

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 22 March 2019

Further Information on the PGT Dissertation Supervision and Marking Practices within ASBS, as Requested by ASC at its Meeting in January 2019

The questions from ASC appear in bold and italic and answers follow in standard font.

In relation to current practice, ASC wished to know whether the marking of all markers was sampled (the wording 'representative of all markers' was ambiguous)

The sample consists of a random selection of dissertations across all grading bands, and additionally all fail grades. It will include at least 2-3 dissertations for each marker.

Why supervisors acted as the sole marker?

It is School practice for supervisors to first-mark dissertations. We also previously received permission from Senate Office to restrict second marking to a sample due to the high number of students. A sample of more than 10% is second marked to inform the moderation process. (Usually around 20-30% of dissertations in total are second marked.)

What action would be taken if a problem was identified at stage 2 (statistical analysis)?

All dissertations associated with the problem would be second marked. For example, a marker who awarded A4 for all six of their dissertations, which produced a standard deviation of zero. This statistic would appear as irregular and therefore all dissertations would be second-marked.

What the difference was between stage 3 and the final part of stage 4 (both of which appeared to be a critical review of feedback and checking for internal consistency between feedback and grade awarded).

We have reviewed this and consider the difference to be minimal. We therefore will revise the process accordingly.

In order that ASC could also take a view on the marking practice in the longer term there were additional questions:

How many PGT dissertations were marked each session?

For 2017-18

- Accounting and Finance: 598
- Economics: 569
- Management: 602 (excluding Professional Pathways)

How many staff were involved in marking? How many of the supervising/marketing staff were adjunct?

- Accounting and Finance : c. 45 (all adjunct)
- Economics: 30 internal and 38 adjunct
- Management: 20 internal and 40 adjunct (excluding Professional Pathways)

What training and debriefing all markers (including adjunct) received, information about the context in which marking took place (other competing priorities within the School at the critical marking time)?

Training:

Accounting & Finance and Economics hold briefing sessions at the end of May to brief adjunct supervisors on the University of Glasgow rules and regulations and related dissertation processes.

All MSc Management Specialist dissertation convenors meet with dissertation supervisors and give detailed background about the programme and the courses the students have completed. Management Generalist and Professional Pathways dissertation supervisors get similar advice. MBA is supervised by internal staff.

Debrief:

This is possibly an area which could be improved. All markers receive their Evasys feedback, but we would only contact supervisors if their marking is found to fall short of the standard we expect, and we are asking them to either re-mark or make more detailed feedback. These requests would be made in writing by the dissertation convenor.

Dissertation submission takes place at the end of August with first marking taking place during September, conflicting with start of new academic year and the beginning of teaching.

Whether consideration had been given to possible alternative deliverables such as shorter project reports (which would be as rigorous as conventional dissertations but would reduce the marking burden).

The Business School have investigated what alternatives to the academic dissertation would be acceptable to the Senate Office under the current generic programme regulations. Our MBA programme convenor recently sent a request to Academics Standards Committee regarding clarification on this subject. Other programmes including the new Financial Technology programme which is due to be launched in September 2019 would also be very interested in alternative approaches.