

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 18 February 2011

Assessment Issues Arising from the Student Lifecycle Project Board

Ms H Butcher, Clerk to the Committee

Introduction

The SLP Project Board had identified a number of assessment issues and reported them to the Education, Policy & Strategy Committee (EdPSC). EdPSC was asked to consider four proposals for improving the consistency of assessment practices across the University. In considering these, EdPSC had noted that the proposals were interlinked and each had the potential to affect the implementation of others. It was agreed that Academic Standards Committee should be asked to consider the implications of the proposals and to suggest the way forward.

The Proposals

Proposal 1: consider modifying the code of assessment to allow continued marking components of assessment in percent where appropriate, but to insist that all aggregation is performed after conversion to the 22 point scale

Proposal 2: consider insisting that contributions of reassessment components are exactly the same as the weightings of the original assessment components.

Proposal 3: consider a means of ensuring that section 16.9 of the code of assessment is applied consistently throughout the University. The default position should be that all components of reassessment are available and a University approval process should be developed for approving “opt outs” for provision of component reassessments.

Proposal 4: consider specifying how aggregate course results should be calculated when there is no reassessment opportunity for one or more components. Two possible methods could be employed for dealing with the component grades which cannot be reassessed:

Consideration of the Proposals

The Academic Regulations Sub-Committee (ARSC) considered proposals 1, 2 and 4 at its recent meeting.

ARSC **recommended adoption of Proposal 1** which reflected current practice under the Code of Assessment.

Proposal 2: *Contributions of reassessment components should be exactly the same as weightings of the original assessment components.*

ARSC noted that the substance of this proposal went beyond anything currently contained in the Code of Assessment or in the Guide to the Code in that it implied that components of assessments would need to remain separate in any reassessment process. It was known that in at least one School there was a practice of reassessing more than one component of

assessment by means of a single assessment (e.g. by a viva) and if Proposal 2 was accepted, such a practice would no longer be possible.

ARSC's view was that while reassessment did not need to take exactly the same format as the original assessment, it did need to assess against the same intended learning outcomes. The Committee's view was that reassessment should involve the same components of assessment being undertaken, whether this involved reassessment within a course or across a number of courses in a programme. **ARSC agreed to commend Proposal 2 to ASC and seek confirmation from ASC that in implementing this, the Code of Assessment would require amendment to make it explicit that separate components of assessment could not be reassessed in a single reassessment.**

Proposal 3: *consider a means of ensuring that section 16.9¹ of the code of assessment is applied consistently throughout the University. The default position should be that all components of reassessment are available and a University approval process should be developed for approving "opt outs" for provision of component reassessments.*

EdPSC had supported this proposal and had also agreed that opting out of offering reassessment should be at the PIP approval stage. Recent discussions at ASC and EdPSC had resulted in agreement to amend 16.9 to require approval of the Head of School in exceptional cases where reassessment was not possible which was consistent with Proposal 3.

It is **proposed that ASC accepts Proposal 3** and directs the Programme and Course Approval Working Group and PIP team to develop the opt-out process in PIP. Campus Solutions could then be instructed to offer a resit on every course except where the "opt out" had been approved in PIP.

Proposal 4: *Where a student performed poorly in coursework and no opportunity existed for reassessment of that coursework, how should their final result for that course be calculated? The two possibilities suggested were:*

1. The original coursework grade to stand and the candidate would have to do better in other components to compensate, or
2. The original coursework grade to be ignored and the other components to be given proportionately higher weightings.

ARSC's view was that option 2 was unfair to other students in that their grades had been calculated taking into account performance in the coursework which could not be replicated. Where reassessment of coursework was not going to be available this should be brought to students' attention at the outset with clear advice on the consequences of poor performance in that component. The Committee's view was that option 1 was consistent with the principles of the Code of Assessment and **it was therefore agreed to commend option 1 to ASC.** EdPSC had also supported option 1.

ASC is also invited to consider EdPSC's view that ignoring some components of assessment is not good practice; for example, in assessment schemes which only use the best two out of three essay grades to calculate the overall course result. EdPSC requested that a statement be added to the code of assessment to make this clear.

¹ 16.9 currently states: A candidate's right under §16.8 to a second opportunity to submit coursework for assessment may be constrained by the nature of the coursework, the context in which it may be generated, the feasibility of its being regenerated, and the integrity of the assessment as a whole. Any such constraint shall be published in the relevant course documentation.