Informatics Teaching Committee
April 2016

Viewing the Guide for Examiners

This paper proposes that we change the School policy on viewing exam scripts so that students may see the guide for examiners alongside their own work, if the course lecturer agrees.

Ian Stark
2016-03-31

Background

Our present School policy on the preparation of exams includes the following.

- Every exam paper must have an accompanying guide for examiners containing sample answers and marking criteria.

- The School routinely publishes these for pre-honours courses, and not at all for honours or postgraduate courses.

- Individual course lecturers may release example questions, model answers, exam guides, and feedback on student attempts at past questions. Questions for which sample answers have been published cannot be reused without substantial change.

- Students may inspect their own marked exam scripts, under supervision, by arrangement at the ITO. The arrangements for this are published online, in the form shown overleaf.

Students are of course interested to understand precisely how their own work compares to the exam setters' expectations, and markers' annotations give very little information.

The viewing of exam scripts under supervision gives an opportunity for us to offer similar access to the sample answers and marking criteria. We already emphasise to students that this viewing is not an opportunity to discuss revising their grades, and this is largely respected. Students may not take away their scripts, and the same would apply to the sample answers and marking criteria.

These guides for examiners are not written for general publication, or for anything other than to assist those marking the exam. In light of this, I suggest that this access for students be at the discretion of the course lecturer.

Proposal

Students who arrange to view their own exam script may at the same time view the matching guide for examiners, provided that the course lecturer agrees.

A revised policy text appears overleaf.

Notes

I have consulted with ITO staff on the implementation of this. They report that it will require little administrative change to the current process. In particular, they are not concerned at any runaway growth in students challenging the details of their exam mark.

The ITO will need to keep information for each course on whether the lecturer agrees that their marking guide be available in this way.

Student Access to Examination Scripts

The following was approved by Teaching Committee at the start of 2007/08:

Access to examination papers is provided to students on request for the purpose of gaining feedback from the examination process. If the student detects a clear error in the examining of their script (e.g., marking omitted on part of an answer, an arithmetical error) then this will be corrected and the overall mark will be revised.

However, this process should not be seen as an opportunity to review the marking process. Nor should it be used to take issue with the exercise of the markers discretion in the award of marks. Therefore there is no need for discussion between the student and marker on the detailed allocation of marks. Any request from a student to discuss their marks must be declined.

Students who wish to view their completed examination scripts are therefore invited to contact the ITO with details of the script/s they wish to access. The ITO and the student will then agree on a suitable date for the student to be given access to his/her script/s, under the supervision of a member of the ITO staff. ITO are unable to give access to examination scripts until after the last BoE meeting has been completed, meaning students will normally have to wait until mid/late-June before being able to access scripts they submitted during the April/May examination diet.

Teaching Committee
2007/08

Proposed Revision

Student Access to Examination Scripts

Any student may arrange to see their own marked examination script, together with the original exam paper and — if the course lecturer agrees — the accompanying guide for examiners.

This access is to provide students with feedback on the details of their exam performance. Viewing is at the ITO and under supervision by a member of staff. Students may not make copies or take photographs of either their own script or the guide for examiners.

If any student detects a clear error in the marking of a script (e.g. a mistake in arithmetic, or part of an answer left unmarked) then this will be corrected and the overall mark will be revised.

However, this process should not be seen as an opportunity to review the marking process. Nor should it be used to take issue with a marker's academic judgement, or the exercise of their discretion in the award of marks. There is no need for discussion between the student and marker. Any request from a student to discuss their marks will be declined.

Students who wish to view their completed examination scripts are invited to contact the ITO with details of the exam scripts they wish to access. The ITO will then arrange with them a viewing date and time. No access to examination scripts is possible until after the last Board of Examiners meeting is complete, so students will normally have to wait until mid or late June to view scripts submitted during the April/May diet.

Teaching Committee
April 2016