

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 23 April 2010

**Report from Academic Regulations Sub-Committee Meetings of 30
November 2009 and 11 February 2010**

Professor Tom Guthrie, Convener

1. Application of Regulation 1.9

The Sub-Committee was asked to consider various aspects of the interpretation of Regulation 1.9 of the Fees & General Section of the *University Calendar* and report to ASC.

The current wording of the Regulation is as follows:

§1.9 Regulations published in the University Calendar shall normally apply, unless explicit provision is contained therein to the contrary, only to students commencing a programme of studies or research later than the date on which the regulations became effective. Any student commencing a programme of studies or research earlier than that date shall be subject to the regulations in place when he or she began that programme unless regulations, including the current regulations, introduced at a later date are considered, after consultation with the student, to benefit the student.

A query in relation to the 2008-09 PGT Masters cohort had raised the issue of whether the revised PGT Generic Regulations (introduced for 2009-10) could be applied, bearing in mind the provisions of §1.9. After due consideration, the Clerk of Senate concluded that the 2008-09 *Calendar* regulations should be applied universally to the 2008-09 cohort of students on Masters programmes which fell under the PGT regulations.

ARSC was asked to consider the following specific issues:

1. *Should the principle in §1.9 be available to students on programmes such as the 12 months Masters, where a new edition of the University Calendar is published mere weeks before Exam Boards meet?*

The Sub-Committee agreed that where students had completed the assessment under the old set of regulations, then those regulations should apply throughout. If a student from the same cohort was re-sitting an assessment at a later date, then the old regulations should still apply.

2. *At what point would 'consultation with the student' take place? The query raised the possibility of such consultation happening at the point that Exam Boards were considering students' results and how these fitted with old and new Merit and Distinction criteria.*

The Sub-Committee's view was that the question of whether a new regulation could be applied to the benefit of the student might only arise at the very end of a course, i.e. at Exam Board, and that to have a flexible interpretation of this provision was desirable.

3. *The revised Merit/Distinction criteria would benefit some students while the old criteria would benefit others. The Sub-Committee's view was invited on whether for any one cohort different versions of regulations could be applied?*

The Sub-Committee agreed that for any one cohort of full-time PGT students one rule should be applied.

ASC is asked to note these views and consider whether any action is required, e.g. the issue of guidance on the interpretation of the regulation.

2. Proposed Amendment to Undergraduate Regulation [Appendix 1]

The Sub-Committee agreed to **propose to ASC a revised form of wording on the counting of courses for undergraduate and PGT programmes, for inclusion in the 2010-11 Calendar.** The development of this proposal arose from the wish to reinforce the principle that the assessment of performance at Honours should be based on a student's first attempt.

It was noted that for the PGT programmes the term 'average aggregation score' would be replaced by 'grade point average' when Schedule C was removed from the Code.

3. Opportunities for Second Attempts at Coursework [Appendix 2]

The Code of Assessment Working Group had been asked to consider the regulations and guidance available on this issue, and as the Working Group had been wound up, this issue had been referred to ARSC.

The Committee considered the provisions governing re-assessment in the Code of Assessment. Section 16.8 stated that a second attempt would normally be permitted. The accompanying guidance indicated that there were inevitably situations in which it would not be practicable to offer second opportunities. The Committee agreed that where it was not possible to offer re-assessment this should be laid out very clearly in course documentation before the start of the course. In some courses a re-assessment might be possible in a different format if it was possible to assess against the same ILOs. For example, an essay might be substituted for an examination. The Group considered that variation in the availability of second attempts between different areas of the University was justifiable. It was agreed that the wording of the guidance should be amended to reflect these points.

ASC is asked to **note** these views.

4. Schedule B [Appendix 3]

A consultation document had been circulated to areas of the University that used Schedule B, asking for comments on suggested amendments. Responses had indicated a strong wish for Schedule B to be retained. It was intended that the new Diploma in Legal Practice would make use of the Schedule. The following views had been expressed:

- 'Practical competencies' should be added to 'skills'
- Awareness of limitations should be included
- The 'Honours' column should be deleted (as it was not being used) and replaced instead with a column indicating Merit (grades A and B), Pass (grades C and D) and Fail (E and F)
- Overall Appendix 3 was the proposed version that appeared to best fit the requirements of those programmes using Schedule B.

The Sub-Committee therefore agreed to propose to ASC that the amended version of Schedule B given at Appendix 3 be adopted, reinforced with the advice that the descriptors could be glossed appropriately at local level.

It was noted that the Campus Solutions system was able to accommodate Schedule B.

5. Retracting Claims of 'Good Cause'

A query had been raised in relation to the position of a student who, after sitting an examination, submitted grounds for 'good cause'. The grounds were accepted and the student was awarded 'MV' for the examination. When the result was published the student contacted the department and asked to know what mark she had achieved in the examination.

The Code of Assessment provides:

16.48 (b) fairness to the individual candidate claiming good cause must be balanced with fairness to other candidates...

And

(d) in the event of the candidate having submitted work for assessment by examination or otherwise, it shall be determined whether such work was manifestly prejudiced by good cause. If such prejudice is established the work affected shall normally be deemed not to have been submitted.

The Sub-Committee's view was that fairness to all candidates suggested that a student should not have the option to retract a claim of good cause after an assessment result was published. However, it was plausible that a student who claimed good cause might change their mind before the result was published. In that situation the Sub-Committee considered that the student should be required to indicate formally that the claim was to be retracted and that that decision should be taken within the same time period as applied to the submission of good cause claims i.e., within one week of the examination or other submission deadline.

The Sub-Committee noted that a student whose claim of good cause had been accepted still had the right to know what mark they had achieved (if in fact such a mark existed) and this could be used for feedback purposes. It was also considered that in deciding whether to allow the claim of good cause the Department should take account of the context and ascertain which outcome would be in the student's overall best interests. (For example, the award of a relatively low mark, which allowed the student to progress, might be preferable to the award of an MV, which would require the student to re-sit. The Sub-Committee's view was that it might be easier to identify which was the more favourable decision for Honours students than for those who were pre-Honours.)

The Sub-Committee agreed to propose to ASC that the wording of sections 16.45 – 16.49 of the Code of Assessment ('Incomplete Assessment resulting from Good Cause') should be amended to clarify these points.

Proposed Amendment to Undergraduate Regulation: Revised Wording on Counting Courses

(a) UG programmes

§15.4 Where a candidate remains enrolled on a course at level 3 or above which forms part of his or her Honours programme either:

(a) on the date on which the first summative assessment for that course is to be submitted; or

(b) on such other date as may be specified in the course document for that course;

that course must normally (unless other provision is justified by good cause circumstances affecting the student) be counted towards the calculation of his or her Honours classification.

(b) PGT programmes

§6.1 Where a candidate remains enrolled on a course either:

(a) on the date on which the first summative assessment for that course is to be submitted; or

(b) on such other date as may be specified in the course document for that course;

that course must normally (unless other provision is justified by good cause circumstances affecting the student) be counted towards the calculation of his or her average aggregation score for the purposes of regulations 7, 9 and 10.

Opportunities for Second Attempts at Coursework

Extract from Code of Assessment

§16.8 A candidate who has failed to attain the threshold grade shall, subject to the provision of §16.9 below, normally be permitted not more than one further attempt at each component of the assessment in which a grade lower than the threshold grade has been awarded. A second further attempt shall not be available as a matter of right but may be permitted at the discretion of the Faculty responsible for the programme in accordance with its policies and procedures which shall be published in the relevant course documentation.

Extract from Guide to the Code of Assessment

The right of students to resubmit coursework, or to submit it at a later date, may be closely constrained, these limits being published in course documentation. It may, for example be impracticable for students to have the access to laboratory facilities they would require if they were allowed a late attempt at an experiment, and contributions to group work must necessarily be submitted as part of the group submission. A student could not present an essay for assessment after the work of fellow students had been discussed in seminars without that assessment being seriously compromised.

Proposed amended version of Schedule B

Current	Proposed
Primary verbal descriptors in respect of Demonstration of Professional Practical Competencies and the Supporting Intellectual Knowledge	Primary verbal descriptors for attainment of Intended Learning Outcomes relating to professional or clinical skills
Exemplary and polished demonstration of the required practical competencies, with focussed sensitivity to the needs of the subject, the complexities of the operational context and the wider implications of the procedures or practices	Exemplary and polished demonstration of the required skill(s), displaying underpinning knowledge, sound judgement and appropriate professional values, as evidenced by focussed sensitivity to the context, the needs of any subject, and the wider implications of the candidate's actions.
Efficient and confident display of the required practical competencies, an evident appreciation of the possible practical complications demonstrating initiative and flexibility of approach	Efficient and confident demonstration of the required skill(s), displaying underpinning knowledge, sound judgement and appropriate professional values, as evidenced by an evident appreciation of the possible implications of the candidate's actions, demonstrating initiative and flexibility of approach.
Clear demonstration of attainment of the required practical competencies, with appropriate familiarity with relevant procedures in a range of contexts	Clear demonstration of attainment of the required skill(s), displaying underpinning knowledge, good judgement and appropriate professional values, as evidenced by familiarity with how to proceed in a range of contexts.
Adequate independent performance of practical competencies suitable to routine operational contexts	Adequate independent performance of required skill, displaying underpinning knowledge, adequate judgement and appropriate professional values, suitable to routine contexts.
Presently inadequate independent performance of the required practical competencies, but evidently aware of personal limitations and likely to attain sufficient practical competence through practice	Presently inadequate independent performance of the required skill. Knowledge, judgement and professional values are at least sufficient to indicate an awareness of personal limitations.
Not presently capable of independent performance of the appropriate practical competencies, lacking in perception in the operational context and prone to errors of judgement and faulty practice	Not presently capable of independent performance of the required skill, lacking self-awareness of limitations, and prone to errors of judgement and faulty practice