

Meeting Number APC15/5 **Confirmed**

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2016

PRESENT: APOLOGIES: BY INVITATION:		Mr N. Alexander, Dr R. Clougherty, Mr S. Lopez, Ms J. Main, Mr A MacKinlay, Dr N. McLarnon, Ms S. McGiffen, Mr V. McKay, Mr R. Ruthven, Dr S. Rate, Mr I. Stewart, Mr M. Stephenson, Professor B. Steves, Professor V. Webster (Chair), Professor R. Whittaker	
		Professor I. Cameron, Professor T. Hilton, Professor A. Morgan, Dr M. Sharp Ms J. Brown, Professor L. Creanor, Ms D. Donnet, Ms J. Fisher, Ms S. MacNeill, Professor S. McMeekin	
			IN ATTEN
MINUTES			
15.129	Considered	The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2016 (APC15/45/1).	
15.130	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as a correct record.	
MATTERS	ARISING		
Academic	Requirements/A	cademic Pillars (Arising on 15.104)	
15.131	Reported	By the Chair that there would be follow up discussion in this meeting to the academic requirements/pillars discussion.	
	of Assessment Boa on 15.116)	ard Decisions to Tuition Fee Debtors	
15.132	Reported	By the Chair that following discussion with the Chief Financial Officer who agreed the amendment as discussed should be made to Policy.	
_	School For Busing Management	ess And Society – Academic Case for Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Human	
15.133	Reported	By the Secretary that feedback to APC's requirements and queries had been received and Chair's action would be taken if appropriate.	

PRE MASTERS		
15.134	Reported	By the Chair that this was a discussion item which would replace the academic case paper APC15/63/1. She introduced the PVCI who would introduce the issue.
15.135	Reported	By Ms Gregersen-Hermans that the University had a strategic imperative to consider internationalisation. Already discussions with the Schools about potential solutions to develop a pipeline to TPGs e.g. 2+2, 1+1 but currently only the INTO Foundation year <i>main route</i> . One proposal was to introduce a pre Masters programme.
15.136	Reported	By the Chair that there would be a concept paper to reflect the proposal but there should be consultation first with Schools and APC about the possible format and consideration of whether it should be the same for all Schools.
15.137	Discussion	Members discussed the potential format of the pre-Masters and asked Ms Gregersen-Hermans if it was envisaged that the focus would be on English language or on other academic or technical skills?
		Ms Gregersen-Hermans replied that the concept was to have more than just language skills, incorporating academic skills and possibly other content related to subject areas.
		Members discussed potential models such as potential length in terms of trimesters. It was clarified that 1 trimester would be categorised as pre-sessional to meet UKVI CAS conditions, where the IELTS rating is minimum of 6.
		Another member asked if there would be comparability of entrants with level 10/Honours graduates?
		In order to get School perspectives it was proposed that each School provide a nominee for a development group supporting the PVC International. It was noted that the intention was to move quickly to establish this group.
15.138	Resolved	That APC supports the principle of a pre Masters and the next steps proposed by the PVC International. (Action: PVCI)
ACADEMI	C PILLARS	
15. 139	Reported	By the Chair that moving on from the discussion at the previous meeting, the focus would be what should be done immediately and what should be done next session.
		Discussion included the following:
		 Changes to modules will be more strictly monitored The Assessment Regulations will be subject to some refinement now and
		some longer term considerations.
		3. The primacy of programmes is reaffirmed.
		 The QE&A Handbook will make the process for change clearer and streamline policies and procedures.
		5. Timing of changes will scrutinised i.e. appropriate use of phasing in changes, particularly where the change may have potential to have a negative effect on students' progression/award/experience.

		 There will be a reassertion of the current position on teaching hours. Requirements of international students will be emphasised. A greater focus on support networks for students. Reassertion of key quality assurance and enhancement roles and responsibilities. In general there would be a reassertion of regulations and policy as well as
		streamlining development of the portfolio.
15. 140	Discussion	Members were supportive of the direction being taken and felt that reassertion of regulations, policy and procedural accuracy was to be welcomed. There was an increased impetus, following the publication of CMA guidelines.
		Members also welcomed the reassertion of the role of programme leaders which had been perceived to be diminished.
		Members asked if there was likely to be lockdown timescales on implementation of change to academic programme content to comply with CMA. The Chair replied that a deadline which would be part of the academic calendar would be developed.
15. 141	Resolved	That APC endorse the direction of travel outlined by the Chair.
ADMISSIC	ONS POLICY and C	RIMINAL CONVICTIONS POLICY
15. 142	Considered	1. The revised Admissions Policy. (APC15/30/2).
		2. The revised Criminal Convictions Policy (APC15/48/1).
15. 143	Reported	By Ms McGiffen that the Admissions Policy had been updated in line with previous APC recommendations and was being presented alongside the Criminal Convictions Policy, as requested by APC.
15.144	Discussion	Members made the following comments:
		That the logo should be removed.
		 That the phrase "appropriately qualified" should be reconsidered or clarified.
		That the policy should be equality impact assessed.
		 Remove phrase "range of methods" in section 1. That some minor typographical changes are made.
		That some minor typographical changes are made.
15.145	Reported	By Ms Fisher that previous versions of the CCP had not included reference to the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme but this has now been added.
15.146	Discussion	Members made the following comments:
		 That the text after "disadvantaged backgrounds" in the policy statement is removed.
		Change second appendix C to appendix D
		 Section 2.1: initial assessment is changed to detailed assessment Section 2.1: within two weeks of receipt of the response is changed to
		 within 5 working days It was mooted that an academic member of staff be included for all CCP
		Panel in all cases (not just enhanced disclosure) but this was not agreed as other members raised the potential of unconscious bias if this became

		 Include a statement about use of sensitive data and adherence to the University's Data Protection guidelines.
15.147	Resolved	 That subject to addressing the points in 15.141, the Admission Policy be approved and recommended to Senate. That subject to addressing the points in 15.142, the Criminal Convictions Policy be approved and recommended to Senate. (Action: Admissions and Enquiry Service)
GCU ONLI	NE SIMILARITY CH	
15.148	Considered	A revised draft University policy for the use of online similarity checking (APC15/16/3).
15.149	Reported	By Professor Creanor that the policy had been revised in accordance with the recommendations of APC.
15.150	Discussion	Professor Creanor informed members that the software licence would cover all GCU students in all locations.
15.151	Resolved	That the policy is approved and recommended to Senate (Action: Professor Creanor).
ASSESSMI	ENT REGULATION	S WORKING GROUP
15.152	Considered	A report from Assessment Regulations Working Group (APC15/58/1).
15.153	Reported	By Mr McKay that the paper contained a number of recommendations from the Assessment Regulations Working Group of APC. He thanked all who had contributed to the discussions. The following matters were considered: Academic Appeals Arising from a 2013 audit by Ernst and Young which highlighted a medium risk in relation to the changes being made to student result outcomes without retaining evidence of the decision making process. The ARWG concluded that as a result of changes to the Chairs' Action template and guidance, which now more explicitly captured the requirement for the rationale for decision making and those involved in the decision making process, the Appeals Procedure was now fit for purpose and the actions taken addressed the audit concerns. No further action was recommended at this time. Double marking and Moderation of Assessments The ARWG recommended a longer term consideration of a policy to provide specific detail and guidance on moderation. The ARWG also recommended textual changes to Section 11 of the Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate programmes and Taught Postgraduate programmes for implementation in 2016-17 to reinforce: • That all final level Projects and Dissertations will be marked by two independent examiners. • That examination scripts and coursework relating to assessments at SCQF levels 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, will be moderated; including borderline assessments, all fails and a representative sample (a representative
		 sample will be 10% across all bands). At 11.2 the regulation is changed to state that where a student has answered more than the required number of questions in any coursework

or examination paper, the Module Leader must ensure that *only the first* questions are marked. (e.g, if a paper requires five questions to be answered and the student has attempted seven, only the first five questions answered will be marked and used to calculate the overall mark for the paper). Students will be alerted to this change.

• Section 11 would also require some textual amendments to take account of the changes proposed (paragraph numbering etc).

<u>Nullification of a Module and Special Circumstances outwith the Control of</u> Students

The ARWG recommended revising section 13.3 of the Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate programmes and Taught Postgraduate programmes for implementation in 2016-17, specifically paragraphs 13.3.1, 13.4.1 and 13.4.3:

- 1. Nullification will be considered in extreme circumstances
- 2. Remove "the majority of" candidates.
- 3. Refer proposal to PVC LSE and Department of Academic Quality and Development for advice and authorisation in advance of the Assessment Board meeting.

Quoracy and Requirement for External Examiner to attend Assessment Boards
The ARWG recommended amendments to Terms of Reference and Standard
Operations of Assessment Boards and Regulations for the Appointment and
Responsibilities of External Examiners to both reinforce existing policy and to
remove discrepancies between undergraduate and postgraduate procedures.

Carrying of up to 40 credits

The ARWG recommended that the carrying of 40 credits is monitored in the next academic session and revisited in time for academic year 2017/18 taking into account student performance over the two years of implementation.

Student Mobility

ARWG had discussed the issue, raised previously at APC, of the translation of marks awarded at other institutions (e.g. on exchange programmes) and recommended that the following text addition be made to the Assessment Regulations, for implementation in 2016/17 at 9.5 (f) of the Undergraduate Assessment Regulations and 9.5 (e) of the Postgraduate Assessment Regulations):

'Schools must ensure that, for modules undertaken for the purposes of mobility/exchange a handbook is issued to students. This handbook should also be issued to exchange/mobility co- ordinators. It is required that explicit arrangements for the calculation and reporting of the mark achieved (i.e. the equivalency to be applied at GCU for reporting to Assessment Boards for the purpose of progression and/or final award decision), are contained within the handbook.'

Distance and Online Learning

The ARWG reported that a fuller recommendation would follow pending consideration and review of sector practice relating to assessment arrangements for Distance and Online Learning students undertaking formal exams at an alternative institution. Nevertheless it was affirmed that all students registered as distance learning should have the right to sit formal examinations in their own country irrespective of examination diet and, to support this process, Registry will provide Schools with a list of approved British Council and/or HEI venues

within which examinations can take place and Schools will have to use an approved venue.

Generic Degrees

The ARWG discussed the ongoing viability of Generic Degrees and the variable interpretation of the current regulation and it was recommended that a short life working group review current policy and ongoing relevance. In the short term the existing regulations are reaffirmed and that at 25.3/23.3 the option to *progress* is removed for clarification.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

The ARWG recommended that *Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Assessment Boards* be updated to ensure Assessment Board members do not remove papers from the Assessment Board and that conflict of interest is declared in situations where a student under consideration may be known to a member of the Assessment Board so that member does not participate in discussion or decisions in relation to the student.

RPL Policy and Postgraduate Assessment Regulations – discrepancy for the calculation of merit and distinction at Masters Level

ARWG proposed that the RPL Policy is reviewed to ensure that post graduate students intending to make full RPL claims (50% of credit) are made aware that they will be unable to be awarded merit/distinction for their final award and that Section 18.2.2 of the Taught Postgraduate Regulations be amended as follows, for implementation in 2016/17:

18.2.2 Distinction: i) overall credit-weighted average of the modules used in the calculation, as specified in 18.2.3, equal to 70% or greater and ii) passed all modules undertaken at the level of the award at the first attempt, and iii) passed all modules in the calculation at the first attempt with a mark of 55% or greater and iv) where the award has a project/dissertation module (or equivalent), the mark for that module is no less than 70%.

Plagiarism and Exam Attempts

The issue of potential lack of parity in penalties for students found to have cheated in examinations and those found to have plagiarised in courseworks had been raised. The matter was referred to the Department of Governance and further consideration by APC.

<u>Conflict between the Assessment Regulations for Merit/Distinction and the GCU</u> Qualifications Framework

This item referred to potential conflict between the Undergraduate Assessment Regulations and the Qualifications framework with regards to the ordinary degree, which requires 360 credits, and a minimum of 60 at SCQF level 9. A programme constructed to this minimum specification would prevent an award with either merit or distinction as this requires 90 at SCQF9. There was no recommendation at this stage.

Re-introduction of threshold minimum marks for all elements of assessment
The ARWG asked APC to consider two possible options in relation to this issue:

1. There is a scoping of current module assessment strategies and if required review module assessment LTAS guidance in respect of the number of assessments to be included per module prior to further consideration of the reintroduction of minimum thresholds. This ensures that programmes/module

teams have adequate time to revisit module assessment strategies as priority during coming academic session. 2. Re-introduce minimum thresholds for coming academic session in parallel with a revitalisation of module assessment LTAS guidance and subsequent alignment by programmes /module leaders as a matter of urgency. Clarification on which set of regulations apply to which cohort The ARWG recommended that any proposed changes to the Assessment Regulations take due attention of the CMA requirements and any potential disadvantage to students that proposed changes may have. APC may wish to propose a timeline for the consideration and approval of future assessment regulation alterations that would enable appropriate consultation with students. <u>Project/Dissertation Supervision Arrangements</u> That a short-life working group be established to review the on-going sufficiency of the current policy. 15.154 Discussion Members were broadly supportive of the recommendations and made the following comments: **Academic Appeals** Further consideration was required to: a) Include referral to Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) following exhaustion of the process. b) Review the wording surrounding preliminary disposal. **Double marking and Moderation of Assessments** There should be clarification that in cases where a third marker is required, this marker should be appropriately experienced and will determine the final mark. Nullification of a Module and Special Circumstances outwith the Control of Students Although members appreciated that nullification should be considered as an extreme measure, the Chair felt that the wording should remain as "exceptional". It was highlighted that the changes would not have circumvented the recent case of partial nullification but taking into account reinforcement of other regulations and procedures (as discussed under academic "pillars") the situation should be averted by an overall tightening of procedures. Quoracy and Requirement for External Examiner to attend Assessment Boards Bullet 4 should be removed as attendance by tele/video conferencing is considered simply as attendance. Student Mobility That a working group to consider the wider implications of student mobility be convened. **Generic Degrees** That the existing wording remains pending consultation with Strategy and Planning on numbers of students affected. Re-introduction of threshold minimum marks for all elements of assessment Members were broadly in favour of reintroducing minimum thresholds but felt

		that further discussion and implications should be explored. Therefore the existing regulations would stand for the 2016-17 session.
		Clarification on which set of regulations apply to which cohort APC agreed that changes should take account of CMA requirements and be introduced incrementally, where appropriate, if there is potential disadvantage to students/student cohorts as a result of the change.
15.155	Resolved	 That subject to the requirements specified above, the recommendations of the ARWG be approved. That the proposed changes to the regulations agreed by APC be recommended to Senate. (Action: Chair ARWG/ARWG).
CODE OF S	TUDENT CONDUCT	
15.156	Considered	 Changes to the Code of Student Conduct (APC15/50/1). A proposed process for the appointment of the Senate Disciplinary Committee chair (APC15/51/1).
15.157	Reported	By Ms Donnet that the Code of Student Conduct was introduced at the start of the 2015/16 academic year. During this first year of implementation a number of omissions and points of clarification have been identified and amendments/additions were detailed at Annex A.
15.158	Discussion	Members were broadly supportive of the changes but felt that emails to students' GCU email account is not sufficient on its own and that communication by letter should continue. Members agreed the change to regulation 11.2.2 where it was proposed that students found guilty of minor first offence of plagiarism or minor academic misconduct should have the attempt counted.
		The issue of potential lack of parity in penalties for students found to have cheated in examinations and those found to have plagiarised in courseworks (raised briefly under the ARWG item) was discussed at more length. Members were clear in their support for parity of sanctions for the offences of cheating and plagiarism. In addition members felt that more work was required on the definitions of plagiarism and poor academic practice.
15.159	Reported	By Ms Donnet that the process for appointing a chair of SDC had not been defined previously but it was opportune to do so with the Senate discussion in mind.
15.160	Discussion	Members felt that the proposed term of office was too long and felt the SDC would benefit from a more regular refresh. Members also agreed that it was not necessary for the Chair to be an academic with legal expertise and it may be beneficial to have Chair and vice chair from different subject areas. However members did not wish to make this a specific requirement.
15.161	Resolved	 That the proposed changes and additions to the Code of Student Conduct be approved subject to letter communications being retained. That there should be parity of sanctions for plagiarism and cheating and that the Code be reviewed further in this regard. That there is further consideration of the definitions of plagiarism used. That the Chair of SDC be an ex officio member of Academic Policy

		 Committee and attend Senate as a non-voting advisor. 5. That the process for appointing a Chair and Vice Chair be approved. 6. That the pool of SDC membership be extended by two to allow wider representation and recruitment of members with specific skills and expertise. 7. That the Code of Student Conduct be amended to include details of the terms of office, with all staff members appointed for a period of 3 years and the Chair and Vice Chair appointed for a period not exceeding 3 years in the first instance, extendable for further periods, each instance not exceeding 3 years. 8. That APC agreed that legal expertise is not a requirement for the Chair of SDC. (Action: Department of Governance)
HESA PER	FORMANCE INDICA	ATORS 2016
15.162	Considered	An overview of the University's performance in the 2016 HESA Performance Indicators (PIs) (APC15/49/1)
15.163	Resolved	That the overview be noted.
RECOGNIT	TION OF PRIOR LEA	ARNING (RPL) POLICY
15.164	Considered	A proposed amendment to the University Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy (APC15/46/1).
15.165	Reported	By Professor Whittaker that the changes were to align with the Assessment Regulations on merit and distinction and to set a time limit for making RPL claims during a student's programme of study. The Assessment Regulations Working Group had discussed this issue and had decided that the amount of credit required to be undertaken at GCU for the award of merit or distinction should remain unchanged and the RPL Policy was being updated to make this clear to potential RPL applicants.
		The time limit had been based on a scoping exercise of other HEIs and aligned with sector practice.
15.166	Resolved	That the amendments be approved (Action: Director GCU Lead).
STRATEG	Y FOR LEARNING	
15.167	Considered	Strategy for Learning Operational Plan for 2015/16: Annual Update (APC15/60/1).
15.168	Reported	By Professor Whittaker that the annual update on the implementation of the FL operational plan for 2015/ focused on the two priority areas agreed by APC in November 2015: Digital Learning and the Common Good Curriculum.
15.169	Resolved	That the Annual update be noted and recommended to Senate. (Action: Director GCU Lead).
DEVELOP	 ING LEARNING AN	IALYTICS CAPABILITY

15.170	Considered	An outline of progress to date on developing GCU's learning analytics capability including overview of our participation in the discovery phase of the JISC Effective Analytics programme. (APC15/47/1).
15.171	Reported	By Ms McNeill that the paper summarised current progress in developing GCU's capability around learning analytics and made a number of recommendations that are necessary to ensure that GCU can meet the aspirations of the Digital Strategy around the potential uses of data and learning analytics.
15.172	Discussion	Members found the summary of progress helpful and acknowledged there was a larger project to be undertaken on the basis of this but highlighted a need to align with Digital Strategy developments. It was critical that the Department of Governance -Information Compliance and IT Services were appropriately consulted throughout developments.
15.173	Resolved	The next steps outlined are agreed subject to appropriate consultation with IT Services and the Department of Governance (Information Governance). (Action: S MacNeill/GCU Lead)
THE TAU	GHT POSTGRADUA	ATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT GCU
15.174	Considered	An update following feedback from Schools (APC15/39/2).
15.175	Reported	By Ms Brown that the report now contained the School specific data.
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15.176	Resolved	That the main outcomes are channelled through appropriate academic development routes. (Action: J Brown/GCU Lead).
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15.183	Discussion	Dr McLarnon confirmed that the proposal was for a condensed Honours programme and that there would be SFC funding. Members felt that the structure and time management of the 3 year Honours programme would be crucial and would have to be defined clearly. It was recommended that the programme development team ensure that this aspect, in particular, is carefully thought out. Consultation with other departments and Schools would be expedient in this process.
15.184	Resolved	The concept paper for the programme BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice be approved.
SCHOOL C	OF HEALTH AND LI	FE SCIENCES – MoU PGC MEDICAL ULTRASOUND
15.185	Approved	The proposed renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding for the transnational delivery of the PgC Medical Ultrasound to Lifeway Specialized Training Centre, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE) subject to this being reclassified as a Memorandum of Agreement (APC15/53/1). (Action: SHLS Associate Dean International)
SCHOOL C	OF HEALTH AND LI	FE SCIENCES – ACADEMIC CASE
15.186	Considered	An academic case for Doctor of Physiotherapy (Pre-registration) (APC15/54/1).
15.187	Discussion	Professor Steves commended the excellent scoping work that gone into the case and requested more detail on the research content and referral to the Research Degrees Committee for scrutiny as the next step of its development.
15.188	Resolved	That the academic case be approved subject to additional consideration by the Research Degrees Committee. (Action: Department of Governance)
SCHOOL C	DF HEALTH AND LI	FE SCIENCES
15.189	Approved	A concept paper entitled Developing a Doctoral Framework in Applied Health and Wellbeing Psychology (APC15/55/1) subject to additional consideration by the Research Degrees Committee. (Action: Department of Governance)
SCHOOL C	 DF ENGINEERING	AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT – REVISED CONCEPT PAPER AND ACADEMIC CASE
15.190	Considered	 Revised concept paper for possible collaborative MSc Oil and Gas Innovation (APC15/13/2). Academic case for possible collaborative MSc Oil and Gas Innovation (APC15/57/1).
15.191	Reported	By Professor McMeekin that the original concept paper had been refined and was being represented to APC. The academic case was presented alongside due to time restraints for the collaboration. The collaborative memorandum of agreement was being prepared.
15.192	Discussion	Professor McMeekin stated that students would have access to resources (e.g. library) at the host institutions and the programme was designated as taught postgraduate. Discussions surrounding the MoA were ongoing with the support of the Department of Academic Quality and Development and any regulatory divergences would be brought to the Exceptions Subcommittee.

15.193	Approved	1. Revised concept paper for possible collaborative MSc Oil and Gas Innovation (APC15/13/2).
		2. Academic case for possible collaborative MSc Oil and Gas Innovation (APC15/57/1).
SCHOOL (OF ENGINEERING	AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT – CONCEPT PAPER
15.194	Approved	Concept paper for a programme MSc in Electrical Power Engineering (APC15/61/1).
COLLEGE	CONNECT	
15.195	Received	An Update Report with respect to the GGAP/College Connect Operational Plan, which has been agreed by the SFC for 2015-16 (APC15/56/1).
ADMISSIO	ONS SUBCOMMIT	TEE
15.196	Received	Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2015 (ASC15/2/A2).
EXCEPTIO	NS SUBCOMMIT	TEE .
15.197	Received	The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 14 August 2015 (ESC15/12/1).
CALENDA	R OF MEETINGS	
15.198		The calendar of meetings of the Academic Policy Committee for session 2016-17: Wednesday 14 September 2016 Wednesday 16 November 2016 Wednesday 1 February 2017
		Wednesday 22 March 2017 Wednesday 10 May 2017 (Venues To be confirmed)

Ag/apc/May2016/minutes