

(Author)

PLH McSweeney, Chair, Academic Development and Standards Committee (ADSC)

(Title of Item)

**Report on the Operation of the Pilot Policy on Allowing First Year Students to Progress
Carrying One Failed 5 Credit Module**

Action requested approval

Brief description / summary of the item

ADSC proposed to AC (6.3.15) a policy to allow first year students who have met all the requirements to progress into second year – except for failing a single 5 credit module – to progress into second year under certain circumstances “carrying” the failed module. Following a debate AC agreed to implement this policy, subject to a review after one year and allowing Colleges to opt out on request to AB. Minutes of AC of 6.3.15 are shown below and the policy itself is attached.

CACSSS and CM&H opted out of this policy for the academic year 2015-16 while it was implemented in CSEFS and CB&L.

The Student Records and Examinations Office (SREO) was asked by AC to review the operation of this policy after one year and attached are statistics from the Student Records and Examinations Officer on the operation of this policy in its first year.

Numbers availing of this policy were considerably smaller than anticipated. Of the 9 students approved to carry 5 credits under this policy, 5 passed second year (and the carried module) in Summer 2016, 3 passed the carried module in Summer 2016 and are repeating a second year module in Autumn 2016 and one student did not register for second year.

ADSC discussed this report on 14-09-16 and it was considered at AB on 26-10-16 as follows:

- Awareness of this policy could be improved. It is likely that there were more students who were eligible for this policy but who were unaware of its existence. Indeed, staff may have

been unaware of this policy. If re-approved, it would be desirable that this policy be more visible in our documentation.

- ADSC and AB felt this policy should continue and that it should be extended to students in years beyond first year.

The revised policy is shown below.

Report from the Student Records and Examinations Officer

2015-16 First Year students eligible to carry 5 credits

11 students were eligible to carry forward 5 credits from First to Second Year.

The breakdown by College was:

College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences:	1
College of Business and Law:	6
College of Science, Engineering and Food Science:	2
College of Medicine and Health:	2

9 were approved. The College of Medicine and Health did not approve one and the other student was registered for a one-year programme – not relevant.

The breakdown of Summer 2016 results:

5 passed both years I & II in Summer 2016

3 passed Year I in Summer 2016 and are repeating second year modules in Autumn 2016

1 did not register for 2015-16

In addition to the above:

BPharmacy: The Appeals Committee approved two students to repeat one 5-credit module in Second Year and progress to Third Year. Both students passed Second and Third Year in Summer 2016

BSocSc

The Senior Vice-president Academic and Registrar approved one student to repeat one 5-credit module in First Year and progress to Second Year. The student passed First and Second Year in Summer 2016. The student had been misinformed about carrying the 5 credit module. It is compulsory to pass all 60 credits in BSocSc I.

Extract from minutes of AC 6-3-15

d. Academic Development and Standards Committee: Proposal to allow First Year students to progress into Second Year "carrying" one failed 5 credit module

The proposal to allow First Year students to progress into Second Year carrying one failed 5 credit module had been circulated, and was introduced by Prof Paul McSweeney, chair of Academic Development and Standards Committee. It was proposed to anticipate one of the benefits of credit accumulation (CA) by allowing first year students to progress, under certain circumstances, to the second year of study "carrying" one failed 5 credit module, thus avoiding the current situation where students must repeat an entire year for one failed 5 credit module. This interim proposal may well become redundant on the introduction of a full CA model. The proposal had been endorsed by Academic Board 11-02-15 subject to minor changes, and was before Academic Council for approval.

In the discussion of this item, Academic Council in general strongly welcomed the proposal which it was felt would improve retention of students. Several potential risks were raised, e.g.:

- A view was strongly expressed raising concern that such a measure would impact on academic standards negatively, and that the current system offered sufficient flexibility for students.
- It was generally agreed that careful monitoring of the first cohort of students "carrying" five credit modules as proposed would be required to ensure that such students are not disadvantaged by their greater workload of 65 credits in second year.
- Concern was raised about potential timetabling difficulties and issues arising particularly where students had previously failed continuous assessment/practical elements of the

module in question. It was reiterated that students would be required to receive approval from the relevant academic unit to repeat modules under this policy, and thus such difficulties could be overcome.

- There were also concerns raised regarding the potential additional administrative workload on academic units resulting from implementation of this proposal; it was felt that this situation should be also monitored and reviewed carefully.
- It was suggested that a positive impact of the policy might be a reduction in the number of examination appeals initiated by first year students who were in the position of having failed only one 5 credit module at first and supplemental sittings, where the module in question is not a prerequisite for the subjects being taken in second year.
- There were also concerns that this proposal would not be suitable for programmes which would lead to professional accreditation; it was stressed that the proposal emphasised that "carrying" a failed 5 credit module would not be automatic, but permission would have to be sought from the coordinators of the degree programme, and that for reasons of professional accreditation, certain schools may decide not to implement this proposal.

In general it was felt that Academic Council was in favour of the proposal, but that resulting risks would need to be managed, and subsequent revisions of the proposal might be required following review of its first year of implementation by the Student Records and Examinations Office.

Academic Council approved the proposal, and also agreed that applications would have to be made to Academic Board from schools/programme directors for the exemption of particular programmes from this policy.

PERMISSION TO ALLOW FIRST YEAR STUDENTS TO PROGRESS INTO ~~A SUBSEQUENT~~SECOND YEAR CARRYING ONE FAILED

5 CR MODULE

This policy applies only to those programmes that allow compensation ~~in first year~~. It does not apply to programmes that require 60 cr to be passed in full for progression to ~~second-a subsequent~~ year.

A ~~first year~~ student may be permitted to progress into ~~second-a subsequent~~ year having failed **one 5 cr module** in the **autumn supplemental examinations** ~~of first year~~ provided that:

- The student has the agreement of the programme coordinator (or chair of the Board of Studies) of his/her degree programme prior to registration and commencement of the ~~second subsequent~~ year of study.
- The student has:
 - (a) presented for the autumn supplemental examination ~~in first year~~. *Students are required to have repeated their failed examination in the Autumn examination session to be eligible for this policy.*
 - (b) passed 55 cr (i.e., $\geq 40\%$ or $\geq 50\%$ in COMH).
 - (c) already achieved an aggregate of 40% (50% in COMH) in first year.
- The failed module carried forward is not a prerequisite for any module taken in ~~second-in the subsequent~~ year.
- The student registers for the full programme in ~~second-the subsequent~~ year and also the failed module (i.e., normally 65 cr).
- The student accepts that he/she will be taking a higher workload in ~~second-subsequent~~ year and that this cannot be used as grounds for appeal or mitigation and that he/she will be liable for a tuition fee for the repeated module.
- The student will not be permitted to progress into ~~third-the year beyond the subsequent~~ year until the failed module has been passed or compensated.
- The student is expected to repeat the failed module in full. In cases where this is not possible due to timetable clashes between years, the student will be permitted to take the module on an examination only basis provided he/she has already passed any continuous assessment element of the module that cannot easily be repeated due to timetable clashes (e.g., laboratory practicals or field work).

Students should be aware that for reasons of professional accreditation or school policy, they may not be permitted to progress with one failed 5 cr module.

Notes:

1. This policy will apply to all programmes in UCC that allow compensation ~~in first year~~. Schools or programmes that wish to opt out fully from this policy may do so by application to Academic Board.
2. Marks for the repeated module will be capped at 40% for the purposes of calculating honours unless the student is granted mitigation. The repeated module may not be used to compensate in ~~second year~~ a subsequent.
3. If the student fails to obtain 30% in the carried forward module in the summer examinations in ~~second the subsequent~~ year, he/she will be permitted to repeat it again in the autumn supplemental examinations that year. If he/she fails to achieve a minimum of 30% in the carried forward module at the summer and autumn supplemental examinations in ~~second year~~ subsequent, the student will be required to take the module in only one further repeat year (i.e., the three year rule will continue to apply to first year).¹
4. The student will be given an “Ex X” (Exempt X credits) judgement at the exam board ~~in first for that~~ year and the marks for the failed module will be presented to the examination board for ~~first year that year~~ in the following academic year. If the student passes or compensates the module, this information will be communicated to the examination board for ~~second the subsequent~~ year. Once the repeated module is passed or compensated, Marks and Standards for ~~second the subsequent~~ year will be applied without reference to the failed module.

¹ Modified appropriately for programmes with a three-year rule with four attempts to pass.