

## **Report from the meeting of Senate held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

### **1. PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR'S AND EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT**

Senate received a report from the Principal and Vice Chancellor and Executive Board to update members on substantive items considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Senate.

In response to a question in relation to the ongoing industrial action by UCU staff, and the position of students and wider HE sector staff on casual contracts in particular, the Chair advised that UCEA had very recently contacted Vice Chancellors informing that work was underway to reopen negotiations. The University recognised staff's right to strike and contingency plans were in place to ensure that students were not disadvantaged. In relation to the position of casual staff, it was highlighted that the University had low levels of casual staff as a lot of work had already been done in this area and further work would continue.

### **2. Senate Composition**

Senate considered a report detailing the outcome of a consultation on proposals for a revised Senate composition. The current composition of Senate was not compliant with the requirements of the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. The Act's key requirements here are for the elected membership to be in a majority (currently it is limited to not more than two thirds of the ex officio membership) and for at least 10% of the total membership to be elected students.

The reported highlighted the proposed changes in the composition, most notably the increase in elected academic staff and elected student members to ensure that at least 51% of membership was elected, and that at least 10% of overall membership was students. The proposed removal of co-opted members, meant that the Professional and Support Staff Governor and the representative from City of Glasgow College would no longer be Senate members, and co-opted student members would be included within the elected student members.

Additionally, following further consideration, Senate was asked to consider the inclusion of the Director of Learning and Teaching as an ex-officio member. This reflected the importance of learning and teaching within Senate's terms of reference and regular business, and it would echo the position of the Director of the Graduate School in relation to research.

Following discussion, Senate agreed a revised composition with a total of 45 Senate members, with 19 (42.2%) ex officio members, 26 (57.7%) elected members (academic staff and students), and 6 (13.3%) elected student members.

A report on the revised Senate composition is on the agenda for this meeting, for Court's approval

### **3. ELIR Update**

The DVC (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) informed Senate that the planning visit by the ELIR Panel on 6th February had gone well, and the Panel had expressed its appreciation at the collegiate engagement with students and staff. The Panel would be back on campus for the review the week beginning 23rd March and initial feedback would be given on the 27th April, with the draft report a week to ten days later. The final report would be received the week beginning 13th July.

The Chair expressed appreciation for the hard work undertaken by staff and students involved in the ELIR.

#### **4. Mitigating Circumstances Policy Update**

Senate considered a report and received an update from the Academic Registrar on progress made in considering revisions to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy. The intention to introduce a “fit to sit” approach whereby students could self-declare that they were not fit to undertake an assessment, without the submission of evidence, either beforehand or up to two days after an assessment, was welcomed. In discussion, it was requested that the opportunity for students to submit an impact assessment be retained as this was a potential route for the University to identify students in need of wellbeing or other support, and it was also requested that students be given longer than two days, post assessment to declare that they had not been fit. The need for better awareness of the policy, amongst both staff and students, was also raised.

Senate endorsed the direction of travel being taken in the review of Mits, subject to the points raised at the meeting, and noted that an updated policy would be submitted to a future meeting.

#### **5. Strategy 2030 Update**

Senate received an update on the development of Strategy 2030. The Director of Strategy and Planning reported that following extensive consultation, feedback received from staff and students had contributed to the refinement of Strategy 2030. The Strategy would be underpinned by two enabling strategies: research, and teaching and learning, and these would be submitted to Senate in due course. Senate endorsed the draft strategy, ahead of submission to Court in April 2020 for approval,

#### **6. Banded Marking**

Dean of the School of Health and Life Sciences (Chair of the Banded Marking Task and Finish Group), updated Senate that following discussion at Senate on 1st March 2019, a Banded Marking Task and Finish Group had been established to explore banded marking and identify barriers to the introduction of banded marking. The work had been divided into three separate work-groups, and both staff and students had been consulted. Both staff and students were generally supportive of a move to banded marking but there were a number of outstanding issues to be explored further, and Senate’s feedback on this was sought.

Following discussion Senate endorsed the direction of work being taken by the Banded Marking Task and Finish Group, and requested that a cost benefit analysis on the introduction of banded marking be undertaken by the Group.

#### **7. REF Update**

Senate noted an update from the PVC Research on preparations for the REF. It was highlighted that 35% of eligible staff expected to be entered into the REF, which was a 40% increase on REF 2014. Each Unit of Assessment would be subject to audit and the University would be undertaking a mock audit. Senate expressed appreciation for all staff involved in supporting the REF submission.

#### **8. Complaints Annual Report 2018/19**

Senate considered the overview of complaints received by the University in Session 2018/19. It was noted that the number of complaints received in 2018/19 was broadly in line with previous years, with 148 Stage 1 (frontline) complaints received and 12 stage 2, complaint investigations undertaken. No complaints were referred to the SPSO by the complainant.

A revised model complaints handling procedure (CHP) had recently been announced by the SPSO and Universities had until April 2021 to comply. One welcome, significant change to the current CHP was the introduction of a “resolved” outcome to stage 2 complaint investigations. Work was underway to update the University’s CHP and this would be reported back to Senate in due course.

The full report is appended to the University Secretary’s report on this agenda, for noting.

#### **9. Senate Disciplinary Committee Annual Report 2018/19**

Senate received report detailing student misconduct offences considered under the terms of the [Code of Student Conduct](#) during Session 2018/19. The Chair of the Senate Disciplinary Committee (SDC) reported that overall there had been 31 alleged breaches of the Code of Student Conduct, of which 15 had been referred to SDC for consideration. The introduction in 2017/18 of a letter of guidance for minor examination infringements had been very effective, and eight cases had been dealt with in this manner rather than by referral to SDC. It was highlighted that there had been an increase in the number of complex and sensitive cases considered under the Code, and it was hoped that initiatives such as the Erase the Grey campaign had encouraged students to report inappropriate conduct.

A copy of the report is attached at **Appendix 1** for information.

#### **10 HESA Performance Indicators 2020**

The Director of Strategy and Planning presented a report providing an overview of the HESA Performance Indicators 2020 relating to widening participation and non-continuation, set within the context of the Scottish HE sector.

In particular, it was highlighted that:-

- In 2017/18, 96.7% of young, first degree GCU students were from a state school or college, ahead of the benchmark of 90% and sector average of 87.4%;
- GUC’s projected degree completion had increased by 1.4% to 80.7%, against the Strategy 2020 target of 80% and ahead of all other Scottish, modern universities, and the sector as a whole (79.8%);
- The drop-out rate was 7.8%, the lowest of all Scottish, modern HEIs.
- Non-continuation after first year of study had improved by 0.2% to 8.3%, against a Strategy 2020 target of 7%.

It was further highlighted that these figures had to be seen in the context of the University’s widening participation profile and this would be reflected in the University’s feedback to the SFC.

Senate noted the report and the University’s strong performance, and expressed thanks to all staff involved in helping the University achieve these positive results.

#### **11. School of Computing Engineering and Built Environment: Portfolio Refresh and Programme Withdrawal**

Senate considered a report by the Vice Dean, School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment, outlining the rationale and consideration process for the withdrawal of seven programmes as part of the School’s portfolio refresh. Senate approved the withdrawal of the following Programmes:-

BSc Health & Safety Management (PT)  
BSc (Hons) Health, Safety & Environmental Management (PT)  
MEng Mechanical & Power Plant Systems  
BEng (Hons) Mechanical & Power Plant Systems (FT and PT)  
MEng Electrical, Electronic & Energy Engineering  
BEng (Hons) Electrical, Electronic & Energy Engineering (FT and PT)  
BSc (Hons) IT Management for Business (FT)

Senate noted the suspension of recruitment to the following programmes, whilst a review of the provision in these areas was considered:-

BSc (Hons) Fire Risk Engineering  
BSc (Hons) Real Estate  
BSc (Hons) Building Services Engineering (Level 1)  
MSc Building Services Engineering

## **12 Approval of Chair's Action**

Senate homologated the following Chair's Actions:-

- Terms of Reference and Standard Operation of Progression and Award Boards and Associated Activities; and
- Research degree: award of one PhD

## **13. Other Matters Approved**

- The award of 13 PhDs, 1 Prof D and 1 DBA.
- The updated membership of the Academic Appeals Committee 2019/20.
- The Updated Committee Terms of Reference, Composition and Membership 2019/20 of the International Committee.
- The proposed calendar of meetings for Senate and Standing Committees for Session 2020/21.

## **14. Other Matters Noted**

- The Research Bulletin updating on research related activities for Trimester A.
- Recent academic staff appointments.
- The confirmed minutes of APPC held on 6th November 2019.
- The confirmed minutes of the Research Committee held on 13th November 2019. The confirmed minute of the meetings of the International Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019.
- The confirmed minutes from the School of Health and Life Sciences School Board held on 11<sup>th</sup> October and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019.
- The confirmed minutes from the School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment School Board held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019.
- Honorary Appointments.
- Summary report from the meetings of the University Court held on 20<sup>th</sup> February.

**Date of the next scheduled meeting of Senate is Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020.**

## Executive Summary Paper

<b>Committee:</b>	Senate		
<b>Title</b>	Senate Disciplinary Committee Annual Report 2018/19		
<b>Sponsored by</b>	University Secretary and VP Governance		
<b>Author ( if different from sponsor)</b>	Deborah Donnet, Assistant Head Governance		
<b>Please tick ✓ as appropriate)</b>	For information	✓	For discussion
	For noting		For approval
	For endorsement		

### 1. Purpose of the Paper and Summary of Key Issues and Information

*What is the purpose of the paper and what key issues do you want to bring to Court's/Senate's/the committee's/Executive Board's attention?*

A report on student misconduct offences considered under the terms of the Code of Student Conduct during Session 2018/19.

### 2. Recommendations

*What decisions or actions are required by Court/Senate/the committee/Executive Board?*

The report is provided for information.

### 3. Freedom of Information

*Unless you specify otherwise, this paper will be deemed available for unredacted release under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) 2002 Act. If some, or all of the paper, should not be released, briefly explain the reason. Examples include: commercial sensitivity, personal information.*

No concerns.

### 4. Consultation undertaken/required

Who have you consulted when developing the paper?	Department of Governance Chair of the Senate Disciplinary Committee
Has this paper been submitted to the Student Action Group for Engagement (SAGE)?	No
Have you already submitted this paper to any other committee for discussion and/or approval? If yes, please state which committee	No
Will you require to submit this paper to any other committee following its consideration/approval at this meeting?  If yes, please state the committee and date of meeting[s.]	Yes –Court 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2020

### 5. Promulgation of Decision/Actions and Implementation

Who will be responsible for ensuring the decision taken by the Court/Senate/committee and/or actions arising from the meeting are promulgated to the relevant people for implementation?	Assistant Head Governance
Who will be responsible for overseeing any resultant changes or implementation plan as a result of the decision taken or actions arising from the meeting?	Assistant Head Governance

***NB. Please ensure that all sections of the form have been completed. Incomplete forms will be returned which may result in your paper not being included in the meeting papers and will have the result of delaying business.***

## Senate Disciplinary Committee Annual Report 2018/19

### Introduction

1. The Senate Disciplinary Committee (SDC) is responsible for considering and disposing of any allegation made against a student which constitutes a major breach of the Code of Student Conduct (the [Code](#)). The SDC also considers instances of major repeat plagiarism which may be referred following completion of the procedures as set out in Section 9.6 of the Code (*please note that a separate overview of plagiarism offences is considered annually by the Learning and Teaching Sub Committee of the Academic Policy and Practice Committee*). This annual report also includes information on minor disciplinary offences which are investigated by the Dean of School, or equivalent, under the terms of Sections 9.3 and 9.4 of the Code.
2. During Session 2018/19 a total of 31 alleged disciplinary offences were considered under the terms of the Code. As is shown in Table 1 in Appendix A, over the course of the last six years there has been no clear trend, with the number of alleged offences reported tending to be erratic.
3. To give an idea of the small scale of alleged Code breaches, it is worth noting that the 31 cases arise from a student cohort of around 16.8k.

### Discussion

4. Of the 31 alleged offences considered under the terms of the Code (see Appendix B), referral to the SDC was not required in 17 cases as:
  - a) 7 minor offences were reported which were dealt with internally by the School (cases 1-7); and
  - b) On 8 occasions students were issued with a letter of guidance in relation to minor technical examination infringements with no formal disciplinary action taken (cases 8- 15).
  - c) On 1 occasion, following receipt of additional information not available at the time of referral, it was established it would not be possible to take the referral forward (case 16).
5. In total, 15 cases were formally referred for consideration by the Senate Disciplinary Committee (see Appendix B), this compares to 26 cases in 2017/18:
  - a) 4 cases of student suspension (protective suspension) were considered during Session 2018/19 pending the outcome of criminal investigations or due to the serious nature of the allegations requiring immediate action by the University (cases 17-20). (*In accordance with Section 8 of the Code the SDC are required to review student suspensions imposed by the DVC Academic in response to an immediate requirement for action*). Disciplinary allegations against 3 students were later upheld with all 3 students expelled. In one case no formal disciplinary action was taken when the outcome of a criminal trial resulted in a not-guilty verdict, and the alleged offence had taken place 18 months prior to the student joining the university.
  - b) In 8 cases, disciplinary allegations were upheld with sanctions imposed (cases 21-28).
  - c) In 3 cases, disciplinary allegations were not upheld (cases 29-31).
  - d) No appeals to the Appeal Committee of the University Court (ACUC) were received against the 2018/19 decisions of the Senate Disciplinary Committee.
6. There has been a reduction in Major Academic Misconduct and numbers have dropped from 14 in 2016/17 to 1 in 2017/18 and 2 in 2018/19. Previous cases of this nature have predominantly involved investigation of ghost-writing. Whilst we cannot be certain, it may be that the drop in cases of this nature is as a result of increased awareness through news and social media of the serious view that institutions and wider society take of ghost-writing and the implications for

transgressing students. A more sinister but also untested interpretation would point to ghost-writing becoming more sophisticated and thus more difficult to detect.

7. As outlined at 5(a) above, SDC considered four cases where a protective suspension was imposed by the DVC (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience), in line with the Code of Student Conduct, pending prescribed review by SDC within 14 days. Protective suspension is not a sanction, but may be put in place where there is perceived to be risk to the individual concerned or where it is felt precautionary action is needed to ensure the well-being of others. The University has a duty of care to victims of alleged breaches of the Code and alleged offenders, and cases involving protective suspension are considered at a case conference involving normally Governance, Student Experience, Student Wellbeing, Security, Chair of SDC and academic staff as appropriate. Cases are risk assessed before recommending protective suspension and its exact terms. This is to ensure that the protective suspension is both proportionate and reasonable in light of the circumstances and wherever possible, steps are taken to minimise the academic impact of suspension on the individual.
8. Case conferences are also used to assess other complex cases that may result in referral to SDC, for example where a student's behaviour gives cause for concern but is not necessarily a clear breach of the Code of Student Conduct, where there may be underlying mental health concerns, or where the University has been made aware that the student is the subject of a criminal investigation/conviction. Overall, there was an increase in the number of cases in 2018/19, and the complexity of cases being referred to SDC for consideration has increased, both in relation to academic and non-academic breaches of the Code of Student Conduct. These cases often require several case conferences together with a detailed investigation, liaison with external bodies and the compilation of extensive documentation for the Committee to consider.

### **Future Developments**

9. Due to the wide variation in the nature of the offences being considered under the Code of Student Conduct and referred to SDC, consideration is being given to reviewing the Code and the penalties within it in particular. Work is also needed to gain a better understanding of the evolving techniques that give rise to academic misconduct, and to devise actions to counter these. This latter is a challenge for the sector and not just the University, with UUK lobbying government to introduce legislation to assist.



Table 1

Number of Alleged Disciplinary Offences	
Year	Number of Alleged Offences
18/19	31
17/18	26
16/17	52
15/16	34
14/15	45
13/14	40

Table 2

Breakdown of Alleged Disciplinary Offences by school	
School	Number of Offences
Graduate School	0
GCU London	1
GSBS	9
SHLS	11
SCEBE	9
INTO	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

Table 3

Breakdown of Alleged Disciplinary Offences by student status		
Student status	Total number students 18-19 16,860	Number of Offences
Overseas	1239	11
Home	13880	18
EU	1053	1
RUK	688	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,860</b>	<b>31</b>

Table 4.a

MINOR OFFENCES - Breakdown by type of alleged offence	
Type of Offence	Number of Offences (17-18 stats)
Academic Misconduct	1
Inappropriate Behaviour	5
Theft	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 (6)</b>

**Table 4.b**

<b>MAJOR OFFENCES - Breakdown by type of alleged offence</b>	
<b>Type of Offence</b>	<b>Number of Offences (17-18 stats)</b>
Infringement of the University Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations	14 (15)
Inappropriate Behaviour	0 (1)
Gender Based Violence	3 (0)
Criminal Convictions	1 (0)
Forgery/Fraud	0 (0)
Repeat Plagiarism *	1 (1)
Academic Misconduct/Contract cheating/Ghost-writing	2 (1)
Research Misconduct	1 (0)
Harassment	0 (1)
Theft	1 (1)
Use/Possession of a Controlled Substance	1 (0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 (20)</b>

*\* A separate overview of plagiarism offences is considered annually by the Learning and Teaching Sub Committee of the Academic Policy and Practice Committee.*

## Breakdown of Student Misconduct Offences Session 2018/19

NOT REFERRED TO SDC				
4.a – MINOR OFFENCES				
Case	Category	Sub Type of Offence	Upheld/ Not Upheld	Outcome
1	Theft	Theft of USB drive contents used to plagiarise fellow students work	Minor upheld	Reprimand, required to engage with appropriate support, assessment annulled with resubmission capped at relevant pass mark
2	Inappropriate Behaviour	Matriculation misuse swiping	Minor upheld	Reprimand, required to engage with appropriate university support services
3	Academic Misconduct	Academic misconduct - falsifying questionnaire data for dissertation	Minor upheld	Formal reprimand and reduction of mark to the relevant pass mark
4	Inappropriate Behaviour	Matric misuse swiping	Minor upheld	Reprimand, requirement to engage with appropriate university support services
5	Inappropriate Behaviour	Matric misuse swiping	Minor upheld	Reprimand, requirement to engage with appropriate support services
6	Inappropriate Behaviour	Matric misuse swiping	Minor upheld	Reprimand, requirement to engage with appropriate support services
7	Inappropriate Behaviour	Photographed two pages of protocol during OSCA but did not share	Minor upheld	Reprimand and letters of apology
4.b – LETTER OF GUIDANCE				
Case	Category	Sub Type of Offence	Upheld/Not Upheld	Outcome
8	Examination Infringement	Technical breach. Unauthorised material programmable calculator	No formal allegation considered	Letter of Guidance
9	Examination Infringement	Technical breach - Unauthorised material phone	No formal allegation considered	Letter of Guidance
10	Examination Infringement	Failure to stop writing at end of exam and aggressive/abusive language towards invigilators	No formal allegation considered	Letter of Guidance
11	Examination Infringement	Technical breach - Formulae on calculator lid	No formal allegation considered	Letter of Guidance
12	Examination Infringement	Technical breach - Formulae on calculator lid	No formal allegation considered	Letter of Guidance
13	Examination Infringement	Technical breach - Unauthorised material phone	No formal allegation considered	Letter of Guidance

14	Examination Infringement	Technical breach - Unauthorised material phone	No formal allegation considered	Letter of Guidance
15	Examination Infringement	Unauthorised material lined note paper	No formal allegation considered	Letter of Guidance
<b>4.c – NOT TAKEN FORWARD</b>				
	<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub Type of Offence</b>	<b>Upheld/Not Upheld</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
16	Theft	Theft of a fellow students mobile phone	No formal allegation considered	Student withdrew from programme prior to conclusion of police investigation
<b>REFERRED TO SDC</b>				
<b>5.a – POTECTIVE SUSPENSION</b>				
	<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub Type of Offence</b>	<b>Upheld/Not Upheld</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
17	Internet related offences	Nature of conviction and court conditions imposed not compatible with being a student	Upheld	Initial Protective Suspension then student subsequently expelled after conclusion of criminal investigation
18	GBV - Domestic Assault	Criminal Conviction Domestic Assault	Upheld	Initial Protective Suspension then student subsequently expelled after conclusion of criminal investigation
19	GBV - Domestic Assault	Criminal Conviction Domestic Assault	Upheld	Initial Protective Suspension then student subsequently expelled after conclusion of criminal investigation
20	GBV - Sexual Misconduct	Criminal Charges - Sexual Misconduct	Not upheld	Protective suspension during court case. Not Guilty verdict issued by court - no internal disciplinary action taken as alleged offence occurred out with GCU prior to the student joining the University
<b>5.b - SDC UPHELD</b>				
	<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub Type of Offence</b>	<b>Upheld/Not Upheld</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
21	Examination Infringement	Unauthorised material crib note	Upheld	Reprimand and two attempts at examination removed
22	Examination Infringement	Unauthorised material crib notes on ruler	Upheld	Reprimand, examination annulled, resubmit with resubmission capped at relevant pass mark
23	Examination Infringement	Unauthorised material crib notes	Upheld	Reprimand, examination annulled, resubmit with resubmission capped at relevant pass mark
24	Examination Infringement	Unauthorised material phone	Upheld	Reprimand, two attempts at exam removed, four month suspension
25	Ghost-writing	Ghost-writing commercial	Upheld	Reprimand, two attempts at coursework removed

26	Repeat Plagiarism	Repeat Plagiarism	Upheld	Student required to resubmit three assignments as final attempt, resubmissions capped at pass mark. Required to engage with LDC
27	Research Misconduct	Research Misconduct	Upheld	Reprimand, two attempts at coursework removed
28	Theft	Theft of a fellow students laptop	Upheld	Reprimand, letter of apology, punitive 1 trimester suspension. Student received warning from police

**5.c – SDC NOT UPHELD**

	<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub Type of Offence</b>	<b>Upheld/Not Upheld</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
29	Examination Infringement	Alleged access to unauthorised material	Not upheld	No case to answer
30	Use/Possession Controlled Substance	Use/possession of a controlled substance	Not upheld	No case to answer
31	Examination Infringement	Technical breach - Unauthorised material crib notes	Not upheld	Letter of Guidance

## Senate Disciplinary Committee

### Membership 2018/19

Department of Governance

#### Chair

Professor Alison Britton GSBS Until 31 July 2019

#### Vice-Chair

Dr Linda Walsh SHLS Until 31 July 2019

#### Pool of Academic Staff

Professor Bruce Wood SEBE Until 31 July 2019  
 Professor David Harrison SEBE Until 31 July 2019  
 Professor Agnieszka Klemm SEBE Until 31 March 2021

Dr Les Wood SHLS Until 31 October

2021

Dr Karen Thomson SHLS Until 31 July 2021

Mrs Frances MacInnes SHLS Until 31 July 2021

Ms Sarah Renton SHLS Until 31 July 2021

Dr Stewart Davidson GSBS Until 31 October  
 2019

Mrs Gillian Kellock-Hay GSBS Until October 2021

Vacancy GSBS

1 x Vacancy

#### Students' Association

Miss Rachel Simpson (or nominee) Student President  
 Mr Moses Apiliga Vice President GSBS  
 Miss Eilidh Fulton Vice President SEBE  
 Miss Yetunde Ogedengbe Vice President SHLS

Ms Maja Jorgensen Elected Student Member

Mr Brendan Owen Elected Student Member

#### Department of Governance (in attendance)

Mrs Louise Clark Clerk to Senate Disciplinary Committee