

LTC09D125

Title: **Report of the Meeting of Taught Programmes Policy Group on 24 March 2010**
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The Policy Group discussed a number of items as set out below. There are two recommendations arising from the meeting for LTC to consider:

- List of approved calculators for use in University examinations and course tests.
- Amendment to Guidelines Note on Co-Teaching, including making the guidance Policy

Items considered:

1 List of approved calculators

As previously reported to the Committee from the LTC Review of Examinations and Course Tests, the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office have been compiling a list of calculators which may be used (where permitted in accordance with the *Rules for the Conduct of University Examinations*) in University examinations and course tests. As the Committee will recall, the Review Group recommended that a standard list of permitted calculators and dictionaries be compiled to ease the process of checking by invigilators, which in turn will enhance the security of University examinations. Following consultation with colleagues in Schools a final list has now been confirmed and will be published to students for implementation in 2010/11.

The list of approved calculators is attached for information.

The Policy Group **recommends** that the list of approved calculators is endorsed by LTC for 2010/11 assessments.

2 Regulations: submission of Work for Assessment (Taught Programmes)

The Policy Group considered the aspects of the above regulations as they related to the penalisation of assessed work. The Policy Group agreed that Associate Deans should discuss the issues and gather further information from Schools via Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees and report back to the Policy Group early next academic year. The Policy Group will then review the current Regulations and make recommendations in respect of Regulations for the 2011/12 academic year. The Director of Taught Programmes was mindful that factors such as the penalisation of assessed work for late submission, exceeding word limits and other transgressions could have a more significant impact under revised CCS (and other taught programme) regulations.

In reviewing current practices the Policy Group was conscious that LTC had previously endorsed the principle that merit marks should be awarded for positive achievement of learning outcomes. They were also mindful of the practical reasons underpinning word limits and submission deadlines.

The Policy Group would also be asking Associate Deans to explore with Schools whether there are other penalty schemes in place, for example penalising (by deducting marks) for poor spelling, poor grammar or poor grammar. It was noted that there is a penalty scheme within the Faculty of Health for breaching confidentiality, which seemed highly appropriate to the Policy Group.

2.1 Penalties for Exceeding Word Limits

The Policy Group received and considered a report on current practices for penalising work where students had written too little or too much. It was noted that the severity of penalties varied between those Schools which applied a penalty and that not all Schools did apply a penalty. As noted above, the Policy Group required further information from Schools as to whether the penalty was applied in practice (or whether its existence was sufficient deterrent such that students never exceeded the stated word limit) and on the rationale for the penalty schemes in place.

The Policy Group noted that there were some assessment tasks where the ability to write concisely was one of the learning outcomes being assessed and felt that in these circumstances a penalty (in the sense of a loss of marks for not having met the learning outcomes) was clearly appropriate.

2.2 Penalties for Unauthorised Late Submission of Work

The Policy Group reviewed the current policy on penalisation for late submission of coursework (introduced in September 2005 for undergraduates and September 2006 for taught postgraduates) in the light of feedback on issues emerging from the operation of the penalty scheme. The discussion was informed by a sample of penalty schemes in operation at a range of other universities. Consideration was given to whether it would be more appropriate to cap a late submission at the pass mark (or count the merit mark where this was below the pass mark), which would prevent the student from being sent to reassessment where the learning outcomes for the assessed work had been achieved. The Policy Group were mindful that under the proposals for the revised CCS (and other taught programmes) regulations non-submission could prevent a student from being referred to reassessment. They were also mindful that working to deadlines and time management were key skills that would be required by our graduates in the workplace.

3 Plagiarism and Collusion Reports

In accordance with a decision by the Committee at its meeting on 3 February 2010, the Policy Group received and gave detailed consideration to the plagiarism and collusion reports from Schools (reported to LTC on 3 February).

There were no issues of general concern arising from the reports, but the Policy Group noted that enhanced reporting mechanisms would be helpful in analysing the data to determine the profile of students who were plagiarising (and to place this in the context of the number of students on modules and the number of items of assessment).

The Policy Group was pleased to note that there was some anecdotal evidence that the revised policy implemented in September 2010 was encouraging colleagues to pursue cases (and formally record them).

During the discussion, the Director of Taught Programmes noted that clarification would be beneficial in respect of self-plagiarism.

4 Co-Teaching

The Policy Group considered an amendment to the existing Guidance Note of Co-teaching of Undergraduates and Taught Postgraduates. As the Committee may recall

the guidance note recognises that there are occasions where it is efficient to teach undergraduate and taught postgraduates together, but requires there to be separate level-appropriate assessment and level-specific teaching. The guidance has been amended to emphasise that the assessment and assessment criteria for undergraduates and taught postgraduates should be separate. The position of students on integrated masters courses taking Masters level modules has also been incorporated into the document for the sake of clarity. The document has also been amended to clarify that where co-taught students are assessed by examination or exam-style course test, they must have separate examination or course test papers. (Such papers should also be co-timetabled, or be sufficiently different as to guarantee the security of the assessment.)

The Policy Group **recommends** that LTC endorse the amendments to the document and **recommends** that the document become policy rather than guidance.