ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2014

PRESENT:	Dr L. Amrane-Cooper, Professor I.Cameron, Mr J. Gaughan, Ms M. Henaghan, Ms C Hulsen, Mr M. Jones, Professor J. Lennon, Ms J. Main, Mr V. McKay (*vice* Professor V. Webster), Dr N. McLarnon, Ms M. Miller (*vice R. Ruthven*), Dr S. Rate, Dr M. Sharp, Mr M. Stephenson, Professor B. Steves, Mr I Stewart, Professor V. Webster, Professor R Whittaker (Vice-Chair), Professor J Wilson (Chair).
APOLOGIES:	Ms S. McGiffen, Ms E. Wilson
BY INVITATION:	Dr N. Andrew, Professor J. Pugh
IN ATTENDANCE:	Professor M. Allan, Ms J. Brown, Ms J. Bruce, Mr S. Lopez, Mr P. Woods (Secretary)

MINUTES

14.060	Considered	The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2014 (APC14/26/1).
14.061	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

Sustainability Literacy Test (Arising on APCM14.041)

14.062	Reported	By the Secretary that feedback had been received from SEBE but was awaited from other Schools.
14.063	Reported	By Dr McLarnon that feedback had been submitted directly to the author but this would be communicated to the Secretary for information of APC.
14.064	Resolved	That all Schools submit their feedback to APC Secretary (**ADLTQs**).

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATIVE REPORTS

14.065	Considered	Annual reports of the University's Partnership and Collaborative Arrangements (APC14/36/1). *Secretary's note:* The annual report for MSc Health History was circulated at the meeting.
14.066	Reported	By Mrs Henaghan that this was the first time this reporting exercise had been undertaken so she thanked everyone for their effort. In future there would be more consideration of timing and more guidance on the required content with a view to avoiding duplication with any other processes. This will be built into the

governance and quality enhancement processes.

She added that not all reports had been received. These would be followed up at the next meeting of APC.

14.067	Reported	By Dr McLarnon that there were 8 reports related to the School of Health and Life Sciences. In most respects the collaborations were going well although the 2 podiatric programmes required follow up action. These programmes were also due for re-approval in 2015.
14.068	Reported	By Dr Rate that the report was completed in co-operation with Dr Amrane-Cooper who comment on the report.
14.069	Reported	By Dr Amrane –Cooper that there were a number of issues to follow up with the main one being that students in London were performing less well than those in Glasgow. She felt that a move to a School governance structure would help to address some of the issues around this.
14.070	Reported	By Mr Stewart that one of the reports (BA Hons Interior Design) was being corrected and would be brought to the next meeting of APC. He asked Professor Malcolm Allan to introduce the CCE Oman report.
14.071	Reported	By Professor Allan that the CCEO arrangements were a long standing collaboration of large scale, with 2500 students. The external examiner reports and student feedback suggested that the arrangements were working well albeit with some room for improvement.
14.072	Reported	By Professor Whittaker that Marty Wright as Academic Head of the School for Work Based Education should be invited to future meetings to address the programmes within the School for Work Based Education.
14.073	Reported	By the Chair that it was important to routinise this process for future years and ensure robust reporting on partnership arrangements. There was also a need to be aware that, for ELIR 2015, historical information from previous years' Annual Programme Analyses is likely to be required to supplement these reports.
14.074	Discussion	Members considered whether or not the arrangement with the University of Jinan fell within the scope of this process. In general, members felt that arrangement did not fit with this particular reporting process as there were no award bearing programmes, although it was agreed that there was scope for a wider periodic review of collaborative learning and teaching arrangements.
14.075	Discussion	It was noted that the INTO report was lacking in quantitative data. Mrs Henaghan would be discussing this with the INTO GCU Academic Director and ADLTQs were welcome to contribute.
14.076	Resolved	1. That outstanding collaborative reports are brought to the next meeting. 2. That the Head of School for Work Based Education (SFWBE) is invited to join APC and to discuss the SFWBE partnership reports as part of the follow up session. (**G&QE to co-ordinate**)

EXTERNAL EXAMINING AT GCU

14.077	Considered	A paper focusing on the next steps in External Examining policy and practice to ensure that GCU meets/exceeds the QAA UK Quality Code criteria (APC14/46/1).
14.078	Reported	By Dr Andrew that the paper contained two proposals: 1. To make external examiner reports available via GCU Learn from 2015-16. 2. To make external examiner reports publically available via the Governance and Quality Enhancement website from 2016-17.
14.079	Discussion	Members welcomed the proposal to publish on GCU Learn. They asked if publication of reports on websites was common practice. Dr Andrew replied that many HEIs were doing this currently. In order to have a consistency of approach there would be a common screening process where any elements of reports that may be subject to data protection

legislation would be redacted. This would be undertaken by the Department of Governance and Quality Enhancement.

Members agreed that Programme Board responses should also be added to GCU Learn when they were available. They also discussed the timing of the publication of the report and subsequent Programme Board response and how this would fit with the timing of Student- Staff Consultative Groups. The addition of a flow chart would help to clarify the timing issue.

Members considered including a specific disciplinary warning to students not to contact external examiners. It was felt that the Code of Student Conduct was a sufficient mechanism to deal with any breach but, more generally, it should be reinforced at student induction that contact with the external examiners is not allowed.   Equally, the point would be reinforced to external examiners at their induction.

14.080	Resolved:	1. That appropriately redacted reports are published. 2. That the location for publication will be GCU Learn (from 2015-16) and the G&QE website (from 2016-17). 3. That Governance and Quality Enhancement undertake appropriate redaction to ensure data protection compliance. (**G&QE**)

REVIEW OF THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND ASSURANCE HANDBOOK

14. 081	Considered	Review of the function and purpose of the GCU Quality Enhancement and Assurance Handbook (QEAH) aligned to the concurrent development of Good Practice Guidelines (Quality Enhancement and Academic Development) (APC14/30/1).
14. 082	Reported	By Dr Andrew that review and re-focus the GCU Quality Enhancement and Assurance Handbook (QEAH) to provide a more concise, high level profile and summary of strategic, GCU Quality Assurance Policy and Enhancement policy. In parallel with this development, good practice guidelines would be developed and the appendices to this paper gave an outline of how this would be presented.
14. 083	Resolved	That the recommendations for the refocus of the Quality Enhancement and Assurance Handbook (QEAH) and development of good practice guidance are approved.

STRATEGY FOR LEARNING OPERATIONAL PLAN 2014-15

14.085	Considered	The updated Strategy for Learning operational plan and progress update (APC14/27/1).
14.086	Reported	By Professor Whittaker that the operational plan had been considered by the LTQE network and LTSC and colleagues were content with the plan and its priorities. Progress was on schedule in the four priority areas. Online learning was the most challenging area and at this stage some more information was required from Schools. Social entrepreneurship was progressing well and a number of examples had already been received. There would be a social entrepreneurship showcase event, linked to Ashoka U on 31 March 2015.
14.087	Discussion	It was clarified that under Peer Support staff were being *encouraged* to participate and were not *required* to participate. It was suggested that there was a need for greater visibility of postgraduate research students in the SfL plans. Professor Whittaker replied that there was a Graduate School representative on the LTQN and LTSC and she invited feedback

		on PGRS in these two fora as appropriate.
14.088	Resolved	That the SfL Operational Plan is approved.

GCU STUDENT TIMETABLE PROJECT

14.089	Considered	An overview of a project to look at the Student Experience aspects of timetabling, in relation to the when and how timetables and associated updates are communicated. (APC14/29/1).
14.090	Reported	By Mr Lopez that the paper outlined the scope and aims of the project in relation to the when and how timetables and associated updates are communicated to the student population. The NSS results showed that the lack of proper communication of changes and/or cancellations was a significant source of student dissatisfaction.
14.091	Discussion	Members agreed that the project was an important piece of work and supported its aims. The Chair informed members that the Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee had identified "hygiene" factors as being a primary source of student dissatisfaction (rather than teaching) and he commended the project as potentially hugely beneficial.
14.092	Resolved	That the project aims are noted and endorsed.

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS WORKING GROUP

14.093	Considered	Notes of the two meetings held in this trimester and composition, remit and 2014-15 work plan (APC14/33/1).
14.094	Reported	By Professor Pugh that Iain Stewart would introduce the Integrated Masters item.
14.095	Considered	Integrated Masters Programmes – principles (APC14/34/1).
14.096	Reported	By Mr Stewart that the paper set out some key principles that were required to underpin the development of Integrated Masters programmes. As programme developments were underway in SEBE, the Assessment Regulations working Group had agreed on the definition of a set of principles to allow progress in the short term.
14.097	Discussion	By Professor Pugh that the Assessment Regulations Working Group were conscious of the need to be sufficiently flexible to allow for variations in Integrated Masters programmes, potentially in a number of different subject areas, but also to contain these variations within specific parameters which would be written in to Assessment Regulations. It was intended to implement these regulations from session from 2015-16 so the Integrated Masters text would be brought to APC for approval during this session.
14.098	Resolved	That the model is approved in principle, subject to: 1. An appropriate phasing schedule. 2. Appropriate regulatory text. (**ARWG**)
14.099	Considered	Consideration of the discontinuation of extra time and translation dictionaries for non-Anglophone international students and the application of this change.
14.100	Reported	By Mr Stephenson that the rationale for discontinuation of extra time had been made but that there had not been a separate rationale for discontinuing the use of translation dictionaries for non-Anglophone international students.
14.101	Reported	By Professor Pugh that the legal points were logically the same. Firstly that the University was open to a potential challenge from students not classed as "international" for discriminatory practice; secondly there were Home Office expectations about students English language proficiency as a condition of their visa.
14.102	Discussion	Members discussed whether the removal of dictionaries was unduly draconian. It was stated that many Universities did allow dictionaries in specified circumstances, such as in open book examinations and also where module leaders specified that all students were allowed access to dictionaries.

Other members pointed out that the existing regulations for the conduct of examinations allowed for module leaders to specify what form of materials could be accessed during exams (e.g. calculators, log books etc.) and this would, of course, apply to all candidates in the exam.

With regard to difficulties with subject specific terminology members were reminded that students were allowed to request clarification from a module expert via the invigilators.

| 14.103 | Resolved | That the regulations in relation to use of translation dictionaries in examinations are upheld. |

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

| 14.104 | Considered | The draft Code of Student Conduct (to replace current Code of Student Discipline) (APC14/35/1). |
| 14.105 | Reported | By Professor Pugh that a lot of work had been done on this draft by Janice Bruce, Moira MacMillan (Chair of Senate Disciplinary Committee) and Michael Bromby (Vice Chair of Senate Disciplinary Committee) and he thanked them for their input. |

He acknowledged there were some minor typographical errors which would be corrected in the final version. He asked members for their views.

| 14.106 | Discussion | Members identified a number of issues. |

The Section 1.2 allowed for students on professionally registered programmes to be subject to Fitness to Practice regulations "instead" of the Code of Student Conduct. Some members were concerned that Fitness to Practice taking precedence was potentially problematic.

Mr McKay informed the Committee that there was a requirement for professionally registered programmes in the School of Health and Life Sciences to have fitness to practice procedures which allowed for sanctions up to and including withdrawal from programme. This was a requirement for continuing professional accreditation of many programmes in the School.

There was general recognition that there was a need to align the two processes particularly to address anomalies whereby students withdrawn under SHLS Fitness to Practice could, potentially, transfer to programmes in other Schools and where complete withdrawal from the University may be the more appropriate sanction. The flexibility to do implement both procedures was required.

Members agreed that, at 8.1, "on the face of it" should be replaced.

In section 8.3 it was queried as to whether there should be statement regarding receipt of results for students suspended under the Code. Members felt that this could vary on a case by case basis so the constraints should be detailed in the suspension letter, not the code.

At section 9.2.5 it was noted that there was not yet a pool of trained mediation staff.

Members queried, at 11.4 under Major Academic Misconduct (v) "expunging of credit", and the context in which it should be used. Members felt that it may be unduly draconian without the framing of circumstances in which it may be

applied. Professor Pugh stated that this was the most extreme sanction and intended to be used in rare and serious cases and that, although he felt it should available as a sanction, there was a need for consistency of application. At the moment this contextualisation was not available but would be provided to APC by the student disciplinary report due at the February APC.

Members felt that a monetary fine served no useful purpose and may be discriminatory.

It was questioned as to whether a Head of Department should be the lead on all initial investigations regardless of offence (e.g. related to misuse of student ID cards, student accommodation). Professor Pugh stated that he felt it was appropriate for the Head of Department to lead investigations taking advice from other areas where required.

It was pointed out that at Appendix 1 xiii, absenteeism was already dealt with under the Student Attendance Policy and should be removed from the Code. There was, however, a need to ensure the Student Attendance Policy was consistent with the Code of Student Conduct with regard to suspensions.

The issue of membership of the Senate Disciplinary Committee/Appeal Committee of the University Court (ACUC) was raised and whether or not it was appropriate to have a wider pool of student members to avoid scheduling difficulties. Members agreed that an expanded pool of suitably trained and approved student members for SDC was appropriate but the membership of ACUC may be constrained by the University's Statutory Instruments.

Professor Pugh clarified that the implementation of the Code would be from the beginning of session 2015-16.

14.107	Resolved	That, subject to the following amendments and clarification of the position on ACUC membership, the Code of Student be approved and recommended to Senate:

1. At Section 1.2 line 5 the word "instead" is replaced by "in addition to".
2. At section 8.1 "If, on the face of it, there is evidence.." is replaced by "If there is prima facie evidence…"
3. At section 11.4 *Sanctions which may be imposed by Senate Disciplinary Committee* and under *Major Non-Academic Misconduct* point ii ("A fine") is removed.
4. In appendix 1 xiii (beginning "absenteeism") is removed.
5. In appendix 1 xiv "ED" is replaced by "Dean".
6. In appendix 4 the composition is amended to allow for student representation from a pool of suitably trained and approved student representatives (**G&QE**).

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY ACTION PLANS

14.108	Considered	School action plans for the NSS 2015. (APC14/28/1).
14.109	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the report summarised the Schools' action plans and performance against the plans. The target satisfaction rating is 90% or above. For 2015 the work would begin in January and continue through 2015. She commented that it was a challenging period for the Schools in relation to the campus building works.
14.110	Resolved	That the report is noted.

PROGRESSION AND COMPLETION

14.111	Considered	An oral report by the Director of Strategy and Planning.

14.112	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the Scottish Funding Council's timetable meant that the report would be due in January 2015 so the report would be presented to the subsequent APC meeting.

She summarised the details available at this stage:

There is stasis at levels 1 & 2
There is a 2% improvement at level 3
There is a 1% improvement at Honours level.
Taught postgraduate showed small improvements

She added that there were variations in performance beneath these overall headline figures.

14.113	Resolved	That the update is noted.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS

14.114	Considered	Recommendations and action plan to supplements the recently completed institutional research project (report presented to September 2014 APC) (APC14/32/1).
14.115	Reported	By Ms Brown that LTSC had approved the recommendations and this action plan had been developed relating to the recommendations. The various responsibilities were now identified.
14.116	Resolved	That the action plan is approved.

LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE (LTSC) ANNUAL REPORT

14.117	Approved	The LTSC Annual Report 2013-14 (LTSC14/27/1).

EXCEPTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

14.118	Approved	The Exceptions Subcommittee Annual Report (APC14/37/1)

GCU LONDON CONCEPT PAPERS

14.119	Approved	Concept papers for: 1. MSC Fashion Business Creation (APC14/38/1). 2. MSc Digital Fashion Strategy (APC14/39/1).

SEBE ACADEMIC CASE

14.120	Approved	Academic Case for Collaboration with the International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM), Muscat, Oman. (APC14/40/1).

SEBE – CONCEPT PAPERS

14.121	Approved	Concept papers for: 1. BEng/MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering (APC14/41/1). 2. MSc/PgD Digital Product Design and Prototyping (APC14/42/1).

SHLS- CONCEPT PAPER

14.122	Approved	Concept papers for: 1. Postgraduate Diploma Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Award (APC14/43/1). 2. Pre-registration accelerated Master of Nursing for graduates (APC14/44/1).

SHLS – ACADEMIC CASE

14.123	Approved	An academic case for Postgraduate Diploma Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Award (APC14/47/1)

GCU LONDON DEVELOPMENTS BRIEFING PAPER

14.124	Received	A GCU London Developments Briefing Paper (APC14/13/1).

BLENDED LEARNING ANNUAL REPORT

14.125   Received   The revised Blended Learning Annual Report 2013-14 (APC13/74/2).

GGAP / COLLEGE CONNECT PROGRESS UPDATE FOR DECEMBER 2014

14.126   Received   GGAP/College Connect progress update for December 2014 (APC14/45/1).

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP 2014-15

14.127   Received   The revised Composition and Membership 2014-15 (APC14/12/1).

LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE

14.128   Received   Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2014 (LTSC12/24/1).

EXCEPTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

14.129   Received   Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2014 (EC13/11/1).