

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

*This Code of Practice is approved by the Academic and Student Affairs Committee.
Last updated: July 2015*

Introduction

This Code sets out general School practices for all taught graduate programmes. It sets out basic reciprocal obligations and responsibilities of staff and students. It should be read in conjunction with all other School policies, regulations, codes of practice and procedures as set out in the School's on-line Calendar. The expectation is that all programmes will meet the standards set out in the paragraphs below. This Code informs students of what they may reasonably expect and informs departments of what they are expected, at a minimum, to provide. Each department will publish a detailed statement of its provision under this Code, in its departmental handbook and on its website. These statements will provide a basis for monitoring the academic activity of departments through the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and its internal reviews of teaching.

Academic Advice

- 1.1 On joining the School each student is allocated a member of the academic staff in his or her department as an academic adviser.
- 1.2 Each department sets out in the relevant handbook its own detailed guidelines regarding the arrangements for supervision and the role of the academic adviser. Among the adviser's responsibilities are:
 - To provide academic guidance and feedback on students' progress and performance and to discuss any academic problems they might experience.
 - To provide pastoral support on non-academic issues and to refer students, as necessary, to the appropriate support agencies within the School.
 - To implement the provisions outlined in Inclusion Plans for students with disabilities, in liaison with the School's Disability and Wellbeing Service.
 - To maintain regular contact with students on academic and pastoral issues through direct one-to-one meetings and other means of communication, such as emails. The number and nature of meetings may vary between departments and programmes as detailed in the relevant handbook.
 - To comment on and provide a general assessment of students' progress on their termly class reports via LSEforYou. To agree students' course choices via LSEforYou.
 - To inform the Programme Director and School of any students whose progress is not satisfactory.
- 1.3 Each adviser must have a good working knowledge of the structure and regulations of degree programmes in the department.
- 1.4 Each adviser must have a good working knowledge of the various academic and pastoral support services within the School.
- 1.5 Each adviser must publicise regular periods of time when they are available to meet with their students.
- 1.6 If the relationship between an adviser and student is unsatisfactory, the department must have in place an appropriate process for arranging a change of adviser.
- 1.7 Programme Directors' responsibilities include:
 - Authorising, where appropriate, a student's request for course choice outside the degree regulations;
 - Authorising, where appropriate, a student's request for a degree transfer.

Teaching

- 2.1 The detailed requirements of each programme and course are provided in the on-line *Calendar*, in the relevant handbook and on departmental web pages. Students are obliged to complete all course requirements as specified in their degree regulations.
- 2.2 Teaching at the postgraduate level will be a combination of lectures and seminars. The teaching method used will largely be determined by the size of the programme and the nature of the subject covered in a particular paper/course.
- 2.3 Lectures are an important part of the teaching and learning experience. The structure and content of each course are set out in the on-line Course Guide. Lecturers must ensure that their teaching is consistent with this information.

- 2.4 Lecturers are responsible for organising the seminar programmes for their courses, for liaising with seminar teachers to ensure that seminars are properly coordinated with their lectures, and for submitting course reading lists to the Library in good time for required books to be purchased.
- 2.5 Seminars are the core of teaching and learning experience at the graduate level. The nature and format of seminars may vary depending on the subject material of the course and will be detailed in the course syllabus. Seminar sizes should not normally exceed 15 students.
- 2.6 Seminars will normally give students the opportunity to participate in a discussion of material relevant to the course. The nature and format of these discussions will vary according to the subject matter of the course.
- 2.7 Lectures and seminars start at five minutes past the hour and end at five minutes to the hour. Staff and students should make every effort to start and finish on time.
- 2.8 Formative coursework is an essential part of the teaching and learning experience at the School. It should be introduced at an early stage of a course and normally before the submission of assessed coursework. Students will normally be given the opportunity to produce essays, problem sets or other forms of written work. The number of these pieces of work for each course will be detailed in the on-line Course Guide.
- 2.9 Individual departmental Assessment and Feedback Statements are the definitive source of information about departmental feedback practices. The practices set out in departmental statements are underpinned by the School-level feedback rules at paragraphs 2.10 and 2.11, below. These rules are de facto minimum feedback requirements. Departmental practices will be at or above this minimum threshold.
- 2.10 Feedback on coursework is an essential part of the teaching and learning experience at the School. Seminar teachers must mark **formative** coursework and return it with feedback to students normally within two weeks of submission (when the work is submitted on time). Seminar teachers must record the marks, or the failure to submit coursework, regularly via LSEforYou. Students will also receive feedback on any **summative** coursework they are required to submit as part of the assessment for individual courses (except on the final version of submitted dissertations). They will normally receive this feedback before the examination period. Individual departments will determine the format of feedback on summative coursework, but it will not include the final mark for the piece.
- 2.11 Some programmes require students to submit dissertations. Students will receive preliminary feedback on a draft chapter, section or detailed plan of their dissertations that they submit in good time prior to the final submission deadline. Individual departmental handbooks will set out the details of the dissertation process, including the deadline by which draft chapters, sections or detailed plans must be submitted to be eligible for feedback. A mark will not be included in this feedback.
- 2.12 Seminar teachers must record student attendance on a weekly basis via LSEforYou.
- 2.13 Seminar reports are an integral part of the School's monitoring system on the academic progress of its students. Seminar teachers must complete, via LSEforYou, full and accurate reports, including a general assessment of each student's progress, at the end of the Michaelmas and Lent Terms.
- 2.14 All full-time members of staff and part-time and occasional teachers must have regular weekly office hours during term time when they are available to students to discuss issues relating to the courses they are teaching. These hours should be displayed outside their offices.

Responsibilities of the Student

- 3.1 Students are required to attend the School for the full duration of each term. Students who wish to be away for good reason in term time must first obtain the consent of their academic adviser. Students away through illness must inform their adviser and seminar chairs and, where the absence is for more than a fortnight, the Student Services Centre.
- 3.2 Students with disabilities which might impact on their studies should contact an Adviser in the Disability and Wellbeing Service in good time to negotiate reasonable adjustments. These will be set out in an Inclusion Plan. Students must also agree to the extent to which this information will be shared within the School. If the School is not informed about a disability in good time, it may not be able to make the appropriate reasonable adjustments.
- 3.3 Students must maintain regular contact with their academic adviser to discuss relevant academic and pastoral care issues affecting their course of study. These should include:
 - Guidance at the start of the session regarding course choice
 - Discussion of academic progress
 - Assistance, advice and guidance on the long essay/project/dissertation
- 3.4 These discussions should take place through direct one-to-one meetings and other means of communication, such as emails. The number and nature of meetings may vary between departments and programmes as detailed in the relevant handbook. Students should be able to meet their adviser within the first week of term time, i.e. either during regular office hours or at a mutually convenient time.

- 3.5 **Attendance at seminars** is compulsory and is recorded on LSEforYou. Any student who is absent on two consecutive occasions or is regularly absent without good reason will be automatically reported to their academic adviser.
- 3.6 Students must submit all required coursework on time, whether it is summative coursework (i.e. work that counts towards the final mark) or formative work (that does not count towards the final mark). In submitting coursework, students must abide with the School's policy on plagiarism as set out in the School's Assessment Offences Regulations: Plagiarism and the Statement on Editorial Help.
- 3.7 Students should ensure the accuracy of the information regarding their programme of study, including their optional papers. All changes in course choices must be communicated to the Student Services Centre. Failure to report changes will result in a student being required to take the examination in the course for which he or she was originally registered.
- 3.8 Students must communicate changes of term time and home addresses to the Student Services Centre via LSEforYou as soon as they occur.
- 3.9 As well as the likelihood of taking action through the Courts, the School may impose relevant penalties for any outstanding debt that students fail to clear by any specified deadlines. For example, the School will normally withhold a student's academic transcript and/or certificate if s/he failed to pay his/her academic fees.
- 3.10 Students who decide to interrupt their studies or withdraw from the School must inform their academic adviser, the Programme Director and the Student Services Centre in writing. Failure to inform the School could result in a demand for fee payments for the full session.

Examination and Assessment

- 4.1 All Departments must publish assessment criteria. 'Statements of assessment criteria' are verbal descriptors of what a department expects from students, which distinguish between different grades. Where expectations are similar across different forms of assessment (e.g. course essays, dissertations, exams) it may be sufficient to have a single set of criteria; where expectations are very different for different pieces of work, then different sets of criteria may be necessary. Within each programme, the Chair of the Sub-Board of Examiners is responsible for ensuring the publication of assessment criteria in-line with this requirement.
- 4.2 Students must complete all elements of assessed work for each course. Methods of examination and assessment for each course are set out in the on-line Course Guide. In submitting course work, students must abide with the School's policy on plagiarism as set out in the School's Assessment Offences Regulations: Plagiarism and the Statement on Editorial Help.
- 4.3 Students must be given clear advance warning of any new or approved changes to examination format. When the content of a course changes to the extent that previous examination papers may not be a reliable guide to future papers, lecturers should warn students and should produce sample questions for the new parts of the course. When the course is new and, there are no previous papers, a full sample paper should be produced.
- 4.4 Any student who requires individual examination adjustments must contact an Adviser in the Disability and Wellbeing Service so that reasonable adjustments can be recommended. Applications for individual arrangements should normally be made no later than 7 weeks before the date of the student's first examination.
- 4.5 Any exceptional (mitigating) circumstances in the period preceding or during the examinations that may affect a student's attendance at, or performance in, examinations must be communicated in writing to the Student Services Centre with all relevant supporting documentation, such as medical certificates, not later than 7 days after her/his last exam.

Notes For the purposes of this Code, the term 'department' comprises both departments and institutes.

See the [Calendar](#) for further information about Programme Regulations, Course Guides, School and academic Regulations.