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Meeting APPC19/4
Confirmed

ACADEMIC POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2020

PRESENT:	Professor N. Andrew, Professor A. Britton, Dr D. Chalmers, Dr M. Ferguson, Ms E. Fulton, Ms C. Hulsen, Ms J. Main, Mrs M. McCann, Professor J. Lennon, Mr S. Lopez, Dr N. McLarnon, Professor A. Nelson, Ms S. Pitticas, Dr S. Rate, Mr R. Ruthven, Dr U. Shahani, Professor B. Steves, Ms B. Stevenson, Professor V. Webster (Chair), Mrs M. Wright
APOLOGIES:	Professor I. Cameron, Professor A. Morgan,
IN ATTENDANCE:	Ms H. Brown, Ms D. Donnet, Professor A. Robertson, Mr P. Woods (Secretary)

REGULATORY CHANGES AND GUIDANCE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19		
019.147	Considered	1. Potential Changes to order of Programme Delivery. 2. Amendments to Assessment Regulations in response to Covid-19 (**APPC19/47/01**). 3. Guidance to Progression and Awards Boards (**APPC19/48/01**). 4. Guidance for Module Review (Covid-19): Online Delivery (**APPC19/49/01**). 5. Guidance for Departments during the Period of University Closure (COVID-19) –Programme Boards (**APPC19/50/01**). 6. Remote Delivery of Enhancement Led Subject Review (ELISR) and Programme Approval and Review (Covid-19) (**APPC19/59/01**). 7. Guidance for Programme and Module Monitoring (Covid-19) (**APPC19/60/01**). 8. Discussion on response to Covid-19 from an academic perspective.
019.148	Reported	By the Academic Registrar that the items presented were measures to be put in place to mitigate the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and would apply to the upcoming programme assessment boards. The key aspects to notes were: 1. Suspension of minimum thresholds for trimesters B and C modules (and AB) unless PSRB stipulations will not allow it. 2. Compensation regulations would be adjusted for trimester B and C performance.

		3. More flexibility around merit and distinction at levels 9, 10 and 11 with pass/fail being introduced at levels 7 and 8 (so no merit/distinction). This latter measure was consistent with the sector. 4. Degrees classification – greater flexibility to look at cases where students are just outside a particular band. 5. All students will have failed attempts/non submissions preserved as first attempts to avoid any requirement for MITs submissions.
019.149	Discussion	Members asked how long these measures would be in force. The Chair answered that it would be the rest of session 2019-20 and there would be a review after the PABs have met, ahead of 2020-21. It was also asked if the granular data on student performance would be shared with students in levels 7 and 8 who would receive a pass/fail result. The Academic Registrar said that it will be via the module percentage marks and through feedback. There was a question regarding normalisation and how it would work. The Chair informed members that if marks are likely to distort calculations for assessing overall performance, normalisation can be used for cohorts. This was drawing attention to an existing regulation, not a change. A member asked if academic judgement is monitored for, for example, equality and diversity purposes. The Chair replied that she would expect PAB chairs to monitor this. Detailed minuting of cases was required to make such decisions clear. It would be necessary to examine afterwards as PABs don't have all background data. The Academic Registrar clarified that external examiners were expected to participate in the Boards but if they are not contactable for whatever reason it will not prevent Boards going ahead. However, Boards were expected to function normally. With regard to quoracy there was provision for flexibility to allow Boards to go ahead if a quorum is not possible but it was still expected that the full Board would meet. Another member asked about arrangements for trimester A assessments. The Chair clarified that trimester A assessments would stand and where a resit examination was required an alternative assessment would be provided. Only trimester B and C assessments would be subject to the Covid 19 special arrangements. It was noted that alternative assessments are set by PSRBs it was required to provide a note of this to the Exceptions Subcommittee.
019.150	Resolved	That at 3.4.1 the guidance is simplified to remove statement (a) (**Action: Academic Registrar**)

Guidance to Progression and Awards Boards		
019.151	Reported	By the Academic Registrar that the document was a work in progress and any feedback would be factored in.
019.152	Discussion	A member asked for clarification on the review of module performance. The Academic Registrar stated that it was a review at cohort level to identify any anomalies. The previous sessions data had been provided for comparison.
Guidance for Module Review (Covid-19): Online Delivery		
019.153	Reported	By Professor Andrew that the paper outlined updated guidance regarding the University approach to Module Review to support Module Leaders who are currently reviewing their modules to ensure effective online delivery. The paper simplified the ongoing module approval process and aimed to provide guidance as simply as possible in order to allow staff to see what is required.
Guidance for Departments during the Period of University Closure (COVID-19) –Programme Boards		
019.154	Reported	By Professor Andrew that the guidance provided would be more user friendly but this outlined the proposed process for APPC. It was expected that, as with the PABs, full attendance would be required but there was greater flexibility to take account of the impact of the pandemic. For example, input from externals for Graduate Apprenticeships but this would be where possible.
Remote Delivery of Enhancement Led Subject Review (ELISR) and Programme Approval and Review (Covid-19)		
019.155	Reported	By Professor Andrew that the paper informed APPC of the process from now on during the pandemic and the arrangements for remote working. Departments should work closely with their AQ Business Partner to avoid any potential delays. She informed members that this working methodology would be in place for the rest of the academic session and was likely to continue into trimester A of 2020-21. AQ were determined that student involvement would continue.
Guidance for Programme and Module Monitoring (Covid-19)		
019.156	Reported	By Professor Andrew that the aim of the paper was to inform APPC of the of the adjustment to timing. It is proposed that the deadline for completing both module review and annual programme monitoring be extended by a period of three weeks with a deadline of 21 July 2020 (including processing any necessary module changes through the student system).
019.157	Discussion	Members raised the issue of updating the postgraduate portfolio to approve for online delivery. The Chair informed members that Deans had been asked to identify Masters that can be provided online and further discussion with the DVC Strategy would identify what can be supported and the quality assurance processes required. Professor Andrew added that the process would be agreed when the scope becomes clear.
019.158	Resolved	That the revised timing be approved.
Discussion on response to Covid-19 from an academic perspective.		
019.159	Discussion	The chair was asked if the review of the MITs process was paused at the

| | | moment. The Chair replied that Senate had required certain things to be done and a further light touch review would be required after the Covid-related measures were reviewed. The Academic Registrar agreed and stated there was an intention to move ahead once the current state of flux was over.

The Chair added that all of the modified processes outlined in the previous discussions would be reviewed to determine where any streamlined process could be embedded into normal business. |
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MINUTES

019.160	Considered	Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2020 (APPC19/38/01).
019.161	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

019.162	Considered	Any matters arising from the above minutes not otherwise covered on the agenda (**APPC19/39/01**).

Corporate Parenting Strategy (*Arising on 019.116*)

019.163	Reported	By the Chair that the revisions had been approved by the Executive Board and the next stage would be for the Strategy to go to both SAGE and Senate.

Mitigating Circumstances Policy (*Arising on 019.120*)

019.164	Reported	By the Chair that, as noted above, the review would progress after the Covid-specific measures had been assessed following the May/June PABs.

Banded Marking (*Arising on 019.124*)

019.165	Reported	By the Chair that Senate had been updated.

Honours Classifications (*Arising on 019.100*)

019.166	Reported	By the Chair that Honours Classification would be revisited after the review of the operation of the PABs.

Progression and Completion Report (*Arising on 019.132*)

019.167	Reported	By the Chair that this process was paused for the moment.

Inclusion and Diversity (*Arising on 019.139*)

019.168	Reported	By the Chair that this item would be revisited in 2020-21.

Module Evaluation Surveys (*Arising on 019.143*)

019.169	Reported	By the Chair that this would be revisited at a later date.

APPC FORWARD LOOK

019.170	Considered	The Academic Policy and Practice Committee forward work plan for Session 2019/20 (**APPC19/04/03**).
019.171	Reported	By the Secretary that the forward programme was based on standard agenda items that recur and expected new items resulting from ongoing work. A standing item had been included to address any issues relating to online delivery.
019.172	Discussion	It was suggested that members could add items by contacting the Secretary. Accessibility legislation was identified as one such item to be added.

019.173	Resolved	That members inform the Secretary of any items to be added **(Action: APPC members/secretary)**
ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT		
019.175	Considered	A report by the ARSC on proposed regulatory updates (**APPC19/56/01**).
Student Mobility		
019.176	Reported	By Dr Rate that there was no policy at the moment and two workgroups had been set up with the aim of providing consistency in this area. The first group had developed the draft policy presented, identifying the baseline requirements for periods of student mobility and signposting the roles and responsibilities of both staff and students undertaking a credit rated period of study with a partner institution. The second group's task was to develop consistent processes and procedures in line with this policy and provide guidance for staff and students. It was intended that the guidance would follow from the policy approval and would be owned by Academic Quality.
019.177	Discussion	The proposal was welcomed as there were longstanding issues with regard to student mobility. Dr Rate was asked to explain how it would work in practice. She explained that a key aspect was setting out parameters in advance with regard to credit equivalence. A learning agreement would be put in place which meant that students would know what to expect in advance. Members asked if grades would be covered in the learning agreement and Dr Rate drew members' attention to appendix A/1 which provided conversion grids based on sector best practice. She also informed member that the Study Abroad team had agreed to update their guidance in line with the Policy, if approved. Members also discussed the distinction between formal and informal mobility. It was agreed that the inclusion of definitions of mobility would be helpful.
019.178	Resolved	That the policy proposal be approved with the addition of definitions of student mobility (**Action: ARSC Chair**).
Moderation Policy		
019.179	Reported	By Dr Rate that a short life working group had reviewed the current GCU Moderation Policy with particular focus on moderation sample sizes. This had been benchmarked with sector norms and so proposed only levels 9, 10 and 11 (i.e. award bearing years) to be moderated. A sample size of 10% would be sent to external examiners and the requirement for all fails to be sent was removed. Exceptions would only be for PSRB requirements.
019.180	Discussion	Members asked about the definition of "review" as opposed to moderation.

		It was clarified that review referred to questions and assessment instruments whereas moderation referred to marks. A member proposed using pre-moderation to describe review activity
019.181	Resolved	That the proposed changes be approved subject to clarification of definitions of review/pre-moderation (**Action: Chair ARSC**).

Consideration of Resit/Resubmission processes for non-standard starts

019.182	Reported	By Dr Rate that there was varying practice across the University so it was proposed that the Taught Postgraduate Assessment Regulations and Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Progression and Award Boards and Associated Activities are updated to allow trimester B start students to resit at the next available diet.
019.183	Resolved	That the proposed updates be endorsed and recommended to Senate (**Action: ARSC**).

Forward Work Plan

019.184	Reported	By Dr Rate that normally APPC would be asked to approve a forward work plan for the ARSC but at the moment it was considered prudent to reflect further before presenting a forward plan.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING POLICY

019.185	Considered	A discussion item led by the Academic Registrar on expected updates to the Policy including changes to UKVI requirements.
019.186	Reported	By the Academic Registrar that there was ongoing discussion between the sector and Home Office. The initial proposal was 80% attendance requirement (with various other conditions) but this currently it was proposed to remove computational requirements for degree level and above and instead require HEIs to develop their own policy which will be acceptable to UKVI. He saw this as an opportunity to review our current policy and practices i.e. our current process monitoring taught students via the card-swipe system. He suggested a task and finish group to define the principles of our policy and procedure.
019.187	Discussion	There was general agreement to the proposal. The Director of Student Life expressed an interest in being involved from the perspective of wellbeing and safeguarding vulnerable students. It was also suggested the linkage between attendance and progression could be explored
019.188	Resolved	That the proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group be endorsed.

HONOURS DEGREE CLASSIFICATION TRENDS – GCU AND SECTOR OVERVIEW

019.189	Considered	1. A high level summary of 'Good honours' degree classification trends at GCU and compared to the University's key comparator groups between 2014-15 and 2018-19. (**APPC19-42-01**). 2. A discussion on the University's position what constitutes a first class degree etc. and School strategies to address.
019.190	Discussion	Members were informed that the high percentage for Nursing overall was partly structural due to the subset of students proceeding to Honours. The best 180 scheme which allowed discounting of worst performance was a factor in these figures. Other HEIs were adopting similar scheme during the Covid period.

019.191	Resolved	That the paper be noted.

HESA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2020

019.192	Considered	An overview of GCU's performance in the 2020 HESA Performance Indicators (PIs) relating to widening participation and non-continuation within the context of the Scottish HE sector(**APPC19-41-01**)
019.193	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the paper detailed a strong performance and in particular there was good news on degree completion and dropout rates where GCU achieved the lowest drop-out rate in terms of Scottish modern universities. Non-continuation after first year of study had improved due to the performance of mature entrants. The implications of the Covid pandemic had been flagged to the University Court.
019.194	Discussion	Members asked if there was more granular data on the spread of young to mature entrants by programme and Ms Hulsen stated that this data was available. It was suggested that it would be interesting to see if there was any distinction by programme or if the pattern was across all programmes to help identify any possible reason for this discrepancy.
019.195	Resolved	That the update be noted.

ENHANCEMENT-LED INTERNAL SUBJECT REVIEW

019.196	Considered	1. Review of ELISR Schedule **(APPC19/55/01)** 2. Issues for University level consideration arising from ELISR (**LTSC19-44-01**).
019.197	Reported	By Professor Andrew that the schedule had been reviewed in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Latest advice from the QAA indicated that they are aware that Institution-led Review schedules are likely to have been affected and that where adjustments to ILR plans mean that the six-year maximum cycle might be exceeded, SFC should be informed. It was thought that the ELISRs scheduled for June 2020 would not be feasible but given that some may have mostly prepared AQ had asked any teams if they wanted to proceed. At this stage no-one has indicated that they would want to proceed.
019.198	Discussion	The ADLTQs agreed that the teams in their respective Schools had preferred to postpone given the considerable stresses upon staff at this time. Members noted their appreciation for the support of colleagues in Academic Quality on this issue. The Chair stated that the University would formally notify the Scottish Funding Council and reassure them that the University was confident that the student experience would not be undermined in any way.
019.199	Resolved	That APPC approves the proposal to move all remaining ELISRs into AY 20/21.

CLOSING THE FEEDBACK LOOP PILOT RESULTS

019.200	Considered	A report on the Closing the Feedback Loop Pilot (**APPC19-40-01**)
019.201	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the paper outlined positive outcomes of the 'Closing the Feedback Loop' pilot. Currently module evaluation for trimesters B and C was suspended so further discussion was required on the next steps. She added that with regard to the NSS the response rate had been almost at 50% when campus closure occurred and had reached 60%. This was lower than 2019 and there was some concern raised about the business as usual approach.
019.202	Discussion	The Chair informed member that it would be necessary to run module evaluation surveys in trimesters A and B in 2020-21 to understand how students are feeling at this time. The surveys may be amended slightly to take account of current circumstances. Members were supportive of this proposal. With regard to the pilot feedback it was noted that it was very positive and that it should be rolled out for future module evaluations.
019.203	Resolved	That Strategy and Planning be thanked for the work on this pilot.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BAROMETER

019.204	Considered	A paper providing high level outcomes of GCU's performance in the 2019 ISB and includes trends and sector level comparisons (**APPC19-46-01**).
019.205	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the University had always performed well in the ISB. However, the contract had now run out and the Executive Board had decided not to renew. It was felt that the University had good software to run internal surveys and would look to integrate international student surveys in the overall approach to student surveys. The ISB had captured more services related to the international student experience, such as catering, and S&P would look at capturing this kind of detail.
019.206	Discussion	It was agreed that services and support functions for international students should be captured in the internal survey. The Student President also informed members that the University's approach to the Covid pandemic and the involvement of students in decision making had been recognised by our counterparts and it would be good to capture this in some way.
019.207	Resolved	That the University's performance in the ISB 2019 is noted.

APPLICATIONS, ENTRANTS AND RETENTION BY GENDER

019.208	Considered	A paper for noting on Applications, Entrants and Retention by Gender (**APPC19/52/01**).
019.209	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the report was largely for information at this stage. The paper highlighted imbalances and the analysis fulfilled actions in our

		institutional Gender Acton Plan (GAP) to annually monitor applicant and entrant data, and the data will inform the update of the GAP.
019.210	Resolved	That the report be noted

PROGRAMME WITHDRAWAL

019.211	Considered	Withdrawal of the Top-up Doctorate route in D.Psych Counselling Psychology (**APPC19/51/01**)
019.212	Resolved	That the proposal be approved.

ACADEMIC CASE –GSBS

019.213	Considered	An academic case for the programme MSc Human Rights (**APPC19-54-01**).
019.214	Reported	By Dr Rate that the proposal would draw upon the expertise of the previous programme in U2B, the work based MSc on Citizenship and Human Rights. The rationale was to fill a gap in the TPG portfolio for social sciences and relevant to the University's mission. The new programme would be more refined than the U2B programme and would focus on poverty and inequalities. Social science undergraduates were the target market for this programme which would draw on institutional research strength and be delivered by experienced staff.
019.215	Discussion	A member asked why the minimum viable recruitment was set at 14 rather than the norm of 15. Dr Rate stated that it was outlined in the business case and this was not a volume market. It was considered that this was a realistic target. Another member asked why the proposal was for an MSc rather than an MA. Professor Lennon stated that there were market research reasons and also that MSc was a legitimate title for a programme drawing on politics and social science. He also clarified that the programme would require to reach the recruitment target in 2 years rather than the 5 years indicated. He added that the programme was ideally suited to the experience of the social science professoriate. There was some concern around recruitment given the failure to recruit to the U2B programme but members were reassured by Professor Lennon's clarification that this would be reviewed after 2 years.
019.216	Resolved	That the proposal be approved.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

019.217	Reported	By the Chair that academic principles for learning and teaching (in relation to digital delivery and GCU Learn) for trimester A (2020-21) would be circulated to Deans and student representatives and elements of this may require to come back to APPC. A special meeting would be convened if required after Senate on 8 June. Academic Development and Student Learning were

		leading work around this plan. The aim would be to equip staff at a baseline to be comfortable in this form of delivery and allow those already with higher skill set in this area to forge ahead.
SCEBE PORTFOLIO REFRESH – Approved by Circulation		
019.218	Received	SCEBE proposals approved by APPC circulation since last meeting **(APPC19-37-01)**
MODIFICATION OF TEACHING PERIOD FOR POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ACADEMIC PRACTICE PROGRAMME DURING COVID 19		
019.219	Received	Proposed modification of teaching period for Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice programme during Covid 19 (**APPC19/53/01**).
CHAIR'S ACTIONS		
019.220	Received	**1.** An academic case to extend ddelivery of MSc Environmental Management at GCU London from September 2020 (**APPC19-45-01**). **2.** The proposed Closure of MSc Oil and Gas Innovation Programme (**APPC19/43/01**).
LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE		
019.221	Received	Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2019 **(LTSC19/34/1).**

Ag/appc/minutes/May2020