Education Matters - September 2013

Education Matters brings you the latest education news from University of Birmingham and Higher Education.

University of Birmingham News

Changes to University Regulations and Codes of Practice from 1st August 2013

The academic and student related Regulations (i.e. Sections 5 to 8 of the Regulations) and Codes of Practice are no longer cohort based but are updated annually on 1st August for all Registered Students for the succeeding academic session.

This note includes information regarding substantive changes to academic and student Regulations, Codes of Practice, Policies and Guidance, which were approved by the Academic Policy & Regulations Committee, and which come into effect on 1st August 2013.

1. Changes to University Regulations
   (a) Regulation 7.3.2(c)
   An amendment permitting “affiliate students” who subsequently accumulate credits equivalent to a University award to be recommended for that award.

   Schools are asked to note this new provision and to ensure that appropriate tutorial advice is given at an early stage to students showing an interest in pursuing further study.

   (b) Regulation 7.4.5(a)
   An amendment requiring that a viva be held for Research Masters degrees when revise and resubmit is being proposed.

   (c) Regulation 6.1.2
   An amendment allowing students undertaking an undergraduate masters degree to take up to 20 level I credits in place of 20 level H credits at stage 3 of their programmes.

2. Changes to University Codes of Practice, Policies and Guidance
   (a) Code of Practice on Student Concerns and Complaints
      - The new Code of Practice replaces the previous Student Concerns
and Complaints Procedures.

- The Code merges the former Formal Stage and the Complaints Review Panel Stage into a single Complaints Review Panel stage. The Code also provides a proper procedure for allegations of bullying and harassment made by students about staff and/or other students to be investigated which the Harassment and Bullying Policy, currently in draft, will require.
- Details of mediation have been removed from the main body of the text and are now in an appendix which lays out, in a less prescriptive manner, how mediation may operate.

(b) Code of Practice on Admissions

- A number of amendments to clarify responsibilities and procedures for the 2014 admissions cycle.

(c) Code of Practice on Plagiarism

Amendments to the Code include the following points:

- Remit of plagiarism detection has been widened to include “any work required to make decisions on academic progress”. Introduction of penalties for formative assessments that do not receive a mark but are used for progress decisions
- Students to be permitted to request review of their case by a College Misconduct Committee rather than the former Review process.
- A detailed outcome letter will be the only formal record of a hearing
- Clarification of the remit of College Misconduct Committees to hear cases of serious plagiarism afresh.

(d) Code of Practice on Procedures for Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee

- A set of changes to provide greater clarity in dealing with misconduct and fitness to practice cases. The student is to be responsible for providing evidence independently translated into English (where relevant); a full hearing will not normally take place if the student admits the offence, but that the hearing will proceed if the student has only partially admitted the offence; the student’s final statement to be based solely on evidence presented to the hearing; adjustments to timeframes.
- An amendment to require that a member of staff holding current GMC registration should be a member of panels hearing the cases of MBChB students.

(e) Code of Practice on Primary Appeals

- Confirmation that Committees’ conditions are being met
- Appellants to be allowed to graduate pending the outcome of appeal
- Membership of Appeals Committees
- Details of how student submissions and related information is managed and who has access to documentation.

(f) Code of Practice on Senate Review
- Details of how student submissions and related information is managed and who has access to documentation.

(g) Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances

- Clarification that when late diagnosis is received readjustments cannot be made retrospectively.

(h) Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses

- An amendment to permit the examiners to require major corrections following revision and resubmission.
- An amendment that a viva be held for Research Masters degrees when revise and resubmit is being proposed.
- Option to award lower qualification of MA/MSc by research for a thesis submitted for a two-year MPhil submission.

(i) Code of Practice on Leave of Absence Procedures

- New sections (9 & 10) to identify options in the event of a student’s failure to return from leave of absence and the facility for the University to deem a student to be taking leave of absence when in his/her best interests.

(j) Code of Practice on Adjusted Regulations for Undergraduate Masters Programmes

- A change requiring students on these programmes to achieve a minimum of 70 credits at the end of year of stage 3 of that programme. (Regulation 6.1.2(p)(vi) has also been amended to enable this change to take effect.)

(k) Code of Practice for Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers

- Responsibilities of Postgraduate Researchers in relation to use of Turnitin and accessing editorial help

(l) Policy on Student Representation System

- A requirement that a Subject Librarian be incited to attend at least one meeting of each Staff Student Committee each year.

(m) Guidance on Student Grievances to Council

- Details of how student submissions and related information is managed and who has access to documentation.

(n) Guidance to Students on Outside Employment

- An amendment that will allow greater flexibility in the time that students may take for outside employment.

3. University Code of Ethics

The University Council has also approved a new document, the University Code of Ethics. This provides an overarching guide to ethical conduct grounded in four core activities: teaching, research and knowledge transfer, fundraising and gifts, and finance (investments and procurement).
The Code is available [here](#); the University Regulations and Codes of Practice are available [here](#); and the detailed changes are documented in the APRC Committee papers.

In the case of queries, please contact Stephen Gower (ex. 44892).

**Welcome 2013**

Over the past few months staff from the University have been working hard to complete the planning for Welcome 2013 which takes place across the campus in September. There will be a range of events and activities taking place during this period to welcome our new students, their parents/friends/relatives and welcome back our returning students for the 2013/2014 academic year.

**Arrivals Weekend (21 -22 September)**

During Arrivals Weekend the main University campus will once again be open to new students and their families, with events, activities and catering outlets available. There will be:

- New for 2013: Welcome Addresses for parents of new students (hosted by Professor Jeff Bale).
- Wellbeing Fairs (Saturday and Sunday 1-5pm, Great Hall) showcasing important support services to new students and their parents.
- welcome Hubs for International/EU (Avon Room, University Centre) and UK students (Mason Lounge, Arts Building) – Saturday and Sunday 12-4pm, to ensure that students can obtain their ID cards, visa holders have their right to study checks, students can access letters to confirm their status as a student, and any questions they may have can be answered.
- Events to facilitate networking and interaction between students who are less likely to engage in wider event provision. These include networking events for Students with Children and Mature UG students.
- New for 2013: Welcome Information Marquee, hosting a range of student support and student information stands (located in Chancellor’s Court).
- campus and orientation tours for students and their parents.
- International Student Help Desk (located in the Welcome Marquee).
- A wide range of events and activities offered in Halls of Residences across the campus and at the Guild of Students.

**Welcome Week (23 – 27 September) and beyond**

There are Vice-Chancellor’s Welcome Addresses (one per College) taking place for new undergraduate students during Welcome Week, Welcome Hubs and the Welcome Information Marquee. During Welcome Week there are also College based induction events, activities in Halls of Residence, events organised by the Guild of Students and much more.

New for 2013 is the introduction of International Day on Thursday 26th September. Events will take place across the campus linking International Day
together. The Welcome Marquee will also host ‘Continents in a Cup’ – an opportunity for new UK and International students to taste food and flavours from around the world and experience different elements of cultures (through entertainment and knowledge sharing).

The Welcome Back Hub (Avon Coffee Lounge, University Centre) will be open to support our returning students with obtaining replacement ID cards, right to study checks (where required) student status letters, Registration queries and information about council tax. It is open from Monday 30th September to Friday 4th October.

Where can I find out more?
The University Welcome website provides our new students with relevant information about events taking place and advice they may need relating to Welcome. The Welcome Timetable section contains key information for our new students about their course induction and provides them with a wide range of events and activities that are happening across the campus during the Welcome period.

There are resources available for use by University staff relating to Welcome on the Staff Welcome resources website, which contains information for staff to support induction and Welcome across the University. It also includes Welcome branded templates, case study examples, toolkits and other information colleagues may find useful.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kelly Hamilton, Assistant Director, Student Services (ex. 49008).

Higher Education News

On 11 July 2013, the European Commission launched a new White Paper on internationalisation, entitled ‘European Higher Education in the World’. The White Paper, which builds on the ‘Modernising Europe’s Higher Education Systems’ and the ‘Rethinking Education’ initiatives, represents a clear statement on the value of internationalisation for employability and competitiveness, as well as placing an encouraging emphasis on the global dimension of higher education, looking beyond the EHEA to the rest of the world.

While acknowledging that there can be no one-size fits all approach to internationalisation, the Commission argues that a comprehensive internationalisation strategy should include the promotion of student and staff mobility; the promotion of internationalisation at home and digital learning; and a focus on strategic cooperation, partnership and capacity building and urges Member States and higher education institutions to incorporate these elements into national and institutional approaches.

The White Paper also includes a summary of the ways in which the European Union can add value in this area through financial incentives and policy support. For example, Erasmus+, the new programme for 2014-2020, will provide mobility opportunities to and from non-EU countries which could
benefit up to 135,000 learners and staff; will support the development of international HEI consortia; and will provide funding for strategic partnerships in cooperation and innovation.

The European Commission will also work to increase the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area by improving quality and transparency within the region and beyond. This includes the promotion of European standards and tools such as ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, the development of the ‘U-Multirank’ transparency tool for the purposes of improving student choice and active promotion of the European Higher Education Area abroad. Finally, the Commission will support global cooperation for innovation and development through multilateral and bilateral policy dialogues; promotion of the EIT; and support for evidence-based policy-making.

The White Paper was discussed at the first Education Council meeting of the Lithuanian Presidency on 15 – 16 July 2013. The Commission will now engage with the European Parliament, stakeholder organisations and Member States to progress this initiative.

**Erasmus+**

The new programme for education, training, youth and sport was agreed on 26 June under the name ‘Erasmus+’ following negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council. The political agreement includes funding for a pilot new Erasmus Student Loan Guarantee Facility. This will provide loans for students pursuing Masters-level study in another European country which the UK supports, as well as funding for extra-European mobility. The budget envelope currently under consideration for Erasmus+ is approximately €13bn. This figure is again dependent on the outcome of the MFF adoption. Of the total financial envelope, 77.5% will be allocated to the "education and training" sector, including HE and an additional 3.5% will go to a new Loan Guarantee Facility. The youth sector will receive 10%, the sport sector 1.8%.

**UK engagement**

The UK sector has achieved most of the policy objectives put forward in the International Unit’s recent mission to Brussels, a letter to MEPs in June, and IU lobbying of EU, UK and other decision makers.

There will be a lot of details yet to sort out to ensure that our universities will be able to capitalise on all of the opportunities and the International Unit will continue to monitor and where appropriate influence the process.

In the UK, the Government's review of the balance of competences between the UK and the European Union, launched last year, has now reached the area of ‘Research and Development.’ BIS leads this and has issued a call for evidence. The IU and UUK will respond. An IU Policy Note with more information has been sent to the sector.

(Taken from the **UK HE International Unit** Newsletter)

See the [Education Matters web pages](http://www.educationmatters.org.uk)
Contact Dr C. Teeling for information, or with any comments.