 0.00% | 0 | 1065 | 0.00% | 0 | 1099 | **0.00%** | 4 | 1105 | **0.36%** | 2 | 1369 | **0.15%** | **5** | **1094** | **0.46%** |
| **D & T** | 0 | 419 | 0.00% | 0 | 408 | 0.00% | 0 | 418 | **0.00%** | 0 | 426 | **0.00%** | 3 | 488 | **0.61%** | **0** | **475** | **0.00%** |
| **Economics** | 11 | 435 | 2.53% | 0 | 462 | 0.00% | 0 | 445 | **0.00%** | 10 | 463 | **2.16%** | 9 | 505 | **1.78%** | **11** | **509** | **2.16%** |
| **English & Drama** | 0 | 459 | 0.00% | 0 | 463 | 0.00% | 0 | 463 | **0.00%** | 1 | 465 | **0.22%** | 0 | 482 | **0.00%** | **1** | **465** | **0.22%** |
| **PHIR** | 10 | 407 | 2.46% | 4 | 443 | 0.90% | 9 | 496 | **1.81%** | 13 | 516 | **2.52%** | 3 | 576 | **0.52%** | **2** | **551** | **0.36%** |
| **Geography** | 1 | 448 | 0.22% | 0 | 480 | 0.00% | 0 | 492 | **0.00%** | 1 | 486 | **0.21%** | 0 | 509 | **0.00%** | **0** | **481** | **0.00%** |
| **SSEHS** | 10 | 699 | 1.43% | 13 | 660 | 1.97% | 7 | 649 | **1.08%** | 6 | 586 | **1.02%** | 2 | 1105 | **0.18%** | **11** | **1058** | **1.04%** |
| **Art & Design** | 0 | 869 | 0.00% | 0 | 852 | 0.00% | 0 | 833 | **0.00%** | 0 | 815 | **0.00%** | 0 | 818 | **0.00%** | **0** | **819** | **0.00%** |
| **Social Sciences** | 0 | 503 | 0.00% | 2 | 500 | 0.40% | 0 | 490 | **0.00%** | 0 | 489 | **0.00%** | 0 | 500 | **0.00%** | **0** | **479** | **0.00%** |
| **Total Faculty of SSH** | **32** | **5329** | **0.60%** | **19** | **5333** | **0.36%** | **16** | **5385** | **0.30%** | **35** | **5351** | **0.65%** | **19** | **6352** | **0.30%** | **30** | **5931** | **0.51%** |
| **Total University** | **125** | **10365** | **1.21%** | **128** | **10581** | **1.21%** | **118** | **10769** | **1.10%** | **171** | **10850** | **1.58%** | **168** | **12007** | **1.40%** | **149** | **11311** | **1.32%** |

Table note: ‘Dept UG Pop’ is the population of the department based on undergraduate students with active module registrations for that academic year.

**APPENDIX II**

**Analysis of the maximum/minimum marks (in %) condoned by Department based on minimum level of performance required for progression.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Academic Department** | **Min** | **Max** | **Mean** | **Median** | **Mode** |
| Aero/Auto | 3 | 11 | 6.25 | 6 | 6 |
| Chem Eng | 2 | 10 | 5.43 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| Civil and Building | 1 | 5 | 2.67 | 2 | n/a |
| Electronic & Electrical | 3 | 12 | 6.14 | 6 | 3 |
| Wolfson School | 3 | 10 | 5.75 | 5 | 5 |
| **Total Faculty of Eng** | **2.4** | **9.6** | **5.248** | **4.8** | **4.75** |
| Chemistry | 1 | 12 | 5.74 | 6 | 7.0 |
| Comp Sci | 2 | 20 | 6.7 | 6 | 6 |
| Ergonomics | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Info Sci | 1 | 19 | 7.43 | 7 | 12 |
| Maths | 2 | 18 | 5.22 | 5 | 2 |
| Physics | 2 | 30 | 13.5 | 14 | 2 |
| Materials | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| **Total Faculty of Science** | **1.4** | **14.4** | **5.8** | **5.6** | **4.4** |
| Business School | 3 | 9 | 5.8 | 5 | 5 |
| D & T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Economics | 1 | 14 | 3.6 | 3.0 | 2 |
| English & Drama | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| PHIR | 5 | 12 | 8.5 | n/a | n/a |
| Geography | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0 |
| SSEHS | 1 | 5 | 3.36 | 4 | 5 |
| Art & Design | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Social Sciences | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total Faculty of SSH** | **1.3** | **4.7** | **2.6** | **1.8** | **1.8** |

Table note: The above table illustrates the maximum, minimum and average marks (in %), per condoned student. This is based on the minimum level of performance that would have been required for progression if the student had not been condoned. Where mode states n/a there were not enough cases of condonement to calculate this average.