

The University of Edinburgh
The Moray House School of Education
School Postgraduate Studies Committee

9th February 2016

Change to assessment arrangements for courses relating to
visual impairment and deafness

Brief description of paper

Following advice from external examiners, this is a proposal to change the pass mark for eight courses taken by teachers of deaf and visually impaired children to 50%, in line with other UK universities offering the mandatory qualification for these teachers.

Action requested

For comment and approval

Resource implications

Does the paper have resource implications? Slight

Risk assessment

Does the paper have a risk assessment? No

Equality and diversity

Have due considerations been given to the equality impact of this paper? Yes

Freedom of information

Can this paper be included in open business? Yes

Any other relevant information

None

Originator of the paper

Rachel O'Neill,
Programme director MEd Additional Support for Learning
17.12.15

Proposed changes to mark for achieving specialist courses

1. The issue

The following courses are currently treated the same as for most other PGT courses where students marks are averaged to achieve an overall programme mark at graduation. However, there are two pathways through the current MEd Additional Support for Learning and the new MSc Inclusive Education which are for specialist teachers of deaf and visually impaired children. These students are gaining competencies specified by the Scottish government which are compulsory within five years of starting work with deaf or visually impaired children (ref. 1).

At 25.9.13 the SPGSC agreed that the Placement course (EDUA11258) on the deaf education pathway should have the mark showing a student has achieved the course increased from 40 to 50%, which was agreed. This means if a student receives less than 50% she / he has the opportunity to resubmit once.

We would now like to propose the same occurs for all the specialist courses for teachers of deaf and visually impaired learners. These are listed here:

Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (deaf learners)	Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (deaf learners)	Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (deaf learners)
Cerebral visual impairment	EDUA11341	Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (visually impaired learners)
Issues and Strategies for teaching and learning (visual impairment)	EDUA11247	Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (visually impaired learners)
Assessing pupils / students with visual impairment	EDUA11245	Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (visually impaired learners)
Inclusion of children with visual impairment	EDUA11244	Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (visually impaired learners)
Audiology and audiometry	EDUA11238	Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (deaf learners)
Language and communication	EDUA11240	Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (deaf learners)
Promoting achievement and curriculum access for deaf and / or bilingual learners	EDUA11241	Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (deaf learners)
Deaf Studies	EDUA11239	Postgraduate Diploma Inclusive Education (deaf learners)

2. Why a D grade is not adequate achievement for these courses

Children who are deaf or visually impaired are usually educated in mainstream settings in Scotland, receiving additional support from peripatetic specialist teachers who work closely with class teachers. The specialist skills which these teachers bring are crucial for maintaining the quality of the inclusive education the children receive.

The specialist staff cannot afford to make mistakes with these skills: children's education and futures depend on it. For example a teacher of deaf children who does not know how to order the correct shoe to link a personal hearing aid to an FM system is depriving the child of a reasonable school education. A teacher who doesn't understand how to analyse the spoken or signed language of a deaf preschool child won't be able to set targets for the child and may advise inappropriate language models, which could lead to the child not developing a fluent language in the crucial early years. These requirements from the Scottish and English governments (ref. 2) are professional ones which these practitioners must be able to demonstrate.

Taught assessment regulation 12.2 for the University for 15/16 states (ref. 3):
Some degrees have professional or statutory body requirements which are reflected in the learning outcomes and their assessment. Students are informed about these in the statement of assessment.

This proposal is being brought as a result of comments by external examiners Professor Wendy McCracken, from the University of Manchester (deaf education EE) in her 13/14 report, Dr Linda Watson, from the University of Birmingham (deaf education EE) in her 14/15 report and Eirlys Lamb from Newport University (visual impairment EE) in her 13/14 report. The other universities involved in PGT courses for teachers of deaf and visually impaired children all have a 50% pass mark: the Universities of Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Hertfordshire.

Letters of support for this proposal are attached from the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf, Scottish Association for Visual Impairment Education, the heads of sensory impairment local authorities forum for Scotland and RNIB. Without these high standards, the school attainments of deaf and visually impaired children will be compromised.

3. Resource implications

Since the averaging regulation has been introduced for PGT courses, there has been less staff time spent on marking resubmissions. There are resource implications for this proposal, but they are minor. For example during 2014/15 there were only 2 marks on these courses below 50% which would therefore require remarking and additional tutorial support from September 2016.

The programme has qualified teachers of deaf and visually impaired children teaching, assessing and moderating these specialist courses: Elizabeth Quinn, Rachel O'Neill, Brian Shannan.

4. Practical implications

Students attend these courses from several programmes across the School. Only students on the Postgraduate Diplomas Inclusive Education (deaf learners) and (visually impaired learners) would need to show achievement above 50%. Assignments are usually differentiated for most of these courses for the teachers and other, usually international students. These arrangements will be fully explained to students in course handbooks through the statement of assessment and in the new MSc Inclusive Education programme handbook from September 2016.

References

1. Guidance on appropriate qualifications for teachers of children and young persons who are hearing impaired, visually impaired, or both hearing and visually impaired (Scotland advice)
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2007/01/29163203/3>
2. Mandatory qualifications: Specialist teachers (England advice)
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mandatory-qualifications-specialist-teachers>
3. University of Edinburgh taught assessment regulations 2015/16
<http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/TaughtAssessmentRegulations.pdf>

Appendices

1. Letter of support BATOD
2. Letter of support SAVIE
3. Letter of support RNIB
4. Letter of support Heads of Services forum, Scotland

Appendix 1

21, Keating Close
Rochester
Kent
ME1 1EQ

Dr Pete Allison, FRSG
Head of the Graduate School of Education and Sport
Moray House School of Education
University of Edinburgh
Holyrood. Edinburgh
EH8 9JX

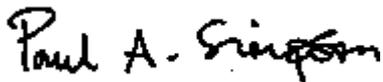
03 February 2016

Dear Dr Allison

BATOD is the sole professional association for Teachers of the Deaf in the UK and has an involvement with all the UK universities offering the mandatory qualification for Teachers of the Deaf.

The association agrees with and strongly supports the advice from external examiners that the pass mark for the relevant courses offered by Moray House at the University of Edinburgh be changed to 50% in line with the other universities offering the equivalent qualification.

Yours sincerely



Paul Simpson, BATOD National Executive Officer