

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 20 February 2009

**Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and
Assessment: Additional Responses to the
Recommendations Arising from the Review of Theatre,
Film and Television Studies held on 20 February 2007**

Ms Jane McAllister, Senate Office

Recommendation 8:

The Panel recommended that Faculty give consideration to the formulation of a policy for dealing with poor attendance at classes which, whilst allowing the student the freedom of choice, ensured potential problems were identified and addressed early, and before they became retention problems (Section C.5.2.1)

Attention : Dean, Faculty of Arts**Response:**

The Faculty supports its Advisers and class convenors in identifying potential problems at an early stage and attempting to address them; we have also been implementing a number of strategies to foster an early sense of commitment to the University and to the Faculty and its departments, and therefore better retention. These strategies include introducing a participation mark for seminars at Levels 1 and 2, recording attendance during lectures, and reviewing course design so that it becomes more difficult for certain students to adopt a pragmatic strategy consisting of strategic attendance rather than seeing attendance of all of the course as the best possible means of preparing for assessment.

Additional Response:

In accordance with the Student Absence Policy the Department records absence in seminars. Letters are sent to students with two absences and their advisors. A further absence report is sent via the Faculty after 5 weeks to students who are not attending and deemed to be 'at risk'. In addition both Theatre Studies and Film and Television Studies take attendance randomly at lectures monitoring in that way overall attendance patterns.

Recommendation 9:

The Panel recommended that, given the recurring issues regarding attendance at Level 2, formal evaluation of the year (and student motivation) be undertaken, in order to identify developments that might address the issue (Section C.5.2.1)

Attention : Head of Department**Response**

Both FTV and TS have reviewed the Level 2 provision in their subject groups and with students at staff/student meetings. We do believe that many of the problems commented on in the report including attendance problems and students making strategic decisions about where to put energy and commitment are problems which affect many subjects in the Faculty. We have

confirmed this with English Literature and History for instance. There are also issues about students undertaking paid work which affects the time devoted to study. Both subject areas will keep this item under review.

FTV The main problems arise with the lectures at 9.30 on Friday morning. Student feedback suggests that attendance is affected by social activities the night before. In addition, the staff/student discussion confirmed that students make pragmatic calculations about what sessions they don't have to attend in person, relying on the back up of hand outs and course documentation. There is evidence to suggest that those students who are motivated and committed to the subject wish to see measures taken to curb this strategy. It is not possible for us to change the time of the lecture and we are experimenting with taking registers in lectures to see if this is feasible and has any impact. Attendance at seminars is monitored and problems raised with the students concerned if necessary via the adviser.

TS Attendance at Level 2 TS lectures is generally high. Nevertheless, the TS team does monitor the numbers attending lectures (at both L1 and L2) and, if a dip is perceived, then a sign-up sheet is circulated at the start of an individual lecture to emphasise to the students that attendance is required. In order to prevent students strategically choosing lectures based on assessment methods, the TS team decided to introduce a second question onto the exam for the first semester's course (Classical to Modern). Incorporating into the exam a second question which requires the students to make important links across and between the different historical periods and theoretical areas covered by the course will mean that the connection between teaching and assessment is strengthened further. The proposed change is in line with an examination assessment that is already in place in Level 1 Theatre Studies: Theatre and Society. Attendance at Level 1 and 2 seminars is monitored especially closely, and any student who misses two classes is contacted by the year convenor via letter. Attendance at honours is compulsory – it is a requisite of each TS honours course that 6 out of 8 seminars must be attended in order for credit to be awarded.

Additional Response:

Course documents inform students that lecture handouts are not a substitute for attending lectures and only make sense in combination with the actual lecture. Course handouts offer more general summaries of material covered each week or group of weeks and are not a reproduction of lecture notes. Lecture notes are not generally available to students either from the office or from course convenors/lecturers.