

Guidance Note on Compensation and Condonement

This Guidance Note should be read in conjunction with the Engineering Council policy on Compensation and Condonement. It supplements the information provided in the policy and illustrates how the limits on compensation apply in practice. This guidance does not replace or materially alter the Compensation and condonement policy.

Extracts from the policy are shown in bold.

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.”

The policy sets out the following requirements for the use of condonement and compensation. These limits are absolute and no discretion is permitted on the part of Professional Engineering Institutions or accreditation visit panels.

1. Evidence that all AHEP learning outcomes are met by all variants of each programme must be provided before accreditation can be granted.

The mapping of modules against the prescribed learning outcomes for the level of accreditation sought must demonstrate that a graduate from an accredited degree will have met all of the required learning outcomes irrespective of any optional modules selected. The AHEP learning outcomes must be summatively assessed.

2. No condonement of modules delivering AHEP learning outcomes is allowed.

No condonement is allowed for core or optional modules that contribute to the delivery of AHEP learning outcomes. Hence condonement is allowed only for modules not directly related to the study of engineering, for example a modern foreign language.

3. A maximum of 30 credits in a Bachelors or integrated Masters degree programme can be compensated, and a maximum of 20 credits in a Masters degree other than the integrated Masters degree.

The limits placed on the use of compensation are set out in the policy and apply to the programme of study presented for accreditation. The credit limits on compensation apply to all academic credit conferred by the degree provider as part of the programme of study, including any credit conferred through a partnership arrangement, dual award etc. Any compensation of academic credit awarded by a different provider but used to gain entry to the programme with advanced standing, for example direct entry to the second year, does not count towards the limit.

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Scotland

Level	Bachelors (Ordinary)	Bachelors (Honours)	Integrated Masters	Masters degree other than the Integrated Masters
7				
8	Maximum 30 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	Maximum 30 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	Maximum 30 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	
9				
10				
11		Maximum 20 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study		

Note

- Any compensation at Level 7 in Scotland is not included in the overall credit limit on compensation. This will help ensure the compensation limits placed on degree programmes in Scotland are proportionate to those in the rest of the UK. Also, students joining the second year of a degree programme with Advanced Highers will be treated no more or less favourably than students joining the first year of the programme having completed Highers.
- Any compensation received on an Access or Foundation year/programme is not included in the overall credit limit on compensation.

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England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Level	Foundation Degree/Top up Degree	Bachelors and Bachelors (Honours)	Integrated Masters	Masters degree other than the Integrated Masters
4	Maximum 20 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	Maximum 30 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	Maximum 30 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	
5				
6	Maximum 10 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study			
7				Maximum 20 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study

Note

- Any compensation received on an Access or Foundation year/programme is not included in the overall credit limit on compensation.

4. Major individual and group-based project modules must not be compensated.

Major projects are an important part of an engineering degree programme and typically make a significant contribution to the delivery of AHEP learning outcomes.

5. The minimum module mark for which compensation is allowed is no more than 10% below the nominal module pass mark (or equivalent if a grade-based marking scheme is used).

Compensation is permitted only when the overall module mark is ten percentage points below the nominal module pass mark. For example, in the case of a normal module pass mark of 40%, compensation is permitted only when the overall module mark is between 30% and 39%.

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.

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

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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 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.

Case Studies

The following examples illustrate the practical application of the Compensation and condonement policy -

Example 1 - A Bachelors (Honours) programme delivered by a provider in Scotland

The programme assessment regulations allow compensation as follows:

Level 7: Up to 40 credits

Level 8: Up to 20 credits

Level 9: No compensation

Level 10: No compensation

The normal module pass mark is 40% and a module can only be compensated if the overall module mark is 30 - 39%

This example conforms with Engineering Council policy as compensation at Level 7 does not count towards the overall limit of 30 credits for the programme. Total compensation is limited to 20 credits for the final three years of the degree programme and the minimum compensatable module mark is within 10 percentage points of the nominal module pass mark.

Example 2 - A Bachelors (Honours) programme delivered by a provider in England, Wales or Northern Ireland

The programme assessment regulations allow compensation as follows:

Level 4: Up to 15 credits

Level 5: Up to 15 credits

Level 6: No compensation

The normal module pass mark is 40% and a module can only be compensated if the overall module mark is 30 - 39%

This example conforms with Engineering Council policy as compensation is limited to 30 credits for the degree programme and the minimum compensatable module mark is within 10 percentage points of the nominal module pass mark.

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Example 3 - A Bachelors (Honours) programme delivered by a provider in England, Wales or Northern Ireland

The programme assessment regulations allow compensation as follows:

Level 4: Up to 20 credits

Level 5: Up to 20 credits

Level 6: No compensation

The normal module pass mark is 40% and a module can only be compensated if the overall module mark is 35 - 39%

This example does not conform with Engineering Council policy. The allowable compensation of 40 credits is higher than the permitted use of compensation across the programme and the specification of a higher minimum module mark (35%) for compensation does not allow any increase to the 30 credit limit for the degree programme.

Example 4 - An Integrated Masters programme delivered by a provider in England, Wales or Northern Ireland

The programme assessment regulations allow compensation as follows:

Level 4: Up to 15 credits*

Level 5: Up to 15 credits*

Level 6: Up to 15 credits*

Level 7: Up to 15 credits*

*The regulations further state that a student can be compensated in a maximum of 30 credits during the course of their studies.

The normal module pass mark is 40% and a module can only be compensated if the overall module mark is 30 - 39%.

This example conforms with Engineering Council policy as compensation is limited to 30 credits for the degree programme and the minimum compensatable module mark is within 10 percentage points of the nominal module pass mark, however it places a requirement on the degree provider to track any compensation applied to individual students across their programme of study.

Example 5 - An Integrated Masters programme delivered by a provider in England, Wales or Northern Ireland

The programme assessment regulations allow compensation as follows:

Level 4: No compensation

Level 5: No compensation

Level 6: No compensation

Level 7: Up to 30 credits

The normal module pass mark is 40% and a module can only be compensated if the overall module mark is 30 - 39%.

This example conforms with Engineering Council policy as compensation is limited to 30 credits for the degree programme and the minimum compensatable module mark is within 10 percentage points of the nominal module pass mark.

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Example 6 - A Masters degree other than the Integrated Masters delivered by a provider in England, Wales or Northern Ireland

The programme assessment regulations allow compensation as follows:

Level 7: Up to 20 credits

The normal module pass mark is 50% and a module can only be compensated if the overall module mark is 40 - 49%.

This example conforms with Engineering Council policy as compensation is limited to 20 credits for the degree programme and the minimum compensatable module mark is within 10 percentage points of the nominal module pass mark.

Example 7 - A Foundation degree and associated Top-up degree programme delivered by a provider in England, Wales or Northern Ireland

The programme assessment regulations allow compensation as follows:

Foundation degree:

Level 4: No compensation

Level 5: Up to 20 credits

Top-up degree:

Level 6: Up to 20 credits

In both awards, the normal module pass mark is 40% and a module can only be compensated if the overall module mark is 30 - 39%.

In this example, the Foundation degree conforms with Engineering Council policy as compensation is limited to 20 credits and the minimum compensatable module mark is 10 percentage points below the nominal module pass mark.

However, the Top Up qualification does not conform to Engineering Council policy as the maximum compensatable credit for this qualification is limited to 10 credits.