Title:	**Taught Programmes Policy Group (2-3)**
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Report from the Academic Director of Taught Programmes to LTC, 25 July 2012

1) Rounding-up of marks for PGT programmes

LTC colleagues will remember that one of the precepts of the New Academic Model for UG programmes is that:
- Item (assessment) and module marks will be rounded up and recorded as <u>integers</u> (whole numbers).
- Stage marks and final classification marks will be rounded-up to <u>one decimal place</u> (e.g. 67.3).

In May LTC endorsed and approved the key elements of the NAM for PGT programmes but also agreed that there should be a delay in introducing the PGT NAM until 2014/15. There were a number of reasons for this delay which will not be rehearsed again here. However, several PGT colleagues have indicated that the principal of 'rounding-up' is one that they would like to see introduced in PGT programmes in 2013/14, alongside UG programmes.

As ADTP I am an agnostic on this issue and have no strong view either way. I can see that there are advantages of killing two birds with one stone and achieving consistency between UG and PGT programmes in the same year, but there will be resource implications of shifting to a rounding-up policy for PGT earlier than planned – e.g. development work on SITS etc may need to be brought forward.

My question to LTC is:
Do members feel that the advantages of bringing-forward 'rounding-up' of marks on PGT programmes are sufficiently great to justify the investment of time/energy in ensuring that out information systems are amended accordingly?

I was not involved in the original discussions around the rationale for 'rounding-up', but it seems to me that there are three main advantages to doing so:

i)   It removes some of the complexity from current data provided to Exam Boards.
ii)   It ensures that student with aggregate module marks of 59.5 or 69.5 would automatically be rounded up to higher classification band (60 and 70% respectively), thus assisting in the University's strategy to address its 'Good Honours' statistics.
iii)   It acknowledges and addresses something that is, bit very nature, problematic: namely, calculating something to two decimal places which is not, in itself, a sufficiently precise or robust process to justify this level of detail or precision. How many markers could really put hand on heart and say with, absolute certainty (or even a high level of confidence), that a student with an aggregate module mark of 59.8% was definitely only worthy of a 2(ii) grade? Is the marking process really that scientific, that robust and that precise? By

rounding-up we are, effectively, acknowledging that the marking process cannot be this precise and that it is therefore only fair to round-up marks accordingly.

Implications we need to consider:

1) Since we are not requiring 'pass all modules' on PGT, there is less work than might have been involved if this had been required. Planning Office will still need to be consulted to ensure that they can make the necessary changes to SITS, and the SITS project team will also need to consider the implications for the work on the UG NAM. The latter has to be a priority. If there is a strong steer against doing so, this will have to be factored in to our decision. At present it seems likely that we would need to change every M level module on SITS to accommodate integers for module and item marks, and one decimal place for Stage marks.
2) Regulations – the common master's Framework currently requires calculations to two decimal places. The Regs would need to be revised accordingly.
3) There is a possibility that efficiencies might be gained by introducing the new module conventions (coding) at the same time as changes in the mark scheme.

2) UEA Teaching Excellence Website

The ADTP set in motion in Sept 2011 the development of a new website which would provide an online focal point for best practice in teaching and learning at UEA which would be of value to staff, students and others outside the institution. This will eventually form part of the LTS website. A small steering group has been leading on the development of the website. It is hoped that the site, which is still under development, will go 'live' in autumn 2012. In the interim, if colleagues would like to share aspects of their practice with a wider audience via the website (whether this relates to innovative teaching materials, assessment strategies, peer-learning, supervision practice, feedback strategies, use of ITC in supporting learning etc) please send ideas/materials in electronic format to Andy Mee in ISD: A.Mee@uea.ac.uk It is hoped to 'demonstrate' the site to LTC at its first meeting of the 2012/13 session.

3) Peer-assisted Learning at UEA

TPPG, LTC, Employability Exec and ET-R have endorsed proposals for an ambitious PAL initiative at UEA starting in 2012/13. The roll-out of PAL across the University will be as follows:
> *PHASE ONE*:   A 6 school pilot (2012/13, spring semester) – more schools can be included in the pilot if there is demand.
> *PHASE TWO*:   12 schools (2013/14, autumn semester)
> *PHASE THREE:* 6 schools (2014/15, autumn semester)

Over £200,000 will be invested in PAL through the funding of a series of PAL Fellowships which will be funded through the four Faculties. There will be new posts created centrally to support the initiative:
- A 0.5 fte administrator in LTS dedicated to PAL
- A 0.5 fte academic champion (senior lecturer?) who will support the role-out and promotion of PAL and provide dynamic academic leadership for it within the institution.

More information will be circulated to Schools during late July 2012 with a detailed indication of 'next steps'. ADs and Faculty LTQCs may wish to take a lead in deciding which Schools they would like to see involved in the pilots, as well as those following-up in the wider roll-out in autumn 2013 and autumn 2014.

4) A 'thank you' to colleagues.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the members of TPPG who have provided such a valuable wealth of advice, guidance and encouragement whilst also occasionally sounding a note of caution when necessary. As incoming ADTP I have enjoyed our meetings and have valued them enormously. The detailed, extensive and robust discussions and scrutiny of policy developments that has taken place in TPPG has contributed greatly to ensuring that proposals to LTC have been properly scrutinised. I would also like to thank members of LTC who have quite rightly subjected proposals to robust scrutiny, debate and discussion whilst also providing constructive feedback.