

## University of Glasgow

## Academic Standards Committee – Friday 23 May 2014

## Annual Report on External Examiners' Reports – Session 2012-13

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**1. Introduction**

External examiners are required to report to the Principal annually via the Senate Office on-line external examiner database. The reports are reviewed by the Senate Office and are categorised according to our satisfaction. The categories are: A (very satisfactory); B (satisfactory); C (satisfactory but some general comments made will prove helpful to course development) and D (concerns have been raised that require attention). There is one further category "spcl", which accompanies the main categories if a specific issue has arisen that applies at University or College level and generally lies outwith the School's responsibility.

This report summarises the External examiners' reports received for Session 2012-13, paying particular attention to concerns and/or recommendations that have been raised by External Examiners. The report draws attention to issues that have affected External Examining procedures during Session 2012.

**2. Statistical Information**

The report covers External Examiner reports on courses taught in the University and does not include those reports on courses validated by the University or for joint courses where Glasgow is not the administering University (e.g. Christie's Education, Glasgow School of Art, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)). These are reviewed by the relevant Joint Boards or Joint Liaison Committees.

The table at Annex 1 shows comparative figures for the last six years. 443 out of a total of **465** expected reports (95%) had been received by the date of the preparation of this report with 65 (15%) requiring a response from the School. Of the 443 reports received, 165 (37%) were categorised as A/Aspcl, 113 (25%) were categorised as B/Bspcl and 100 (23%) were categorised as C/Cspcl. Consequently, 377 (85%) expressed general satisfaction.

**3. Comments Requiring Reply**

As indicated in the table at Annex 1, from the 65 reports (15%) which contained comments that required a response, the Head of School was asked to arrange for the School or Subject to address the points made and to respond to the Senate Office within three months. From the 65 requests, 49 replies have been received; copies of these responses have been sent to the External Examiners. It should be noted that four responses are not due until the end of May. Senate Office is currently following up on outstanding responses.

**4. Issues**

In general, comments and recommendations made by External Examiners for Session 2012-13 covered the following issues.

#### **4.1 Marking and Marking Scheme**

There has been an increase in the number of comments made in relation to the marking scheme with 40 External Examiners commenting as compared to 29 in session 2011-12. The main concerns were:

- 32 commented on inconsistent use of the marking scheme;
- 8 on the lack of moderation.

#### **4.2 Assessment and Feedback**

There was an increase in the number of comments made with 33 External Examiners commenting on Assessment and Feedback compared with 14 in session 2011-12. Recommendations raised were as follows:

- 14 commented on the need for current forms of assessment to be revised;
- 11 commented on the variability of feedback to students;
- 5 commented on excessive overlap of essay and examination questions.

#### **4.3 Procedural and Documentation**

Nine External Examiners raised issues pertaining to procedures and documentation:

#### **4.4 Teaching and Course Content**

Three External Examiners commented on teaching and course content issues.

#### **4.5 Standard of Students**

Three External Examiners raised concerns regarding the standard of students.

#### **4.6 Staffing**

Eleven External Examiners commented on academic and administrative staffing levels which is comparable to last year's figures.

#### **4.7 Accommodation**

Two external examiners commented on teaching accommodation.

### **5. Code of Assessment**

Twenty three comments were referred to the ASRC for consideration with main topic being discretion borderline cases.

### **6. MyCampus**

Two External Examiners made comments pertaining to the difficulties experienced by staff and students through MyCampus.

### **7. On-line External Examiner System**

The most recent development of the online External Examiner System is the publication of external examiners reports for session 2012-13 on the Senate Office website. All reports are read, scrutinised and redacted, where necessary, prior to publication. These reports are accessible to on-campus users only.

The GUID system continues to present difficulties. The main criticism from external examiners concerns the log-in process which is discerned as being overly cumbersome.

Future Actions:

The automation of school-related processes such as nominations and responses to examiners will be developed.

## **8. QAA Quality Code Chapter B7: External Examining – Update**

As outlined in last year's report, a Frequently Asked Questions section has been added to the on-line induction section on the Senate Office webpage.

## **9. Summary**

The Academic Standards Committee is asked **to note** the following:

- The summary of comments made by external examiners in their reports for session 2012-13. These comments will be addressed where necessary by schools and responses reviewed and monitored by the Senate Office.
- The external examiner on-line system update

<b>Diet</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>
Report Prepared	4 May 2009	7 May 2010	13 May 2011	14 May 2012	7 May 2013	20 May 2014
No. of external examiner reports expected	432	441	449	479	469	465
No. received at date of report	413 (96%)	409 (93%)	404 (90%)	403 (84%)	442 (94%)	443 (95%)
% received by 31 July <sup>1</sup>	46%	50%	44%	37%	47%	50%
% received by 31 October <sup>2</sup>	74%	78%	70%	60%	71%	76%
Reports with substantial comment, for reply by Department	82 (20%)	52 (12%)	51 (13%)	38 (9%)	72 (16%)	65 (15%)
Replies received from Department and forwarded to external examiners to date	77 (94%)	38 (73%)	36 (71%)	9 (24%)	58 (81%)	49 (80%) <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is the date by which reports are requested

<sup>2</sup> This is the date by which most reports on taught post graduate courses are expected

<sup>3</sup> Four responses are not due until 31 May 2014 and have not been included in this figure