

**UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**  
**Academic Standards Committee**

**Minute of Meeting held on Friday 20 February 2009 in the  
Carnegie Room**

**Present:**

Dr V Bissell, Professor G Caie, Dr P Cotton, Dr Q Cutts, Mr T Guthrie, Mr M Hastings, Professor R Hill, Dr D McCafferty, Ms H Macpherson, Dr P Skett, Professor D Watt (*Convener*), Dr A Whittaker, Mr J Wightwick.

**In attendance:**

Ms H Butcher, Dr F Boyle (*by invitation*).

**Apologies:**

Dr J Aitken, Professor N Evans, Dr A Jenkins, Dr S Johnston, Professor A Nolan.

**ASC/2008/34. Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 14 November 2008**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

**ASC/2008/35. Matters Arising**

*ASC/2008/35.1 Report from Faculty Quality Assurance and Enhancement Officers on Annual Monitoring for Session 2006-07 (ASC/2008/21.4)*

A late paper was received which provided information from the Director of Estates and Buildings on progress with installing recommended standard facilities in all central learning and teaching space.

Members agreed that there had been a significant improvement in the quality of audiovisual facilities in teaching accommodation. However, it was agreed that easy-to-follow instructions should be provided in every location. Noting that many janitorial staff were not trained to operate a/v equipment, it was suggested that instructions should include the names of any such staff who could provide assistance, where this applied.

It was also agreed that academic staff should be encouraged to attend the training on the use of a/v equipment where necessary.

**Action: Clerk**

The Committee noted that E&B did not propose to supply wooden pointers in every lecture room as it had been found to be impractical as they easily went missing.

Members noted progress with other items which had been identified (clock, coat hook, chalk, adequate ventilation and heating systems, information on janitorial assistance).

*ASC/2008/35.2 Approval of Double/Multiple Degrees (ASC/2008/23)*

It was reported that guidelines for the approval of double/multiple degrees would be developed in the Senate Office by the end of the current academic session.

*ASC/2008/35.3 Report on Late Course Approvals (ASC/2008/27)*

The Committee received a short update confirming that the PIP Project Board had considered the issue of Late Course Approvals which had been identified by ASC at its last meeting. It had been confirmed that most delays had been caused by the late input of administrative data, rather than late academic approval of the proposals. The PIP Project Manager had outlined the reasons for this and the steps which had been taken to address these, where necessary. It was noted that the Project Board had been satisfied that the late input of data was unlikely to arise again as a significant issue.

**ASC/2008/36. Convener's Business**

There was no Convener's business to report.

**ASC/2008/37. Review of PGT Generic Regulation and Compensation Regulations: Report from Academic Regulations Sub-Committee**

The Convener of the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee, Mr Tom Guthrie, introduced the report which detailed progress and recommendations arising from the reviews of i) the PGT Generic Regulation and, ii) compensation regulations at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

**The following recommendations for the PGT Generic Regulation were considered and approved for recommending to EdPSC.**

**1. Continuation of the current arrangements for progression to Masters in the generic regulation, namely:**

- the threshold for progression to Masters should continue to be the achievement of an average of Grade C in taught courses;
- departments should have discretion to allow progress in individual cases;
- departments should be able to specify the achievement of specific grades in specific courses as a prerequisite for progress to the dissertation.

It was also agreed that use of Schedule A of the Code of Assessment should be continued with grade D being used to describe the satisfactory attainment of learning outcomes for each course being assessed.

ASC was advised that the consultation for the review had shown strong support for both an average of Grade C and an average of Grade D as the threshold for progression to the Masters dissertation. In making its recommendation to retain the average of Grade C, the Sub-Committee had been persuaded by the argument that the Masters dissertation/substantial independent work was a special element of the degree which required a different set of skills from those required for the taught components, and therefore the minimum threshold for

progression should be based on the principle that a higher than satisfactory level of performance was required in order to select students who would be capable of undertaking the Masters dissertation/substantial independent work.

Mr Guthrie reported that although the Department of Economics had originally expressed some reservations about the continued use of the average of Grade C as the minimum progression threshold, subsequent discussion with the Head of Department had clarified that their concerns lay with the compensation arrangements associated with reaching the average, rather than the threshold itself. The compensation issue was considered separately (see below).

## **2. For the award of Merit and Distinction, for a taught Masters degree:**

**Merit:** on the attainment, at the first attempt, of a mean overall aggregation score of 15 (equivalent to B3) or above for the taught component and Grade B3 or above for the dissertation.

Discretion could be applied to the consideration of an award of a Merit if the mean aggregation score for the taught component fell within the range 14.1 to 14.9.

**Distinction:** on the attainment, at the first attempt, of a mean overall aggregation score of 18 (equivalent to A5) or above for the taught component and Grade A5 or above for the dissertation.

Discretion could be applied to the consideration of an award of a Distinction if the mean aggregation score for the taught component fell within the range 17.1 to 17.9.

For Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, either as exit awards or self-contained awards, the same criteria, and discretion, would apply except that, of course, the criteria would refer only to the taught component.

ASC agreed with the Sub-Committee's recommendation that, given the significance of the dissertation within the progress rules, it was consistent to require a specific level of performance in the dissertation for these awards. Therefore the proposed discretion would not apply to the dissertation, only the results for the taught components. It was agreed that the wording of the revised regulation should be very clear that discretion could not be applied to the dissertation result.

In noting that the new criteria for the award of Merit and Distinction represented a tightening up of current requirements, the SRC representative sought confirmation that they would not be applied to current PGT students. It was clarified that, following approval, the revised PGT Generic Regulation would apply to all students registering on PGT programmes from 2009-10 onwards, but not current students.

## **3. In relation to the capping of reassessments:**

- Discontinuation of capping of dissertation reassessments;
- Changing capping arrangements for taught courses so that they would

not be capped by grade, but would instead be capped by the aggregation score equivalent to C3 which was 12.

It was noted that the current regulation capped the result for a dissertation at C3 which matched the grade at which taught courses were capped for Masters degrees. The reason why taught courses were capped at Grade C was because of the progression requirement of an average of Grade C, but it had been highlighted before the review that the dissertation grade had no bearing on progression. ASC agreed with the view that there was no strong reason to cap grades for reassessed dissertations. It was noted that student transcripts would show where a dissertation had been reassessed.

#### **4. Diploma and Certificate Regulations:**

- the retention of generic regulations for postgraduate diplomas and certificates which were separate from the Masters regulation;
- the extension of maximum duration of study for part-time students from two to four years of registered study.

Members agreed that separate regulations were appropriate for self contained Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates which many students undertook as an end in themselves. Postgraduate Diplomas/Certificates which were available as Masters exit awards would remain in the Generic Masters regulation. It was also agreed that it would be important to update both the Masters and Diploma/Certificate Generic regulations whenever revisions were made, to ensure consistency between both sets of regulations.

#### **Compensation Review**

In terms of the review of compensation regulations for both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees it was noted that there had not been a high response rate to the consultation document.

ASC members noted that the Sub-Committee had agreed that different rules for compensation were appropriate for different types of degree for the following reasons:

- As a general principle, compensation should be permitted where there were no resit opportunities, but for programmes offering reassessment, compensation should be limited.
- It was important that some breadth of attainment was required for degree awards, and in the case of honours, account should be taken of the longer length of the degree programme. Honours degrees comprised four years of study and although there was (in many cases) unlimited compensation for the honours level study, compensation was limited in the first two years, thus requiring demonstration of breadth of attainment before entry to honours.
- Furthermore for honours, the element of the degree which could have unlimited compensation was the same part on which the honours classification was calculated, and this provided a more graduated classification system which reflected poorer performance in the award of the lower degree classifications.

**Academic Standards agreed to recommend to EdPSC that there should not be any change to the compensation arrangements for undergraduate degree awards.**

Attention was also drawn to the position of Glasgow School of Art (GSA) regarding compensation at undergraduate level. While they supported current compensation arrangements, they raised the issue of reassessment for honours courses and proposed that allowing reassessment for honours courses would be welcomed for their degrees, because under current arrangements there was a limit to compensation between theory and practice, because a Grade D or better was required for each, and therefore students could fail to achieve an honours degree on the basis of failing to achieve the learning outcomes for a theory course worth 20% of the final assessment.

Members acknowledged that practice could vary with different types of curricula, and that some flexibility should be applied. ASC therefore invited GSA to request an exemption to current regulations to accommodate their needs as they considered appropriate.

**Action: Clerk**

It was noted that while the Sub-Committee had agreed that limited compensation should continue to be applied to PGT awards, disparate views had been offered between Economics and Computing Science (along with other areas in the Faculties of Science) regarding the limits to be applied to compensation in calculating the Grade C average required for progression to Masters. Economics had advocated a reduction in the amount of compensation permitted, and Computing Science had sought an increase in compensation by permitting grades below E3 to be compensated, if performance was sufficiently high elsewhere.

Mr Guthrie proposed that he should continue his dialogue with each of the departments of Economics and Computing Science to try and find an acceptable position for both which could be proposed to the next meeting of Academic Standards Committee. This was agreed.

**Action: TG**

## **Further Issues**

### *Grade Points*

Academic Standards Committee also discussed the use of Grade Points and grade point averages (GPAs) at undergraduate level which had been an issue arising from the Sub-Committee's consideration of the capping process for PGT degrees. For PGTs, it had been agreed that capping should be by aggregation score rather than grade point score, as grade points offered less granularity than aggregation scores and could only be mapped onto primary grades, rather than secondary bands. It was therefore suggested that replacement of the Grade Points with Aggregation scores should also be considered for undergraduate regulations.

Members agreed that the use of two separate numerical scales was potentially confusing and that it would be more straightforward to use a single scale. It was also pointed out that currently the two numerical scales were sometimes used together in third year classes where honours and non honours students studied together. **ASC therefore agreed to recommend in principle to**

**EdPSC that Schedule C should be removed from the Code of Assessment and the use of grade points be replaced with the 22 point aggregation score scale in undergraduate regulations and capping arrangements for reassessments.** If approved by EdPSC, there would need to be a detailed consideration of the implementation of this change, particularly in terms of the student records system – both the current system and the new one to be introduced under the Student Lifecycle Project.

#### *Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees*

The Sub-Committee had consulted on question of whether the generic Masters regulation could be amended to include Masters degrees which comprised mainly research/dissertation work. Few responses had been received on this question, and all but one of these had strongly advocated the use of separate regulations for PGR degrees.

ASC agreed that separate regulations should be retained for PGR Masters degrees and that the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee could consider, as a future project, the development of a generic PGR Masters regulation.

**Action: Clerk**

### **ASC/2008/38. Code of Assessment**

#### *ASC/2008/38.1 Report from the Code of Assessment Working Group*

The Convener introduced the above report which detailed the main outcomes of two meetings of the Code of Assessment Working Group held in December 2008 and January 2009.

The Working Group had considered the introduction of standard penalties for late submission and had agreed that further discussion was required on the issue of good cause. However, in the interim, the following was recommended to ASC.

1. Coursework which is submitted up to ten working days late shall be accepted and a provisional grade / band determined.
2. It shall then be penalised by two secondary bands for each full or part working day that it is late.
3. Coursework which is submitted more than ten working days late shall not be accepted for assessment.

In discussing these proposals, ASC drew attention to the effect such deadlines might have on timescales for the return of work to the majority of students who had submitted on time. It was agreed that work should not be returned before the 10 day period given that students submitting late could then have the opportunity to look at others' work, and the feedback they had received, before submitting their own work late. Some members considered that a shorter timescale, for example 5 working days, should be implemented. However, the SRC representative suggested that reducing the time within which students could submit late for no stated good cause was likely to impact on retention. He suggested that students at risk of withdrawing from study could be negatively

affected by a perception of inflexibility on the part of the University in accepting work late.

Dr Cutts suggested that the question of the time limit for accepting late coursework should be discussed further with teaching colleagues within faculties/departments to get a clearer view on opinion. Following the meeting all faculty-based members were invited to raise the matter in their own faculty and report any views to the Senate Office.

The Convener agreed to take the Committee's comments back to the Code of Assessment Working Group, which would be revisiting the matter of penalties for late submission of coursework at its next meeting.

#### **Action: Clerk/Convener**

ASC noted from the Report that another group with an assessment focus (considering the ways in which assessment may enhance learning) was being formed. **It was agreed that the Code of Assessment Working Group should be disbanded at the end of the session** with any residual items of business being transferred to the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee or the new Assessment Group.

#### *ASC/2008/38.2 Exemption: Assessment of School Experience (Faculty of Education) – For Noting*

The Committee received and noted a short paper which reported that the Faculty of Education's exemption from the Code of Assessment for the assessment of School Experience had been revised. Instead of using a Merit/Pass/Fail grading scheme for School Experience, this has been revised to satisfactory/unsatisfactory to comply with practice agreed by Local Authorities and Deans of Scottish Education Faculties. The Clerk of Senate and Convener of ASC have approved this revision.

#### **ASC/2008/39. Monitoring of Three Year Degrees – Faculty Feedback**

Previously ASC had discussed monitoring procedures for three year degrees. Some concern had been raised about faculty mechanisms for awarding these degrees. Accordingly, the Faculties of Arts, and Law, Business & Social Sciences had both reported back to ASC on their procedures for determining students' eligibility for three year degrees. Their responses were considered by the Committee and it was noted that established procedures were in place which did not unduly rely on only one or two individual members of staff with knowledge of three year degree regulations. This was also the case in the Faculties of Science when decisions were made for the award of the three year BSc designated degrees. Members were satisfied with the robustness of the procedures which had been reported and agreed that there was no need to recommend any revision to these.

#### **ASC/2008/40. DPTLA Business – Update Reports**

##### *ASC/2008/40.1 Adult & Continuing Education*

ASC received a further update on one recommendation which had arisen from the review of the above department in 2006. It was noted that the recommendation had led to a trial of extended opening hours for the

catering outlets in the St Andrew's Building which had been successful and therefore the extended opening hours would be continued.

*ASC/2008/40.2 Politics*

Previously the department of Politics had been invited to strengthen its response to one recommendation and provide an update on another, both of which had originated from a review in 2007. ASC noted the update and was satisfied i) with the department's arrangements in providing feedback on student essays and ii) its work on increasing students' awareness of course outcomes relating to PDP (personal development planning).

*ASC/2008/40.3 Theatre, Film & Television Studies*

Following receipt of the 12 month update on the above department's review in 2007, ASC had sought further elaboration on responses to two recommendations which related to poor student attendance and student use of hand outs in lieu of attendance. The Committee was fully satisfied with both additional responses which had been provided, although members commented that with regard to recommendation 8, it would be important to ensure that students were informed of actions the department was taking in accordance with the Student Absence Policy.

**Action: Clerk**

**ASC/2008/41. Report from Scottish Agricultural College and University of Glasgow Liaison Committee**

The Committee received the report of the Liaison Committee meeting which had been held on 24 November 2008. ASC approved the membership of the Liaison Committee and agreed that the recommended SAC staff should be approved as Teachers of the University for the purposes of teaching on courses leading to Degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas of the University.

**ASC/2008/42. Report of the Meeting of the Joint Board of the University of Glasgow and the Free Church of Scotland College**

The Committee received the report of the Joint Board meeting which had been held on 22 January 2009. ASC approved the membership of the Joint Board and agreed that the recommended Free Church of Scotland College staff should be approved as Teachers of the University for the purposes of teaching on courses leading to Degrees of the University.

**ASC/2008/43. Accreditation by Professional Statutory Bodies: Sessions 2006-07 and 2007-08**

ASC received a summary of the accreditations which had taken place in 2006-07 and 2007-08 and noted the following accreditations now in place and the various conclusions of the accrediting panels.

Degree	Accredited by	Until
MSc Information Management and Preservation (Digital)	Society of Archivists	2010
MSc Information Management and	<i>And</i> The Chartered	



Preservation (Records Management)	Institute of Library and Information	2012
BEng Aeronautical Engineering MEng Aeronautical Engineering	Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) <i>And</i> Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE)	Up to and including 2013 intake
MBA	Association of MBAs	2010
BSc (Hons) Computing Science BSc (Hons) Software Engineering BSc/BEng (Hons) Electronic and Software Engineering MSci (Hons) Computing Science ( <i>backdated to 2000</i> ) MSci (Hons) Software Engineering ( <i>backdated to 2002</i> ) BSc/MA (Hons) Computing Science (Joint)	British Computer Society	Up to and including 2012 intake
MSc Computing Science	British Computer Society	Retrospectively for 2006 and 2007 intakes
MSc Advanced Computing Science	British Computer Society	Retrospectively for 2004 - 2007 intakes
BSc (Hons) Computing Science BSc (Hons) Software Engineering BSc/BEng (Hons) Electronic and Software Engineering MSci Computing Science ( <i>backdated 2000 – 2007 intakes</i> ) MSci Software Engineering ( <i>backdated 2002 – 2007 intakes</i> ) MSc Computing Science	Institution of Engineering and Technology	Up to and inc 2012 intake
MSc Advanced Computing Science	Institution of Engineering and Technology	Retrospectively for 2004 - 2007 intakes
BSc Designated Degree in Computing Science	Institution of Engineering and Technology	2006 – 2008 intakes
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology	British Psychological Society	2013

**ASC/2008/44. Programme Approval Groups for March 2009**

The Committee noted the membership of the Programme Approval Groups which would be meeting in March 2009.

**ASC/2008/45. Any Other Business**

*ASC/2008/45.1 Reserved Business*

No items of reserved business were identified at the meeting.

**ASC/2008/46. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Academic Standards Committee will be held on **Thursday 9 April 2009 at 9.30am** in the **Melville Room**.

*Prepared by: Ms H Butcher Clerk to Committee h.butcher@admin.gla.ac.uk*

*Last modified on: Tuesday 3 March 2009*