

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/19/16c

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

17 June 2019

Agenda Item 7c

DEPARTURES AND VARIATIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULATORY  
FRAMEWORK: MSc Dental Disciplines specialisms

COVER SHEET

*Presenter: Professor A McKillop*

Action is required of the Committee as indicated below.

The Committee is asked to consider a request to vary the University regulation governing classification of final result in Master's degrees.

## **Case for variation to University regulation - MSc Dental Disciplines**

**Presented by:** School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

**Regulation affected:** Section 14.2 Classification of Final Result (Master's regulations)

**Existing regulation:**

### **14 CLASSIFICATION OF FINAL RESULT**

- 14.2 The assessment results [for all modules (*if all at Level 7*)] OR [for the final level of the programme (Level 7)] shall determine the overall grading. The weighting of each module's contribution to the final result shall be determined by the module's credit value. (See table at section 17.)

*[In programmes of more than 200 credit points, replace first sentence with: The assessment results from the final 120 credit points shall determine the overall grading.]*

**Proposed MSc (Dental Disciplines) regulation:**

### **14 CLASSIFICATION OF FINAL RESULT**

- 14.2 The assessment results for all modules shall determine the overall grading. The weighting of each module's contribution to the final result shall be determined by the module's credit value.

### **Case for change to regulation**

The dentistry MSc programmes vary in length and include programmes of 180, 360 and 540 credit points. This application relates to those programmes with a credit value of over 200 credit points. The programmes all have a strong clinical orientation and the students enrolled on the programmes have a clinical focus. In addition, research contributes significantly to the programmes. The general structure of the programmes is that the students will learn the principles of each specialist area in year 1 while in year 2 the focus is on advancing clinical practice and professional competencies. In the third year the nature of evidence-based practice is reinforced, culminating in a professional project or dissertation. All years/modules throughout the programmes are delivered at level 7.

The current regulation states that for programmes of more than 200 credits, "*The assessment results from the final 120 credit points shall determine the overall grading*". However, as described above, a major component of the final 120 credits is based on the research dissertation. Taking account of only the final 120 credits therefore will not reflect the clinical performance of the students within the dentistry specialism they are undertaking. This approach will not be fully consistent with the strong clinical nature of the programmes and student expectations. Hence, it is proposed to take into account

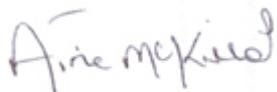
all years and modules of study while calculating the mark, where the weighting of each module in the final result is determined by the module's credit value.

In June 2015 the School put forward a similar case for contribution of years 2, 3 and 4 to the final award classification for the MPharm. The case that was accepted, as put forward by the General Pharmaceutical Council, was that the University's principle of 'exit velocity' was not a measure of attainment in pharmacy but a reflection of a very much narrower set of achievements defined by the final year. It was felt by the accreditation team that it did not engender in students the value and contribution of continuous learning and was out of step for developing the skills required of a healthcare professional. It was felt that a reflection of how 'safe' a graduate is likely to be can only come from recognition of the attributes which are assessed in years two and three in addition to year four.

This is a similar case – the classification for the final dental specialism MSc award should reflect the clinical performance of the students within the dentistry specialism they are undertaking, acquired over the full length of the programme.

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June 2019



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