

University of Strathclyde

Faculty of Science

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

CLASS TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT LOADS

1. Introduction

There has been much discussion throughout the University regarding appropriate class sizes. The Vice Dean (Academic) recently undertook some work looking at appropriate class sizes and this is outlined in the proposal below. Committee members are invited to discuss the proposal and consider whether their department's teaching fits with the proposed class sizes.

2. Suggested appropriate class sizes:

10 credit theory: 20 – 24 lectures with no tutorial/workshops and no coursework. The number of lectures should be reduced for the addition of tutorials (2-to-1, i.e. 10 lectures + 5 hours). Coursework in a 10-credit class is not really practical, unless it is the entire class (such as a 10-credits project assignment class).

10 credit labs: 5 – 6 laboratory sessions lasting 2 – 3 hours each (2 hours preferable).

20 credit theory: 20 - 24 lectures with 10 – 12 hours tutorial/workshop support or one piece of substantial coursework.

20 credit mixed theory/lab: 20 – 24 lectures/5 – 6 lab sessions (2-3 hours each)

20 credit labs: 10 – 12 laboratory sessions lasting 2-3 hours each.

Classes with significant self-directed study (such as paper interpretation classes) can have less contact. A single substantial piece of coursework can occupy half of a 20-credit class – i.e. reduce the rest to a 10-credit equivalent.

As a rule of thumb, contact should not exceed about 25% of credit load – i.e. maximum face-to-face contact for a 10 credit class should not exceed 25 hours. However, this reduces with class credit size; a 40-credit class should have less than 100 hours of face-to-face contact.

Undergraduate labs should not be longer than 3 hours (and rarely 3 if at all possible). Where possible, “tutorials” should be facilitated workshops (i.e. 30 – 50 students at a time, working independently in groups) and not “small group teaching”. The use of small-group and one-to-one teaching should be absolutely minimal, and at a senior level of study only.

3. Reducing assessment

In order to reduce assessment the following should be considered:

- (i) No degree examination exceeds 2 hours.
- (ii) With the exception of lab classes, all classes should have only one piece of coursework.
- (iii) No part of any class is examined twice – i.e. content assessed in coursework is not assessed in the degree examination, and vice versa.
- (iv) No compulsory non-contributory coursework.