Teachability: Creating an accessible curriculum for disabled students

Brief description of the paper

The paper reports on the progress of the implementation of the College strategy on Teachability.

Action requested

To note the paper.

Resource implications

Does the paper have resource implications? Yes

The development and implementation of actions plans by Schools will require time of academic staff. This will be offset by the anticipated reduction in the need for ad-hoc academic adjustments for students with a disability.

Risk Assessment

Does the paper include a risk analysis? No

Equality and Diversity

Does the paper have equality and diversity implications? Yes

The proposals will enhance the accessibility of the curriculum for disabled students.

Originator of the paper

Dr David Williams, Head of Academic Affairs, College Office

Freedom of information

Can this paper be included in open business? Yes
Teachability: Creating an accessible curriculum for disabled students.

Background

The goal of Teachability is the promotion and maximisation of the inclusion and effective participation of disabled students in higher education. Further detail on Teachability is available on the web page: [http://www.teachability.strath.ac.uk/](http://www.teachability.strath.ac.uk/). This process is regarded as valuable in developing provision for all students, not only disabled, as well as helping Schools to address the requirements for “anticipatory adjustments” in the Disability Discrimination Act.

At its meeting on 21 November 2006, the College Undergraduate Studies Committee agreed a College strategy to address Teachability issues as part of the overall College Learning and Teaching Strategy; whilst addressing particular aspects in focused, College-wide activities. The Committee agreed that the aspect to be reviewed in 2006/07 should be “creating accessible examinations and assessments”.

The College has taken forward its Learning and Teaching Strategy, details of which may be found from the following link: [http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/LTStrategy/](http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/LTStrategy/). This paper reviews the progress in addressing the annual Teachability themes.

College strategy - implementation

A College Teachability Working Group comprising of representatives from all Schools and the College Office has been convened. The remit and current membership of the Group is given in Appendix 1.

The Working Group met in February 2007 to formulate a pro-forma to assist Schools in self-assessment and reflection of their current practice and the extent to which they meet legislative requirements for the 2006/07 theme: “creating accessible examinations and assessments”. The pro-forma, and methodology for self-review, was taken from guidance provided by the national Teachability group.

These self-assessments were completed by 31 March 2007. The Group then met again in April 2007 to review the self-assessments, identify good practice and areas where further guidance or activity was required. A College summary of the School self-assessment documents is attached as Appendix 2.

Following the self-assessments, each School Teachability representative co-ordinated an action plan within their School to address those areas where the School is not fully meeting obligations under the DDA in terms of anticipatory adjustments in examinations and assessments. The Group then met again in January 2008 to review the action plans and note how the Schools had addressed issues identified in the self-assessments. A College summary of the School action plans and associated activities at School or College level is attached as Appendix 3.

At its January 2008 meeting, the Working Group also formulated a pro-forma to assist Schools in self-assessment and reflection of their current practice and the extent to which they meet legislative requirements for the 2006/07 theme: “Creating accessible course or programme design and structure for disabled students”. This theme will also incorporate consideration of competence standards, see Appendix 4.

David Williams
February 2008
Appendix 1

Membership of the College Teachability Group

College Teachability Working Group was set up to oversee the implementation of the College Teachability Strategy, to review the self-assessment documents and action plans produced by each School, and to report to the College Learning and Teaching Committee.

The membership of the Group for 2007/08:

College Office: David Williams (Convenor)
College Office: Lynda Henderson
Biological Sciences: Jeff Bond
Chemistry: Gordon McDougall
Engineering and Electronics: Tom Bruce
GeoSciences: Rachael Atherton
Informatics: Neil McGillivray
Mathematics: John Byatt Smith
Physics: Judy Hardy
Appendix 2

College of Science and Engineering

Teachability

College summary: Reviewing and evaluating practice in the Teachability theme: Creating accessible examinations and assessments for disabled students

1. Staff are consciously aware of, and in agreement about, what aspects of student attainment or performance they are trying to assess.

Current practice across Schools meets this requirement. There is a review of assessment at the course level in the light of student performance and Exam Board comment and feedback, including the comments of the External Examiner. Where there are significant changes to learning outcomes (LOs), particularly those impinging on other courses, these must be approved by the School Board of Studies. This level of formality is not intended to be cumbersome or heavy handed, but rather a means of protecting against unforeseen consequences of uncontrolled changes; in particular to ensure that the programme LOs are related to the appropriate course LOs. Vertical reviews of courses within a particular academic strands happen periodically and these allow lecturers to consider the links between the LOs and assessment methods across a group of courses.

Some subject areas indicated that they would welcome further consideration of “core” areas of their programmes; both to guide their assessment of performance of students with less-common disabilities; and for judgement on required competences within the subject. There was discussion on generic competences and how these may be assessed. Most Schools integrate such assessment within other courses, but some arrange specific formative assessment, e.g. diagnostic online testing via WebCT. Representatives from all Schools attended the recent workshops run by the Disability Office / DET Scotland on Competence Standards and will be reviewing the implications of the standards on admissions and assessment practices within their Schools.

2. Students are aware of the aspects of attainment or performance which are the subject of assessment.

Current practice across Schools generally meets this requirement (except in one area where students have commented that this is not always clear – action will be taken to address this). The information is communicated to students through Course Guides and Programme Guides which summarise the nature and level of courses, assist students in choosing courses and allow them to assess effectively their own progress. In practice, this is implemented somewhat patchily at present: some Course Guides simply include a summary of the aims and objectives of the course rather than full information on learning outcomes, though this is also available to students via the online Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS).

In some cases, whether the details of the assignments give students full insight into relationship between the learning outcomes of the course and the activities involved in the particular assignment varies depending upon who sets the assignment and produces the accompanying information (and their level of training and commitment to Teachability). Lecturers set the coursework assignments and produce the documentation autonomously and there is no formal procedure for peer vetting of coursework assignments (compared with the setting of examinations which are rigorously peer vetted) although lecturers may involve some colleagues, especially for non-honours courses.

Students have access to past papers for all courses and the specimen solutions / marking guidelines for these past papers for most courses. Many courses offer revision lectures which explicitly cover this issue with regard to the forthcoming examination.

Within the School of Engineering and Electronics, further information and verbal / written guidance is often given by academic staff when assessed assignments are issued. This covers information such as the relationship between the assignment and the learning objectives. The School of Chemistry in many cases provides to students via course documentation the same pro-forma used by staff for marking assignment. They are working on more detailed pro-forma for laboratory reports.
3. The nature of marking criteria are kept under regular review: such matters as the importance of spelling, grammar, the ability to calculate, and the ability to remember dates and constants are collectively evaluated by the staff including part-time staff and teaching assistants.

Marking criteria are evaluated regularly, though different Schools have different fora. The issues are usually discussed in general terms at Board of Studies and Teaching Policy Committee (or equivalent) within Schools, but there is often additional discussion at other Committees and groups within Schools, and informed by activities such as participation in the College Learning and Teaching Strategy and liaison with TLA and the Disability Office. All Schools have written examination procedures which cover the nature of marking criteria, but some are less clear for other forms of assessment. Schools are encouraged to ensure their administrative procedures cover all forms of assessment, and that there is clarity in the responsibility and role of the various groups discussing marking criteria.

The College has produced General Descriptors for Honours Years within the Extended Common Marking Scheme which are for use by Schools as the basis for their Specific Descriptors. These may be found on the College web page:

http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/Admin/Procedures/College%20Descriptors%20-%20December%202005%20v1.doc

The descriptors are indicative of the level of performance expected from the students and are written primarily as an aid to the assessment of judgmentally assessed work, such as essays, fieldwork, lab or project reports and certain types of examination. There is a College Working Group providing further guidance on general descriptors for project and dissertation work. For examinations, marking guides are produced alongside the examination papers and undergo the same rigorous vetting by academic staff and the External Examiner.

As methods of assessment vary from course to course, course monitoring meetings (or equivalent) interpret the guidance and apply local consistency. There is variation in the degree to which local interpretation is applied: in large courses where team marking is necessary it is applied routinely; one area does not explicitly require marking criteria to be discussed locally, but has introduced a generic exam feedback form that will facilitate this process and help to highlight any issues. The importance of memory, calculation, spelling and grammar differs with the nature of the subject and the assessment type and is determined locally: for example, the ability to calculate is central to almost all courses in Mathematics, and spelling and grammar may be important to ensure accuracy of meaning in descriptive work.

A typical issue with international postgraduate students has to do with their frequently imperfect knowledge of the English language as well as the possibility that spelling or syntactical deficiencies may reflect an undetected deeper problem such as dyslexia. These aspects have been frequently discussed with staff and there is a broad awareness of their potential significance. A further issue raised was the degree to which project students may be assisted or guided by the project supervisor and how this should be reflected in the assessment. The practice in the School of Chemistry is that supervisors may comment only on a draft of the project report prepared by the student, and the final report is usually double marked / moderated by other markers within the subject area. It was agreed that Dr Williams will raise this issue with the College Working Group looking at marking criteria for project work.

Adjustments are made automatically for students with learning profiles. Most areas have designed procedures so that additional adjustments do not have to be made for students with dyslexia. Sometimes, a School considers that it would not be appropriate to put in place an anticipatory adjustment for all students, e.g. by providing formula sheets for all students, whether or not they are disabled.

4. Policies concerning electronic aids to spelling, grammar and calculation in examinations are kept under regular review.

Policies regarding calculators for use in examination are set by College and not by School. Where queries have arisen these are passed to College for advice before guidance is distributed throughout the School to ensure consistent arrangements are in place. The College guidance on the use of calculators, including a section on calculators for students with a disability, is updated annually and can be found at:

http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/Admin/ADU/CSS%20Sheet-updated%20November%202006.pdf
Examination setting and checking procedures require staff to state whether calculators and/or constant sheets are allowed for each exam and this is done for each diet. The College does not have an explicit policy on the provision of electronic aids to spelling and grammar - normal practice is that exam scripts are handwritten and Schools rely on the provision put in place by Registry for students who have a learning profile and who require special arrangements for exams. In one School, students whose first language is not English are permitted to use paper dictionaries (English-Foreign Language) but no students are allowed to use electronic dictionaries (unless this is a recommended reasonable adjustment).

5. Where a student is unable by reason of an impairment to show evidence of relevant attainment or performance in the standard way, alternative arrangements are put in place if it is possible to do so.

Course organisers are alerted to specific requirements related to assessment for students with a learning profile by the Coordinator of Adjustments (CoA). Learning profiles are circulated to the Course Organiser and lecturers on each course by the CoA as early as possible at the start of the course. It is rarely possible to do this before the course starts unless the student has a very significant disability and is willing to choose their courses earlier than other students do.

Requests for additional or alternative assessment arrangements are relatively uncommon; when they arise they are considered on a case-by-case basis, usually by the Course Organiser and CoA in consultation with the Director of Teaching and the Disability Office. It was noted that the most appropriate outcome may be suggested by the student him/herself. Schools could be more pro-active about this and consider how else to assess performance, but this is very challenging as it involves planning for unknown scenarios. Schools are building up good practice in such cases, which could be more widely disseminated within the School and across the College. This process may be assisted by the development of a searchable database of such adjustments, and Dr Williams will explore this possibility with the Disability Office.

One School has suggested attaching a summary of all the reasonable adjustments which are appropriate for students taking a course to the exam paper when it is being vetted as a means of focusing the minds of the setters and veters on the teachability of the assessment.

There are examples of good practice across the College, particularly in those disciplines which have laboratories or fieldwork. For example, the School of GeoSciences:
(i) have made special provision for a person with a physical disability to take part in field visits where possible, and in cases where he could not, that this would not affect his performance on subsequent assessments and exams in consultation with the course organiser;
(ii) have anticipated the need for an alternative to experiments in laboratory work which involves going onto the roof of JCMB via a steep staircase not accessible for wheelchairs, by arranging alternative experiments done on the automatic weather station;
(iii) have provided an alternative to a study tour when a student was unable to attend because of illness;
(iv) have prepared a “virtual fieldtrip” for students who, for reasons of disability or special circumstance, cannot participate in the actual trip.

6. The flexibility referred to above is available in terms of deadlines and timetabling of assessments.

In most Schools there is some flexibility in the deadlines for assessments particularly for disabled students should they request or require an extension. Such flexibility is sometimes limited on academic grounds: there may be a conflict that arises between the need to extend deadlines for some students yet provide prompt feedback and standard answers for the majority of the class. This is particularly acute for one School which generally cannot extend deadlines of weekly assessments as solutions are made available for the other students and this is felt to be an important part of their learning. (In this case the School generally disregards at least one assessment in the final scores.) Thus, in some cases, assessment deadlines are fixed and extensions would only be given in exceptional circumstances. Sometimes, flexibility is limited by the timing of Exam Board meetings.

In the past, the most common issue was exam timetabling clashes where students should not be asked to sit two exams in a single day, where this was specified in the learning profile. However, since the new exam timetabling arrangements came into operation this year, there have so far been no cases of disabled students having two exams on one day or, where relevant, two consecutive days – although there has been a large concentration of exams for some students.
7. **Alternative assessment arrangements as referred to above are well controlled to ensure consistency and fairness, vis-à-vis both the students taking them and other students.**

Most cases are covered by the well-established University-wide procedures. The School of Biological Sciences is introducing Programme Boards to oversee consistency and fairness across the wide range of Honours programmes in that subject. Standard alternative examination arrangements such as extra time and separate exam rooms are managed by College/Registry in consultation with School Staff. Exceptional cases require a discussion involving the CoA, School-level academic administrator (such as the Director of Teaching) and Disability Office in order to ensure both fairness and equivalence. Some Schools are less confident about the arrangements and adjustments for coursework assignments. The reasonable adjustments relating to coursework are less well defined in the learning profiles and there is concern that some staff in the Schools do not have the skills and the experience to always make the correct adjustments to maintain fairness for all students for coursework assessments. On occasion, exceptional cases have been referred to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to ensure equivalence in terms of academic rigour across the College.

8. **Assessment feedback to students is accessible to all our students, both in terms of content and format.**

Assessment feedback is provided to all students but it is not ideal, as shown by the comments in the National Student Survey. In some cases, feedback is written so it potentially is not always accessible, though two Schools are investigating the use of a tablet PC to capture handwritten feedback of student work. Written feedback may be supplemented by verbal feedback. Any exceptions would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis (for example, the course organiser or student’s DoS could give further explanations if required). Students are able to contact the Teaching Organisation if they wish to view their exam script after the marks have been released following the Board of Examiners meetings, but very few take up this opportunity.

The College, in collaboration with student representatives, is exploring good practice in providing formative feedback and will be disseminating such practice. There are examples of good practice: for example in Physics, starting from 2006/07, generic examination feedback is provided for all courses; this provides examples of what went well and what was done badly; it forms part of the marking process, and is carried out immediately following marking of exam scripts. The feedback sheet is made available to students via WebCT or the School course information portal so the normal accessibility tools are available.

9. **Those responsible for our examinations and assessment appeals are well versed in the ways in which procedures may need to be adjusted in acknowledgement of the needs of some disabled students.**

Current practice across Schools meets this requirement. School staff are aware of sources of advice if it appears adjustments to procedures are necessary. Appeals are handled by the University Secretary and specially convened Appeals Committees from outside the Schools.

10. **There are procedures for the consideration of course assessment methods at the course approval stage.**

Consideration of course assessment procedures is undertaken at the approval stage by the Board of Studies when agreeing course content and organisation. The course assessment methods and weightings are required for course approval via CCAMS. Although assessment by examination continues to be the norm for most courses, the “Assessment for Learning” strand of the College Learning and Teaching Strategy: [http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/Admin/Strategy%20Document.pdf](http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/Admin/Strategy%20Document.pdf) positively encourages Schools to consider alternative assessment mechanisms. The School of Physics will be convening a “task force” to consider assessment breadth across the School.
11. There is contingency provision for students with sudden illness which may be regarded as a temporary disability (e.g. a severe migraine).

Students are encouraged to discuss concerns with their Director of Studies (or Degree Programme Director) when issues of this nature arise. Extension of deadlines etc. may be arranged for in course assessments and the Special Circumstances committee will consider issues of this nature in reference to the examination. Many instances of such provision have occurred. In one School where there are weekly assignments, they disregard at least one and so a last minute illness will not significantly affect the score.

12. Other comments

The College Office should liaise with the Disability Office to compare assessment marks for disabled and non-disabled students, which may help to identify any problems with assessment-related adjustments.

May 2007
College of Science and Engineering

Teachability

College summary: Action Plans for the Teachability theme:
Creating accessible examinations and assessments for disabled students

1. **Staff are consciously aware of, and in agreement about, what aspects of student attainment or performance they are trying to assess.**

The self-reviews showed that current practice across Schools generally meets this requirement. Some subject areas indicated that they would welcome further consideration of “core” areas of their programmes; both to guide their assessment of performance of students with less-common disabilities; and for judgement on required competences within the subject. It has been agreed that the theme of course and programme design, and core competences will be the College Teachability theme for 2007/08.

Some specific enhancements during the year have included the introduction of new-style Course Descriptors in the School of Engineering and Electronics (being piloted in the Mechanical Engineering discipline) which include direct identification of generic learning outcomes from the subject benchmark statement addressed by the course. The School of Informatics is introducing new procedures to require explicit linking of learning outcomes to specimen assessments as part of the case for support for new courses at Boards of Studies.

All Schools are taking the opportunity of the introduction of EUCLID to reviewing the quality of learning outcomes and ensuring that these are updated in WISARD / EUCLID.

2. **Students are aware of the aspects of attainment or performance which are the subject of assessment.**

The self-reviews showed that current practice across Schools generally meets this requirement, except in one discipline area where students have commented that this is not always clear. This is being addressed by the review of learning outcomes, as described above.

Some specific enhancements during the year have included the dissemination of the new-style Course Descriptors to students via WebCT and in year handbooks and associated start-of-year (week 0) briefing session. One School has introduced a new School policy requiring details of assessment criteria (via pre-sight of marking proforma) to be given alongside issue of all coursework assignments. One School has introduced “mock” assessments for some types of assessments that students can experience prior to an assessment. This will be reviewed to ascertain if it can be adopted more widely across the College.

3. **The nature of marking criteria are kept under regular review: such matters as the importance of spelling, grammar, the ability to calculate, and the ability to remember dates and constants are collectively evaluated by the staff including part-time staff and teaching assistants.**

The self-reviews showed that marking criteria are evaluated regularly, though different Schools have different fora. All Schools have written examination procedures which cover the nature of marking criteria, but some are less clear for other forms of assessment. The College, through SUGSC, has asked the Disability Office for clearer guidance on the use of coursework stickers. Procedures within the School of Mathematics have been reviewed to ensure that all tutorial assessment and exams have clear marking schemes and marking instructions. This is to help with uniformity of marking and with feedback.

The College has produced General Descriptors for Honours Years within the Extended Common Marking Scheme which are for use by Schools as the basis for their Specific Descriptors. These may be found on the College web page:

http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/Admin/Procedures/College%20Descriptors%20-%20December%202005%20v1.doc
There has not been progress on College guidance on general descriptors for project and dissertation work. The wide range of project work available within the College has meant that any set of generic guidance at College level would have limited value to Schools. The Working Group did assist the sharing of ideas and did help some School develop specific descriptors for their disciplines.

Adjustments are made automatically for students with learning profiles, according to the schedule of agreed adjustments. In the discussion of action plans it was felt that the practice in one School of providing exam setters with an anonymised summary of all the agreed adjustments for that course so that they were aware of the types of adjustment required was to be commended, and this practice will be disseminated throughout the College.

4. Policies concerning electronic aids to spelling, grammar and calculation in examinations are kept under regular review.

Policies regarding calculators for use in examination are set by College and not by School. The College guidance on the use of calculators, including a section on calculators for students with a disability, is updated annually and can be found at: http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/Admin/ADU/CSS%20Sheet-updated%20November%202006.pdf

The College does not have an explicit policy on the provision of electronic aids to spelling and grammar, but the self-reviews showed that the arrangements for students who have a learning profile and who require special arrangements for exams are working satisfactorily.

There has been one innovation during the year in response to the self-assessments. Student assignments (especially in the early years) are usually marked by different markers each week, hence it is possible that students whose Learning Profiles are not providing appropriate support could remain undetected. To address this, one School plans to implement a system (starting in semester 2, 07/08) to monitor instances where there is “cause for concern” and alert Course Organisers and the Coordinator of Adjustments. Students who are consistently causing concern will be advised to contact the Disability Office if appropriate so that their Learning Profile can be reviewed.

5. Where a student is unable by reason of an impairment to show evidence of relevant attainment or performance in the standard way, alternative arrangements are put in place if it is possible to do so.

In the self-reviews, it was noted that requests for additional or alternative assessment arrangements are relatively uncommon; when they arise they are considered on a case-by-case basis, usually by the Course Organiser and CoA in consultation with the Director of Teaching and the Disability Office. Such arrangements seem to be working adequately. Schools are building up good practice in such cases, which could be more widely disseminated within the School and across the College. This process may be assisted by the development of a searchable database of such adjustments, and Dr Williams will explore this possibility with the Disability Office.

In one School, this year has seen more emphasis on on-line assessment, with a pilot for a large Year 1 course. It is a simple task to arrange for extra time in such assessment, and this appears to have caused no problems for the students so far.

6. The flexibility referred to above is available in terms of deadlines and timetabling of assessments.

In the self-reviews, it was noted that there is some flexibility in the deadlines for assessments particularly for disabled students should they request or require an extension. Such flexibility is sometimes limited on academic grounds: there may be a conflict that arises between the need to extend deadlines for some students yet provide prompt feedback and standard answers for the majority of the class.

A major experiment in one School introduced in response to the self-assessment is to allow students to schedule their own laboratory sessions via WebCT. This has been running this semester (in Fluid Mechanics 2; 210 students; 2 labs/student) and should assist students in planning the phasing of their coursework effort.

Schools are looking to encourage major coursework assignments being issued in the latter part of S1 to have deadlines in week 1 of S2 (rather than in revision / exam period).
7. Alternative assessment arrangements as referred to above are well controlled to ensure consistency and fairness, vis-à-vis both the students taking them and other students.

In the self-reviews, it was noted that most cases are covered by the well-established University-wide procedures. Standard alternative examination arrangements such as extra time and separate exam rooms are managed by College/Registry in consultation with School Staff. Exceptional cases require a discussion involving the CoA, School-level academic administrator (such as the Director of Teaching) and Disability Office in order to ensure both fairness and equivalence. The College has produced guidance this year to ensure that the External Examiner is involved in the approval of alternative examinations, to ensure the maintenance of standards. The School of Biological Sciences this year has introduced Programme Boards to oversee consistency and fairness across the wide range of Honours programmes in that subject.

Some Schools are less confident about the arrangements and adjustments for coursework assignments. The reasonable adjustments relating to coursework are less well defined in the learning profiles and there is concern that some staff in the Schools do not have the skills and the experience to always make the correct adjustments to maintain fairness for all students for coursework assessments. One School is working this year with Year Organisers to produce specimen reviews of coursework to identify where alternative arrangements might be necessary in order to develop exemplars for staff training.

8. Assessment feedback to students is accessible to all our students, both in terms of content and format.

In the School self-reviews, it was noted that assessment feedback is provided to all students but it is not ideal, as shown by the comments in the National Student Survey. In some cases, feedback is written so it potentially is not always accessible. Two Schools are investigating the use of a tablet PC to capture handwritten feedback of student work.

The College, through the Learning and Teaching Committee has undertaken further reviews and discussion on feedback, to identify and disseminate good practice. More discussions are scheduled during 2007/08. More Schools are adopting the practice of giving generic face-to-face (student and academic) feedback to classes on exams and major pieces of coursework, with the feedback sheet made available to students via WebCT or the School course information portal so the normal accessibility tools are available. This has met with a positive response and will be encouraged.

9. Those responsible for our examinations and assessment appeals are well versed in the ways in which procedures may need to be adjusted in acknowledgement of the needs of some disabled students.

The self-reviews showed that current practice across Schools meets this requirement. School staff are aware of sources of advice if it appears adjustments to procedures are necessary. Appeals are handled by the University Secretary and specially convened Appeals Committees from outside the Schools.

10. There are procedures for the consideration of course assessment methods at the course approval stage.

Consideration of course assessment procedures is undertaken at the approval stage by the Board of Studies when agreeing course content and organisation. In response to the self-reviews, the College has re-issued guidance to Schools on the definition of “significant changes” to assessments that must be brought to Board of Studies. This will ensure that wider consideration, including Teachability issues will be considered.

The “Assessment for Learning” strand of the College Learning and Teaching Strategy: http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/Admin/Strategy%20Document.pdf positively encourages Schools to consider alternative assessment mechanisms. Flexibility and the nature of assessment will be considered at the College Learning and Teaching Strategy discussion meeting on 14 February 2008. The School of Physics convened a “task force” to consider assessment breadth across the School, which has reported to the Board of Studies and possible future courses of action are under discussion within the School.

11. There is contingency provision for students with sudden illness which may be regarded as a temporary disability (e.g. a severe migraine).
The self-reviews showed that there have been many instances of such provision. Extension of deadlines etc. may be arranged for in course assessments and the Special Circumstances committee will consider issues of this nature in reference to the examination.

Schools felt it would be useful to have specific guidelines on what conditions could be regarded as a temporary disability, particularly in the cases of recurring, chronic physical illness.

February 2008
The eight themes of the Teachability project are:

1) Creating accessible information about courses or programmes of study for disabled students and applicants.
2) Creating accessible course or programme design and structure for disabled students.
3) Creating accessible lectures for disabled students.
4) Creating accessible seminars and tutorials for disabled students.
5) Creating accessible placements, study abroad and field trips for disabled students.
6) Creating accessible practical classes for disabled students.
7) Creating accessible e-learning resources for disabled students.
8) Creating accessible examinations and assessments for disabled students.

Theme 2) "Creating accessible course or programme design and structure for disabled students" has been selected as the theme for 2007/08. Further detail on this theme is available at: [http://www.teachability.strath.ac.uk/chapter_2/introduction2.html](http://www.teachability.strath.ac.uk/chapter_2/introduction2.html)

This theme will incorporate consideration of competence standards. It is timely to think about competence standards, in view of the recent legislative guidance and the relevance to this College in the context of professional accreditation. Further information about competence standards is available at: [http://www.disability-office.ed.ac.uk/legislation/dda_2006.cfm](http://www.disability-office.ed.ac.uk/legislation/dda_2006.cfm)