

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 25 January 2019

Matters Arising

Ruth Cole, Clerk to Academic Standards Committee

1. *Annual Monitoring Updates: Responses to Issues Raised in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate College Annual Monitoring Summaries 2016-17 (ASC/2018/13.1)*

Mental health of students: A consolidated response will be provided to the March 2018 ASC meeting for matters raised on this issue through 2016-17 and 2017-18 Annual Monitoring.

Moodle: No further response has yet been received further to the VLE Board meeting in December 2018.

2. *Periodic Subject Review*

- 2.1 *Update: Accounting & Finance (ASC/2018/13.3)*

Further to the meeting between the Clerk of Senate and the Head of the Adam Smith Business School regarding marking practice for PGT dissertations, no further information has yet been provided by the Head of School.

The suggestion of exploring alternatives to the traditional masters dissertation has been referred to the Assessment and Feedback Working Group.

Update (21/1/19): see Appendix for response from School.

- 2.2 *Reports on PSR to be Received during 2018-19 and Proposed ASC Reviewers (ASC/2018/16.1)*

The paper detailing the PSR reports to be received during 2018-19 and the allocated ASC reviewers (<https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/commndoc/senate/ASC/Papers/asc1825.pdf>) is now available on the ASC webpage:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/senateandcommittees/#/academicstandardscommittee>.

3. *Programme Approval (Validation) Process for The Glasgow School of Art: Update (ASC/2018/13.5)*

At the October 2018 meeting of ASC it had been noted that both in-principle and full approval by ASC would be required for new GSA programmes identified as non-standard. Guidance on what constituted non-standard provision was requested. A meeting between Senate Office and the Academic Collaborations Office took place recently and the proposed arrangements are now under discussion with GSA. These will be reported back to ASC once finalised. The new arrangements will be introduced for proposals presented in 2019-20 (no further proposals are expected in 2018-19).

Adam Smith
Business School

Postgraduate Dissertation Marking Protocol 2017-18/2018-19

The following describes the context within which PGT dissertations were marked in the Adam Smith Business School in academic session 2017-2018, and the intended process for 2018-19. This process ensures the reliability of marking, its consistency across markers, and the quality of feedback provided to students. The process is comprised of the following five steps, Step 2 identified as a point where improvement could be applied, and due to be added to the marking process for the current year.

- (1) All PGT dissertations first marked by the supervisor, who is allocated by Dissertation Convenors at the beginning of the dissertation supervision process, and works with each student for the duration of the dissertation supervision period (June - late August).
- (2) (New step to be added for current academic year). Carry out automated statistical analysis to review variance across markers for a cohort, and to compare with previous cohorts. This will help identify potential problems.
- (3) After the completion of first marking, all dissertation assessment forms to be examined by the PGT Dissertation Convenors to ensure the quality of the feedback provided, and to check the internal consistency between the feedback provided and the mark awarded. In cases where there are issues, either with the quality of the feedback, or with its consistency with the mark awarded, first markers are requested to look into their original assessment and amend it as appropriate.
- (4) A sample of around 22% of the dissertations to be selected for internal moderation. Internal moderation refers to a process of review to check the consistency of grades awarded for an assessment. (Internal moderation is defined as the independent marking of an assessment by more than one marker, when the second marker has access to the comments of the first marker and to the grades awarded by that marker). Within this context, a stratified sampling approach is adopted to select a sample for internal moderation that is representative of all first markers as well as of all the bands of grades awarded. Furthermore, all dissertations awarded a fail grade (E1 and below), as well as all dissertations which have received a grade that appears inconsistent ('anomalous' in relation to) the students' GPA in the taught part of their studies are added to the sample. The selected dissertations are allocated on the basis of their topic selection to internal members of staff, who examine the fairness of marking and its consistency across supervisors. In cases of disagreement between the first marker and the moderator, the process requires, 1) the first marker and the moderator to communicate with each other, to identify and discuss the reasons for the disagreement and try to come to an agreement on the mark to be awarded; and, 2) the PGT Dissertation Convenor to examine the possibility that the disagreement is indicative of a systematic error in the way marking has been conducted by the first marker. (Out of dissertations internally moderated in 2018, disagreements were observed in a small number of cases, all of which were deemed as minor i.e. they involved a difference of no more than two secondary bands in the grades awarded. The examination of all cases of disagreement did not reveal any systematic error in the marking conducted by any of the first markers. These were resolved after communication between the first marker and the moderator). In cases where disagreement persists, a third senior academic is asked to review the case and make a final decision on the mark to be awarded. This is followed by a critical review of all marked dissertations within a subject area to check that feedback and grades have been given consistently by all markers and that any minimum requirements in terms of feedback have been met.

- (5) A stratified random sample of 10% of the dissertations are selected for external examining. As before, this sample is specifically selected to be representative of all of the first markers and of all bands of grades awarded, including also a small proportion of dissertations that have been included in the previous stage of moderation. The decision has been made to keep the sample selected for moderation and the one selected for external examination fairly independent, so as to increase the coverage of the dissertations examined. The dissertations are allocated on the basis of subject area to our external examining team.

External examiners have expressed their satisfaction with the process as well as their confidence in the fairness and consistency of the marking itself.

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