

SEN11D024

Title: *Amendments to General Regulations (Discipline)*
Author: C J Sharp (Head of Learning & Teaching Services)
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Issue

A proposal to insert minor amendments into the current General Regulations in order to clarify the scope of regulations relating to: The conduct of research by students; the scope of regulations relating to Attendance and Progress; and the suspension of non-UKBA compliant students.

Recommendation

That Senate endorse the enclosed amendments to be effective within the University's General Regulations from the 2012-13 academic year onwards

Resource Implications

None

Risk Implications

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity

The proposed amendments do not give rise to a new set of expectations with regard to students' conduct, but serve to clarify the appropriate regulatory route for dealing with inappropriate conduct.

Timing of decisions

Approval by the Senate will allow the amended regulations to take effect for the 2012-13 academic year.

Further Information

Background

The proposals seek to address three distinct issues:

- 1) A lack of clarity regarding the meaning of the terms 'engagement' and 'progress'
- 2) The suspension of students who are not compliant with UKBA requirements
- 3) The lack of any disciplinary mode against which to hear breaches of General Regulation 16 (University Research Ethics Policy) and the restriction to Postgraduate Research students of disciplinary action regarding breaches of Regulation 15 (Conduct of Research)

Discussion

1) Engagement and Progress

The current guidance regarding the application of and the initiation of discipline in the event of a breach of Regulation 13 is couched entirely in terms of student attendance.

The Chair of Senate Student Discipline Committee is keenly aware of the need to ensure that Schools possess a means of correcting issues of poor progress and engagement that are not necessarily expressed through a failure to physically attend teaching events nor through poor academic performance in the form of marked academic work.

It is important that Heads of Schools retain the ability to issue a Head of School's warning for the full range of performance and engagement issues that may threaten the good progress of a student or that of their peers. For example, a student who attends all sessions but fails to contribute or who contributes in a counter-productive manner is clearly neither engaging nor making good progress in their studies. There is a value both to the student and the University in being able to address such behaviour before it manifests in poor academic outcomes.

It is proposed that the following text be inserted into General Regulation 13 at 13 (1) [subsequent paragraph numbers to be amended accordingly]

13 1. For the purposes of this regulation the following definitions shall apply:

- a) Attendance – the physical presence on a timely basis of the student at teaching events or other required events as prescribed by the School.*
- b) Engagement – the active involvement of the student in their studies as evidenced, for example, by meaningful contributions to teaching events, appropriate preparatory work in advance of teaching events, constructive working with fellow students as required by the structure of the programme of study.*
- c) Progress – the achievement of satisfactory academic results, evidence of developing academic skills appropriate to the programme of study,*

the development of ancillary skills as appropriate to the particular programme of study.

The determination of the extent to which a student is fulfilling the requirement for Engagement and Progress shall be an academic judgement. It shall normally be within the authority of the Head of School to determine whether the level of Engagement and Progress evidenced constitutes a breach of Regulation 13. This determination shall be made in accordance with the procedure described within the University's Statement of Policy on Attendance Engagement and Progress.

2) UKBA Compliance

The University currently uses the requirements laid down in Regulation 13 to effect suspensions of students who are not compliant with UKBA requirements. However, strictly speaking, there is no provision within the disciplinary procedures that provides for an immediate suspension on the specific basis of non compliance with UKBA requirements.

It is therefore proposed to insert a specific reference to UKBA compliance into the disciplinary regulations as follows:

2.2.4 The Registrar & Secretary is authorised by the Vice Chancellor to immediately suspend any student who is not compliant with the extant requirements of the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) with regard to Visa legislation and associated monitoring regimes. The obligation upon students to ensure compliance with UKBA requirements is detailed in General Regulation 13. Suspensions enacted under this regulatory provision shall not be subject to the constraints detailed at 2.2.2 above, but shall be subject to review only on receipt of evidence that the student has returned to full compliance with the requirements of UKBA.

3) Research Ethics and Misconduct in Research

The inclusion of some form of research element in the programme of study followed by Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students is increasingly common.

All students, irrespective of the level of study are required to abide by the University's policies regarding the ethical conduct of research (Regulation 16).

There is currently no disciplinary mode under which breaches of the University Research Ethics Policy can be considered. Although most breaches of Regulation 16 can be considered under the more general Regulation 15 (Conduct of Research), it would seem appropriate and in keeping with the regulatory framework to specify a disciplinary mode under which breaches of Regulation 16 may be considered.

The Chair of the Senate Student Discipline Committee also notes that with the increasing incidents of student research and undergraduate and postgraduate level it no longer seems sensible to restrict the applicability of Regulation 15 to postgraduate research students. The widening of the scope of this regulation would still allow for the research conduct of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students to be considered in the context of the reasonable expectations that might apply to student research at their given level of study.

It is proposed that the following amendments be applied.

University General Regulations:

15 Conduct of Research

(For students on programmes leading to research degree awards)

Be amended to read

15 Conduct of Research

Disciplinary Procedures:

Removal of all parenthesised statements referring to a restriction of scope to research students only

5.7

Mode B: *for cases arising under General Regulations 13; 15 (for students on programmes leading to research degrees awards only); 17 (concerning matters of academic assessment under the procedures relating to breaches of examination and course test regulations); and 18*

Be amended to read

5.7

Mode B: *for cases arising under General Regulations 13; 15;16; 17 (concerning matters of academic assessment under the procedures relating to breaches of examination and course test regulations); and 18*