

**Consultation on the Draft Policy on
Submission of Work for Summative Assessment on Taught Programmes**

Summary of Comments

General Comments

- There are many things about this policy that suggest that it is based on the assumption that summatively assessed work takes the form of prose, that standard/reliable/fast techniques exist to detect academic malpractice, and that the frequency/granularity of submission is such that cost of prosecuting malpractice is manageable on a per-submission basis (i.e. that submissions are substantial but infrequent). None of these assumptions are necessarily true in some Schools (particularly Computer Science). How students understand particular subject areas is achieved through the assessment of a large number of small, related, well defined exercises where the students submit source-code and not prose.
- We foresee conflict between the proposed policy and our approach to T&L in 3 areas:
 - (i) Neither of the options for penalising late work provide incentive for students who've struggled with early concepts to complete essential exercises in terms of learning outcomes for later work; since the exercises have to be completed in order, attempts to submit late work inevitably impact on future work, increasing the likelihood of further late submission
 - (ii) Neither option provides any way for a student to recover from an 'unpassable' state.
 - (iii) The proposal assumes there are suitable automated plagiarism detection mechanisms available that can be applied across all exercises. There is no one-size-fits all solution to plagiarism/collusion; each of the taught programming languages & paradigms need bespoke approaches.
- There isn't a need for a University policy on penalties for late work beyond stating that they must be made clear in School's Programme Handbooks and the course unit descriptions as it is a School decision.
- There is a concern with this at PGT & PGR level in terms of what protection the University gives to students IPR on essays, projects etc, as it is understood that the default position is to add any student submission to a collection of documents that Turnitin collects.
- Can Blackboard make the assessment anonymous, as at the moment it is not anonymous.

Comments on Section 3

- Section 3.1 - the policy refers to coursework submitted for summative assessment, i.e. work such as essays, project reports, portfolios and dissertations that contribute to a final mark. The use of "i.e." suggests that 'coursework submitted for summative assessment' is primarily prose which is not the case in EPS Schools as there is a variety of assessed submissions.
- Clarification is required on what is meant by the 'final mark' is it the final mark for the unit or the final degree award mark? For example, in some Schools the first year does not count at UG so does the policy not apply to first year units?

Comments on Section 4

- Section 4.3 - makes it clear that the School can adopt method a) or b) for different components and years, whereas 4.8 seems to imply that the School should adopt a) or b) for taught students. Does this suggest that Schools have to do the same for all?
- Section 4.4 – asking for the policy to be publicised prior to every submission is not practical. Schools should publicise the policy in the Programme Handbooks and communicate it clearly e.g. via statements on Blackboard and/or as part of a coursework brief pro-forma, it shouldn't need to be publicised again at submission.

- Section 4.4 – American spelling has been used.
- Section 4.5 – clarification is required. It specifies deadlines should be published for the submission of ‘major’ pieces of work ‘well in advance’, what constitutes ‘major’ and ‘well in advance’? Suggest it should be ‘deadlines are published for all assessed coursework and at the beginning of every semester’.
- Section 4.9 – clarification required as it seems to imply that the Board of Examiners could apply a deduction that is greater than might be suggested by the late submission policy. Perhaps it should be that if the mark for the late work is below the pass mark after the School's late submission procedure has been applied then the exam board could decide to award a capped mark if it would have achieved a pass mark before the late submission penalty was applied.
- Section 4.10 - all written assessed coursework, including dissertations, must be submitted online and subjected to plagiarism detection software. This assumes appropriate software is available or that there are various systems that could potentially be used for plagiarism/collusion detection for the wide range of outputs that are in place for assessed work.
- Section 4.10 – not all written work is typed, therefore submitting this online would not be suitable for being subject to plagiarism software.
- Section 4.10 - we would like to have some discretion regarding the submission of coursework that is only a small part of the unit. For instance, we might state something along the lines of "All written assessed coursework worth more than 1 credit, including dissertations, must be submitted online and subjected to plagiarism detection software". For instance, some of our laboratory exercises involve the completion of written tasks, on paper, during the practical session. As the students are working in groups at a single workstation it is impractical for them to each write their responses electronically and, in any case they are collaborating in obtaining the results and this will lead to inevitable and justified "similarities". Subsequent scanning of the documents and online submission is, in our opinion, an unnecessary and inefficient extra step for such pieces of coursework.
- Section 4.12 – this clause also lends itself to ‘forcing’ staff to mark online and there is some resistance to this amongst staff.
- Section 4.12 – clarification required or needs re-wording as it either does not make clear that alternative arrangements would be **in addition** to online submission or it contradicts the requirement for online submission
- Section 4.12 – Schools currently expect students to meet the cost of submitting written copies of Year 3 (and 4?) project reports and for MSc dissertations. Printer credits for dissertations would be a considerable financial cost to Schools.
- Section 4.15 – why is it the School’s responsibility to develop a ‘back-up system’, should this not be IT Services’ responsibility? In the current e-Assessment Guidance and Procedures document, paragraph 14, it states that this is the responsibility of IT support

Review of Summative Assessment Draft Policy - Comments from EPS Schools					
School	Comment 1	Comment 2	Comment 3	Comment 4	Comment 5
Computer Science	<p>There are many things about this policy that suggest that it is based on the assumption that summatively assessed work takes the form of prose, that standard/reliable/fast techniques exist to detect academic malpractice, and that the frequency/granularity of submission is such that cost of prosecuting malpractice is manageable on a per-submission basis (i.e. that submissions are substantial but infrequent). None of these assumptions are true in the case of the School of Computer Science. Mastery of the skills and concepts involved in programming is perhaps the defining characteristic of a Computer Scientist, consequently a considerable portion of our syllabus is dedicated to developing knowledge in this area. In the 1st year we run a compulsory 30 credit Course Unit dedicated to programming, with a subsequent compulsory 20 credit Course Unit in the second year. The nature of learning to program requires students to progress in a more-or-less linear way grasping a long sequence of learning outcomes each of which builds upon the previous ones, and many of which are threshold concepts. This is currently achieved through the assessment of a large number of small, related, well defined exercises where the students submit source-code and not prose</p>	<p>We foresee conflict between the proposed policy and our approach to T&L in 3 areas • Neither of the options for penalising late work provide incentive for students who've struggled with early concepts to complete essential exercises in terms of learning outcomes for later work; since the exercises have to be completed in order, attempts to submit late work inevitably impact on future work, increasing the likelihood of further late submission • Neither option provides any for a student to recover from an 'unpassable' state • The proposal assumes there are suitable automated plagiarism detection mechanisms available that can be applied across all exercises. For us there is no 1-size-fits all solution to plagiarism/collusion; each of the taught programming languages & paradigms need bespoke approaches. Whereas Turnitin can detect & quantify malpractice in the essay "Genetic Mutations Implicated in Breast Cancer" as well as it can on "Unexpected Benefits of the Great Fire of London", detecting plagiarism in computer program source code is a much more heterogeneous, complex & costly process, one which we can currently only resource by sampling. Translating University guidance on malpractice in prose into malpractice in code is very difficult since concepts such as "A single instance of the copying or close paraphrasing of 2 or 3 sentences of perhaps no more than 50 words in total" [1] have no equivalent meaning. It is also common practice to set exercises where students modify a given program. In such an event there are sure to be significant & innocent overlaps in submissions. Points 1 & 2 have serious implications for student progression; point 3 for staff loads & student satisfaction</p>	<p>3.1 This policy refers to coursework submitted for summative assessment, i.e. work such as essays, project reports, portfolios and dissertations that contributes to a final mark. The use of "i.e." suggests that 'coursework submitted for summative assessment' is primarily prose. In the case of Computer Science, very little of our summatively assessed work is of this nature. If the policy applies only to prose-based work then the rest of our concerns largely disappear. The bulk of our summatively assessed work is in the form of source code, i.e. the form a computer program takes when created by a human and before it is translated into the form executable by a machine. Other submissions include diagrams or solutions to mathematical problems (which are often much easier to write on paper than they are to format for electronic submission). For a typical CS degree programme, a student would be expected to submit many 10s of non-prose assignments, and perhaps only 3 or 4 prose assignments</p>	<p>For example, at masters level we currently run Turnitin on two reports related to projects. However, our masters programmes involve around 25 units, each of which may have up to 5 assessed submissions that are diverse in their nature. Scrutinising Turnitin reports on this volume of submissions is likely to lead to an intimidating overhead, which could encourage staff to reduce the number of assessed submissions. Thus the policy could easily change assessment practice in ways that reduce the amount and timeliness of feedback obtained by students. 4.8 For taught students Schools may choose between method (a) zero tolerance or and method (b) a sliding scale of penalties. The policy we have operated for several years for UG programmes within the School is that pieces of late work are marked and the student gains credit for it up to a limit of a pass mark for the total coursework on the unit. Once that pass mark is achieved, further late work is not counted. This policy permits students who have fallen behind to recover enough to pass the course unit and make progression, while still penalising late submitted work</p>	<p>4.10 All written assessed coursework, including dissertations, must be submitted online and subjected to plagiarism detection software. This assumes appropriate software is available; in our case it is not clear that this is true, or that the various systems that could potentially be used for plagiarism/collusion detection in source code can be applied consistently across different programming languages, or that their outputs can reasonably be aligned with the University policies on plagiarism for prose. The granularity/frequency of our submissions would make monitoring the output for all exercises a massive task. If 'written assessed coursework' does not include source code, this concern goes away</p>
SEAES	<p>We do not see any need for a university policy on penalties for late work beyond stating that they must be made clear in handbooks and course unit descriptions (e.g. "late submission of work in this unit will be penalised according to the policies of the school of..., namely [e.g.] z% per day late.)</p>		<p>"A key concern here, particularly at PGT & PGR level (the latter of which I am following up separately to this) is what protection the University gives to students IPR on essays, projects etc – particularly as I understand the default position is to add any student submission to a world-wide collection of documents that Turnitin collects."</p>	<p>"I think it is ridiculous to expect that students can't print out their short written assignments and turn them in. I guess this rule can be met by providing free access to printers in the School?"</p>	<p>"Some of our practicals have large format elements (ie figures, maps) that can't be submitted on turnitin. I guess this falls in a grey area?"</p>
Materials	<p>3.1 – policy relates to all coursework that contributes to a 'final mark' – need clarification i.e. is this the final mark for the unit or the final degree award mark? E.g. in our School first year does not count at UG so does the policy not apply to first year units?</p>	<p>4.4 – asking for the policy to be publicised prior to every submission is not very practical. If it is publicised in the Programme Handbooks and communicated clearly e.g. via statements on Blackboard and/or as part of a coursework brief pro-forma, it should need to be publicised again at submission. Also on this point, American spelling has been used</p>	<p>4.5 – specifies deadlines should be published for the submission of 'major' pieces of work 'well in advance' – this should be specified i.e. what constitutes 'major' and 'well in advance'? Suggest it should be all assessed coursework and at the beginning of every semester</p>	<p>4.10 – for all written work to be subjected to plagiarism software – uncomfortable with this as there is a lot of room for manoeuvre/manipulation by staff and students. Not all written work is typed and therefore it may not be suitable for being subject to plagiarism software</p>	<p>4.12 – the School is very concerned about this clause. Students in our school are required to submit a vastly wide range of outputs for coursework including for example: garments, fabrics, calculations, graphic designs, problems etc. many of which cannot be submitted online and require some kind of physical entity. If the School is expected to fund the costs of all outputs, it will likely force an increase in examinations as it is not feasible. This clause also lends itself to 'forcing' staff to mark online and there is some resistance to this amongst staff. Applying this clause would be very difficult for our School</p>
Maths	<p>4.10: Much of the work we ask our students to submit is handwritten and so submitting this online would not make sense. We could ask students to word-process their work, and in fact we introduce our first years to the scientific word-processing package LaTeX, however this is a time consuming exercise and we would rather they spent this time on doing mathematics. Larger pieces of work such as projects and dissertations have to be submitted electronically and all these are run through Turnitin</p>	<p>Some of our assignments involve producing computer code. Even though this is produced electronically, plagiarism detection software does not work well for this kind of material</p>	<p>4.12 appears to contradict 4.10. If all written assessed coursework is submitted online what is meant by 'alternative methods of submission'?</p>	<p>In 4.15 we do not believe it is the School's responsibility to develop a 'back-up system'. This should be IT Services' responsibility. In fact, in the current e-Assessment Guidance and Procedures document, paragraph 14, it states that this is the responsibility of IT support</p>	

MACE	All submitted online may be a problem - we have many handwritten submissions which could not be checked in Turnitin in any case and would add considerably to student load - for no academic gain - if they had to be typed	Any printing costs to be met by school - what about handwritten submissions, would we be expected to provide pens and paper?	Can blackboard make the assessment anonymous, at the moment it is not anonymous.	Printer credits for dissertations would cost £25,000 a considerable financial cost to the school	4.12 needs re-wording as it either does not make clear that alternative arrangements would be in addition to online submission or it contradicts the requirement for online submission
EEE	4.3 : Makes it clear that the School can adopt method a) or b) for different component and years. 4.8 seems to imply that the School should adopt a) or b) for taught students. Does this suggest that we would have to do the same for all ? – which we don't want	4.9 : Not clear. Seems to imply that the Board of Examiners could apply a deduction that is greater than might be suggested by the late submission policy. Perhaps it should be that if the mark for the late work is below the pass mark after the School's late submission procedure has been applied then the exam board could decide to award a capped mark if it would have achieved a pass mark before the late submission penalty was applied	4.10. We would like to have some discretion regarding the submission of coursework that is only a small part of the unit. For instance, we might state something along the lines of "All written assessed coursework worth more than 1 credit, including dissertations, must be submitted online and subjected to plagiarism detection software". For instance, some of our laboratory exercises involve the completion of written tasks, on paper, during the practical session. As the students are working in groups at a single workstation it is impractical for them to each write their responses electronically and, in any case they are collaborating in obtaining the results and this will lead to inevitable and justified "similarities". Subsequent scanning of the documents and online submission is, in our opinion, an unnecessary and inefficient extra step for such pieces of coursework.	4.12 may be an issue. I think we currently expect students to meet the cost of submitting written copies of Year 3 (and 4?) project reports and for MSc dissertations	
Foundation Studies	Foundation Studies is already following these almost exactly. We have a strict ruling of a zero mark for late submission of coursework				