

EXTERNAL EXAMINER COMMENTS AND SCHOOL RESPONSES – SESSION 2012-13

MARKING AND ASSESSMENT

Marking				
Remit ID	Remit	Issues	Comment	School Response
10729	Vet Bioscience (BSc)	Overmarking Internal Moderation	<p>Marking of the assignment was a little generous - this was out of line with what I have experienced on similar courses in other institutions. I estimate that the assignments were over-marked by an approximately flat 15%, which made the module average over-marked by approximately 4-5%. while, in a first year module, this is not a huge amount (and inspection of the individual marks revealed that this would not have made the difference between any individual student passing or failing), it should receive some attention.</p> <p>A sample of exams and assignments should be moderated, and evidence of this, for example with a signature, should be given at the bottom of scripts.</p>	<p>This is a legitimate concern that he communicated to us as the time of the Examiners' Meeting. Broadly, I agree with his comment, although I would suggest that the comment that there is a flat over-marking of 15% might be a little over my estimate. In marking the essay, I used a criterion-referenced system that with the benefit of hindsight was probably over-generous and I wanted to take care that I did not penalise students for unclear criteria set out in the original questions. My intention for the next session is to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the criteria given to students are robust and unambiguous 2. Share the marking with colleagues to enable some moderation of the essay marks 3. Share the marking of the examination to enable some moderation of marks. <p>I have also spoken with the Programme Director, who has informed me that it is planned to review assessment and marking on all of the Programme courses in the near future</p>
10633	MBChB 5 th Year	Marking Scheme	<p>Standard setting needs to be transparent. Methodology needs to be declared. The examination schedule states that "We will continue to use the "borderline" method to set standards and this year will again use the median mark of this group as a measure of central tendency. This will set the cut score" but I have also been informed by senior staff that an arbitrary pass mark of 66% is used in written tests.</p>	<p>We use a standard Angoff method for standard setting of the written MBChB finals paper. The "borderline" method is used in the OSCE examination but not in the written tests. As such this comment is difficult to interpret as it appears to ascribe a borderline method to the written test, which is incorrect. An "arbitrary pass mark" of 66% is not used in any component of either examination. The external examiner does not name the "Senior Staff" to whom he spoke, however it is highly unlikely that these individuals would be involved in standard setting of either written or OSCE examination.</p>
10905	BDS 1 st Year	Weighting	<p>Although there is a different weighting given for the MCQ part and the MSA part of the examination, with</p>	<p>The weighting of the various components is representative of the assessment time involved and also</p>

			<p>the former having less weight than the latter, there would be merit in the School reviewing this again. The standard set for the MCQ gave a pass mark that was much lower than the average score achieved by the student cohort i.e. they tended to score highly in this section. The MCQ mark was then combined with the MSA mark and averaged. The outcome of this was that several students failed 7 or 8 out of 9 of the short answer questions but still passed the examination overall because they scored highly in their MCQ. The School might consider either a) changing the weighting for the two parts of the examination, or b) setting a threshold number of short answer questions that must be passed (e.g. 4) in order to pass the examination overall. The reason for this suggestion is that the short answer questions tend to test understanding, as well as recall, and it doesn't seem appropriate for candidates to pass who have little understanding of the material. There were two questions that only around 12% of students achieved the standard set pass mark. It is perfectly reasonable to include a couple of hard questions to discriminate between the excellent and the average students. However, the School should use this result to inform their standard setting to ensure that the pass mark was set correctly.</p>	<p>of what the School considers to be the relative importance of factual recall and higher cognitive skills at this early stage of the curriculum. Different weighting has been modelled; for those students "failing" seven of nine MSA questions in the recent diet, increasing the weight of the MSA paper from 40% to 50% would have had no effect on the grades obtained; only by increasing the weight from 40% to 55% would a change have been effected. The School's view is that this change in weighting cannot be justified.</p> <p>Free compensation operates across written components and the School considers that this is not unusual. A requirement for a minimum number of "passed" MSA questions would, however, be unusual and this is not an approach the School favours. However, it is accepted that the current method of aggregation does not incorporate any adjustment for facility. The School will therefore look into a different approach to aggregation that takes into account the relative difficulty of the papers.</p> <p>There is ongoing review of assessment items based on their facility, discrimination and contribution to reliability.</p>
11113	Biochemistry/Medical Biochemistry	Consistency of Marking	<p>I made the following comment last year. 'There was variability in the annotation of scripts by exam markers. I would suggest that all markers be required to make some mark on each page (to show that they have looked at the material on that page) and to provide sufficient annotation to justify the grade and band awarded for the question.' There continues to be considerable variability in the annotation of scripts by exam markers and not all markers make a mark on each page. This should be addressed. I also note that the School of Life Sciences marking guidelines for L4 exams states 'All comments should be legible....'; this was not</p>	<p>The external examiner's comments were discussed at a meeting of the Biomolecular Sciences Degree Group where it was agreed that steps to reinforce the guidelines with marking staff will be made. In particular, the marking guidelines will be highlighted to a greater extent in the information given by course co-ordinators to markers.</p>

			always the case. The guidelines also state 'The first (specialist) marker's comments should be written on the inside back cover of the script book.'; this was seldom the case	
11176	Business & Management	Assessment – Feedback	There is some variance in the amount of feedback received for some assignments, especially in Junior/Senior Honours classes where coursework is the only mode of assessment. Some of the feedback is also hard to read. This may be something the department wants to be aware of given its importance in the NSS.	We agree that we could improve the quality of feedback on assessed work. This is a point also highlighted by our NSS results. We are now requesting that staff improve poor quality of feedback and this will be closely monitored.
10922	Hispanic Studies (Latin American)	Marking	I was particularly impressed with the feedback and am convinced that overall the marking criteria was applied consistently. I did, find, however, that the 0-22 scale can, by its very nature, with five bands in the First Class grade, encourage markers to be arguably over-generous. As it is my first year as External and I accept that it is possible that this year's finalists in Hispanic and Spanish Studies were a particularly exceptional student cohort, I was reluctant to change any marks and chose not to do so. However, I am concerned that the number of firsts awarded in the modules I moderated was remarkably high. In HISP4021 40.7% were awarded Firsts. In HISP4023 it was 40%. The statistics for HISP4009 were also high, with 26% of students obtaining Firsts. As became evident at the classification board, this trend was reflected in the number of First Class Degrees that were awarded. Taking Single Honours Hispanic and Spanish students together - a total of 18 students - 8 first class degrees were awarded, with the remaining ten students obtaining a 2.I (5) and a 2.II (5). Markers in Spanish may want to monitor the way they use the 0-22 scale so as not to end up with inflated grades that may, in turn, devalue the merit of genuine first class work.	<p>The points raised by the External were discussed by the Learning and Teaching Committee on 2.10.13 [REDACTED] confirmed that all Honours papers were double marked and that last year's student group was indeed, as the External suggests, a very strong cohort. The External was given an extensive range of scripts to review, including all First Class marks.</p> <p>For this academic year, the SMLC Assessment Officer has been tasked with setting up a working group to review various aspects of assessment criteria, particularly criteria specific to the assessment of language work. The issues raised by the External for Hispanic Studies will be considered as part of this SMLC process and the comments will inform the discussion of marks next year by colleagues in Hispanic.</p>
9512	Health & Social Policy	Assessment	I feel that it would be worth reviewing essay questions in conjunction with the exam questions, with a view to limiting the number of choices. This is because at times	We felt that are two related issues here. 1. First, there is the matter of duplicating content in essays and exams. It was felt that there was scope to

			<p>it is possible for students to do an exam question on the same, or very similar, topic to an essay question they have previously submitted</p>	<p>address this and conveners would either ensure that there was no overlap in question content between essays and exams or that students would be told that they were not allowed to duplicate content. It was also felt however that exams and essays can often be considered to be two very different forms of assessment requiring the demonstration of different skills from the students and that in these circumstances, it would be acceptable for course conveners to allow the use of the same material in two different contexts.</p> <p>2. Second, there is the extent of choice offered and keeping in line with the recommended assessment load (guidelines were circulated). Again, there was a view that this could be addressed, particularly in the new courses being introduced 2013/14. Though again there was a recognition that the broad and interdisciplinary nature of some of the courses made limited choice inappropriate and suggest the continued need for a relatively wider choice.</p>
9582	Politics (UG)	Assessment	<p>On the positive side, teaching and feedback is generally of a very high standard indeed. Overall, there has also been improvement in the depth of feedback provided. However, some students could graduate in politics from Glasgow without doing any exams (there are lots of options that are only course assessed). While the assessments are interesting and address a variety of student and course needs, lack of exams combined with observations that some students do not show for classes beyond the first meeting means that you could be awarding degrees to people who are doing full time work elsewhere and getting others to do their course work for them. I recommend that all classes that contribute to a degree classification have an examined component where the student turns up with student id and you then have greater chance that you are awarding degrees to those who truly deserve them. This would also help reward those who show up to class as those attending are typically more likely to do well in</p>	<p>The External Examiner suggests that we introduce an exam in all Honours modules. We would like to see how Turnitin functions in the Subject as a deterrent, detection and learning tool before considering this step. We are reluctant to mandate exams in all courses for several reasons. First, we believe the pluralisation of our assessment regimes in Politics is a very real source of strength and innovation in our Honours curriculum. Indeed this strength was highlighted in a recent review of teaching in the Subject as noted in the PSR report: "The Panel welcomed the emphasis away from examination-room assessment to reports, essay plans or article reviews, which was considered appropriate for the subject area" (Draft Politics Subject Review 2013). Although introducing an exam in every module would not prevent us from utilizing other forms of assessment, we fear it would limit room for such innovation and experimentation. Further it would go against a trend in the School of relying more on in-course assessment in</p>

			<p>exams. So you would be reducing fraud opportunities and increasing reward for attendance (which would help address the issue of decreased attendance that has been raised by your staff as a problem).</p>	<p>Honours modules. Feedback from our student-staff meetings over the past two years indicates anecdotally that students welcome this trend and the move away from examination-based course work. In addition we are not convinced that exams are an absolute guarantee against academic fraud as cheating can occur in exams as well. Similarly seminar attendance should help students perform better on in-course work as well as on exams. Thus while we share these concerns about plagiarism in our Honours modules, we believe that the introduction of Turnitin is a reasonable response to help reduce this risk without unnecessarily narrowing assessment regimes and innovation in our curriculum.</p>
10419	English Literature	Assessment – Feedback	<p>Q. 2.8 There is a great variety in the method by which feedback is given: ranging from hand-written post-it notes, to typed up notes, to the use of cover sheets (which detail the criteria used), to the exams, which have no sign of markers' comments on them, despite the fact that exam booklets have a margin for this purpose. I would recommend that the School adopt one of these systems across the board, ideally some form of cover sheet that explicitly links up with the marking criteria. While I did receive most of the work necessary for the task there was the odd piece of work missing and on occasion, marker's comments were missing. It was a real hindrance not to have access to any comments on the exams: this made it difficult for me to assess why certain marks had been given, how the overall mark for the paper had been arrived at (what the marks were for individual questions), discrepancies between markers and the process by which agreed marks had been arrived at. I understand that this is because exams are double blind marked, but I fail to understand why a different marking system should be adopted for this mode of assessment.</p>	<p>Response 1) A standard cover sheet has been drawn up which was approved at a subject meeting in September 2013 and will be in use for all submitted work from now on.</p> <p>Concern 2) Externals given no access to comments on exam scripts</p> <p>Response 2) The following procedures were discussed and agreed upon at a subject meeting in September 2013: <u>Dissertations:</u> As at present, markers should draw up their comments and suggested mark independently. The final mark will then be agreed in discussion in the usual way, and both sets of comments, individual marks, and the final mark recorded on a cover sheet (modelled on that currently used for Masters essays and dissertations). <u>Exams:</u> As at present, markers should draw up their comments and suggested mark independently. The final mark will then be agreed in discussion in the usual way, and recorded clearly on the front of the exam booklet. A summary of each marker's comment, giving an indication of the mark each marker had in mind, will be written on the inside cover of the exam booklet, followed by a final overall comment indicating how the final mark was arrived at. The markers will also indicate in these comments the presence of short measure or rubric</p>

				violation and how it was treated in arriving at a final mark.
11308	Chemistry (Organic)	Marking – Marking sheet	<p>As last year, the Examiners spent some time looking at the marks for the Industrial Placement year, particularly for candidates on final degree class borderlines. Last year we commented on the need to calibrate the marks from the industrial supervisor, and we were told that this is indeed done by the Class Head, with supervisors being contacted where necessary to ensure that they understand the marking criteria. Looking at the mark sheet provided to the industrial supervisors, we noted that the criteria applied to each mark range are subjective ones (Good, Satisfactory, etc.) I would recommend revising the mark sheet so that it includes explicit examples of achievements meriting award of marks at particular levels. I would also like to see documentation of the visit to the student on placement, explicitly showing that the visiting academic has ensured that the pastoral and supervisory arrangements are satisfactory.</p> <p>. 8.3 The reasons for the low average mark in the Final Year MSci problem paper should be considered. This may of course be a specific feature of this year's paper/cohort (the average was fine in 2011-12 but it was also low in 2010-11). While I consider the questions on this year's paper to be fair, in future years staff should consider structuring the questions carefully so that the level of difficulty increases gradually as the question proceeds. This is particularly important given that questions on this paper contain advanced material not necessarily linked to any specific lecture courses, a very commendable situation but one which many students find challenging. Question spotting has largely been eliminated in earlier years of the course, but there were still some relatively unpopular questions in the Final Year papers. I agree with the Glasgow staff that an element of choice is entirely appropriate at this level, but they need to consider whether in omitting entire courses the students are able to avoid material that has</p>	<p>We have modified the marking scheme which is sent out to all Industrial Supervisors in line with suggestions from the External Examiners to make the marking more transparent.</p> <p>(b) Documentation should provided demonstrating that the Academic Supervisor has been reassured the pastoral care and supervisory arrangements in Industrial Placements are satisfactory</p> <p>RESPONSE : Academic supervisors are informed at the start of the academic year of their responsibilities and the tasks they should complete during the student's placement and when they are on a placement visit.</p> <p>(c) The reasons for the low average mark in the Final Year MSci Problem Paper should be considered</p> <p>RESPONSE : We have carefully looked at the relative difficulty of questions in the current and previous years paper, but we were unable to uncover any reasons for the difficulties experienced by the current cohort. The format of the Level -4 papers is changing slightly this year, and we are hopeful that this problem will not arise again.</p> <p>(d) The academic staff need to consider whether omitting entire courses has a deleterious effect on their overall understanding of the subject.</p> <p>RESPONSE : This issue was discussed and it was felt that the case for providing some element of choice in the final year was stronger than the need to mandate a complete coverage of the subject. The Level-4 courses are also available as post-graduate courses, should it be the case that students have missed the topic in their undergraduate years and it becomes essential for their post-graduate education.</p>

			an important role in their overall understanding of the subject	
10951	Microbiology	Assessment – Feedback Marking Scheme	All examiners should annotate/comment on examination scripts otherwise it is very difficult to provide detailed student feedback or respond to students challenging the marks given. Furthermore, for examination papers, there was a distinct lack of model answers and marking schemes making it difficult for externals to determine how marks had been allocated. This would also help to ensure full use of the marking scale was used. Vivas by external examiners are used at Glasgow to make decisions on candidates at degree classification borders and these sessions include non-borderline students as markers. The accepted role of the externals should be to scrutinize the examinations process not evaluate individual student performances. Hence due consideration should be given to replacing vivas by externals with a formula-driven mechanism for determining final degree classification.	We ask that it be noted that the External Examiner was not unhappy with the marking, as he considered the grades fair and acknowledged the rigorous use of double marking. With regards the use of model answers, on wider discussion it became clear that model answers were used for many questions within option courses, but are not routinely made available to the external examiners. This is, at least in part, because the model answers are often generated informally by the question setter and then provided to the second marker to guide discussions after independent marking. For some options, such as Core Skills in Microbiology, Parasitology and Virology, and Molecular and Biochemical Parasitology, where multipart, data-driven questions are used model answers were more formally provided to the course co-ordinators in order to ensure clarity and fairness in the questions. In summary, therefore, model answers are more widely used than it may appear. We will endeavour to provide a route to provide these model answers to the examiners. With regards to the annotation of scripts, it was agreed that group D guidelines for markers be reviewed and circulated with exam scripts in the coming session. Group D discussed in detail the criteria for deciding on final classifications in relation to rounding up/down, noting that preponderance of grades, mitigating circumstances, feedback from staff, in addition to the external examiner's comments, are all considered for borderline students. Thus, it is important to note that the external examiner, and the student's performance in the viva, is never the single deciding factor in borderline cases. The group D staff were firmly in favour of retention of the viva system as it stands; indeed, at a L4 Microbiology-specific teachers' meeting (12 th June, 2013) colleagues were unanimous in their support of viva retention. Nonetheless, we accepted that this requires further discussion and it was agreed that the matter

				should be raised at the School education committee.
11105	MBChB 2 nd Year	Marking – Internal Moderation	<p>At present, there is no internal moderation of the marking of the written papers. I would ask you to consider this particularly for fail/borderline candidates.</p> <p>The emphasis in the written papers is in testing knowledge recall; I did not note many opportunities to test the understanding or application of knowledge. I would encourage you to look at this for the future.</p>	<p>The University Learning and Teaching Committee have published guidelines for double marking for non-Honours undergraduate assessments. In future we will look at all the E1 grades in future as the policy recommends.</p> <p>We will work towards including questions which clearly test understanding and application of knowledge. However, diagnostic skills are developed and tested later in the course during the clinical years.</p>
10936	MSc Global Mental health	Marking – Internal Moderation	<p>This maybe the result of my lack of familiarity with the course assessment but I was not aware of the work having been second marked or internally moderated. That is, the work had been reviewed by only one person.</p>	<p>At our recent Exam Board Meeting (13th September 2013), I took the opportunity to explain to both External Examiners the policy that we use for moderating assessments submitted by the students. This policy states that a selection of submitted assessments are blind 2nd marked. This 2nd marking provides an opportunity to identify any disparities between the two markers grading of the work and facilitate discussion and agreement between markers. The External Examiners were also provided with evidence of this 2nd marking.</p>
9172	Large Animal Clinical Studies	Assessment – Format	<p>The one area of concern I still have is the general ability of the students to undertake a clinical examination in a stressed environment. If they move into a clinical post, which most will, every consultation will be a stressed environment until confidence is attained. Some are excellent. Most are just acceptable, some are terrible. Nerves may come to play, I accept, but they will be nervous in practice at first. I examined some 30 students on clinical exam stations this year and was disappointed in the ability of most to spot the obvious and prioritise their actions. In fairness, only the minority were unsafe in my opinion and I failed them on that station, but those that just passed really did scrape by and would be found to be wanting by clients and therefore employers despite not being dangerous. It's all well and good that</p>	<p>We had attempted to address this concern over clinical examination skills, which is one that we have been aware of for a number of years. In the LACS course in 2012-13 there was a system whereby all students had to undertake an assessed, structured, time limited clinical examination of both an equine animal and bovine animal whilst on the corresponding rotation. Following completion of that task, all students received direct one-to-one feedback from a member of the LACS clinical staff on their performance and areas that were both good and, or, needed improvement. All students were required to pass this assessment to be eligible to go forward to the final professional exam. If they did not pass they were instructed to repeat the assessment at a later stage in the rotation.</p>

			<p>they have to pass a clinical exam process during the year, but by the time they reach the finals day that skill has been largely forgotten. I hope that this effect is not repeated with other skills in the new format. If I were to return next year I would be seeking some kind of reassurance that clinical examination skills have been maintained.</p>	<p>In addition, a member of the farm animal clinical group developed an on-line teaching tool to guide students how to approach clinical examination of the bovine animal, which emphasised the importance of subjective observations of the animal and its surroundings, as this was an area that we felt students were often inclined to ignore; either due to ignorance or 'panic' in a stressed environment.</p> <p>Throughout rotations in both equine and farm animal, students were given many opportunities to practice clinical examinations of a range of large animal species and there was always plenty of opportunity for feedback from staff and supporting clinicians such as interns and residents on student performance. Overall, we were sometimes disappointed that students did not always embrace the opportunities they were given; especially in farm animal when at any one time there are always plenty of cases across species, breeds, ages and with various conditions ranging from 'normal' to abnormal. It is very hard to teach experience to students unless you expose them to a real farm or stable yard and a real client and get the students to undertake initial examinations of a case alone: with corresponding constraints of time and supervision and client acceptability. We do attempt to expose students to as many farm visits as possible, both through the first opinion farm animal practice rotation and through the farm visits they undertake with us, and often on those visits students are encouraged to take responsibility for some aspects of case examination. In equine rotations there are always opportunities to practice and refine skills on cases across a range of situations (initial examination, pre and post surgical etc).</p> <p>A further aspect which may impact on students' abilities to undertake an appropriate clinical assessment is the lack of appropriate extra mural studies (EMS) during their</p>
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				<p>student careers. We have been increasingly concerned about the number of students reaching final year who have no large animal EMS experience and therefore are both ignorant about large animal husbandry and unsafe with regards to large animal handling (this means equine and production animal species). If the students have limited prior exposure to large animals and their management systems it is perhaps not surprising that they cannot easily recognise abnormalities when they have a limited basis for comparison. Observational and clinical skills can be taught to students but there must be some supporting practical large animal experience that the student has, to provide a more complete learning environment. In response to these concerns, the School has recently stipulated that EMS undertaken by BVMS students must include at least 2 weeks in both farm and equine environments.</p> <p>In the new curriculum, I concur with the external examiner in having some uncertainty about the new format of the final exam. A workshop is being held in December to develop the format of the final written exam and therefore I cannot comment further at this stage. However, we are doing our utmost during rotations to give students as much practical experience as possible (and I think in both farm and equine rotations there is more opportunity to do this) and this is being assessed during rotation. Current educational theory suggests that continuous assessment gives a better indication of performance. Ideally, there should still be at the end of the BVMS course a demonstrated ability to both perform a basic, thorough clinical examination of a case, integrate the clinical findings and the history of the case and formulate a sensible approach to case management and it is hoped this can be included in the assessment process in the written exam</p>
10910	MBChB 1 st Year	Marking	It was not clear to me that the scripts were marked consistently, nor did the markers appear to always	Last academic session, for the first time, we piloted the writing on scripts by exam markers. Prior to this it had

			<p>follow the model answers. The examiners often did not make it clear where marks had been awarded, and so it was sometimes unclear where the marks were attained or denied. The difficulty here may sometimes lie in the complexity of the answers given. The exam questions need to be simplified and consequently so do the model answers.</p>	<p>been policy not to make comments or indicate marks on degree exam scripts. As this was a pilot, exam markers had a choice on their approach and some used “ticks”, others used marks (0.5, 1 etc.) whilst some decided to follow previous policy and only note final scores. In response to feedback by both our external examiners and internal exam markers it will now be policy to mark scripts and a standardised format will be used by all to ensure there is clarity on the grades awarded. The External Examiner also suggests that markers may have awarded marks out with model answers provided. We would agree with this comment but a model answer is exactly that and where an exam marker considers it appropriate to award marks for other relevant information given in an answer, we ask them to indicate this. It is however impractical to record all variations that were accepted but at the post exam, examiners’ meetings we ask for feedback from exam markers to indicate where model answers could be altered/enhanced. Again our policy of marking on scripts in future examinations should remove this uncertainty.</p>
10910	MBChB 1 st Year	Assessment – Format	<p>In my opinion, there is insufficient basic science in the examination papers. I would have expected to see a greater emphasis on the basics of anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, cell biology and pharmacology. Although these were represented, they were lacking in both breadth and depth. Also, I was not convinced that the exam papers were the best assessment for either staff or students. I can see little benefit of complex questions and answers. Sometimes the model answers were too lengthy and would be difficult for students to replicate. I believe little is gained in students giving written answers, since the exam in its present state is mostly assessing factual knowledge. This is best assessed in single-best answer MCQs, and this would make the examination process simpler for both students sitting the exam and staff marking them. There currently seems to be little time to turn around the scripts for</p>	<p>We do not necessarily agree with this and in fact in response to feedback in previous years we have altered MEQ format to being more structured in an attempt to direct students towards information we are seeking. It has been a conscious decision to use MEQs as we are trying to measure knowledge in an integrated approach, similar to our curriculum structure and delivery. ██████ suggests that MCQs are best to test knowledge and indeed more than 20% of our exam is in MCQ format. Another external examiner (Dr Lewis) actually praises the use of MEQs as an integrated way of examining the students and our overall Programme external examiner ██████ encourages a variety of assessment methods, commonly used in many pre-clinical courses to measure the knowledge base.</p> <p>Depending on the definition of “basic science” we</p>

			<p>marking, and this is possibly a factor in introducing inconsistencies in marking. This would be eliminated by having the majority of the exam as an MCQ.</p>	<p>appreciate why [REDACTED] may consider there is less than he expected but our exams are trying not just to measure knowledge in the classical subjects of anatomy, biochemistry, physiology etc. This concern has also been discussed in part above but in addition we do use best answer MCQs which we agree is a good way to examine “factual knowledge” if written well and is all that is being assessed.</p> <p>Having looked over our full written examination: Paper One included one MEQ and 5 short note style questions and around 80% of the marks, in our opinion, asked about basic science. Paper Two which included 50 MCQ questions also had an MEQ of which in excess of 80% was again examining basic science.</p>
11052	PGDE	Assessment – Feedback	<p>Not all scripts are annotated. While this isn’t an issue with the stronger scripts, some students may argue that some students are given more support and feedback than others (not all of the weaker scripts have been annotated). Consistent feedback regarding referencing would also be useful as some markers have outlined the specific errors and how these can be corrected while others have simply highlighted that the student should revise their referencing.</p>	<p>The External Examiner indicates that, where present, the annotation of scripts was supportive and informative for the students, most particularly for those find themselves in the weak and fail categories. This consistency of approach will continue to be a priority for the marking team.</p> <p>The Course Leader (Primary Curriculum) will make staff involved in assessing this assignment aware that the University’s policy on providing feedback to students on examinations: “does not prevent, nor seek to deter, examiners from writing comments on examination scripts. Any comments made, whether written on the scripts or on separate sheets, will, however, be seen by students who request a copy of an examination script.”</p> <p>The Course Leader will request that staff make suggestions / recommendations within the body of the text or as footnotes. In the case of strong scripts, summative feedback may suffice on the feedback sheet, as long as there is acknowledgement of what the strengths of the paper actually are.</p>

				The Course Leader shall convene meetings with the tutors assessing the assignment to ensure consistency of approach to marking and annotation of scripts.
10901	Bachelor of Nursing	<p>Marking Scheme</p> <p>Assessment - Format</p>	<p>Examiners should provide a mark scheme with the proposed exam paper to ensure continuity of marking for all examiners - particularly for second marking and external moderation.</p> <p>One part of the PN1/LBLS1 exam, the physiology component, seemed to be particularly problematic for students - some did not even attempt it. Perhaps if the questions were worded to make them more clinically relevant/applicable then students would have a better grasp of this very important aspect of life sciences. Again a mark scheme would be helpful here to clarify what the examiner of this component was looking for in answers.</p>	<p>The external examiners comments and concern regarding provision of a mark scheme with the proposed exam paper to ensure continuity of marking for all examiners has been actioned and changes to process should be fully implemented for this session 2013/2014 assessments. We have not provided mark schemes in the past because of the relatively small class sizes, 40-45. All exam questions are marked by one academic and a sample of questions moderated by a second academic in line with University guidelines and therefore the problem of maintaining continuity of marking has rarely arisen. However we recognise that the transparency of process and reliability of marking could be significantly enhanced by the use of marking schemes and so have begun implementation of such for this academic year. The programme intends to implement these across the range of assessments, not just the exam format. A number of marking scheme templates have been reviewed by staff so that course leaders can adopt a proforma that suits the assignment. Course leaders will be required to have a mark scheme ready for each component of the course assessment for the scheduled exam questions/assignment meeting where assessment for the academic year are reviewed by the undergraduate teaching team. This will be sent along with proposed assessment for review by External Examiners. With regards to the physiology element of the exam we have ensured that our dates for exam question meetings have been set early enough this year to allow our colleagues in other schools to attend. Marking scheme proforma will be shared across all teams involved in course delivery and assessment and support given for implementation of the initiative.</p>

			<p>that I have commented on idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies in some of the feedback given to students. There has been progress in this area; however, I note that in this final report I am still referring to this. I suggest that the School makes it a priority to address this, otherwise the hard work of the many will be undermined by the inadequate contribution of the few when it comes to NSS review of feedback.</p>	<p>ensure that this requirement is explicit in our upcoming examination procedures document and that all staff are alerted to this requirement.</p> <p>For the last two sessions (2011-12, and 2012-13) we changed our marking scheme for A-grade work to include the full range of grades (18, 19, 20, 21, 22) in order to address the issue raised by the external examiner with regard to rewarding the best of 1st Class work. Analysis of 4 years of data indicates that even when using the full grading scale there is a clear reluctance of staff to utilize the full scale, and there has been no significant improvement in the number of top A-grades awarded. Following discussion at the GES Staff Meeting on December 11, 2013, it was decided to revert to the previously used 3 grades in the A-band (18, 20, 22) and staff were strongly encouraged to make sure that a 22 grade is attainable.</p>
10907	Czech, Slavonic & EE	Marking	<p>a) The Czech oral exam was too generously marked. We agreed on significantly lower marks for all three candidates. b) I also thought there was too much use of First-Class grades 21 and 22 at the very top in several other examined scripts and units. These highest grades ought surely to be reserved for very exceptional work indeed. We agreed on some lowering in a number of cases. I don't think this affected the final classes of degree, however - these very good students were not significantly affected in their overall sets of marks.</p>	<p>All colleagues agreed with the External Examiner that First Class grades 21 and 22 should be reserved for exceptional work.</p> <p>For this academic year, the SMLC Assessment Officer has been tasked with setting up a working group to review various aspects of assessment criteria, particularly criteria specific to the assessment of language work and oral examination criteria. The group will report back to the School Learning and Teaching Committee.</p>
11047	Company Law	Assessment - Format	<p>On the Law of Commercial Banking module in that bank confidentiality was covered in both the essay and exam and the questions posed on the essay and the exam did not require a materially different treatment of the issue. The essay and the exam should either cover different material or, if they cover the same topic, require a different answer. A further issue is that questions tend to be recycled very quickly between years and between first submission and resubmission. Some questions are</p>	<p>These comments were drawn to the attention of the internal examiners. It is understood that the issues about overlap were dealt with through discussion and clarification between internal and external examiner. In future all coursework questions will be forwarded to the external examiner for review and attention will be paid to ensure that recycling of exam questions takes place appropriately. Care will also be taken to clearly distinguish between questions examining different</p>

			<p>different but some are very similar. Recycling is inevitable but it would still be helpful if there was a greater variety of questions. In addition when I have asked for changes to be made in the light of this the new question was not put to me. I am currently awaiting a revised version of the resubmission paper. I also understand that students are allowed to pick an essay question from past assessments if they think it more relevant to their circumstances and this is then moulded by the module leader into a revised essay question for them that is not identical to the one which appeared on the assessment. I don't object to this-it seems like a good idea-provided that the revised question is of a similar standard to that set for the other students. I am not sure how often this occurs but I do not see these questions and they should probably be forwarded to me for review</p>	<p>aspects of the same issue.</p>
11343	MBChB 2 nd Year	Assessment – Format	<p>The assessment is still very much based on the eliciting of facts from the students and the paper at times reads like a catechism. There are very few questions assessing how the students have assimilated their factual knowledge and how they can apply it to new situations.</p> <p>There is no opportunity for the good student to show that they can synthesise their learning and apply it to problems. The assessment is also very compartmentalised in that each question appears to deal with a clearly defined part of a teaching module. There do not appear to be any questions that link between different parts of the teaching, i.e. there is no integration of learning.</p> <p>It would be helpful, when assessing the breadth of the assessment to map the learning outcomes/objectives onto the assessment. This would enable examiners to check that a sufficient range of the learning outcomes/objectives had been covered by the</p>	<p>It is true that individual questions test knowledge from different blocks of teaching and do not cross blocks. I introduced this type of examination paper when I took over the course as a way of letting students see that all parts of the course were clearly represented in the exam. Each question begins with a clinical scenario and these are different to the PBL scenarios.</p> <p>Integration of knowledge is tested in the exam questions, but it is integration of pre-clinical sciences (Anatomy, Physiology, Biochemistry) rather than integration of 'Gastrointestinal system, Reproductive System etc.</p> <p>The UG Medical School has embarked on an exercise to map all learning outcomes/objectives to the GMC 'Tomorrow's Doctors 3' and 'Scottish Doctors' as well as to assessments. Completion of the mapping exercise is an objective on the Development Plan for session 2013/14.</p>

			assessment and that there were no large areas unassessed.	
11102	Central and EE Studies	Marking	I had some queries about application of marking criteria for two modules; the marks seemed to me to be rather too high, but this was subsequently addressed by the academic staff and revised marks submitted and agreed at the external exam board. I would just say that an eye should be kept on application of marking criteria to ensure consistency across modules.	<p>As the report makes clear, with the exception of these two courses, taught by the same lecturer, the marking was deemed to be of a high standard. The lecturer concerned had the largest marking load among CEES colleagues and one or two anomalous marks could have been the result of tiredness – but most of these were identified in the double-marking discussions. The fundamental problem seems to lie elsewhere. When the marks for these two courses are compared with the marks for the other courses, there is a consistent pattern of these two courses being the ones where students received their lowest marks.</p> <p>The discussions held at the examiners’ meeting repeatedly returned to the suggestion from the external examiner that, on these courses, some crucial elements were missing from the students’ answers. He repeatedly explained how he teaches similar courses at the University of ██████████, and he seemed to be assessing the students against what he had taught his students, not the curriculum delivered at University of Glasgow.</p> <p>Of course, CEES plan to monitor things closely this coming year, but the evidence suggests that CEES marking is consistent, but consistently out of line with the expectations of the external.</p>
9586	Economics	Marking	We had some serious concerns over the final distribution of marks on a number of modules - most notably Economics for Business and Microeconomics - where the proportion of 1st class marks was exceptionally high. I believe that these modules had been led by new members of staff who were less familiar with the UK system - there was some overlap across the questions set for the coursework and exams, students had also been provided with practice papers.	<p>In response to the problems uncovered at the External Board of Examiners’ meeting and, as outlined by ██████████, we have made the following changes: We asked each of the staff members involved to review their processes and offer an explanation as to the profile of the grades for their course</p> <p>We have discussed, at a number of Undergraduate Learning and Teaching and Subject meetings, the process</p>

			<p>This experience raises some questions about internal processes for mentoring new colleagues and also for reviewing and monitoring students' performance. I would encourage the department to review these.</p> <p>There are clearly some adjustment issues for the teaching teams on Economics for Business and Microeconomics. Not only were there issues with the assessment, the feedback to students was rather perfunctory.</p>	<p>for mentoring new staff (9th October, 6th November, 4th December 2013 and 26th February 2014), particularly with reference to assessment</p> <p>We have instituted a more rigorous internal process for monitoring exam papers.</p> <p>We have instituted a new process of asking first and second markers to comment/review the grades awarded for each piece of assessment for each course at the time of marking and to comment/explain any odd or unexpected profiles of grades</p> <p>The External Examiner points out, the two courses mentioned were taught by relatively new members of staff with little experience of the UK system. These staff members are now more aware of the system and the need to apply properly the Code of Assessment. The measures relating to mentoring, which are highlighted above, together with the ongoing measures designed to ensure that student feedback is full and appropriate, should also address this issue.</p>
10946	World Religions	<p>Assessment – Feedback</p> <p>Assessment - Format</p>	<p>Examination feedback to students.</p> <p>Ensure that students cannot duplicate work in essay and examination through precise instructions on examination papers.</p>	<p>Moderation will take place for exams at levels 1 and 2. The second marking process is already in place at honours level.</p>
10946	World Religions	Marking – Internal Moderation	Second marking process with special consideration of examinations	<p>Only today I received a request from a student who wished to see her marked exam scripts for a level 2 course. I asked the SA administrator to show the student her script. At the most recent examiners' meeting and SA meetings this has been discussed, and it has been agreed that students will be supplied with their scripts upon request. In addition, all examining staff will undertake to right a brief justification of the mark awarded on a cover</p>

				sheet or on the script.
11331	Introduction to Latin	Marking	There seemed to be some variation in the way that the 22-point scale was being used in the marking - sometimes impressionistically ('this is a mid-2.1, so B16'), sometimes converted from a percentage.	<p>The External Examiner, raised concerns about the assignment of grades for the BEd version of our Latin course. She assumed that grades were being assigned arithmetically (i.e. points deducted for incorrect answers) and she double-marked assessments to align her marking with the course tutor's. This resulted in a few cases where her mark was one or two grades lower than the grade assigned. I confirmed with the External that grades are not assigned arithmetically but rather on a holistic basis (which is our standard practice). A whole attempt at a translation is graded according to grade descriptors (judging holistically how well a student has met marking criteria outlined in the code of assessment). That arithmetical grading compared to this system only produced a few discrepancies (and within an acceptable range) seems to be a confirmation that the tutor's marking system is working as it should be.</p> <p>The main issue arose from a misunderstanding about the criteria for marking. The course tutor and I have already discussed this for the coming session. This year, it will be made much clearer with the aid of descriptors (rather than numerical marks, which the tutor used just to show students where they were going right/wrong) that the grading is holistic rather than arithmetically cumulative. This issue is flagged in our AMR for CertHE.</p>
9642	Economics	<p>Marking Scheme</p> <p>Internal Moderation</p>	<p>A marking trail is largely absent. Moreover without marking schemes, it is difficult to follow how marks have been given.</p> <p>What is the role of the second examiner? Is there any moderation across courses? The distribution of marks across courses varied hugely and there had been no reflection on this prior to the board meeting.</p> <p>There appeared to be lack of familiarity with the British exam system on the part of some examiners - perhaps</p>	<p>A marking review form is now produced for each course on which the first and second markers comment on the assessment with the first responding to any issues raised by the second. This is then reviewed by the Honours Assessment Officer and the Coordinator of Honours Study and thereafter, it is completed by the External Examiners when they review grades and samples of student scripts. These reviews will be presented by the individual course co-ordinators to the Board of Examiners. This will ensure a greater focus on, and explanation of, the second marking process. I attach the form here.</p>

			mentoring would be appropriate.	<p>Marking guides were produced and provided to the External Examiner's in 2012-13 in all but one course.</p> <p>Moderation across courses: This issue was highlighted in the 2012-13 Board of Examiners' Meeting as a result of a clear disparity in the results of three courses with those of other courses. In the case of one of the affected courses (Public Economics) we were able to satisfy ourselves on the day that we understood why those differences arose. In the case of the other two courses (Economics of Business 2 and Microeconomic Analysis) we were unable to reach that conclusion in the absence of some key members of staff. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed, with the External Examiner's approval, that we would process the grades but that:</p> <p>We would carry out an investigation and if we found, as a result of that investigation, that the grades were not acceptable, then we would take the necessary steps to rectify the situation</p> <p>We would further document and improve our marking trail/procedures (having improved upon it in previous years at the request of the External Examiners)</p> <p>Following the meeting we were able to satisfy ourselves that the decisions of the Board of Examiners in awarding the degree classifications were correct. Furthermore we have now instituted a process whereby: In future, the Internal Examiners' Meeting will look closely at the distribution of grades across courses, instead of just within courses, and identify and investigate any issues prior to the Board of Examiners' Meeting.</p> <p>Details of first and second marks for in-course assessment as well as end-of-course exams will be presented to the Board of Examiners and to the Externals</p>
10701	Earth Sciences	Marking	I am not happy with the current marking system for the	The alternating option system with the two-year honours

		Scheme	<p>Level 3 Mapping Dissertations. There are two specific and somewhat related problems both of which are easily remedied: 1) The current marking scheme is probably fair but is in my view rather too complex and lacks transparency. I found it difficult to drill down into the mark sheets to look at individual assessments and, more importantly, understand how agreed marks were arrived at by examiners. My recommendation is that the Department adopt a single mark sheet and provide a set of agreed protocols that are followed when deciding on the final mark for each project.</p>	<p>programme is a key part of the structure of the Earth Science and Geography degrees. There are different marking schemes in place for essay style assessment but short questions are graded on the same criteria. It is true that small differences in average grades are sometimes present between the different cohorts of students however a small underperformance of a student whilst in 3rd year is balanced by a slightly stronger performance in the shared options in 4th year. The 4th year of the programme is also more highly weighted in the calculation of the final degree classification. Therefore over the course of the two years these tiny differences are balanced out. Where appropriate we have urged staff to address any slight underperformance in L3 when writing references for students.</p> <p>We have reviewed the marking of the independent field projects and have introduced the following changes. The maps, and sections will be marked together by a team of two staff and all the notebooks will be marked by another team of two staff. The reports will be double marked divided between 4 staff for 1st marking and all will be blind double marked by a single member of staff. This has the benefits of the consistency of marking done by the team approach, and a consistent overview of the report. We have consolidated the feedback on a single sheet which will accompany the work through the different stages of grading and in addition we have significantly reduced the size of the marking team to further enhance consistency. We chose not to have pair of staff mark all elements in part because of the difficulties of ensuring consistency with our very large class sizes and because grading the maps and sections separately ensures that feedback is provided at an early stage to the students prior to them completing the top copy map and report. We view this as essential because unlike so many other Universities our students are not visited in the field by a member of staff during their INDEPENDENT mapping and</p>
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				hence their first opportunity to receive formal feedback needs to be as early as possible at the start of the semester. We will continue to monitor the situation and continue to undertake statistical assessment of the grades awarded for the different components.
10860	Russian Language	Marking – Internal Moderation	The question of internal moderation is one to which I would draw attention. The School is aware of this situation. I was made aware of the situation at the outset. I do find it surprising that no second marking (other than presumably during the oral examination) seems to be in operation. As external examiner I felt obliged to second mark and re-assess all scripts. The lack of such internal moderation is a matter requiring attention.	<p>This report covers the first year that these courses were delivered through the School of Social and Political Sciences rather than the School of Modern Languages and Cultures. When the tutor ██████████ asked colleagues in SMLC if they would help provide double-marking, he was apparently told that the courses were no longer their concern. For reasons that are unclear to me, ██████████ did not report this situation to me as CEES Head of Subject and I was unaware of the issue until I received this report – I had assumed students' work was being double-marked appropriately as in the past.</p> <p>Obviously this is now the subject of discussion between CEES and Slavonics, although the current staffing uncertainties in Slavonics do not make it any easier to ask for support of this nature.</p>
10987	Health Profession Education	Marking	The markers are clearly dedicated and conscientious in their approach. However it appeared that there was a significant minority of results which were a little discrepant. While I do not see this as a major issue, I think that it will enhance greatly the consistency of the marking, and therefore the standards of the course, to continue to work towards better shared understanding of expectation of candidates, and thresholds for grading. Inevitably this takes time and experience, but I would suggest the course considers measures to enhance and support this process; for example formally identifying a core team of markers, and conducting some training/ discussion sessions using examples of submissions that have had discrepant marks	The team are aware that it may appear at times that grades are discrepant. This has prompted us to review our processes. A protocol has been developed: Students submit work into Turnitin. Administrators distribute the work to the Programme Director for marking, and to a panel of second markers for blind marking. All assignments are marked by 2 individuals. Markers meet to discuss the scores, and agree a final score. A third person will be involved if there is a need for arbitration. The agreed marks, all comments and all work are available for the external to review. Any points about the work are clarified prior to the formal Board of Examiners Meeting. The Board meet to approve the marks.
9259	Electronics & Electrical Engineering	Assessment - Feedback	Students had differing opinions about the quality of feedback on lab assignments - it is important that the	During the first semester of the 2013-14 session, this point was raised by the Head of discipline to staff

8446	Geoinformation Technology	Assessment – Feedback	<p>Students reported that feedback was variable in quality and timeliness. Some evidence that not all feedback is as thorough.</p>	<p>Generally speaking, feedback is provided promptly, and in many cases within 1 week of submission. We monitor this at regular teaching team meetings. Occasionally pressure of work on particular members of staff means that some exercises are not returned as quickly as we would like, but we ensure that feedback that is required promptly for pedagogical reasons is prioritised, which can mean other feedback may be delayed. We communicate such information to the students.</p> <p>We require a relatively large number of assessments and, particularly in the early stages of the programme, these are important, but relatively minor. The main objective is for the students to gain necessary skills and feedback is intended mainly to highlight significant problems. In some cases, significant amounts of general feedback is provided during practical sessions, rather than comments on individual exercises and regular practical sessions and tutorial also allow ample opportunity for students to seek further feedback or clarification.</p> <p>Given the range of material we wish to cover and the limited examination time allowed by UofG regulations, in some courses there is difficulty in examining both the required technical aspects and having more expansive questions. We have increased the focus on the later in recent years, but it does vary from course to course. Staff continue to be encourage to include more questions, or parts of questions, that probe deeper understanding.</p>
		Assessment - Format	<p>More could still be done on developing the examination style to test students' analysis and decision making. I find my comments this year have again focused on asking students to describe a technique, or a piece of equipment (and so on) at the expense of describing a situation and inviting students to come up with solutions.</p>	
11049	Diploma in Legal Practice	Assessment - Format	<p>Does the Conveyancing Exam still perform a useful role bearing in mind it tends to have a disproportionate impact on the students and is out of "sync" with the rest of the Diploma?</p>	<p>The issue of the final exam has been considered by the course team but they consider that there is merit in requiring students to complete the task under exam conditions and within a fixed time limit. It is true that other courses do not have a final exam of this sort, but, as noted, the course team consider that this is the most</p>

				appropriate form of assessment and there are other assessments on the Diploma which are time limited and/or take place under exam conditions. The nature and content of the exam has been reviewed and changed over the years since the course first ran. The matter will be considered again by the course team in preparation for semester 2014/15 in light of these comments.
11110	Middle Leadership & Management	Assessment - Feedback	However, marker feedback was not consistent and some were more general than others. For example, some tutors had clear headings for "next steps" while others embedded them in the feedback itself. I feel that a clear area for next steps on all pro-formas would be helpful. This was also mentioned last year.	<p>Response from Programme Leader</p> <p>The current practice is that the student receives a two page written report on each of their assignments:</p> <p>page one is an open box for formative feedback which would include next steps</p> <p>page two provides formative and summative feedback against each criteria</p> <p>To ensure consistency:</p> <p>page one will now include a specific section on next steps and on page two the comments will relate to formative and summative</p> <p>feedback against each criteria</p>
10986	MSc in Quantative Methods in Biodiversity, Conservation & Epidemiology	Marking Scheme Internal Moderation	<p>For some items of double marked work it was not clear to me how substantial discrepancies between marks from the two markers were resolved. I would encourage the use of a clearer and better documented procedure where some explanation as to how markers came to a consensus mark.</p> <p>The quality and consistency of the second marking of the dissertation projects requires urgent attention.</p>	<p>In response to the one highlighted query for the QMBCE MSc below about double marking, we are now requesting each marker to write a short justification for their mark. We will also discuss with the external at the meeting in September the procedures we follow for double marking, which are the same as used for our undergraduate courses.</p>

External Examiners' Comments and School Responses – Session 2012-13

General Council Business Committee Observations

General

The responses show the encouraging seriousness with which the externals' comments are received and considered in the schools, and indicate that effective mechanisms are in place to develop appropriate and constructive adjustments to processes and procedures where these are warranted.

Specific

1. On the matter of feedback content, which is presumably intended to indicate to students how a higher grade might be attained rather than to justify the marker's judgment (111113), there might be advantage in confirming that the stated intended learning objectives of courses are always sufficiently clear to ensure that students know the acquired capabilities they will be expected to demonstrate in the assessment. (The external examiners should have contributed to their specification). As well as encouraging student self-assessment during preparation it should also allow feedback comment to be directed economically and uniformly to the objectives not mastered.
2. On the matter of variability of the extent of comments and of second marking, these may indicate time allocation issues which might need addressing in workload models, to ensure that realistic allowance is made for these crucial aspects of the teaching function.
3. Some comments imply the use of percentage marking (e.g. 10729, 11331) and pass/fail criteria whereas it was understood that marking was direct to grades and bands (MCQ assessment and judgement of fitness to practise apart). There is some evidence that the subdivision of grade A into five bands as opposed to the more general three creates problems (e.g. 1120, 10907). Possibly these wider issues require consideration.

F G Hay
General Council Business Committee
28th August 2014