

Managing and regulating reassessment for student success: the possibilities and limitations for evidence based policy

Student Assessment and Classification Working Group

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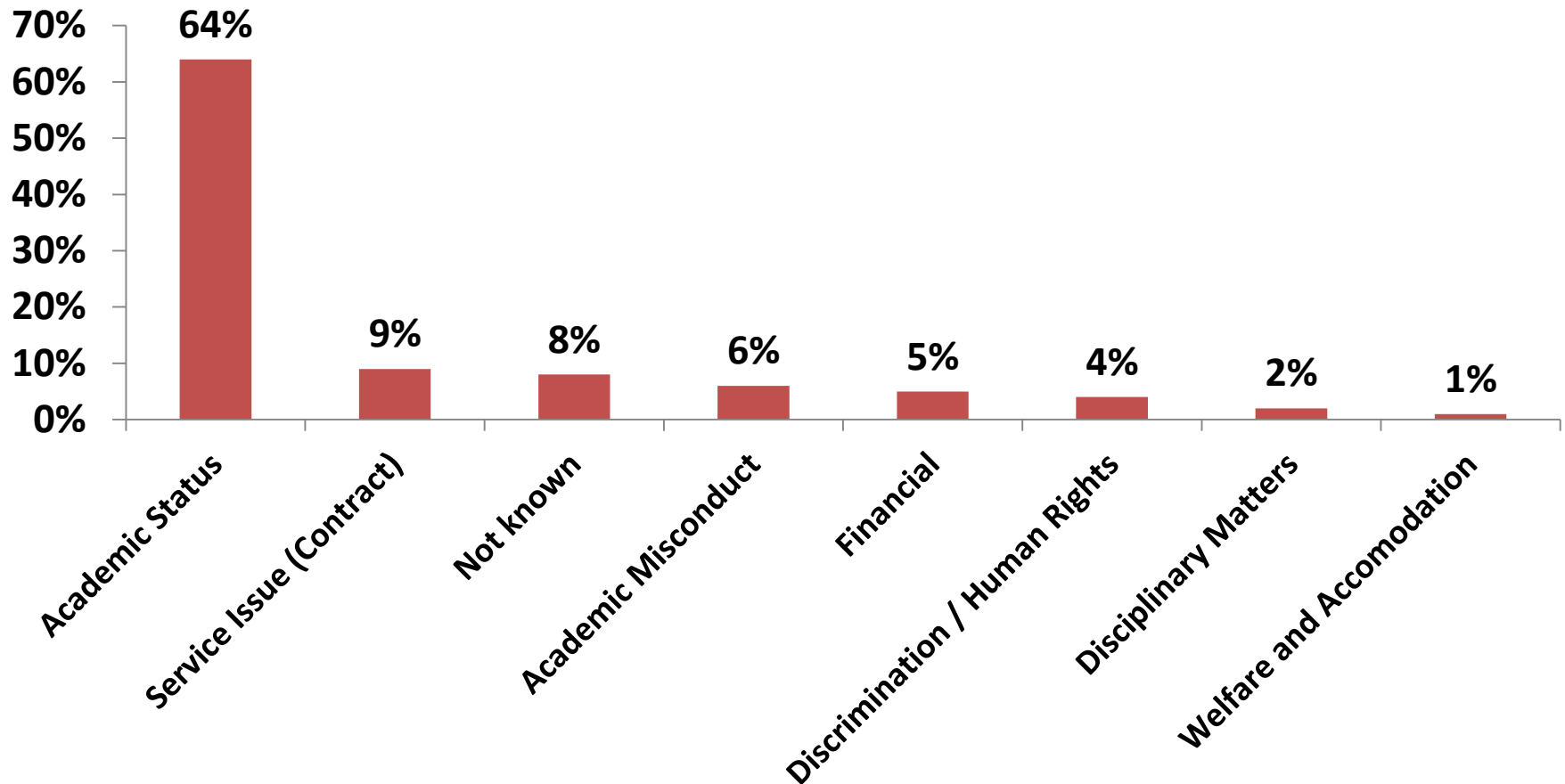
Harvey Woolf

HEIR Conference 2014 , Oxford Brookes University , 8-9 September

Context

- Progression regulations: equity, consistency, standards etc.
- Impact on retention, progression and student success
- Alignment with sector 'norms'
- Impact of Quality Code
- Possibilities and limitations of evidence based review

OIA Annual Report 2013



Academic status

The majority of complaints from all student backgrounds relate to academic status, typically **progression between years** and final degree or postgraduate outcomes.

Research

- Analysis of 34 institutional regulations for first year Hons degrees, and 12 follow-up interviews, and SACWG experience
- Statistical modelling of impact of different regulations on student success rates
- 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?
- British Academy funded

Key variations in requirements

Passing a module

- On aggregate / Pass each assessment

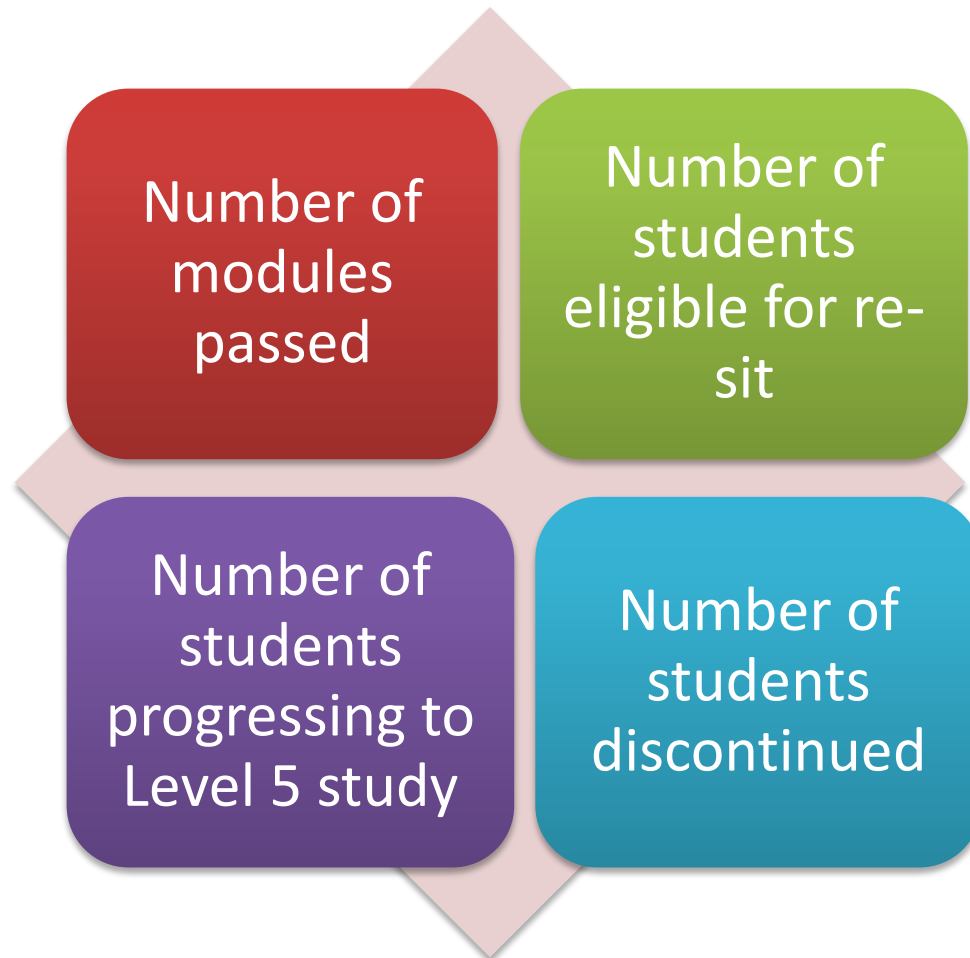
Reassessment

- Automatic / Qualified
- Credit limited / unlimited
- Re-assessment of assignment / module

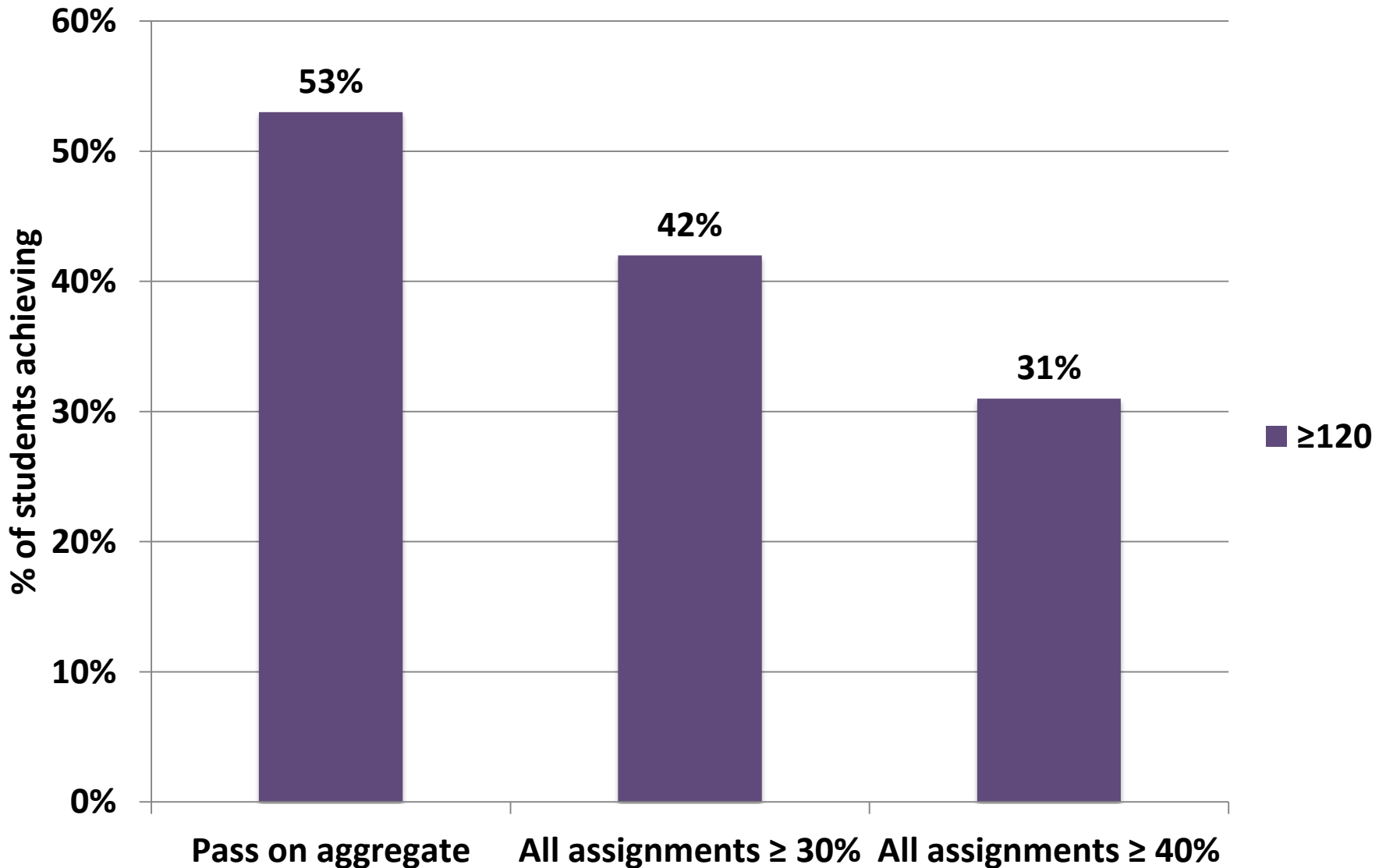
Requirements for progression

- Conditional / Unconditional

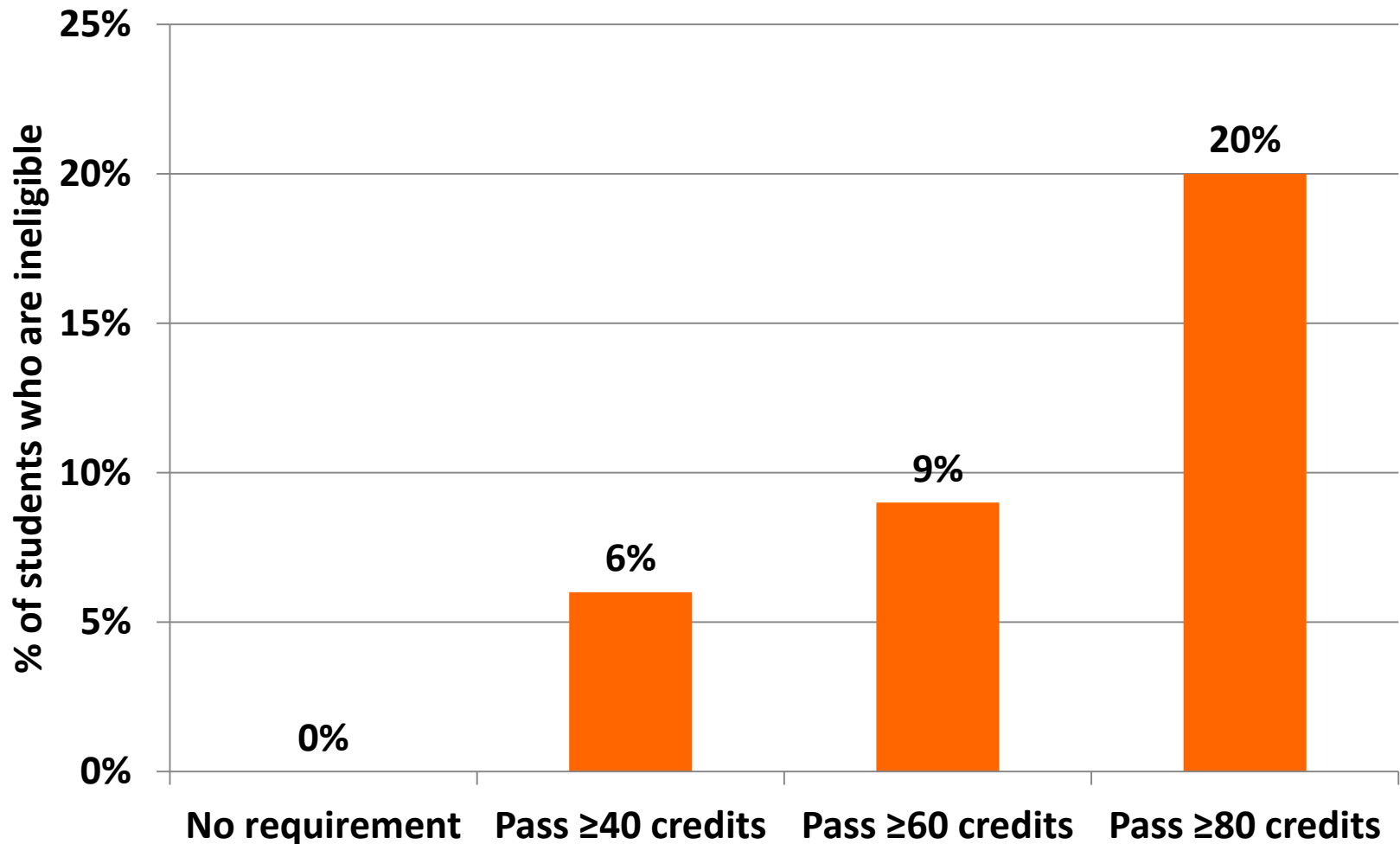
Impact of variable regulations



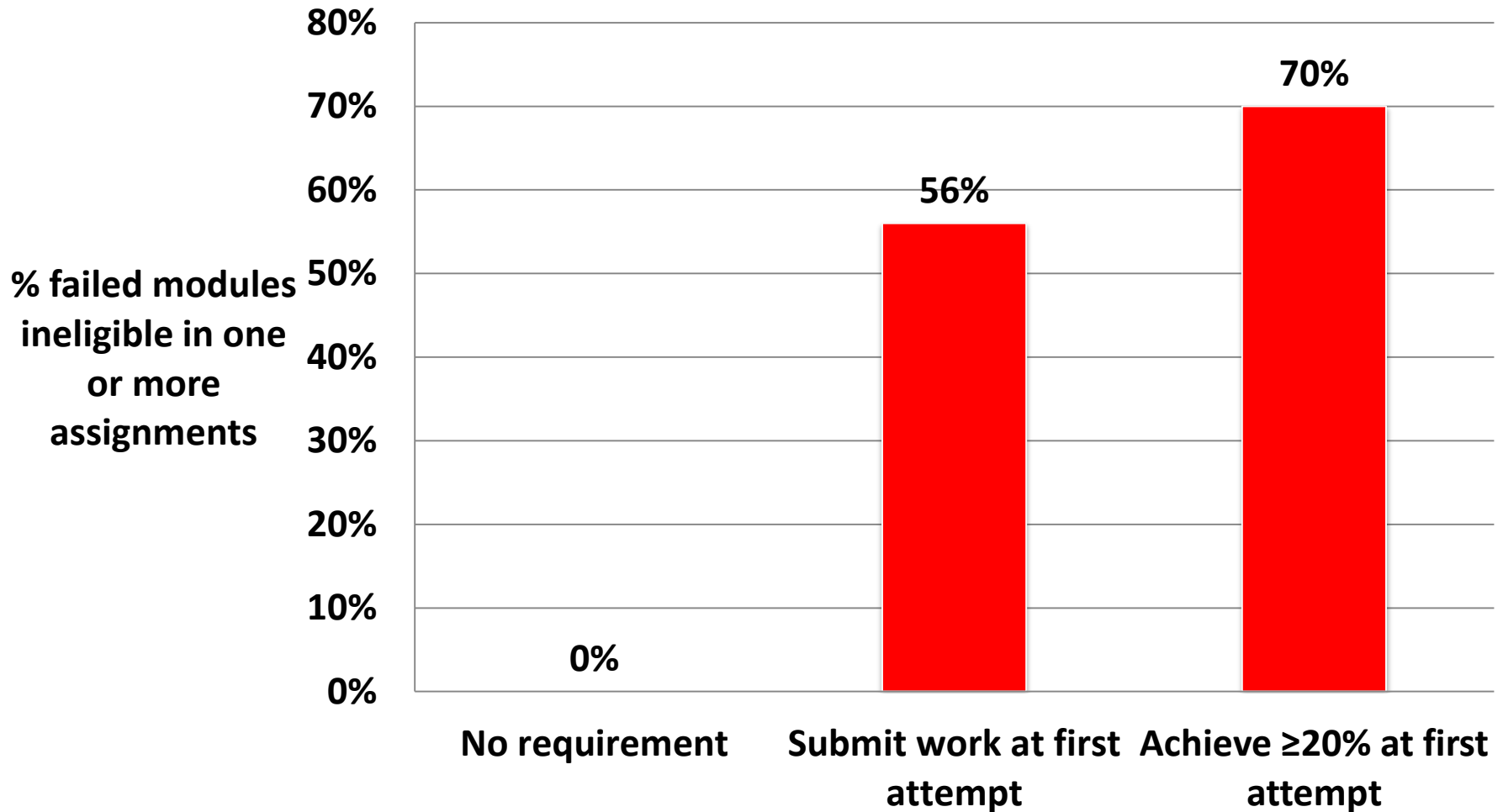
Impact of different rules for passing modules



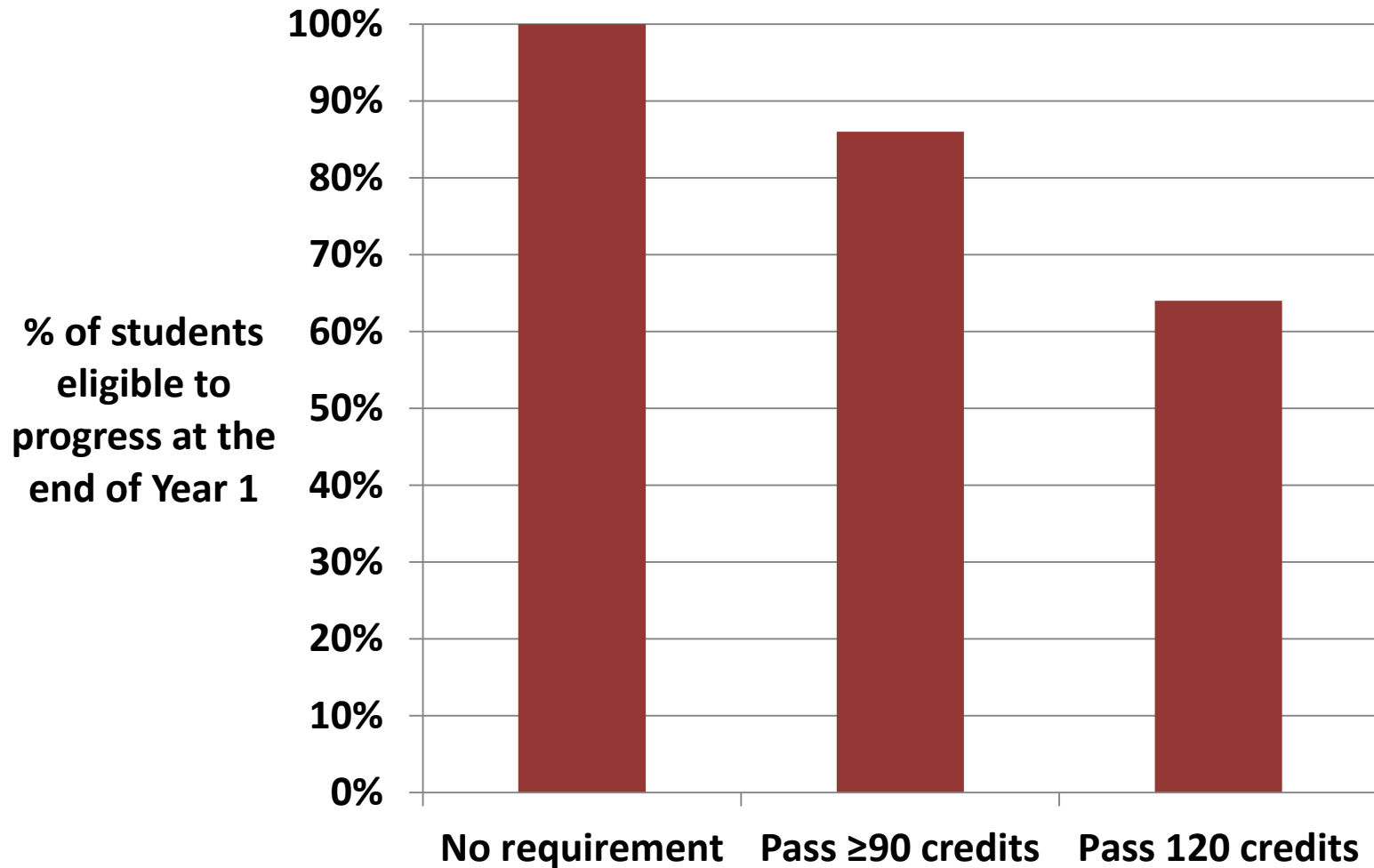
Impact of different programme level rules for the availability of reassessment



Impact of different module level rules for the availability of reassessment



Impact of different rules for progression



Findings

It is possible to quantify potential impact of specific regulatory changes

Seemingly small differences in regulations can have a very significant impact on outcomes

Some aspects of regulations may have little impact on outcomes

Raises question of how far academic standards are influenced by regulatory regimes

Some tensions and limitations of an evidence based approach

- Difficulties of 'norm' referencing practice
- Institutional academic standards and continuity over time
- Inter-relationship of variables
- Non-availability of 'clean' data for testing impact
- Moral dimension of regulations
- Administrative efficiency
- Extent of devolution and discretion in institutional regulations

Issues for discussion

- What prompts institutional regulatory review?
- How do HEIs ensure regulations are fit for purpose?
- To what extent are changes to assessment regulations informed by data analysis and data modelling?
- What is the relationship between assessment regulations and academic standards?
- Is there too much variation across the sector in assessment regulations?

Impact of different rules for compensation

