

LTC09D117

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Subject: Condoned progression

1. When LTC approved the recommendation of the CCS Review Group to draft new regulations requiring students to pass all modules it requested the Review Group to consider a regulation allowing students to progress to the next stage of their study or to leave with appropriate exit awards not having passed all modules. Currently this is permitted in CCS and CMF regulations where it is called condoned failure. Should it be incorporated into the new CCS regulations it is intended for it to be called condoned progression.
2. The Review Group have discussed condoned progression but has not come to a consensus view on it. This paper sets out some of the issues discussed by the Review Group and seeks a view from LTC on whether condoned progression should be incorporated into the draft of the new CCS regulations.
3. The issue is more complicated than a simple yes or no because a decision to allow condoned progression then leads on to the circumstances where it will be allowed.
4. It is possible that the Review Group have not considered all the factors relevant to condoned progression and LTC is reminded that a decision to allow or not allow it at this stage is only to ensure that appropriate draft regulations can be constructed to be tested with Schools. Following discussions at Faculty LTQCs it is envisaged that amendments to the draft regulations will be made, giving another opportunity to consider condoned progression.
5. Points made against incorporating condoned progression into regulations.
 - a) It is envisaged that transcripts of marks and other indicators of student achievement (e.g. Diploma Supplement, HEAR, GPA) will increasingly become important. In the view of Prof Burgess, who Chaired the UUK review of degree classifications, the HEAR will replace Honours degree classification within the envisaged lifetime of the revised CCS regulations. Condoned progression may allow a student to exit with an award but it will be clear on whatever marks statement they get that they did not pass all modules and this may disadvantage them.
 - b) Allowing condoned progression in regulations may undermine other features of the revised CCS regulations aimed at encouraging student engagement with their studies.
 - c) Allowing condoned progression in regulations will introduce a complexity to them and the supporting infrastructure that will be more costly to manage than the simpler system of not allowing condoned progression.
 - d) Even without incorporating condoned progression in regulations there will be a mechanism to ensure that a student who has failed a module is not required to

withdraw from their studies if there are acceptable mitigating circumstances for their failure. This is the concession route.

- e) Some staff have an expectation that not allowing condoned progression and requiring students to pass all modules will lead to an unacceptably high failure rate. However, this is not clear as historical data for Schools where students are not required to pass all modules cannot be extrapolated forward to the revised regulations. It is likely that the expectations of both staff and students will be affected by the regulation change. Comparing recent results for students from NAM/AHP, where they have to pass all modules and condoned progressions is not allowed, with results of students in Schools where they do not have to pass all modules shows that the failure rate of students is higher in some of the latter Schools than it is in NAM/AHP.
 - f) If we get our admissions and student support right, then all students should be capable of getting at least 40% in their modules if they engage with them appropriately.
- 6) Points in favour of incorporating condoned progression into regulations.
- a) It is a needless stress for students and expense for Schools to force to reassessment, or require to withdraw, a student who has narrowly failed to get 40% for a module.
 - b) In many degrees there are modules whose learning outcomes are not central to the award learning outcomes (e.g a single-subject science degree where a student chooses to take a humanities module).
 - c) Peer Universities within the 1994 Group allow condoned progression in some of their courses.
 - d) Though Free Choice within degree profiles is anticipated to be discontinued in the new CCS there will be degree profiles allowing students to be as intellectually adventurous as the current Free Choice arrangement allows, and condoning progression should be permitted for such students if they inadvertently pick wrong modules.

LTC is requested to decide whether condoned progression should feature in the draft CCS regulations.

If the answer is yes, LTC is asked for further guidance.

- 7) Should condoned progression be limited to modules that do not contribute directly to the learning outcomes of the award? Note that one suggestion is that for modules which do contribute directly to the learning outcome of an award a student may fail the module (through for example a poor exam mark) yet attain the relevant learning outcome (by passing another item of assessment testing the relevant outcome).
- 8) Should condoned progression be limited to a 'narrow fail'? If so what constitutes a narrow fail, 39%, 35%, or lower?
- 9) Should condoned progression be limited to a number of credits? E.g. 20 credits in each of the study years? Or should it be limited to the level of the module; e.g. condoned progression allowed for level 1 modules but not for level 3?