

Dear Dr Stella

I raised the following point about the Discussion Paper in a Committee at CQUniversity but it did not seem to be endorsed or rejected by those present. I thought that I was perhaps way off the track.

"It seems to me that one of the problems of higher education institutions have when seeking to endorse uniform achievement standards is that a particular grade may not be what the student has actually achieved but a result which has been lowered by academic penalty. This could take the form of loss of marks for late submission of course work or the deduction of marks for some form of academic misconduct.

If the final result achieved by a student in these circumstances is meant to be a true reflection of the student's achievement in a course of study this is really not the case. The problem is not alleviated even if there is a system in place for the granting of extensions and policies in place to guide those who grant the extension. Students who are able to use the system and have acceptable reasons for late submission do not suffer a reduction in marks but students whose reasons for late submission are not accepted have their measure of achievement distorted (usually diminished).

The challenge for higher education institutions is to establish policies that deal with late submission of coursework items and other types of academic misconduct which do not comprise standards without imposing an academic penalty which diminishes the integrity of the student achievement.

In the case of academic conduct involving deliberate fraud and deception the issue becomes more complex. It would seem that no credit should be awarded for any of the "tainted" work (as it was not the student's own efforts) and the student should be subject to discipline for academic misconduct. The student should, however, be granted whatever credit they have obtained on the "untainted work" without an artificial penalty for a further loss of marks.

I have found it strange that institutions persist in having a penalty of failure for the course for any form of misconduct in an examination or academic misconduct without necessarily considering the circumstances. Some might argue that this is a form of maintaining standards. In my mind that it is really an undermining of the concept of academic integrity in assessment of an individual achievement and a potential problem in our seeking to deal with academic standards."

I am willing for this submission to be made public.

Yours sincerely,

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