Assessing Re-assessment

Marie Stowell & Harvey Woolf
Student Assessment and Classification Working Group

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Approach

Why assess re-assessment?

Regulatory variations

The Re-assessed Level 4 students project
Why assess re-assessment?
Why assess re-assessment?

- Justice, equity and fairness
- Impact on retention and student success, and academic standards
- Relatively invisible aspect of academic practice
- Institutional variations in regulations
- Significant institutional resource costs
- Implications for teaching excellence
Progression regulation project - Method

- Analysis of 34 institutional regulations for first year Honours degrees
- 12 follow-up interviews
- SACWG experience
- Statistical modelling of impact of different regulations on student success rates
Progression regulation project - Key research questions

How do regulations for ‘passing’ year 1 of an Honours degree vary?

In what ways do regulatory practices determine the criteria for student ‘success’ (progression)?

What are the rationales for different regulatory practices?

How do different regulatory practices impact on student 'success' rates?
Regulatory variations
### Key variations in module/progression requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing a module</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• On aggregate/Pass each assessment/Minimum mark for each assessment</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Re-assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Automatic/Qualified</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Credit limited/unlimited</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Re-assessment of assignment/module</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Requirements for progression</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conditional/Unconditional</td>
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<td>• Compensated credits included/excluded</td>
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Impact of different rules for passing modules

- Pass on aggregate: 53%
- All assignments ≥ 30%: 42%
- All assignments ≥ 40%: 31%

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Impact of different rules for progression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of students eligible to progress at the end of Year 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No requirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass ≥90 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass 120 credits</td>
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</table>
Impact of different rules for compensation

% of students with one or two failed modules who would achieve 120 credits

- No requirement: 100%
- ≥20% in module(s) to be compensated: 76%
- ≥30% in module(s) to be compensated: 49%
- ≥35% in module(s) to be compensated: 26%

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The SACWG-NUCCAT Re-assessed Level 4 students project
What happens to re-assessed Level 4 students?

The project:

- compares the award outcomes of students who were re-assessed at Level 4 with those who passed first time

- is confined to 3 years Honours courses

- adopts four progression categories
Progression Categories

**First timers**: Students who passed all L4 modules at the first attempt

**Re-assessed**: Students who passed all L4 modules following re-assessment

**Compensated**: Students whose progression from L4 to L5 was not contingent on re-assessment following failure

**Trailing**: Students whose progression from L4 to L5 comprises a further attempt at assessment following failure at L4
The Data

- c20,000 results across 9 institutions
- Census points A & B
- The institutions’ regulations reflect the regulatory variations found in previous SACWG and NUCCAT studies
Honours attainment by progression category at census point B

![Bar chart showing Honours attainment by progression category at census point B]
Key findings 1

First timers most likely to achieve a Good degree and least likely not to be completers

Almost 1 in 3 of both Re-assessed and Compensated likely not to be timely completers but Re-assessed more likely to achieve a Good degree than Compensated

Trailing most likely not to be timely completers and least likely to achieve a Good degree
Despite the range of complicating factors (e.g., curriculum mix, mandatory and optional modules, intra-module compensation, student support systems), patterns of performance across the institutions are broadly similar.
Some questions for consideration

a) What are the justifications, including educational rationales, for
   1 Automatic re-assessment
   2 Compensation/condonement
   3 Trailing of failed modules

b) What are the relative merits of each of these strategies in supporting student retention and success?

c) How important in assessing the relative merits of each of these strategies does their impact on completion time and degree class matter?

d) To what extent should decisions about the progression of individual students be rule-based or dependent on ‘professional judgement’ (discretionary)?

e) Is there a ‘best’ strategy for dealing with academic failure that maximises student retention and success?
References


Contact details

If you would like further information, please contact

Marie Stowell at m.stowell@worc.ac.uk

or

Harvey Woolf at harvey.w@blueyonder.co.uk