

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 16 November 2012

Report from Meeting of Academic Regulations Sub-Committee held
on Thursday 1 November 2012

Professor Bob Hill, Convener

1. Penalties for late submission of sub-components of coursework

The Code of Assessment sets out standard penalties for late submission of coursework (essentially two secondary bands per day, with a cut-off at five days after which the submission would receive a grade H).

In the course of the Periodic Subject Review in Physics and Astronomy during session 2011-12, a question arose as to how penalties should be applied in relation to sub-components that were submitted late (e.g. weekly submission of lab books). ARSC considered the description of the way that penalties were applied in Physics and Astronomy: Sub-components were marked in percentages, and only when the totals for the various sub-components were combined was there a translation to an alphanumeric grade for the component as a whole. It was therefore inappropriate to apply penalties of secondary bands in relation to late sub-components. Physics and Astronomy instead deducted 10% from the percentage mark awarded to a sub-component per day that it was late. This was considered to be close in effect to deducting two secondary bands from an alphanumeric grade. Members agreed that this was an appropriate approach, but also noted that for consistency with the general rules on penalties, any sub-component that was submitted more than five days late should be awarded a zero.

ARSC recommends the above to ASC as good practice to be followed across the University in relation to sub-components of assessment which are marked in percentage terms. If agreed, it is proposed to include this in the Guide to the Code of Assessment.

2. Late submissions that should be treated as non-submissions

As described above, submissions that are late by more than five working days are required to be graded H irrespective of the performance demonstrated in the work. ARSC had been asked to consider at what point the lateness of submission was so substantial that it should be regarded as a non-submission rather than a late submission. This status was important because non-submissions could ultimately lead to a CW or CR result being entered.

The regulations could be read as implying the cut-off point to be the end of the first assessment diet for the course or the end of the honours programme (§16.42 – 16.44 Code of Assessment), but this could be seen to be too long. One option was to set the cut-off as the point where coursework was returned to students, but it might be that not all coursework was returned to students and there might also be inconsistencies in the way in which grades were returned. Another possibility was to fix a specific time limit beyond which submission would be deemed not to have taken place.

Members reported a variety of practice in terms of the nature and timing of feedback on submitted work. The Committee considered that any submissions received after feedback had been returned to students should be treated as non-submissions. The Committee's view was also that course teams should be able to specify in

course/programme documentation dates after which submitted work would not be considered to constitute a submission.

ASC is asked to consider these views. If agreed, then it is proposed that guidance should be included in the Guide to the Code of Assessment.

3. 'Exams only'

The term 'exams only' is applied to students who are registered either overall or for a particular course for assessment only.

Most commonly, the assessment is an exam, but it could equally be resubmission of course work. The status 'exams only' gives access to facilities such as the library and the computer network, but it does not allow students to attend classes. Students can register on an 'exams only' basis, or they can register as full-time or part-time students attending some courses while being 'exams only' for others.

Given that the 'exams only' status covered assessment by means other than exams, there was a suggestion that renaming this as 'assessment only' would be advantageous. (Use of the term 'exams only' was recently cited in an academic appeal as a cause of confusion, where a student claimed to be unaware of a requirement to resubmit coursework.)

Members agreed that the term 'exams only' had the potential to cause confusion and while not strictly a matter of regulations, it is proposed to ASC that the term should be replaced with 'assessment only'.

4. 'Manifest prejudice' where the course threshold grade has been achieved

In order for good cause provisions to be invoked where a student has completed assessment (submitted coursework or attended an exam), there must be deemed to have been 'manifest prejudice' to the performance in that assessment. Where good cause is so established the normal expectation would be that the performance would be set aside, a grade MV returned, and the student offered an opportunity to repeat the assessment (where such an opportunity existed).

In some areas of the University there appears to be a reluctance to set aside the grade and thus to require another attempt to be made if the student has in fact achieved at least the 'threshold grade' for that course (D3 for undergraduate programmes, C3 for PGT programmes). Where the grade is sufficient for progress it might be considered disadvantageous for students to be required to repeat the assessment. However, in some areas (e.g. competitive professional) it is suggested that course grades from all stages might be scrutinised by future employers, and students could for their own reasons wish to have the best possible result on their record.

ARSC was not persuaded by the suggestion that achievement of the course threshold grade indicated that there had been no manifest prejudice. The view was that a judgment should always be made on a case by case basis in the context of the individual student's overall profile and the requirements of the programme. It was also important to bear in mind that by making the good cause claim the student was expressing a view that their performance had been compromised.

ASC is invited to note this view.

5. Future business

Other items under consideration by ARSC for future reporting to ASC:

- Schedule B
- External examiner reports in relation to the Code of Assessment
- Progress regulations
- Regulations for Masters by research

Membership

The membership of the Sub-Committee will consist of two representatives from each of the Colleges who will normally be a member of the Academic Standards Committee:

College of Arts

Dr S Marritt

Dr Costas Panayotakis

College of Medical, Veterinary & Life Sciences

Dr P Cotton

Professor N Evans

College of Science & Engineering

Professor B Hill (*Convener*)

Dr B Stewart

College of Social Sciences

Ms Joanne Ramsey

Dr Roisin Coll

Mr Razvan Balaban

SRC, student representative

Clerk: Mrs R Cole

Senate Office