

LTC11D021

Title: Taught Programmes Policy Group
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Issue

A report from the Director of Taught Programmes on issues considered by TPPG

Recommendation

LTC members are asked to consider the questions and recommendation contained in the report.

Resource Implications

Many of the recommendations contained in the report will have resource implications for the University. These are explained in relation to the specific recommendations brought forward to LTC.

Risk Implications

Many of the recommendations contained in the report, as with all aspects of the New Academic Model will have a 'risk' element for the University in the sense that decisions about 'how students earn the right to reassessment' and other policy issues will have an impact on student progression.

Equality and Diversity

It is not envisaged that any of the recommendations contained in the report will impact on groups with protected characteristics.

Timing of decisions

The report from the Director of Taught Programmes reflects discussions at TPPG meetings on 19 October and 23 November 2011.

Further Information

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Background

TPPG is an advisory group which provides guidance and advice to the Academic Director of Taught Programmes on issues relating to UEA policy and teaching/pedagogy in general. TPPG is not a decision-making body and has no executive powers – it is a body with cross-University membership which puts forward recommendation to LTC for the latter to consider and/or approve.

Discussion

The report from the Academic Director for Taught Programmes draws attention to a number of important policy recommendation that LTC is asked to consider/approve. Most relate to the implementation of the New Academic Model: e.g. the shape of the academic year, the function of the 2 week period resulting from the reduction in the length of the exam period, criteria students will need to meet to be eligible for reassessment in each module, the role of synoptic assessment, and the structure and constraints relating to defined choice. However, there are also recommendations unrelated to the New Academic Model: e.g. a revised word count policy, and proposals for a new set of Senate Scales or 'marking grids' intended to replace/supersede the existing UEA Senate Scale.

Report from Academic Director of Taught Programmes to Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC)

Recommendations from Academic Director for Taught Programmes are in text boxes:

THE NEW ACADEMIC MODEL

1) The Shape of the Academic Year

Within the New Academic Model the Exam period will be reduced from 6 to 4 weeks. TPPG has considered when this newly-gained 2 week period should fall, and the implications this has for the shape of the Academic Year from 2013/14 onwards.

TPPG considered three possible models:

- 1) 12 + 12 + (2) + 4
- 2) 12 + 12 + 4 + (2)
- 3) 12 + 12 + (1) + 4 + (1)

The majority view of TPPG members was that the University should adopt **12 + 12 + (2) + 4**

This is almost certainly the model that most staff would prefer and it is the model that our students have said they would prefer. These are two good reasons for adopting this model and LTC would be wise to take these factors into consideration when making its judgement.

However, as Academic Director for Taught Programmes my role requires me to consider not only these factors but others: in particular what would be the most effective in promoting effective learning (i.e. the model which has most merit on a pedagogical basis), and in developing the employability skills our students need in order to out-compete other graduates in the graduate employment market place.

Recommendation:

My personal view as ADTP is that LTC should put aside the majority view of TPPG and adopt the 12+12+4+(2) structure. This more radical model will undoubtedly require some significant cultural change within the University and significant changes in practice but in my view provides the greatest opportunity to enhance learning and employability.

2) The Function of the 2 Week Period

There are a number of options to consider. When Schools were consulted on the use of the 2 week period, a number of responses were received. These fall into several key categories:

- Dedicated revision time
- Time for academics to do field work
- Placements/Internships & Employability-related activities

- Skills training /Induction/Transition for students as preparation for following Academic Year

Dedicated Revision Time

The Students Union would prefer the 2 week period to be a revision period prior to Exams. This is understandable: one would be surprised if students didn't want to have more time to prepare for examinations. Whilst one can sympathise with the Student Union position on the use of the 2 week period, I do **not** believe that using it prior to the Examination period as 'revision time' is a good use of this time either for students or for the University. Having a 2 week period dedicated solely to revision is difficult to justify on a number of levels:

- It is debatable whether students should need an extra two weeks to prepare for exams. If modules are entirely self-contained blocks of learning, it could be argued there should be no need for a dedicated, post-semester revision period.
- If students are required to undertake exams in May/June in relation to Autumn semester modules, the argument for having a small period for revising is stronger. If the University decides, therefore, to adopt the 12 + 12 + 4 + (2) academic year, LTC may wish to consider making a ruling requiring that Exam-based modules ONLY run in the spring semester.
- Having 2 weeks of revision means that this period becomes pedagogically 'dead' time. Academics would have little influence on student learning or the development of their employability skills/capacities during this crucial end of year period.
- It adds no 'value' to the student experience. Schools will need to make considerable adjustments to their programme level assessment strategies in order to 'free-up' the 2 weeks in question (e.g. by reducing the number or length of exams and using alternative assessment formats). Given this investment of staff time in programme redesign it would be a great shame to see 2 weeks given over to 'revision' when it could be used to 'add value' to the student learning experience and empower Schools/Faculties to develop and deliver a programme of study skills or employability-focused activities which would actually succeed in preparing students for 'transition' to the following academic year or ensuring that they develop skills/experiences which make them more attractive to employers. We know that UEA excels in NSS, but we are out-competed by our 94 Group peers and others in terms of employability (as measured by students transitioning into graduate level jobs). As an institution we need to maximise ANY time which can be found within the traditional academic year to provide opportunities for students to develop the skills and, crucially, the work experience which will enable them to be successful in securing a graduate level job.

Time for academics to do field work

Whilst opening-up a 2 week period within the year for academics to engage in research-related activities would no doubt be highly attractive to many colleagues, I do not believe that this is a justifiable use of the time available. Students expectations of contact time, quality teaching and quality support will increase in the new fees regime and we will need to 'up our game' rather than reducing our contact with students. The 2 weeks comes within the 30 week academic year and arguably should be dedicated to activity which underpins and promotes student learning rather than the research of academic staff.

Placements/Internships & Employability-related Activities

There are tremendous opportunities to use the 2 week period to provide a range of activities aimed at developing students experience of professional work settings, and building employability. These might include some or all of the following (and many other things besides):

- **Short-term paid/un-paid placements** in external professional settings (the placement module in the BA Educational Studies in EDU involves a minimum commitment of 60 hrs and would provide a sensible 'model' for this).
- **Short-term paid/un-paid placements** within UEA (the placement module in the BA Educational Studies in EDU involves a minimum commitment of 60 hrs and would provide a sensible 'model' for this).
- **Internships** in a range of professional and industrial/commercial external settings.
- **Employability workshops** aimed at enabling students to interact with and learn from our alumni or regional/national employers.
- **Problem-solving projects** – where small teams of UGs from different Schools come together in small teams to analyse and explore solutions to real-world business problems for employers/organisations.

Internships and placements do not have to be several months in duration to be of value. An 80 hr placement can transform a student's understanding of professional settings, professional roles and what it is like to work in a professional team.

Skills training /Induction/Transition to following Academic Year

Having a 2 week period after the Exam period provides an unencumbered period in which Schools or Faculties can provide support focused on ensuring that students are well-equipped to cope with the transition from Year 1 to Year 2, and from Year 2 to Year 3:

- **'Transitions' programmes for Year 1/2 students** – intensive programmes aimed at preparing Year 1 & 2 students for the difficult transition into Year 2/3. This could include providing detailed feedback on Exams, honour's-level study etc.
- **'Transitions' into employment for Year 3 students** – intensive programme aimed at preparing finalists for the transition from student to employee/employer. CV-building and checking, interview techniques and intensive interview practice with alumni, briefings on what we know employers want from graduates, coaching & mentoring by alumni, etc.
- **Field work related to the Year which follows (e.g. students could engage with fieldwork at end of their 2nd year of study that they had to reflect back on in autumn semester of 3rd year).**
- **Work-based learning module** – like the one already run by CCE for ENV students during summer between Year 2 and 3.

However, if the 2 week period falls before Exams, would it be realistic to expect students to engage in any other 'enrichment' or 'employability-related' activities knowing that their exams would immediately follow? I believe that there is a real danger that students will be so distracted by looming exams that any attempt to develop or deliver a coherent programme of pre-Exam activity will be fatally undermined, even if the activity is 'high-quality' and 'high-value'.

Ensuring Engagement

The key to engagement is motivation. If students feel sufficiently intrinsically or extrinsically motivated they will engage effectively and even enthusiastically. It is essential, therefore, that the 2 week post-examination 'Enrichment Programme' is not viewed either by staff or by students as some kind of 'bolt-on' experience that is poorly articulated with their degree studies or the development of their employability and transferable skills. If it is poorly planned and articulated it will be resented by students, they will gain little from it, and it will negatively impact on wider student experience and the NSS.

It follows, therefore, that for students to engage energetically with the 2 week programme they will need to see it as something of real value for its own sake (in terms of their personal development

and learning) or as something that will help them get a well-paid or attractive graduate level job. It will need to be:

1. Clearly focused on 'adding value' to their degree.
2. Focused on building employability, translatable skills and understanding of professional settings/roles.
3. Carefully designed and planned.
4. Properly articulated with the learning outcomes of their degree programmes.
5. Intensive and challenging yet also enjoyable and fun.
6. Tailored, where possible, to students' specific needs and career ambitions.

Making the Enrich Programme work will not be straight-forwards. The nature of the academic year will change as will the pattern of work for students and staff. It will require staff to work in a different way, with more teaching/delivery in June than is the case at present. It will require a change in behaviour amongst students and the development of a new culture of engagement which will be promoted in many different ways by other aspects of the New Academic Model. The potential 'gains' for students and for the University are considerable, however, and we should grasp this opportunity to 'Do Different'.

Recommendation:

LTC should endorse the use of the 2 week period for a combination of activities:

- Placements/Internships & Employability-related activities, with a different emphasis for 1st/2nd years.
- Skills training /Induction/Transition for students as preparation for following Academic Year.
- Preparation for transition to employment for finalists – intense CV development, interviewing skills, reflection on translatable skills, confidence-boosting activities, communication strategies, team role analysis, mentoring by alumni etc.
- Work-based learning module(s).
- Subject-related fieldwork, field visits etc.

3) Earning the Right to Reassessment

One of the principles of the New Academic Model (NAM) is that there is no automatic right to reassessment. Students will be required to meet certain criteria in their engagement and progress to earn the right to reassessment, if they fail a module or modules. There needs to be evidence that a student has engaged with his or her studies in a meaningful way. Three criteria can be readily considered as evidence that a student has engaged with their studies. TPPG has discussed and debated all three.

- *Engagement in formative assessment*
- *Attendance*
- *A Threshold mark of some kind in the 1st attempt at assessment.*

Formative assessment: Some have argued that we cannot be absolutely certain that all modules will involve or include formative assessment, which means that it would be problematic using this as a reliable criteria for engagement which could be applied across the University. However, it is up to LTC to set expectations, and it may wish to require that all modules within the NAM include an

element (i.e. at least once piece) of formative assessment. Given the importance of formative assessment in building student learning/skills, this is arguably not an unreasonable expectation. It is suggested that in the first year of operation of the NAM that Schools begin to formally identify formative assessments which can be submitted to the HUB and recorded on SITS. The number of pieces of formative work will vary, depending on the module. Once a level of uniformity has been achieved, with all modules including formative work of some kind, at that stage LTC may wish to put in place a third criteria for reassessment: namely, the submission of at least one piece of formative assessment via the HUB.

SITS implications: The Hubs will log the submission on SITS, with an 'engaged' flag, which will be fed through to the calculation of reassessment, as part of the progression rules, as required. The absence of an 'engaged' flag, in conjunction with the presence of a 'non-engaged' flag, will prevent the student from being automatically set up for reassessment.

Attendance: In the absence of sophisticated biometric technology it will not be possible to consistently monitor attendance at lecture sessions. However, it should be possible to monitor seminars and lab-based workshops. However, all Schools would need to ensure that the latter were monitored closely and consistently. Attendance and engagement will be monitored throughout the year via General Regulation 13 in the usual way, but depending on the monitoring arrangements in place and the triggers set by the individual School, some students may end up with less than 80% attendance at key teaching events without triggering the formal procedure. Potentially this is the area of greatest disparity between modules.

SITS implication: there is no automatic feed from attendance monitoring through to the progression rules. There will need to be a manual check on students' attendance for the failed module, for those students who have achieved the other criteria for reassessment. This can be reported out of SITS via a Discoverer report.

A threshold mark: TPPG was of the view that a threshold mark was a legitimate criteria on which to measure engagement, but there were differing views on whether the threshold should be a mark of 20% or 30%. LTS colleagues have carried out some statistical analysis which shows that in 2010/11, students gained a mark of less than 20% in a total of 1,174 instances (in some cases one student might account for 4/5 or even 6 instances).

Modules Marks by Marking Band for all Undergraduate Students in 2010/11 (excluding pass/fail modules). Figures include students who withdrew part way through the year.

Mark Band	Count of Modules
0	715
>0.00 - 9.99	193
10-19.99	266
20-34.99	1187
35-39.99	853
Grand Total	3214

It is not yet clear how many separate students were responsible for the 1,174 fail marks, but it is likely to be in excess of 200. At present, most of these 200 students might progress despite carrying failed modules/credits.

Within the NAM, they would be required to withdraw at the end of the Stage of Study. This seems like a large number of students to lose, but LTC needs to consider whether it is actually preferable for weak/struggling students to withdraw (and preferably early-on in their studies), rather than limping through to the 3rd year and having to withdraw then, or failing their degrees entirely. The latter isn't in the students' interests or those of the University. It should also be pointed out that the large number of students failing modules and being given reassessment opportunities in the present system is very costly, involving thousands of hours of academic and administrative staff time.

SITS implication: The mark will be fed through to the calculation of reassessment, as part of the progression rules, as required. A mark of below 20% will prevent the student from being automatically set up for reassessment.

Recommendations:

In order to earn the right to reassessment students:

1. must have no more than 20% unauthorised absence for the failed module (as monitored through attendance at lab classes, practicals, seminars etc) AND
2. must have achieved an overall module mark for the failed module of at least 20%.

Note:

- a. It is acknowledged that there will be a few modules where attendance is not monitored, in which case only the mark threshold will be taken into consideration. This will be made clear to students at the point of registration for the module.
- b. For modules where there is no mark awarded (pass/fail modules) only the attendance threshold will be taken into consideration. This will be made clear to students at the point of registration for the module.
- c. Where there are extenuating circumstances, students may be permitted to take a reassessment opportunity where one or both thresholds have not been met. This will be further discussed as part of the Review of Appeals and Complaints.

Failure in more than one Module

- Where students have failed more than one module, they will need to satisfy the reassessment criteria in **each** failed module to be permitted to be reassessed in **any** of the failed modules, because students are required to pass every module in the NAM.
- Students would not be permitted to go to reassessment in order to obtain an exit award. For example, where students meet the criteria in some of the failed modules, but not all of them, they would not be able to obtain a degree. If they fail to meet the criteria in one module, they would not be permitted to be reassessed in any module.

Extenuating Circumstances

- Students may be permitted to undertake reassessment if all or some of these criteria are not met, but only if there are relevant and significant extenuating circumstances which have been brought to the attention of the University by the published deadline.

Reassessment and In-Year Reassessment

- It is proposed to keep reassessment at the end of the year, and not accommodate in-year assessment (except in NSC). This will keep the burden of assessment down, and ensure that students meet the criteria to be permitted to take reassessment. For example, if a student fails a piece of coursework in Semester One, they may still pass the module by achieving a good mark in the exam. We do not want to place a possibly-unnecessary burden on students to do extra assessment before the outcome of the whole module is known.
- Where students fail both the exam and the coursework the student will only be reassessed in the exam, as this tests all the learning outcomes i.e. it has a synoptic function.
- If a student fails the coursework, passes the exam, and still fails the module, the student would be reassessed in the coursework.

4) Defined Choice

One of the features of the New Academic Model (NAM) is the replacement of Free Choice modules in course profiles with a Defined Choice. In the paper that was considered by LTC on 24 April 2011, the Director of Taught Programmes reported that what is currently said to be free choice can actually be more restricted than defined choice because free choice is subject to many hurdles, including the approval of the School in which a student is registered, the student timetable, and rules that govern when a module is full. Defined choice modules must be carefully selected by the Course Directors to ensure that they do not clash with the core modules on their programmes/courses. Assuming that there were no timetable clashes and that approval was no longer necessary, it would be desirable to remove the 'cap' on numbers on a defined choice module so that any student wishing to take it as part of their defined choice would be able to.

However, resource constraints mean that there will need to be exceptions to this rule:

- A. Modules where numbers are limited by resource implications/constraints – e.g. access to computer terminals in teaching labs, access to work stations in computing/science labs.
- B. Modules where numbers are limited by teaching spaces used in delivery – e.g. where classrooms essential for delivery of particular modules place constraints on number of places available.
- C. Modules run within FMH Faculty would be excluded from defined choice.

Recommendations:

1. First year students should - wherever possible - have core modules for the whole year. Defined choice should, therefore, be restricted (wherever possible) to second year and beyond. This will result in a more efficient enrolment process for first year students, and allows them to see their timetable as soon as they have registered. It is recognised that some flexibility may be required on this but having a more prescribed 1st year would have many advantages.
2. It is proposed that there should be three 'types of choice':
 - a. **Programme Level Choice (PLC)**, similar to the current choices available through option ranges, where the modules contribute to the programme level outcomes;
 - b. **Employability and Enrichment Choice (EEC)** which replaces the current 'free choice' and gives students the option to take modules outside their discipline of study, for enrichment or employability enhancement. The distinction between EEC and Free Choice is that the group of modules in the EEC range will be chosen so they do not clash with any of the core modules, will not require School approval, and the students will be guaranteed a place on them (except in cases where resource constraints dictate otherwise).
 - c. **Language Skills Modules (LSM)**
3. **PLC options** will continue to be considered in the usual way, although Course Directors are asked to pay particular attention to timetabling to ensure the avoidance of clashes. It is recommended that all modules use the A to E timetabling slots, and their sub-slots, to help with planning.
4. **EEC options** will be a mixture of new EEC modules designed and delivered by a School specifically for students studying outside the School's discipline area, and of standard modules, already part of a School's core provision for its own students, which students external to the discipline can take alongside the core students.
5. To aid the avoidance of clashes, it is proposed that the new EEC modules put on specifically for out-of-School students be timetabled in a specific slot. Course Directors who wanted to offer those modules would need to ensure that those slots were kept clear. All such EEC modules would be timetabled in the identified slots, as students would only take one.
6. EEC modules will be expected to be 20 credits, and may be year-long or one semester only. The suggested timetable slot is AL, 09.00 – 11.00 on Fridays and 17.00 – 18.00 on Mondays.
7. **LSM Language options** – in some courses, language modules in LCS may form part of PLC choice. In others, they may be EEC choice. However, in order to protect the ability of students to take language modules it will be necessary to have a dedicated language 'choice'.

5) Synoptic Assessment

At UEA students register on modules and are assessed on each module. Assessment is therefore very closely tied to modules and to the learning outcomes associated with modules. Within the New Academic Model, the emphasis will shift to **programme-level** coordination, planning and assessment. There is a very strong argument, therefore, for taking this opportunity to develop and integrate synoptic assessments into degree programmes.

Discussions and planning regarding the function of Synoptic Assessment within the New Academic Model are in their early stages. However, work between LTS and SIS colleagues (notably Caroline Sauverin and Andrew Watson) has flagged-up some useful insights into the constraints and possibilities that we can work within and around. It is important that as a University we have a clear sense of what the term 'synoptic assessment' might describe and what is allowable under this term, and also how we feel it should inform the final degree classification of students. In this section, I have set out some questions for LTC colleagues to consider.

Definition of synoptic assessment

Q.1 How should we define synoptic assessment?

- *“Synoptic assessment combines assessments over modules and across subjects. It expects and requires students to transfer and translate knowledge and skills and helps them see how things connect across a programme of study or a subject discipline” - ADTP*
- *“Synoptic assessment encourages students to demonstrate their accumulated knowledge and understanding of a topic or subject area. A synoptic assessment normally enables students to show their ability to integrate and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding with breadth and depth in the subject. It can help to test a student's capability of applying the knowledge and understanding gained in one part of a programme to increase their understanding in other parts of the programme, or across the programme as a whole” – University of Exeter*
- *“A form of assessment which tests candidates' understanding of the connections between the different elements of a subject” - QCA*

Q.2 What kinds of assignments might test synoptic learning?

Types of synoptic exercises which might enable students to demonstrate integrated learning:

- decision making/problem solving exercises, requiring candidates to draw together knowledge, understanding and skills learned throughout the course to tackle a decision, problem or issue that is new to them;
- a case study within which specific questions require candidates to apply knowledge, understanding and skills learned throughout the course;
- assessment requiring candidates to apply knowledge, understanding and skills learned in other parts of the course, eg a project based on experience of work or a professional setting.
- preparing a business plan.
- *Others?*

Types/formats of synoptic assessment

Q.3 What types of assessment should be allowed at UEA under the term 'synoptic assessment'?

- Exams which have questions that test learning across modules?
- Coursework assignments which test learning across a programme/course?
- *Others?*
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Building Synoptic assessment into the New Academic Model

Some key questions here:

Q.4 Should synoptic assessment(s) count towards degree classification?

Q.5 If so, how should it be weighted?

An example:

Year 2 – worth 40% made up from weighted mean of the year's marks, taking credit of the module into consideration.

Year 3 – worth 60% made up from weighted mean of the year's marks, taking credit of the module into consideration. The synoptic module could be given a nominal '60 credit' or '30 credit' loading (or whatever seemed appropriate) which would be taken into consideration: i.e. the weighted mean would be calculated over more than 120 credits, so in fact any mark from the 3rd year modules would be diluted a little to take into account the synoptic assessment.

Q.6 Should synoptic assessments only be employed in final year?

Q. 7 How might a weighted synoptic element affect the already-approved adoption of a 40:60 weighting in years 2 and 3?

The simplest module would be that the Year 2 120 credits contributes 40% of the classification mark, and Year 3, including the synoptic assessment, contributes 60%. This would consist of the marks for 120 credits plus the mark for a 30-credit synoptic assessment.

The technical perspective

From a technical perspective synoptic assessment is very 'do-able'. It will be possible to accommodate it by allocating a module code and credit rating. The latter will enable the weighting to be taken in to consideration for final classification.

Tribal may have an alternative way of taking into account synoptic assessment, but we are still waiting for a meeting to be set up with Tribal so we can talk through the options.

LTS and SIS colleagues are confident that we can attribute the credit 'taken' for the synoptic assessment appropriately in the marks statement, HEAR/diploma supplement and HEFCE returns.

REVISED WORD COUNT POLICY FOR 2012/13

Background to current policy

There are several reasons why the current word count policy was adopted:

- There was no *consistency* policy on the issue - different systems of word-count penalties were in place in different parts of the University, some permissive, some very prescriptive.
- There was no consistent *requirement* for students to indicate the word count on their submissions.
- There was no consistent practice or method in place to allow staff to *easily check* actual word lengths against stated word lengths (e.g. those declared by students on their coversheets) – esp assignments submitted in hard copy format.
- As with many other educational issues, there are 'doves' and 'hawks' on the issue - some staff feel strongly that students shouldn't be unnecessarily 'constrained' by word counts, whilst others feel that it is crucial to develop a 'high-compliance' culture in the context of the wider development of professional skills.

- TPPG and LTC were mindful that any policy agreed within the University needed to be *sufficiently flexible* to allow for the huge variations in assignment formats (e.g. Maths submissions framed around algebraic equations etc).
- TPPG and LTC were mindful that introducing a policy which required robust 'checking' of word lengths would require a major investment in resource.

Problems with the current policy

Since taking over as ADTP I have received a number of written and verbal requests for clarification and many colleagues have expressed their frustration and dissatisfaction with the policy. It has also been very poorly received by some of our key partners (e.g. Guernsey Institute). My own view on the policy is that:

1. It sends out a very unfortunate message to students: namely, that we're not overly bothered whether students stick to word count limits.
2. It implies that we're not really concerned about ensuring a standardised, consistent approach to dealing with over-long submissions within the University and between Faculties, Schools. The degree to which markers withhold marks for a piece which is overlong will inevitably vary WILDLY within and across the University.
3. It gives the impression that we're happy for some students to be penalised (or have marks withheld) but not others – depending on the whim of the School or module convenor.
4. It doesn't explain to colleagues or student why adherence to the word limit might be included as an assessment criterion for some assignments but not others.
5. It is simply vague and imprecise – the lack of clarity has led to confusion and frustration.
6. Why should adherence to word count be weighted as a criteria? – there are more important things to award marks for and more important criteria on which to recognise and acknowledge students' performance.
7. It doesn't allow markers to deduct marks for exceeding a clearly stated word limit – this seems at odds with having a word limit. Why bother having word limits at all?
8. The policy seems at odds with practice in most other HEIs.

In addition:

- Some colleagues feel there was insufficient consultation amongst staff prior to its approval. This is debatable in the sense that Schools were consulted about word counts and the policy was fully discussed at TPPG and LTC, but the discussions around the policy did coincide with the Integration Project. Rightly or wrongly, there seems to be a sense in some quarters that the policy slipped in 'under the radar'.
- Some colleagues feel that it runs the risk of compromising marking rigour and resulting in an inflation of marks.
- There are concerns in some schools that the policy undermines professional standards and the development of 'professional' attitudes (e.g. recognition of the importance of compliance with requirement/guidance). In FMH there are serious concerns about awarding/withholding 5% of 10 % of marks purely for meeting/adhering to a stated word limit.

A revised policy for 2012/13

At TPPG on 23 Nov the ADTP set out two OPTIONS for an alternative, revised policy for 2012/13. Both were discussed. Some members of TPPG favoured keeping the current policy, some favoured option 1 and some favoured option 2. The ADTP and all four Assoc Deans favoured the simplicity and

clarity of Option 2 which is more likely to ensure consistent and equitable treatment for all students at UG and PG level. However, it was not possible to reach agreement.

OPTION 1

% over the Word Count Limit	Words over the limit*	Penalty
Up to 5% over stated word limit	0-99 words	No penalty
Between 5-10% over stated word limit	100-200 words	2 marks deducted
Between 11-20% over stated word limit	201-400 words	5 marks deducted
Between 21-30% over stated word limit	401-600 words	10 marks deducted
More than 30% over stated word limit	600 words +	Mark capped at 40%

**On a 2,000 word assignment*

OPTION 2

The individual module convener will advise you of maximum length of the coursework (maximum word count). All students must declare their word count on the coursework submission form. The following penalties will be applied if you exceed the word limit (please note there will be no exceptions to the rule and it is your responsibility to ensure that you adhere to the word limit set). ***The awarded mark will be capped at 40% for work which is over the word limit.*** Frequent random checks are carried out on coursework by the HUBS to verify word counts. Cases of intentional misrepresentation of word count will result in a capped mark of 40%. If students fail to declare the word count on the coursework submission form the mark will be capped at 40%. On modules marked using a Pass/Fail system, markers will only read text up to the word count and the mark will be based ONLY on that text.

It is quite evident that word counts policy is an area that divides opinion amongst academic and on-academic colleagues. However, doing nothing is not a viable option and a revised policy is required. As ADTP I believe that there are four key criteria which should underpin any new policy:

1. Clarity – it must be easily understood by students and staff
2. Simplicity – it should be easy to implement
3. Equity – it should promote a more even-handed and consistent treatment of students across the University.
4. It should be seen to be fair – no students should be unfairly disadvantaged or advantaged, and it should reflect ‘natural justice’.

Following discussion at TPPG the ADTP has reviewed Option 2 and, with assistance from Associate Deans colleagues in LTS, has drafted a revised proposal:

Revised word count policy:

- a. All appropriate assignments must have a specified word count limit.
- b. There is clear guidance for students as to what is included/excluded from word counts.
- c. Similar to the way they detect potential plagiarism, markers will be able to raise concerns where they think an assignment has gone over the word count limit. Work will be checked by requiring the student to submit a Word version of their work to the Hub.
- d. Penalties will be imposed as follows:

Exceeding limit	Mark capped at pass mark
Misleading word count (lower than actual word count)	10% of marks deducted (or capped at pass mark, whichever is higher)
Missing word count entry from coversheet	10% of marks deducted (or capped at pass mark, whichever is higher)

- e. The word length for coursework, written assignments, projects, reports and dissertations shall include the text only. The expected word length for coursework, written assignments, projects, reports and dissertations will not include appendices, footnotes, endnotes, bibliographies, graphs, charts, diagrams, tables and their labels.
- f. Information on the expected word length of each item of coursework (whether formative or summative) shall be published to students. Module outlines or assessment outlines shall state maximum word count for each item of coursework, written assignment, projects, reports and dissertations. (There will be obvious exceptions, for example, where the assignment requires formulae or computer code rather than text).
- g. In pass/fail regimes, markers will only read up to the word count and the mark will be based only on the text which falls within the word count.

Advantages:

- ❖ It is admirably **CLEAR** – there is absolutely no scope for confusion/misinterpretation.
- ❖ It can be easily explained and justified to students.
- ❖ It is more likely to ensure that students are treated consistently regardless of the School in which they are studying.
- ❖ There is no need to do any ‘calculation’ to figure-out what the penalty should be – there is just **one** consequence of going over the published word count. This minimises work required in HUBS.
- ❖ It sends out an unambiguous message to students – we expect that they **will** adhere to word counts and not doing so has consequences.
- ❖ It caters for percentage marking, and also Pass/Fail marking.
- ❖ It ensures that staff time is not dissipated reading over-long text which ignores or blatantly disregards stated word count limits. This is an important consideration – academic staff time does need to be protected.
- ❖ All four Associate Deans and the ADTP are strongly in favour of the proposed revisions.

Issues LTC needs to be aware of:

- ❖ The responsibility for identifying work which exceeds the word limit will lie with module markers, as is the case with plagiarism. Markers are human and not every script which exceeds the word count will be ‘spotted’ and reported to the HUB.
- ❖ Some TPPG members have argued that we cannot impose a word count limit unless it can be policed consistently. This argument is not sustainable. Our plagiarism policy places the emphasis on markers ‘identifying’ cases of plagiarism and collusion. Some are better equipped than others to do so. This does not mean that the policy is unfair – any more so than being caught by the police for speeding is ‘unfair’ just because someone else might also have been speeding on the same stretch of road without being caught. The policy and its penalties are there to act as a deterrent. There will never be an 100% effective means of checking for plagiarism, and there is unlikely ever to be a 100% reliable means of detecting flouting of word count limits. This doesn’t mean that we should not require students to adhere to a word count and, if it is knowingly flouted or disregarded, impose penalties accordingly.
- ❖ Differences in the ability of markers to identify scripts which exceed the word limit should not be allowed to form the basis of a legitimate student appeal – any more than I would expect to be ‘let off’ a speeding penalty because I knew for a fact that someone else had exceeded the speed limit on the same road a few minutes before I was caught myself. The

emphasis should be on students taking responsibility for their own work and their own practice, and not on whether all markers are able to spot all over-long scripts.

- ❖ In order to make this penalty system work, some key changes would be required and there are certain things that would need to be rigorously and robustly articulated.
 - 1) Module convenors would need to clearly state word count limit for each and every written submission (as now)
 - 2) Staff would need to employ a rigid and clearly stated integer (whole number) as the word count: e.g. **2,500 words**. Avoid providing a 'range': e.g. 2,500-3,000 words
 - 3) The published word count for the assignment would be automatically populated in coursework coversheet. LTS is able to facilitate this.
 - 4) Students would need to input the actual word count (MS Word produces this easily) for each submission into the 'box' on the coursework submission coversheet. LTS is able to facilitate this. It is recommended that they should also tick a box noting that they have read and understood the word count policy: "I hereby confirm that this submission adheres to the stated word count limit. I recognise that if I have exceeded the stated word count that my mark will be capped at 40%".

Recommendation:

Revised word count policy:

- a. Penalties will be imposed as follows:

Exceeding limit	Mark capped at pass mark
Misleading word count (lower than actual word count)	10% of marks deducted (or capped at pass mark, whichever is higher)
Missing word count entry from coversheet	10% of marks deducted (or capped at pass mark, whichever is higher)

- b. The word length for coursework, written assignments, projects, reports and dissertations shall include the text only. The expected word length for coursework, written assignments, projects, reports and dissertations will not include appendices, footnotes, endnotes, bibliographies, graphs, charts, diagrams, tables and their labels.
- c. Information on the expected word length of each item of coursework (whether formative or summative) shall be published to students. Module outlines or assessment outlines shall state maximum word count for each item of coursework, written assignment, projects, reports and dissertations. (There will be obvious exceptions, for example, where the assignment requires formulae or computer code rather than text). All summative assignments must have a precise, specified word count limit (e.g. 2,000 words).
- d. In pass/fail regimes, markers will only read up to the word count and the mark will be based only on the text which falls within the word count.
- e. Similar to the way they detect potential plagiarism, markers will be able to raise concerns where they think an assignment has gone over the word count limit. Work will be checked by requiring the student to submit a Word version of their work to the Hub.

Should LTC approve this revised word count policy, the ADTP is of the opinion that it should be introduced from Jan 2012 (spring semester) – that is during the current session.

A CHANGE TO *INSTRUCTION FOR EXAMINERS*

Clarification regarding Section 9.2.3 of Instructions to Examiners: How To Read The Guidance on Classification Decisions: Borderline Candidates

Background

Dissatisfaction with the classification of an academic award is one of the main causes of student appeals. Sometimes successful appeals arise from situations where the classification guidance within the Instructions to Examiners has not been followed at the original meeting of the Examination Board. The current Instructions to Examiners are problematic as they lack clarity in relation to students whose aggregate mark does not place clearly within a given classification. The brief notes below are intended to aid Boards of Examiners until such time as the Instructions to Examiners are formally amended. As a final note of background it is worth noting that the University has placed strategic importance on increasing the achievement of 'good honours' by our students and while it is important to retain academic standards we should also not fall into the trap of regarding the non-promotion of border-line students to the next classification bracket as representing a weakening of academic rigour.

Problematic Instructions

Decisions about students who do not automatically fall within a given classification are covered by the following Instruction:

9.2.3 . . .the Board of Examiners *may* refer to the following combinations of marks and credits as guidance for the exercise of *discretion* in recommending degree classification (Instructions To Examiners 2010-11)

The italics have been added to highlight the problematic terms. It is not uncommon for this Instruction to be read as implying that a significant degree of discretion is available to the Board. It appears to create a set of conditional consequences: The Board 'may' refer to the subsequent combinations of marks and credits, which suggests that equally the Board can decide that it will not refer to those suggested combinations. It seems to follow that the application of the suggested combinations of marks and credits would only apply in the event that the Exam Board actively chose to refer to them.

Moreover, the use of the term 'discretion' suggests a further layer of conditionality: Even when the Board has actively chosen to refer to the guidance below Instruction 9.2.3 it appears that it should exercise its discretion in determining whether, having referred to and considered the suggested guidance, it will apply that guidance in reaching a classification decision.

What Is Intended by Instruction 9.2.3?

In practice the University takes the view that where guidance is provided to Examiners it expects that the guidance will be followed and that by association where the Instructions indicate what a Board 'may' do it is most usefully read as indicating what a Board 'should' do. The conditionality of 'may' as opposed to 'shall' (which is found elsewhere in the Instructions) reflects the fact that there may from time to time arise circumstances that are sufficiently exceptional such that the Examination Board does not make use of the classification guidance. That is to say, Boards of Examiners should apply the guidance under 9.2.3 except in extremis.

Having clarified that in almost all cases the Examination Board should indeed refer to the combinations of marks and units provided, we can turn to the use of the term 'discretion'. This is not intended to suggest that having, except in extremis, made reference to the suggested combinations

of marks and credits the Examination Board should then engage in case by case decisions as to whether those combinations ought to be applied.

The use of the term 'discretion' here relates to the fact that any classification awarded to a student whose aggregate is outside the classification range, by however small a margin, technically constitutes the exercise of discretion in the making of an award. It is therefore a reference to the nature of the decisions being taken when following the guidance at 9.2.3 rather than an expression of the ability of the Board to choose whether or not that guidance will be followed.

In cases where the OIA has been involved their reading has also been that the provision of guidance, particularly given its very specific nature, should be understood as directive rather than suggestive. Moreover, the view has been taken that students would reasonably interpret these instructions as implying that except and unless there are compelling reasons not to follow the guidance, the award of the higher classification should be effectively automatic where the guidance criteria are met. This position is also reflected in our Student Record System which automatically generates the higher classification as the expected outcome in the individual student record where those criteria have been satisfied.

REVISED SENATE SCALE

A number of academic colleagues, including the Faculty Associate Deans for Learning & Teaching, recognise that the current Senate Scale has severe limitations in terms of its language, its lack of precision, and its usefulness as a guide to the qualities of work which fall into different grade/classification boundaries. It is now recognised that the University's Good Honours statistics fall behind those of its close competitors and it is also recognised that one of the reasons for this are entrenched marking cultures within the institution. To put it bluntly, too few students are being awarded 2(i) and 1st class marks. The 'bar' is being set unrealistically high – as a consequence in some schools it is highly unlikely that a bright student would gain a 1st.

The Academic Director for Taught Programmes has consulted TPPG on changes to the Senate Scale and presented the three examples (Docs A, B, C) at TPPG meeting on 23 November. Some felt that they were too complicated and that students would have difficulty understanding them. I and the four Associate Deans totally disagree – they provide, we believe, a clear, concise guide to the qualities of scripts which fall into key classification boundaries.

The existing Senate Scale may be a significant factor in the development and entrenchment of conservative marking cultures and the general reluctance to award marks at the upper end of the marking scale. The issue is complicated by some 'odd' academic perceptions of the expected attributes of a 1st class script.

Some academics argue that even small grammatical errors should preclude the award of a 1st class mark. Others argued that a 1st class submission should be of 'publication quality' or should be an important contribution to the discipline. In some instances colleagues have argued that the upper 20% of the marking scale should be reserved for students who produce something 'remarkable' or truly 'special' or unexpected in terms of its originality and/or creativity. In some disciplines it seems that a student has to verge on 'genius' to be deserving of 1st class marks. Perspectives like these are partly responsible for the problem we now have in terms of Good Honours outcomes.

Let us be clear about a few important things:

1. We have a **100% marking scale**. We should use 100% of the marks available, and not just the middle 30% between 40 and 70.
2. Each assignment should have **clear learning outcomes** so that students know what they are expected to achieve or demonstrate in their submitted work. If a student demonstrates achievement of all the learning outcomes to a very high standard, they should be awarded with a very high mark in the 85-100% range.
3. Failure to do well in relation to one learning outcome should not, in itself, necessarily preclude the award of a 1st class mark. I am sure we can all agree that the standard of written English in student submissions should be an assessment criteria for most assignments. However, it should only be ONE of the criteria on which an essay or assignment is assessed. One suspects that the other criteria might include things like sophistication of argument, use of evidence, critical evaluation of key concepts/ideas, structure, presentation, methodology etc. If a student performs VERY strongly in most of the criteria, but their work contains occasional minor grammatical errors, I do not see why a 1st class mark should not be awarded unless accuracy of written English is weighted at more than 30% of the marks available.
4. We should not expect 'perfection' in a 1st class piece of work – especially a lower 1st in the 70-85% range. The view that a 1st should be of 'publication quality' seems to me to be unreasonable. Many staff struggle to achieve work of publication quality so why should we expect this of an 18/19 year-old student or any student for that matter? It should be possible for a student to gain a 1st by demonstrating the stated learning outcomes to a high standard or meeting generic assessment criteria to a high standard. This isn't about 'dumbing down' – far from it. Rather, it is about rewarding excellent work with high marks – and giving credit where credit is due.
5. Penalising students disproportionately for weaknesses in grammar undermines notions of equality and fairness. Take for example an International Student who has been admitted to a degree with a 6.5 IELTS score. The chances are that their spoken English might be satisfactory, but their written English might be rather less well developed than that of a native English speaker. Whilst the student might do their best to achieve the highest standards of grammar etc in their written submissions, it would not be unusual for scripts produced by International students to contain occasional grammatical errors. If the presence of such errors automatically disqualifies them from gaining a 1st, despite their work being very strong in all other respects, then they really are enormously disadvantaged. If an assignment has clearly articulated assessment criteria, or learning outcomes, and the student demonstrates most of these to a very high standard, then they should be given the mark that reflects their overall performance.

The PVC (Academic) has asked the ADTP to bring forward examples of the revised Senate Scale/Marking Grids for LTC to consider.

Recommendation:

LTC is asked to consider the revised Senate Scales/Marking Grids attached as an appendix to this report (See Docs A, B, and C).

Detailed guidance notes will be published and circulated subsequent to approval. The ADTP will also liaise with Faculty Assoc Deans to roll-out a programme of staff training in order to ensure that academic colleagues are clear about how to use the marking descriptors in practice.

A similar programme of awareness-raising, induction, and explanation will be roll-out for students.

Dr Adam Longcroft

Academic Director for Taught Programmes

30 November 2011

UEA SENATE SCALE: COURSEWORK

Classification	Learning outcomes	Presentation	Argument & understanding	Criticality & analysis	Use of sources and evidence	Academic referencing	Written communication
Mark range 85-100% Pass High 1 st	All learning outcomes are met at an exemplary standard showing creativity and innovation. Demonstrates an exemplary understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.	Exemplary presentation: clear, logical, imaginative, creative and original. Almost flawless.	Highly effective and sustained arguments, demonstrating a detailed and impressive level of understanding of the topic and associated issues/debates. Addresses all aspects of the assignment to exemplary standard.	Work demonstrates a very high standard of critical analysis and/or originality and creativity. Exemplary in its use of ideas, concepts, theory.	Exemplary use of case studies and evidence. Demonstrates impressive command of data or literature, drawing on a very broad range of material and/or examining the topic in considerable detail.	Exemplary in all respects. Outstanding bibliography	Exemplary standard of written English. Written communication, including use of subject-specific language, is of highest standard.
Mark range 70-84% Pass Low 1 st	All learning outcomes have been fully met to a high standard. Demonstrates a strong understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.	A high standard of presentation: clear, logical and few errors.	Coherent and articulate arguments, demonstrating a high level of understanding of the topic and associated issues/debates. Has addressed most or all aspects of the assignment to a high standard.	Work demonstrates a high standard of critical analysis and/or originality and creativity. Employs ideas, concepts, theory to good effect.	Work demonstrates a very good command of data or literature, drawing on a broad range of material and/or examining the topic in some detail.	A high standard of referencing throughout. Very good bibliography.	A high standard of written English
Mark range 60-69% Pass 2(i)	All learning outcomes have been met to a good standard. Demonstrates a good understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.	A good standard of presentation: clear, mostly logical, and errors are mostly very minor.	The student has submitted work which contains evidence of insight. Thought it may lack finesse, it is thorough, clear and shows an understanding of the subject context. Has addressed most or all aspects of the assignment.	The work contains some good examples of critical analysis and but limited originality and creativity in use of ideas, concepts, case studies etc.	The student draws on a good range of material but lacks the breadth of engagement with the secondary literature required to achieve a 1 st class mark. Good use of evidence. Topics are mostly addressed but not always examined in sufficient detail.	A good standard of referencing, though some minor errors or inconsistencies may be present. Good bibliography.	A good standard of written English, with only minor errors present
Mark range 50-59% Pass 2(ii)	All learning outcomes have been met satisfactorily. Some have been met to a good standard. Demonstrates some understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.	A satisfactory standard achieved: mostly clear, some evidence of logical progression. Some minor inaccuracies.	Competent work, with evidence of engagement in the relevant issues, but little originality and only occasional insight. Gaps in understanding and knowledge; may not have addressed all aspects of the assignment.	Conscientious work and attentive to subject matter and/or task set, but balanced more towards a <u>descriptive</u> rather than a critical, analytical treatment.	Draws on a satisfactory but relatively limited range of sources. Some assessment of evidence. Topics are mostly addressed but not always examined in sufficient detail. Some use of examples. Treatment of data or literature is basically sound but too narrow in scope and underdeveloped.	Referencing satisfactory on the whole, though some inconsistencies or instances of poor/limited citation may be present. Satisfactory bibliography	A reasonable standard of written English, though a number of errors may be present.
Mark range 40-49% Pass 3 rd	Learning outcomes have been met to the minimum required level. Understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards is barely adequate.	Barely satisfactory standard of presentation. Some inaccuracies /errors may be of	Work shows some understanding of the topic and some relevant knowledge, but its treatment is basic, unimaginative, superficial and the student's grasp of	Narrow range of data and/or literature employed is very limited. May be mostly limited to material provided in lectures/seminars.	Draws on a limited range of sources. Little attempt to assess evidence. Examples are provided but are poorly chosen or employed. Lacking in sophistication or finesse. The submission reflects a	Citations present, but referencing is poor, suggesting that little effort has been made to follow guidance. Work is vulnerable to unwitting plagiarism.	A barely satisfactory standard of written English; a number of serious errors may be present; Poorly structured and written, with poor attention to vocabulary and grammar.

UEA SENATE SCALE: COURSEWORK

		a more serious nature. Work has been rushed to completion.	key concepts is weak. Arguments employed are poorly evidenced and/or contain flaws.		limited level of engagement in wider reading and a limited confidence/ability in the use of evidence.	Bibliography barely adequate.	
<p>Marks awarded in the range below indicate that the candidate has <u>failed</u> to achieve the standards required for a pass mark. It is recommended that students receiving marks in this range should meet with their advisor to review the factors that may have influenced the mark and ways in which their performance might be enhanced in subsequent assessments – this might include a discussion of the student’s engagement, study skills development or need for additional learning support. A referral to the Dean of Students Office should be considered.</p>							
Mark range 35-39% Marginal Fail	Insufficient demonstration of learning outcomes to justify a pass grade. Understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards is not sufficient for a Pass.	Unsatisfactory standard, lacking sufficient clarity, and a logical progression, with serious errors/inaccuracies.	The submission contains some material of merit, but it is only a partial attempt to address the question and fails to answer the question fully or in a robust manner with few (and mostly unsuccessful) attempts to construct argument(s). Poor understanding of key issues or concepts.	The treatment is <u>mostly descriptive</u> . Whilst the work contains some evidence of criticality or analysis, it is too limited or partial or lacking in depth to justify a pass.	Draws on a <u>very limited</u> range of sources. No real attempt to assess evidence. Examples are occasionally provided but are poorly chosen and employed. Entirely lacking in sophistication or finesse. The submission reflects a very limited level of engagement in wider reading and a limited confidence/ability in the choice and use of evidence.	Citations present but very limited. Referencing is very poor. Bibliography is either omitted, partial or poorly structured. Guidance not followed. Poor referencing means work is <u>highly vulnerable</u> to unwitting plagiarism.	Unsatisfactory standard of written English; too many serious errors present. Weaknesses undermine clarity of meaning. Text occasionally incomprehensible. Includes significant flaws in spelling, grammar, and basic sentence/paragraph composition
Mark range 20-34% Fail	One or two learning outcomes have been met in a limited way. Understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards is considerably below that required for a pass.	Very poor standard of presentation, lacking sufficient clarity, and a sufficiently logical progression, with many serious inaccuracies.	Little material of merit or relevance, revealing a paucity of understanding of key issues or concepts. Fails to address most aspects of the task or question set. Work lacks any sustained argument(s).	The treatment is <u>almost wholly descriptive</u> . Contains little evidence of a critical or analytical engagement in the topic.	Draws on <u>minimal</u> range of sources. Rarely goes beyond paraphrasing bits of lecture notes or easily accessible web sources. No attempt to assess evidence. Examples are very rarely provided and those that are are very poorly employed. Submission reflects a <u>very limited level of engagement</u> in study on a more general level.	Citation almost or entirely absent. Guidance largely ignored. Bibliography omitted or very poorly assembled. Poor referencing means work is <u>highly vulnerable</u> to unwitting plagiarism.	A poor standard of written English. All of the flaws mentioned above, but of an even more serious nature.
Mark range 10-19% Fail	The work submitted will have very limited relevance to any of the stated learning outcomes. Understanding of link between theory and practice is very weak.	Little evidence that any thought has been given to the standard of presentation. Many serious errors/inaccuracies.	No material of merit or relevance, revealing a complete lack of understanding of key issues or concepts. Fails to address all aspects of the task or question set. No attempt to construct argument(s).	The treatment is <u>wholly descriptive</u> . No evidence of a critical or analytical engagement in the topic.	Almost complete absence of evidence. Submission reflects a <u>very limited level of engagement</u> in study on a more general level.	Citations absent. Guidance entirely ignored. No bibliography that could merit description as such. Very poor referencing <u>Highly vulnerable</u> to unwitting plagiarism.	A very poor standard of written English throughout with little care taken in the composition of proper sentences or paragraphs.
Mark range 0-9% Fail	Lacks any understanding of learning outcomes. No understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.	No evidence that <u>any</u> thought has been given to the standard of presentation.	No understanding is demonstrated. Arguments notable for their complete absence.	The treatment is <u>wholly descriptive</u>	Evidence absent. Submission reflects a <u>very limited level of engagement</u> in study on a more general level.	Citation entirely absent. Bibliography omitted. <u>Highly vulnerable</u> to unwitting plagiarism.	Incomprehensible. No attempt to compose proper sentences or paragraphs.

UEA SENATE SCALE: COURSEWORK

UEA SENATE SCALE: DISSERTATIONS

Classification	Learning outcomes	Presentation	Methodology	Argument & understanding	Criticality & analysis	Use of sources and evidence	Academic referencing	Written communication
<p>Mark range 85-100% Pass High 1st <i>Dissertation is 'exemplary' in most areas and strong in others</i></p>	<p>All learning outcomes are met to exemplary standard. Demonstrates an exemplary understanding of link between theory and practice and related issues/standards.</p>	<p>Exemplary presentation: clear, logical, imaginative, creative and original. Almost flawless.</p>	<p>Underpinned by a sophisticated methodology. Demonstrates a very high level of skill and sensitivity in the use of quantitative and/or qualitative methods. Research tools employed are of a very high standard. Exemplary awareness of research ethics.</p>	<p>Highly effective and sustained arguments, demonstrating a detailed and impressive level of understanding of the topic and associated issues/debates. Addresses all aspects of the assignment to exemplary standard.</p>	<p>Work demonstrates a very high standard of critical analysis and/or originality and creativity. Exemplary in its use of ideas, concepts, theory. Limitations in the research or incomplete conclusions are recognised by the candidate and explained.</p>	<p>Exemplary use of case studies and evidence. Demonstrates impressive command of data or literature, drawing on a very broad range of material and/or examining the topic in considerable detail.</p>	<p>Exemplary in all respects. Outstanding bibliography</p>	<p>Exemplary standard of written English. Written communication, including use of subject-specific language, is of highest standard.</p>
<p>Mark range 70-84% Pass Low 1st <i>Although not without flaws, dissertation is 'strong' in most areas.</i></p>	<p>All learning outcomes have been fully met to a high standard. Demonstrates a strong understanding of link between theory & practice and related issues/standards.</p>	<p>A high standard of presentation: clear, logical and few errors. Errors present are mostly of a minor nature.</p>	<p>The dissertation is underpinned by a sound methodology. Demonstrates a high level of skill and sensitivity in the use of quantitative and/or qualitative methods. Research tools employed are of a high standard. High level of awareness of research ethics.</p>	<p>Coherent and articulate arguments, demonstrating a high level of understanding of the topic and associated issues/debates. Has addressed most or all aspects of the assignment to a high standard.</p>	<p>Work demonstrates a high standard of critical analysis and/or originality and creativity. Employs ideas, concepts, theory to good effect. Limitations in the research or incomplete conclusions are mostly recognised and some attempt is made to explained them.</p>	<p>Work demonstrates a good command of data or literature, drawing on a broad range of material and/or examining the topic in some detail.</p>	<p>A high standard of referencing throughout. Very good bibliography.</p>	<p>A high standard of written English</p>
<p>Mark range 60-69% Pass 2(i) <i>Although not without flaws, dissertation is 'good' in most areas and strong in some.</i></p>	<p>All or most learning outcomes have been met to a good standard. Demonstrates a good understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.</p>	<p>Good standard of presentation: clear, mostly logical, though lacking the 'flair' of 1st class submission. Errors mostly of a minor nature, but some may be more substantive.</p>	<p>Some weaknesses in methodology or use of research tools, but good attempt at undertaking the research process. Competent use of quantitative/qualitative methods. Research tools of a good standard, though may lack sophistication. Satisfactory awareness of research ethics.</p>	<p>The student has submitted work which contains evidence of insight. Thought it may lack finesse, it is thorough, clear and shows an understanding of the subject context. Has addressed most or all aspects of the assignment.</p>	<p>Contains some good examples of critical analysis but limited originality/creativity in use of ideas, concepts, case studies etc. Although there may be some awareness of the limitations of research, awareness of reasons for these and their implications is variable.</p>	<p>The student draws on a good range of material but lacks the breadth of engagement with the secondary literature required to achieve a 1st class mark. Good use of evidence. Topics are mostly addressed but not always examined in sufficient detail.</p>	<p>A good standard of referencing, though some minor errors or inconsistencies may be present. Good bibliography, but lacking slightly in either breadth or depth.</p>	<p>A good standard of written English, with only minor errors present</p>
<p>Mark range 50-59% Pass 2(ii) <i>Dissertation is 'good' in some areas but only satisfactory in others. Modest intellectual engagement.</i></p>	<p>All or most learning outcomes have been met satisfactorily. Some have been met to a good standard. Demonstrates some understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues/standards.</p>	<p>A satisfactory standard achieved: mostly clear, some evidence of logical progression. Some minor inaccuracies.</p>	<p>Methodology approach is basically sound but under-developed and lacking in sophistication. Research tools employed are satisfactory but lack finesse. Data retrieved may be of limited, breadth veracity or reliability. Only a basic awareness of issues associated with us of qualitative/qualitative data.</p>	<p>Arguments are presented but lack contextualisation. Competent work, with evidence of engagement in the relevant issues, but little flair and only occasional insight. Gaps in knowledge and understanding.</p>	<p>Diligent execution. Conscientious and attentive to subject matter but balanced more towards a <u>descriptive</u> rather than a critical, analytical treatment. Awareness of the dissertation's limitations is demonstrated but at a basic level.</p>	<p>Satisfactory but relatively limited range of sources. Some assessment of evidence. Topics are mostly addressed but not always examined in sufficient detail. Some use of examples. Treatment of data or literature sound but underdeveloped.</p>	<p>Referencing satisfactory on the whole, though some inconsistencies or instances of poor/limited citation may be present. Satisfactory bibliography</p>	<p>A reasonable standard of written English, though a number of errors may be present, some of them of a more substantive nature.</p>

UEA SENATE SCALE: DISSERTATIONS

<p>Mark range 40-49% Pass 3rd <i>Dissertation is only 'satisfactory' in most areas and weak in some others.</i></p>	<p>Most learning outcomes have been met to a satisfactory level. Understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues/standards is barely adequate.</p>	<p>Poor standard of presentation. Some errors & inaccuracies may be of a more serious nature. Work has been rushed to completion.</p>	<p>Methodological approach is barely adequate and flawed in some areas. Research tool simplistic and under-developed. Data may be of very limited breadth or reliability. Very little awareness of issues associated with us of qualitative/qualitative data.</p>	<p>Arguments employed are poorly evidenced and/or flawed. Work shows some understanding of topic and relevant knowledge, but its treatment is basic. Grasp of key concepts is weak.</p>	<p>Narrow range of data and/or literature employed. Mostly limited to material provided in lectures/seminars. Little awareness of the dissertation's limitations or the implications of conclusions/recommendations.</p>	<p>Limited, modest range of sources. Little attempt to assess evidence. Examples are provided but are poorly chosen or employed. Lacking in sophistication or finesse. Limited level of engagement.</p>	<p>Citations present, but referencing is poor. Little attempt to follow guidance. Work is vulnerable to unwitting plagiarism. Bibliography barely adequate.</p>	<p>A barely satisfactory standard of written English; a number of serious errors present. Poorly structured and poor vocabulary and grammar.</p>
<p>Marks awarded in the range below indicate that the candidate has <u>failed</u> to achieve the standards required for a pass mark. It is recommended that students receiving marks in this range should meet with their advisor to review the factors that may have influenced the mark and ways in which their performance might be enhanced in subsequent assessments – this might include a discussion of the student's engagement, study skills development or need for additional learning support. A referral to the Dean of Students Office should be considered.</p>								
<p>Mark range 35-39% Marginal Fail <i>Dissertation is barely 'satisfactory' in a few areas and weak in most others.</i></p>	<p>Learning outcomes not met to a satisfactory standard. Understanding of link between theory and practice is insufficient for a Pass.</p>	<p>Unsatisfactory standard, lacking sufficient clarity, structure. Many serious errors.</p>	<p>Methodological approach is unsound and flawed in too many areas. Research tools under-developed and/or inadequate. Data of insufficient breadth or reliability. Awareness of issues associated with us of qualitative/qualitative data appears to be minimal or non-existent.</p>	<p>Contains some material of merit, but only a partial attempt to address the question. Fails to address research Qs fully. Few (and mostly unsuccessful) attempts to construct argument(s). Poor understanding of key issues or concepts.</p>	<p>The treatment is <u>mostly descriptive</u>. Whilst the work contains occasional evidence of criticality or analysis, it is too limited or partial or lacking in depth to justify a pass. Hardly any awareness of the dissertation's limitations is demonstrated.</p>	<p>A <u>very limited</u> range of sources. No real attempt to assess evidence. Examples are occasionally provided but are poorly chosen or irrelevant. Entirely lacking in sophistication or finesse. Very limited level of engagement.</p>	<p>Citations present but very limited. Referencing is very poor. Bibliography is either omitted, partial or poorly assembled. Guidance ignored. Work is <u>highly vulnerable</u> to unwitting plagiarism.</p>	<p>Unsatisfactory standard of written English; too many serious errors present. Weaknesses undermine clarity of meaning.</p>
<p>Mark range 20-34% Fail <i>Dissertation is weak in most areas.</i></p>	<p>One or two learning outcomes have been met in a limited way. Understanding of link between theory and practice is very weak.</p>	<p>Very poor standard of presentation. Many serious inaccuracies, typos, errors, and weaknesses in layout.</p>	<p>Work reflects a very poor understanding of what a 'methodology' is. Approach is unsound and flawed at a fundamental level. Research tools under-developed and/or inadequate. Data minimal.</p>	<p>Little material of merit or relevance, revealing a paucity of understanding of key issues or concepts. Work lacks any sustained argument(s).</p>	<p>The treatment is <u>almost wholly descriptive</u>. Contains little evidence of a critical or analytical engagement in the topic. No awareness of the dissertation's limitations.</p>	<p>Draws on <u>minimal</u> range of sources. Simply paraphrasing bits of lecture notes or easily accessible web sources. No attempt to assess evidence. Minimal engagement.</p>	<p>Citation almost or entirely absent. Guidance ignored. Bibliography omitted or very poorly assembled. Witting/unwitting plagiarism.</p>	<p>A very poor standard of written English. All of the flaws mentioned above, but of an even more serious nature.</p>
<p>Mark range 10-19% Fail <i>Dissertation is very weak in most areas.</i></p>	<p>The work submitted will have very limited relevance to any of the stated learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Little evidence that any thought has been given to presentation. Many serious errors/typos</p>	<p>Little understanding of 'methodology' is apparent. Approach is entirely unsound and seriously flawed at a fundamental level. Tools and data unreliable/unsound.</p>	<p>No arguments present. No material of merit or relevance, revealing a complete lack of understanding of key issues or concepts.</p>	<p>The treatment is <u>wholly descriptive</u>. No evidence of a critical or analytical engagement in the topic. No awareness of the dissertation's limitations.</p>	<p>Almost complete absence of evidence. Submission reflects a very limited level of engagement in study on a more general level.</p>	<p>Citation(s) largely absent. Witting/unwitting plagiarism likely to be present. No awareness of good academic practice.</p>	<p>A very poor standard of written English. Often incomprehensible</p>
<p>Mark range 0-9% Fail <i>Dissertation is very weak in all areas.</i></p>	<p>No learning outcomes have been met.</p>	<p>No evidence that <u>any</u> thought has been given to presentation.</p>	<p>Nothing that might be described as a 'methodology' is apparent. Total absence of proper research tools or usable data.</p>	<p>No understanding is demonstrated. Arguments notable for their complete absence.</p>	<p>The treatment is <u>wholly descriptive</u>. No awareness of the dissertation's limitations.</p>	<p>Evidence absent Submission reflects a very limited level of engagement in study on a more general level.</p>	<p>Citation entirely absent.</p>	<p>Entirely or mostly incomprehensible</p>

UEA SENATE SCALE: DISSERTATIONS

UEA SENATE SCALE: ORAL PRESENTATION

Classification	Learning outcomes	Presentation	Projection, language and spoken English	Argument & understanding	Organisation & structure	Criticality & analysis	Use of sources and evidence
Mark range 85-100% Pass High 1 st	All learning outcomes met to an exemplary standard. Demonstrates an exemplary understanding of link between theory and practice..	Exemplary: clear, logical, imaginative, creative and original. Almost flawless. Very high level of choreography. Almost flawless in delivery. Encouraged group participation and discussion and responded to questions with considerable flair and authority. Exemplary use of visual aids. Time management exemplary.	Very high standard of spoken English and diverse vocabulary. Excellent use of disciplinary-specific terminology and language. Exemplary voice projection/eye contact/body language.	Highly effective arguments; impressive level of understanding. Key points are rigorously argued and convincingly presented, with appropriate and critical use of supporting evidence.	Structure clear; logical progression. Very well organised presentation with a razor-sharp focus and sense of purpose.	Demonstrates a very high standard of criticality. Exemplary in its analysis of ideas, concepts & theory. Where appropriate, the latter are 'applied' in a sophisticated manner.	Exemplary use of case studies/evidence. Impressive command of data/literature. Draws on very broad range of material. Examines the topic in considerable detail. Strong academic underpinnings.
Mark range 70-84% Pass Low 1 st	All learning outcomes fully met to a high standard. Demonstrates a strong understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.	A high standard achieved: clear, logical, few errors. The delivery - whilst not exemplary - is lively, with good use of visual aids (if appropriate) and some evidence of practice and choreography. Encouraged group participation and discussion and responded well to questions. Very good use of visual aids. Time management very good.	A high standard of spoken English. Good breadth of vocabulary. Very good use of disciplinary-specific terminology. Good voice projection and eye contact/use of body language.	Coherent and effective argument(s) are presented. Demonstrates a high level of understanding of the topic and associated issues/debates.	Structure clear and well-suited to topic. Whilst not entirely without flaws, there is evidence of careful planning and attention to detail. Logical progression.	Work demonstrates a high standard of critical analysis and/or originality and creativity. Employs ideas, concepts, theory to good effect.	Work demonstrates a good command of data or literature, drawing on a broad range of material and/or examining the topic in some detail.
Mark range 60-69% Pass 2(i)	All learning outcomes have been met to a good standard. Demonstrates a good understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.	A good standard of presentation: clear, mostly logical, and errors are mostly minor. Whilst lacking some finesse, the presentation is clear and lively. Makes appropriate use of visual aids. Time management good. Makes some attempt to engage the audience and responds well to questions.	A good standard of spoken English and vocabulary. Good use of disciplinary terminology and language. Voice projection and eye contact/body language are better than average, though some room for improvement.	Most points are illustrated with relevant examples, though the latter may not always contribute convincingly to the argument(s) made. Evidence of insight and an understanding of the subject context.	Structure generally clear and there is logical progression. Whilst the presentation shows evidence of care in its planning, needs more careful 'honing', and clearer focus.	The work contains some good examples of critical analysis and but limited originality and creativity in use of ideas, concepts, case studies etc.	Draws on good range of material but lacks the breadth of engagement with the secondary literature required to achieve 1 st class mark. Good use of evidence. Issues mostly addressed but not always examined in sufficient detail.
Mark range 50-59% Pass 2(ii)	All learning outcomes have been met satisfactorily. Some have been met to a good standard. Demonstrates some understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.	A satisfactory standard achieved: mostly clear, some evidence of logical progression. 'Workmanlike'; lacks dynamism or creativity/imagination; rather 'stagey' in its delivery. More or less to time, though some parts may have been slightly 'rushed' or even omitted. Makes some attempt to engage the audience, though responses to questions of limited sophistication or authoritative nature.	Satisfactory standard of spoken English & vocabulary. Some discipline-specific terminology and language are used, mostly accurately. Voice projection/eye contact/body language are no more than satisfactory.	Competent work, with evidence of engagement in the relevant issues, but little flair and only occasional insight. Gaps in understanding and knowledge; may not have addressed all aspects of the assignment.	Generally accurate and relevant but some gaps and or irrelevant material. Not always clear or logical.	Conscientious work and attentive to subject matter and/or task set, but balanced more towards a <u>descriptive</u> rather than a critical, analytical treatment. Some illustrative material, but not consistently critically evaluated.	Relatively limited range of sources. Some assessment of evidence. Topics are mostly addressed but not always examined in detail. Some use of examples. Treatment of data or literature is basically sound but narrow.
Mark range 40-49% Pass 3 rd	Most learning outcomes have been met to a satisfactory level. Understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-	Barely satisfactory standard of presentation. Some errors of more serious nature. Not always easy to follow. Unimaginative and un-engaging. Lacks dynamism or flair – conveys meaning, but is sometimes unclear, muddled or clumsy. Little evidence of	Standard of spoken English and vocabulary is only just adequate for a pass. Use of disciplinary-specific terminology and language lacks precision and may be flawed.	Work shows some understanding of the topic and some relevant knowledge, but its treatment is very basic, unimaginative, superficial and the	Material fairly disorganised with poor sense of 'mission' or key points the student wished to convey.	Narrow range of data and/or literature employed. A fairly superficial level of interpretation and generally derivative and lacking criticality in its	Draws on a narrow range of sources. Mostly limited to material in lectures/seminars. Little attempt to assess evidence. Examples are provided but are poorly

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	related issues and/or standards is barely adequate.	'practise' prior to delivery. Uncomfortable responding to questions and little attempt at engaging audience. Poor time management: slightly under/over time.	Use of voice projection and eye contact/use of body language are poor - considerable scope for improvement.	student's grasp of key concepts is quite weak. Arguments employed are poorly evidenced and/or contain flaws.		use of evidence and/or sources.	chosen/employed. Limited level of engagement in wider reading.
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Marks awarded in the range below indicate that the candidate has failed to achieve the standards required for a pass mark. It is recommended that students receiving marks in this range should meet with their advisor to review the factors that may have influenced the mark and ways in which their performance might be enhanced in subsequent assessments – this might include a discussion of the student's engagement, study skills development or need for additional learning support. A referral to the Dean of Students Office should be considered.

Mark range 35-39% Marginal Fail	Insufficient demonstration of learning outcomes to justify a pass grade. Understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards is not sufficient for a Pass.	Unsatisfactory standard: lacks clarity, and logical progression, with serious errors/inaccuracies. Delivery is clumsy, or muddled or even incomprehensible. Unimaginative and un-engaging. Very little evidence of 'practise' prior to delivery. Fails to respond adequately to questions. No attempt to engage audience. Poor time management, - significantly under/over time.	Standard of spoken English and vocabulary falls below the standard required for a pass. Use of disciplinary-specific terminology and language is inaccurate. Voice projection and use of body language are poor.	Contains some material of merit, but only a partial attempt to address question/topic. Few attempts to construct argument(s). Poor understanding of key issues or concepts.	Structurally weak, muddled, lacking incoherence. Little sense of focus or sense of 'mission'.	The treatment is <u>mostly descriptive</u> . Whilst the work contains some evidence of criticality or analysis, it is too limited or partial or lacking in depth to justify a pass.	Draws on <u>very limited</u> range of sources. No real attempt to assess evidence. Examples occasionally provided but poorly chosen/employed. Very limited engagement in wider reading and little understanding of how to select and use evidence.
Mark range 20-34% Fail	One or two learning outcomes have been met in a limited way. Understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards is considerably below that required for a pass.	Very poor standard of presentation, lacking sufficient clarity, and a sufficiently logical progression, with many serious inaccuracies. Little attempt at time management, with no evidence (that is apparent) of rehearsal or practice. Little awareness is demonstrated of the 'purpose' of the oral presentation and the techniques required in delivering it.	Standard of spoken English and vocabulary is very poor. Use of disciplinary-specific terminology and language is inaccurate. No awareness of voice projection and body language.	Little material of merit or relevance, revealing a paucity of understanding of key issues or concepts. Fails to address most aspects of the task or question set. Work lacks any sustained argument(s).	Disorganised and incoherent. No obvious or apparent focus or sense of 'mission'.	The treatment is <u>almost wholly descriptive</u> . Contains little evidence of a critical or analytical engagement in the topic.	Draws on <u>minimal</u> range of sources. Rarely goes beyond paraphrasing bits of lecture notes etc. No attempt to assess evidence. Examples rarely provided & very poorly employed. Submission reflects a <u>very limited engagement</u> in study.
Mark range 10-19% Fail	The work submitted will have very limited relevance to any of the stated learning outcomes. Understanding of link between theory and practice is very weak.	Little evidence of care or serious thought being given to the standard of presentation. Many serious errors/inaccuracies.	Spoken English and vocabulary cause for major concern: may require remedial intervention. Use of discipline-specific terms and language suggests <u>major deficiencies</u> in reading/ knowledge.	No material of merit or relevance, revealing a complete lack of understanding of key issues or concepts. Fails to address all aspects of the task or question set. No attempt to construct argument(s).	Totally disorganised and incoherent. No obvious or apparent focus or sense of 'mission'.	The treatment is <u>wholly descriptive</u> . No evidence of a critical or analytical engagement in the topic.	Almost complete absence of evidence. Submission reflects a <u>very limited level of engagement</u> in study on a more general level.
Mark range 0-9% Fail	Lacks any understanding of learning outcomes. No understanding of link between theory and practice and practice-related issues and/or standards.	No evidence that <u>anything</u> other than perfunctory thought (a few minutes at best) has been given to the presentational aspects of the exercise. Quite clear that the presentation has not been informed, in any meaningful way, by any of the guidance provided.	Standard of spoken English totally inadequate for an oral exercise at HE level. Remedial intervention essential. Hardly any knowledge demonstrated.	Understanding and/or arguments either entirely absent or barely discernible.	Difficult to discern any organisation or structure.	The treatment is <u>wholly descriptive</u>	Evidence absent. Submission reflects a <u>very limited level of engagement</u> in study on a more general level.

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