LTC09D144

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Report of the Meeting of Taught Programmes Policy Group on 28 April 2010

The Policy Group discussed a number of items as set out below. There is one recommendations arising from the meeting for LTC to consider:

- Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees (Taught Masters' Degrees)

Items considered:

1. Retention of Students' Work

   The Chair had been considering whether there should be a change in regulations to require students to retain a copy of marked coursework from their Honours years. The current regulations relating to plagiarism and collusion assumed that students would have a copy of coursework from the current year. (It is not clear how widely known this expectation is.) On balance, the Chair had concluded that such a regulation could not be recommended. In discussion with the Policy Group, however, it was felt that it would be good practice for student handbooks, course teams and Academic Advisors to recommend that students retain copies of their marked work. The Policy Group felt that it was in students' interests to retain their work for a number of reasons, including making it available to external examiners should a student be on a classification borderline and being able to provide evidence to counter any suspicion of unfair means that might arise in the future. By adopting this approach we would prepare students for a future regulation which required them to retain their work.

   The option of Faculty Offices or Schools retaining (hard) copies of students' work was not practical.

2. Regulations for the Submission of Dissertations

   As the Committee may recall, both PGRPG and TPPG have been reviewing the *Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees* and *Rules for the Form of Theses and Dissertations*, prompted by the e-theses project. Last year the Policy Group recommended the tweaking of these regulations in respect of taught postgraduates, with specific reference to word limits. At that time it was noted that the regulations might benefit from more thorough revision.

   The Policy Group **recommends** that the regulations for submission of work for Masters awards and for dissertations be separated from those governing research degrees.

   The Policy Group further **recommends** that a single set of regulations governing the submission of work and the form of the dissertation be approved by the Committee for implementation from September 2010. (Appendix 1)

3. Return of Examination Scripts to Candidates

The Director of Taught Programmes, as Chair of the Review of Examinations and Course Tests, referred this item to the Policy Group on the basis that the focus of the Review Group was currently on the business costs of assessment and that this issue fitted neatly alongside issues being considered by the Policy Group.

The Policy Group received a presentation from the Academic Officer of the Union of UEA Students, summarising responses from students to a recent Union survey seeking views on a range of issues, including examination feedback.

The Policy Group also received feedback from Faculty Managers of Teaching Officers in respect of the practicalities of returning scripts to students. They were advised that the comprehensive return of scripts might be achievable, but not without diverting resources from existing commitments or without additional resources. The Faculty Managers had reflected that the return on such an investment of resources might be minimal.

The Policy Group reflected on this information and reiterated the view of the ECT Review Group that resources might be better targeted towards effective feed-forward, which was advocated by 42% of students.

The Policy Group and Review Group would continue to reflect on this issue.

4. Review of Coursework Marking by Registration Number

The Project Officer for the Review of Assessment had undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment of a sample of coursework marks to determine whether there was any evidence that the implementation of anonymous (by registration number) coursework marking had had an effect on marking patterns and identified unintentional bias in marking prior to its implementation. The Policy Group recognised that this sample approach was the most sensible way to look at the data given the volume of coursework assessment undertaken at the University.

The Project Officer's report indicated that there was no identifiable difference between the marking of coursework where the student's name was available to the marker (and second marker) and where only the student's registration number was available.

The Policy Group agreed with the view of the Director of Taught Programmes, however, that the University would need a convincing case to be put before moving away from anonymous marking and concurred that the policy of marking by registration number should remain in place.

Notwithstanding this recommendation, the Policy Group noted with concern that there was some anecdotal evidence that feedback on coursework was perceived as being less valuable since the implementation of the policy.

Faculty Managers would be asked to continue their consideration of mechanisms for more efficient de-anonymisation and return of coursework.

5. General Regulation 6 and Disciplinary Procedures

The Director of Taught Programmes shared a preliminary draft of a revised General Regulation 6 and associated disciplinary procedures with the Policy Group and invited their views, specifically in respect of the adoption of levels of offence (similar to those used in the current plagiarism and collusion policy).

The Policy Group provided the Director with a range of feedback which would be fed into the Review of Discipline. The Policy Group endorsed the general approach being taken.

Proposed Regulations 2010/11

Rules for the Submission of Work for
Higher Degrees (Taught Masters' Degrees)

1. A candidate must submit two hard copies of the dissertation (or research project completed in place of a dissertation).

2. Both copies of the dissertation are for the purposes of assessment only. Where the School of registration wishes, students may subsequently be asked to deposit one copy of the dissertation with the School for the purpose of future consultation by students or staff.

3. The dissertation must be written in English, unless the subject of the dissertation dictates that it is partly written in another language (for example, where the subject of the dissertation is translation or a language).

4. The text of a dissertation shall, as far as possible, be typewritten on ISO A4 size paper of good quality.

5. The dissertation must be submitted for assessment in a secure soft binding sufficiently durable for the assessment process.

6. The volumes when submitted for assessment shall bear the registration number of the candidate, the title of the dissertation, the name of the degree for which the dissertation is submitted and the date of submission.

7. A volume deposited with the School shall bear the name of the candidate, the title of the dissertation, the name of the degree for which the dissertation is submitted and the date of submission.

   The title page should include the international copyright sign © and the following words:

   "This copy of the dissertation has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with the author and that no quotation from the dissertation, nor any information derived there-from may be published without the author's prior, written consent."

8. Where a dissertation is deposited with a School following the assessment process and for the purpose of future consultation, it may be hard-bound or in portable document format (pdf) on a CD.

9. Diagrams, maps and similar documents may be submitted in a portfolio of any size or in the form of a CD-ROM and must bear equally the particulars mentioned in rule 6 (and rule 7) above.

10. When submitting the dissertation for assessment, a candidate must also submit a statement showing what part, if any, of the material contained in the dissertation has previously been submitted by the candidate for a degree in this or any other University.

11. When submitting the dissertation for assessment, a candidate must confirm that the work contained within the dissertation is their own (in accordance with the University's regulations relating to Plagiarism and Collusion) or, where joint work is submitted, what part of it is the candidate's independent contribution.

12. A statement of the length of the dissertation, which includes footnotes, but excludes appendices, bibliography and reference lists.