

INFORMATION ON NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME PROGRESSION RULES AND REASSESSMENT REGULATIONS, 2020/21.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2020/21 Birkbeck will be introducing two important changes to the assessment regulations of the Common Award Scheme (CAS) Academic Regulations. These will apply to all new and continuing undergraduate students. These new regulations are separate to any recently-published guidance around measures put in place due to Covid-19.
- 1.2 The two key changes are: the **introduction of standard programme progression rules and changes to the reassessment regulations**.
- 1.3 This document explains what these changes are and how they will affect you. Full details of undergraduate programme progression rules are contained within Part 1 of the Common Award Scheme (CAS) Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study 2020/21:
<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/regulations>

2. Why is Birkbeck introducing these changes?

- 2.1 Birkbeck is committed to supporting students undertaking flexible learning and fulfilling their ambitions of gaining a degree. As a result, we have made positive changes to help students successfully progress through their programme. These changes are in line with the Office for Students code of quality.
- 2.2 We see clear and consistent regulations as an important element of helping students to remain on track and successfully complete their studies. Progression through a degree involves a number of levels. The new regulations ensure a previous level is completed before a student progresses to the next.
- 2.3 The **programme progression rules** set clear College-wide principles for what students need to achieve in order to move to the next level of study. They also establish principles for students who are in the position of retaking modules to offer them the best chance of success.
- 2.4 The amendment to **reassessment regulations** provides all students with a better opportunity to reattempt modules that have not been passed and to stay -on track.

3. What are programme progression rules and how do the changes affect me?

- 3.1 Programme progression rules define what is required for students to progress from one year to the next and how students can pass modules that have been failed.
- 3.2 In order to progress under the new rules, you **must** achieve the required amount of credit before the start of the next academic year, including credit from reassessment and/or compensated fails. You may only progress with a module or modules that you have not passed if no more than 30 credits are being taken as a reassessment in the following year.
- 3.3 If you fail a module(s) and need to retake you cannot progress and will be required to retake that module(s) in the next academic year. This will help to ensure you pass the retake(s) and achieve better overall outcomes.
- 3.4 At the discretion of the Sub-Board of Examiners, alongside retakes you may also be permitted to take some further modules from your following year of study up to a maximum of 30 credits less than the normal full credit study load. This can be made up of new and retake modules if

necessary. If you are a **Part-time** student, this means you can take a **maximum of 60 credits** and if you are a **Full-time** student this means you can take a **maximum of 90 credits**.

- 3.5 Any Part-time student that needs to retake 60 credits or more and any Full-time student that needs to retake 90 credits or more will need to retake all failed modules and will not be allowed to take any new modules.
- 3.6 If you have failed all of your modules you will still need to repeat your full year of study and retake all your failed modules. If you are a **Part-time** student, this means you will retake **90 credits** and if you are a **Full-time** student this means you will retake **120 credits**.
- 3.7 A set of example scenarios to illustrate the new progression rules is included in appendix 1 to help explain how the changes may impact you.

4. What are reassessment regulations and how do the changes affect me?

- 4.1. Reassessment regulations define what happens if you fail a module. You have the opportunity to reattempt the module with either a reassessment or a re-take. Reassessment involves resubmission of coursework or resitting an exam. A retake involves taking a module again including attendance, assessment and payment.
- 4.2. Reassessment is capped at 40% (the pass mark) unless a claim for mitigating circumstances has been approved. Marks for a module that is retaken are not capped.
- 4.3. All students who have failed a module due to failed element(s) of assessment will be offered a reassessment opportunity as a second attempt before the start of the next academic year. (If there are accepted mitigating circumstances the reassessment will be considered a first attempt).
- 4.4. If you do not pass or do not submit for reassessment you will be required to retake the module in the following year, and this will count as your third attempt.
- 4.5. The new regulations have increased the number of opportunities to pass assessment from three to four. This means that if you fail your original assessment attempt, subsequent (second) reassessment attempt and (third) retake attempt you will now have a final (fourth) reassessment opportunity before the start of the next academic year. This fourth and final attempt will be capped.

5. When will the changes be introduced?

- 5.1. The changes to the reassessment rules will be introduced for students taking their first attempt at modules in 2020/21. They will also apply to students taking modules in 2020/21 as a third attempt (i.e. a retake involving attending classes and submitting all assessments). They will not apply for students who have an ongoing reassessment from 2019/20, or earlier.

6. Who can I speak to about the new progression rules and changes to reassessment regulations?

- 6.1 If you would like more information please contact your programme administrator in the first instance.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Progression

Q. What do you mean by programme progression?

A. Programme progression means moving from one year of study to the next. For example, if you are a Full-Time student studying a three-year degree this means moving from year 1 to year 2.

Q. Who decides if and how many additional modules I can retake?

A. The Sub-Board of Examiners decides if and how many modules you can retake in the following academic year. Sub-Boards have discretion to allow this up to the cap of 90 credits Full-time and 60 credits Part-time. The decision to allow you to take additional modules is not automatic and is likely to take into account your academic performance to date.

Q. Won't this mean it takes me longer to get my degree?

A. If you are required to retake a module or modules, then you are not going to be able to complete your degree in the three (Full-time) or four (Part-time) years that you would have originally expected. This is not different to the present situation, as students currently retake modules and have their studies extended.

Q. Will this affect my student loan funding?

A. Full-time students usually have one extra year of funding in addition to the normal duration of their degree to cover the cost of possible retakes. Prior study may affect this, however. More than one retake year will usually require self-funding, unless the student has compelling personal reasons for requiring an additional year of funding. It is also possible to change mode to Part-time study which has less strict rules on loan eligibility.

Q. How will my maintenance loan be affected?

A. Full-time students doing a reduced study load can remain Full-time and continue to receive the full maintenance loan. However, this is only if you study across all three terms in your retake year. For students studying in less than three terms the maintenance loan will be adjusted accordingly. Part-time students' maintenance will be adjusted in line with their intensity of study.

Q. How does retaking modules affect International (Tier 4) Students?

A. International (Tier 4) students can study a reduced credit load in a year of study but must attend in all three terms of the academic year.

Reassessment

Q. What is reassessment?

A. Reassessment is another attempt at a failed module by resubmission (for coursework) or resit (for exams). It does not require re-attendance at the module's teaching.

Q. What happens if I fail an assessment at my first attempt?

A. You will automatically be given a reassessment opportunity, which will be your second attempt, before the start of the next academic year. You will not have to pay for this.

Q. What happens if I fail my reassessment?

A. You will be given the opportunity to retake the module in the following year and this will count as your third attempt.

Q. What is a retake?

A. Retake (or repeat) is taking a module again with attendance and assessment. Retake modules must be paid for.

Q. What happens if I fail my retake?

A. You will be given one last reassessment opportunity before the start of the next academic year. This will be your fourth and final attempt. In the event that you fail your fourth attempt at any module your registration on your programme may be terminated.

Q. What happens if I have mitigating circumstances that have affected my performance in my assessment(s)?

A. If you believe you have circumstances that have significantly disrupted your performance in assessment you should submit a claim in line with the Mitigating Circumstances policy.

Appendix 1: Programme Progression Scenarios

NOTES:

Reassessment: In the scenarios that follow it is assumed that students who have failed modules have failed the first attempt AND second attempt reassessment opportunity. The majority of students required to retake a module should be doing so at third attempt.

Compensated Fails: The examples do not take into account compensated fails. Students can be exempt from retaking modules and awarded a pass if they meet the compensated fail criteria.

Retakes: Students who have any retakes in any year will be limited to studying at 30 credits less than a full study load in that year. This means 90 credits for a Full-time student and 60 credits for a Part-time student.

The exceptions to this are:

- a) Any Part-time student that needs to retake 60 credits or more and any Full-time student that needs to retake 90 credits or more will need to retake all failed modules and will not be allowed to take any new modules.
- b) If a student is in their final year, at the discretion of their Sub-Board they may be permitted to take a full study load (i.e. 120 credits for a Full-time student and 90 credits for a Part-time student), even if this includes retakes.

FULL TIME PROGRAMME PROGRESSION EXAMPLES

Please note: for students taking 15 or 60 credit modules, the credit totals in the examples below still apply.

For context the standard programme pattern for Full-Time students is shown below.

Full Time 3-year degree - STANDARD PROGRAMME PATTERN							CREDITS TAKEN
1	2019/20	Year 1	MODULE 1 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 2 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 3 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 4 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	120
2	2020/21	Year 2	MODULE 5 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 6 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 7 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 8 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	120
3	2021/22	Year 3	MODULE 9 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 10 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 11 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 12 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	120

Example 1:

- A student fails 2 x year 1 (L4) modules.
- The student is able to retake and in a second year of study take an additional level 5 module.

Full Time 3-year degree							CREDITS TAKEN
1	2019/20	Year 1	MODULE 1 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 2 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 3 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 4 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	120
			PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	
2	2020/21	Year 1	MODULE 3 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 4 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 5 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5		90
			RETAKE-PASS	RETAKE-PASS	PASS		
3	2021/22	Year 2	MODULE 6 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 7 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 8 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 9 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	120
			PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
4	2022/23	Year 3	MODULE 10 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 11 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 12 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6		90
			PASS	PASS	PASS		

Example 2:

- A student fails a year 1 (L4) module).
- They then retake this failed module alongside 5 x level 5 modules in their 2nd year, but they fail 1 level 5 module.
- They then have to retake the failed level 5 module and at the same time take the remaining 45 credits of level 5 modules in year 3. They can also take 2 x level 6 modules.
- The student completes their remaining final year level 6 modules in a fourth year of study.

Full Time 3-year degree (15 credit modules example)											CREDIT TAKEN
1	2019/20	Year 1	MODULE 1 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 2 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 3 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 4 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 5 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 6 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 7 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 8 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	120
			PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL	
2	2020/21	Year 1	MODULE 8 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 9 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 10 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 11 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 12 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 13 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5			90
			RETAKE- PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL			
3	2021/22	Year 2	MODULE 13 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 14 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 15 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 16 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 17 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 18 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6			90
			RETAKE- PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS			
4	2022/23	Year 3	MODULE 19 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 20 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 21 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 22 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 23 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 24 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6			90
			PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS			

Example 3:

- A student fails 2 x year 1 modules.
- They pass the retakes in year 2, and take an additional level 5 module, but fail this.
- They retake the failed level 5 module in year 3 and pass but are limited to 90 credits in this year.
- If the student has achieved 30% or above in the failed module, they could accept a compensated fail.
- This means the student will not be able to complete in 4 years. If paying their fees via a Student Loan, the student will need to self-fund their study in 2022/23, as the Student Loans Company will hold back funding until the student is officially in their final year. It would be advisable for the student to transfer to Part-time study at this point in their degree and not be limited to 4 years of funding. They would then take 90 credits in 2022/23 and 60 credits in 2023/24

Full Time 3-year degree							CREDITS TAKEN
1	2019/20	Year 1	MODULE 1 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 2 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 3 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 4 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	120
			PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	
2	2020/21	Year 1	MODULE 3 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 4 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 5 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5		90
			RETAKE-PASS	RETAKE-PASS	FAIL		
3	2021/22	Year 2	MODULE 5 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 6 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 7 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5		90
			RETAKE-PASS	PASS	PASS		
4	2022/23	Year 2	MODULE 8 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 9 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 10 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 11 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	120
			PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
5	2023/24	Year 3	MODULE 12 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6				30
			PASS				

Example 4:

- A student fails 2 x level 5 modules in year 2.
- The 2 failed level 5 modules are retaken in year 3, but the student fails 1 level 6 module.
- The student retakes the failed level 6 module a fourth year of study and, at the discretion of their Sub-Board, is able to take a full study load (120 credits) even though they have a retake module.

Full Time 3-year degree							CREDITS TAKEN
1	2019/20	Year 1	MODULE 1 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 2 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 3 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 4 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	120
			PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
2	2020/21	Year 2	MODULE 5 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 6 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 7 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 8 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	120
			PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	
3	2021/22	Year 2	MODULE 7 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 8 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 9 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6		90
			RETAKE-PASS	RETAKE-PASS	FAIL		
4	2022/23	Year 3	MODULE 9 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 10 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 11 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 12 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	120
			RETAKE-PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	

PART TIME PROGRAMME PROGRESSION EXAMPLES

For context the standard programme pattern for Part-Time students is shown below.

Part Time 4-year degree - STANDARD PROGRAMME PATTERN						CREDITS TAKEN
1	2019/20	Year 1	MODULE 1 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 2 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 3 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	90
2	2020/21	Year 2	MODULE 4 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 5 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 6 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	90
3	2021/22	Year 3	MODULE 7 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 8 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 9 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	90
4	2022/23	Year 4	MODULE 10 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 11 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 12 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	90

Example 5:

- A student fails 1 level 5 module in year 2.
- This failed module will be retaken in year 3.
- The student will take 5 years to complete and have 60 credits left in their final year.

Part Time 4-year degree						CREDITS TAKEN
1	2019/20	Year 1	MODULE 1 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 2 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 3 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	90
			PASS	PASS	PASS	
2	2020/21	Year 2	MODULE 4 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 5 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 6 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	90
			PASS	PASS	FAIL	
3	2021/22	Year 2	MODULE 6 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 7 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5		60
			RETAKE- PASS	PASS		
4	2022/23	Year 3	MODULE 8 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 9 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 10 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	90
			PASS	PASS	PASS	
5	2023/24	Year 4	MODULE 11 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 12 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6		60

Example 6:

- A student fails all of their modules in year 1.
- They will need to retake the entire year 1 in their 2nd year of study.
- In their 4th year the student fails a level x 6 module, which is then retaken in their 5th year.
- The student will take 6 years to complete and have 60 credits in their final year.

Part Time 4-year degree						CREDITS TAKEN
1	2019/20	Year 1	MODULE 1 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 2 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 3 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	90
			FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	
2	2020/21	Year 1	MODULE 1 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 2 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 3 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	90
			RETAKE-PASS	RETAKE-PASS	RETAKE-PASS	
3	2021/22	Year 2	MODULE 4 30 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 5 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 6 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	90
			PASS	PASS	PASS	
4	2022/23	Year 2	MODULE 7 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 8 30 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 9 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	90
			PASS	PASS	FAIL	
5	2023/24	Year 3	MODULE 9 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 10 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6		60
			RETAKE-PASS	PASS		
6	2024/25	Year 4	MODULE 11 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 12 30 CREDITS LEVEL 6		60
			PASS	PASS		

Example 7:

- A student fails modules at each level, in some years studying 90 credits and others studying 60 credits.
- The student would complete in 6 years, taking 90 credits their final year of study

Part Time 4-year degree (15 credit modules example)									CREDITS TAKEN
1	2019/20	Year 1	MODULE 1 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 2 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 3 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 4 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 5 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 6 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	90
			PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
2	2020/21	Year 2	MODULE 7 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 8 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 9 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 10 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 11 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 12 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	90
			FAIL	FAIL	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	
3	2021/22	Year 2	MODULE 7 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 8 15 CREDITS LEVEL 4	MODULE 13 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 14 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5			60
			RETAKE-PASS	RE-TAKE PASS	PASS	FAIL			
4	2022/23	Year 3	MODULE 14 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 15 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 16 15 CREDITS LEVEL 5	MODULE 17 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6			60
			RETAKE-PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL			
5	2023/24	Year 3	MODULE 17 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 18 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 19 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 20 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 21 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 22 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	90
			RE-TAKE PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	FAIL	
6	2024/25	Year 4	MODULE 19 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 20 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 21 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 22 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 23 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	MODULE 24 15 CREDITS LEVEL 6	*90
			RETAKE-PASS	RETAKE-PASS	RETAKE-PASS	RETAKE-PASS	PASS	PASS	

*as this is the final year, at the discretion of their Sub-Board the student is permitted to take a full study load even though there are retake modules.