University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 13 February 2015

Matters Arising: Undergraduate College Annual Monitoring Summaries for 2013-14: College of Social (ASC/2014/22.4)

Dr Robert Doherty, College Quality Officer

In response to a request for additional information, the following response from the School of Social & Political Sciences was received:

1) Sociology had concerns regarding the process of submitting good cause evidence. Two main points of concern were: That the demand for evidence was creating work for admin and academic staff. That the 2 mark penalty which was intended to encourage timely submission had in fact created an increase in the number seeking good cause extensions. Part of this was addressed internally by the School L&T who developed advice for students and standard e-mails to better inform students about the process of applying for good cause.

    From our SAMS: Penalty System: One cause for concern, as indicated by our externals and discussed at our exam board, is the University penalty system. While we do grant extensions to students based on good cause, the number of applications has very much increased in the past few years and it takes quite a lot of staff time to answer enquires, processing the claims, and chasing students up for medical documentation. While the intention of deducting two marks per day for late work might have been to reduce the number of claims, we find that it has increased levels of stress and anxiety amongst our students and would welcome a re-examination of the penalty system by the University.

    From Sociology Honors AMR: 'It would be useful to have a review of the procedures for good cause as we think that the penalties are too harsh, which causes stress and anxiety for the students. I understand that the School Teaching and Learning Committee is working on a good cause booklet for lecturers in order to give us standard guidelines. A student version of the booklet will also be produced.'

2) This was a more general concern about PIPS being overly complex and prescriptive. The PIPS system isn't very user friendly. Several colleagues noted that it is not flexible enough to accept innovations in teaching practice. The form itself is jargon ridden and difficult to complete (especially if, as is often the case, it is a new member of academic staff proposing a new course).