

Appendix F

Compensation and condonement

Many UK universities' examination board rules include some allowance for compensation or condonement¹ of limited failure in one or more modules, where this is compensated by a stronger performance across the programme as a whole. Paragraph 23 of the Registration Code of Practice requires accrediting institutions to consider the awarding institution's regulations regarding progression. They may impose constraints on an accreditation decision as a result of this.

The Engineering Council defines compensation as: "*The practice of allowing marginal failure (ie not more than 10% below the nominal pass mark) of one or more modules and awarding credit for them, often on the basis of good overall academic performance.*"

The Engineering Council defines condonement as: "*The practice of allowing students to fail and not receive credit for one or more modules within a degree programme, yet still qualify for the award of the degree.*"

In the consideration of the accreditation of undergraduate and postgraduate engineering degree programmes:

1. Evidence that all AHEP learning outcomes are met by all variants of each programme must be provided before accreditation can be granted.
2. No condonement of modules delivering AHEP learning outcomes is allowed.
3. A maximum of 30 credits in a bachelor's or integrated master's degree programme can be compensated, and a maximum of 20 credits in a master's degree other than the integrated master's degree.
4. Major individual and group-based project modules must not be compensated.
5. The minimum module mark for which compensation is allowed is 10% below the nominal module pass mark (or equivalent if a grade-based marking scheme is used).

The key consideration in the rules above is to ensure that graduates of accredited engineering degree programmes have met all the programme learning outcomes specified in the Engineering Council's AHEP (Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes) specification.

Phased implementation schedule

These requirements will apply to all students joining the first year of an accredited degree programme from September 2022. There is no requirement or expectation that assessment regulations will be changed for students who enrolled on an accredited degree programme before this date. A phased implementation will be allowed whereby new accreditations must comply from the 2022 implementation date, but existing accreditations will be allowed to continue as they were but must align from the point of reaccreditation. For accreditation visits from September 2019 until September 2022 HEIs will have the option to either change their regulations to conform with the current guidance (below) and then change them again to conform to the new rules by **September 2022**, or to change their regulations straight away to comply with the new rules in advance of their enforcement.

IChemE's current compensation strategy

It must not be possible for any student to graduate without having successfully completed (in each of the IChemE learning outcomes categories) the minimum credits stipulated as the threshold for the level of accreditation awarded.

In some assessment schemes it is possible for students to compensate for poor performance in one module by achieving better marks in other modules. For example, a student scoring just below the pass mark in a particular module might be excused the failure if their average performance for all modules in the same semester or year was above a particular level, such as >10%

¹ There are no consistent definitions of the terms 'compensation' and 'condonement' across UK universities, and they are often confused. The Engineering Council therefore adopts a similar definition to that used by QAA and HEA, and, for the avoidance of doubt, includes this definition in this statement.

above the normal pass mark. Because practices vary from university to university, it is necessary to detail such compensation strategies at the appropriate point within the questionnaire submission. The department must supply evidence that the learning outcomes have been met elsewhere in the programme by students compensated in this way. Programmes allowing compensation may only be accredited if there is a maximum 10 IChemE credit compensation in the final year.

All accreditation visits from now until September 2022 will require Universities to provide a plan of how they propose to meet the new Engineering Council compensation and condonement rules which come into effect from 2022.

Engineering Council guidance on Compensation and Condonement can be found at www.engc.org.uk/engcdocuments/internet/website/Guidance%20Note%20on%20Compensation%20and%20Condonement.pdf