ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2012

PRESENT:	Professor M Mannion (Chair), Dr N Andrew (vice Professor N James), Mr R Ruthven, Professor E McFarland (vice Professor J Wilson). Mr I Stewart, Ms C Fyfe, Mr A Pierotti, Ms D Borrett, Professor R Whittaker, Mrs C Hulsen, Ms J Main
APOLOGIES:	Professor D Greenhalgh, Professor N James, Professor J Wilson, S Laing, Professor D Smith, Ms S McGiffen
IN ATTENDANCE:	Ms J Malcolm (Secretary)

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed the newly elected student sabbatical officers to their first meeting of the Academic Policy Committee and thanked the departing President and Vice President Education for their valuable contribution to the work of APC over the last academic session.   He also noted that it was anticipated the composition of the Committee would change slightly to reflect amendments in University structures and the Director of the Student Experience would now attend APC as a full member rather than "by invitation".

MINUTES

12.001	Considered	The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Academic Policy Committee meeting held on 23 May 2012 (Doc APC12/1/1).
12.002	Resolved:	That, with the amendment of minute number 11.253 to reflect the inclusion of the analysis international student progression in document APC11/68/1, the minutes be confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting. **(Action: JKM).**

MATTERS ARISING

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Away Day

12.003	Reported:	By the Chair that,

i. he had lead an extremely productive Away Day involving the Associate Deans Learning, Teaching and Quality, senior staff from the Directorate of Governance and Academic Quality and staff from GCU LEAD which was intended to focus on current issues relating to Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement reporting and ongoing external and internal developments;

ii. as a result of discussions a number of short-life working groups had been established to consider the current appropriateness of the University's:

- Internal Subject Review processes
- Annual Monitoring processes
- Consideration of Special Factors
- Programme Approval/Re-approval processes
- Quality Enhancement Strategy

Feedback Enhancement Implementation Group (arising on APCMin 11.214)

12.004   Reported: By the Chair that,

i. A Feedback Enhancement Seminar had been organised for 26 September as part of the Feedback for Future Learning Campaign;

ii. 15 feedback workshops for students had now taken place with a view to scheduling significantly more over the coming Trimester;

iii. The Feedback Enhancement Web site provided useful updates and information on scheduled activities;

iv. A new timeline and project plan for the work of the Feedback Enhancement Implementation Group will be presented at the NSS Summit.

(Action: KG/JKM)

HEAR Implementation (arising on APCMin 11.218)

12.005   Reported: By the Chair that,

i. The HEAR Implementation Sub Committee was now meeting fortnightly with a view to piloting the HEAR during this academic session with a programme from the School of Health and Life Sciences.

Assessment Regulations (arising on APCMin 11.219)

12.006   Reported: By the Chair that,

i. the work of the Assessment Regulations Working Group was ongoing with a meeting taking place on 28 September to consider feedback received from Schools, the Students' Association, the Directorate of Governance and Quality and members of Assessment Boards;

ii.   a further update on progress would be provided at the next meeting of APC.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook (arising on APCMin 11.

12.007   Reported: By the Secretary that,

    i.   the revised Handbook had not yet been launched as anticipated due to ongoing structural, procedural and personnel changes in the University and further work requires to be carried out on the content of the Handbook to ensure it accurately reflects the external and internal environment;
    (Action: DGAQ)

    ii.   It was still the intention to combine the launch of the revised Handbook with a wider briefing programme to provide an overview of the new Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Quality Code.
    (Action: DGAQ)

Academic Advising Working Group (arising on APCMin 11.227)

12.008   Reported: By the Chair, that

    i.   the Group, chaired by the Head of GCU LEAD has met on 3 occasions since the last meeting of APC and will continue its work over the academic session with a view to reporting to APC in May 2013;

    ii.   much of the discussion to date has centred around the how GCU can embed explicitly the new PPAC Standards into Academic Advising at GCU;

    iii.   although there had been insufficient time to do this for session 12/13 the group has assured itself that the agreed principles and PPAC Standards are all currently reflected in how Academic Advising is currently delivered at GCU and a key priority is circulating guidelines and good practice in Academic Advising to all staff and students;

    iv.   for session 13/14 it has been agreed that communication of Guidelines and good practice will focus on Level 4 students;

    v.   that the proposed Guidelines will be presented at the forthcoming NSS Summit

LEARNING AND TEACHING SUB COMMITTEE ITEMS

12.009   Reported: By the Vice Chair, that:-

    i.   the Learning and Teaching Sub Committee had debated a number of important issues at its last meeting and the minutes of that meeting were included on the Agenda as a Part B item;

ii.   one of the most substantive items debated had been the variability in the annual monitoring processes carried out across all three Schools for session 10/11;

iii.   A short life working group with a remit to review and re-vitalise the annual monitoring process had been established at the QA and E Away Day and it was anticipated this would result in revised procedures relating to annual monitoring being put in place for monitoring of session 11/12 onwards;

iv.   As part of the forward programme of Thematic Audit, LTSC has requested a Audit of Blended Learning activity across the University, led by GCU LEAD with support from the Directorate of Governance and Academic Quality;

v.   It is anticipated that this audit will allow for the enhancement of the infrastructure currently in place to support Blended Learning and for better use to be made of new staff appointments, developing technology and internal structures;

vi.   The Audit Team hope to report their findings to the April meeting of LTSC with a view implementing any recommendations with effect from session 13/14;

vii.   the report and associated Action Plan from the Quality Enhancement Visit to GCU London had also been considered and approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee at its meeting on 15th August 2012;

viii.   the Action Plan included the establishment of a GCU London group (provisionally The GCU London Board) which would have operational and academic oversight of all issues relating to GCU London.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

12.010	Considered:	A paper from the ADLTQ (SEBE) concerning the current and future position of the three Learning Development Centres (LDCs) (Doc APC12/2/1)
12.011	Reported	By the Chair, that this paper aimed to present the current and future position of the three Learning Development Centres (LDCs) and responded to a request by the Committee for more detailed information about student usage.
12.012	Discussion:	The Chair reminded members that Learning and Development Centres (LDCs) were established as a result of the restructuring exercise of 2011 to deliver academic support to students, a service that had previously been offered centrally within the University. He had asked the ADLTQ from the School of Engineering and the Built Environment to conduct an early evaluation of the operation of all three LDCs since August 2011 and this paper now presented to Committee provided some analysis and dialogue relating to their operation over the last year. Members welcomed the paper and noted that it represented a good interim summary of the how LDCs had operated over the last 12 months, however, it was felt that there was insufficient data and analysis

provided relating to the specific needs of students who had accessed the LDCs' services and the profiles of those students using the service. Members commented that this kind of data and analysis was particularly important so that pre-emptive measures could be put in place at programme-level to help students before problems became serious.   It was also noted that the paper lacked any reference to Regional Coherence Funding (ie the source of funding for LDCs) , and therefore it was difficult to correlate data to show alignment with the Outcomes Agreements, particularly in relation to students who attend GCU via widening participation routes.

Members noted and agreed with this issue which in turn generated concern that, in highlighting the source of funding and alignment with Outcome Agreements the University may, in doing so, preclude some groups of students from being able to access the resources offered by LDCs, in particular International and GCU London students.

The lack of visible marketing or advertising which had been carried out to promote the LDCs since they were originally established was also highlighted as an issue that required to be addressed via a carefully planned communication strategy.

12.013	Resolved:	i.	That the paper be noted;

ii. That a more detailed report be provided to APC which should include:-
   a. Profiles of students who access the services offered by the LDCs;
   b. Detailed data and analysis of the types of issues students receive support for;
   c. A mapping of this data and analysis onto University Key Priorities and Outcomes agreements;

iii. That a communication strategy should be developed in order to promote the services and support offered to students via the LDCs.
(Action: Chair of LD Sub-Committee)

KIS IMPLEMENTATION

12.014	Considered:	A paper from the Directorate of Policy and Planning on KIS Implementation (Doc APC12/4/1)

12.015	Reported:	By the Head of Management Information that:-

i. KIS is intended to provide information for potential students considering applying to universities for academic year 2013/14;

ii. It is a high profile UK-wide initiative and, as such, is likely to be launched amid considerable publicity in September at the time when prospective students are considering their study options;

iii. As this is the first year of publication, the full impact of KIS on recruitment is difficult to judge and for some GCU programmes published information may have a positive impact although for

others this may not be the case;

iv.   The paper provided an update on the final KIS submission for 2012 and offered a brief overview of the content of the submission and highlighted issues emerging from the process together with recommendations from the KIS Working Group to address these;

v.   At the time of writing, data for the rest of the sector had not been released, therefore it was not yet possible to compare our performance against competitors;

vi.   The Committee was invited to consider the paper and endorse the recommendations contained within it;

vii.   After a preliminary review of the KIS test site, staff in Policy and Planning had noted the following key headlines for note by the Committee:-

viii.   NSS data is the very prominent on the website and will be the first thing visitors to the site will see;

ix.   Graduate employment levels are a key feature of the KIS and measures have been put in place to ensure that the University's own website contains as much information as possible to mitigate anything contained in the KIS that may not reflect favourably on graduate employment levels;

x.   Learning and Teaching activity is also categorised for each programme as follows:-

- Independent study
- Scheduled learning and teaching
- Placement

With data calculated from module choices, following the methodology set out by HESA and using information held in module descriptors;

xi.   In relation to Learning and Teaching specifically, Members may also wish to note:-

- The pattern of learning and teaching activity varies significantly both across and within Schools and this variability is concerning;
- Only 33 of the 89 programmes have placement activity and only 15 have placement activity at more than one level;
- As would be expected SHLS programmes s how reasonable amounts of placement activity across all levels but the data suggest there is relatively little activity in the other two Schools;
- This information requires to be reviewed to establish whether or not this is a correct reflection of the position or if this is as a result of data issues as this data does not match up with GCU promotional material.

xii. In relation to Assessment data, for each year of the programme data was provided showing the percentage of assessments in each of the following categories:-

- Written exam
- Coursework assessment
- Practical exam

Again, with data calculated from module choices, following the methodology set out by HESA using information held in module descriptors;

xiii. In relation to assessment data specifically, Members may also wish to note:-
- The preliminary review of data shows that the position is complex and that the e pattern of assessment varies depending on year of programme and subject;
- Although averaged figures will appear as the "headline" in KIS, it is more helpful to look at the underlying data for each level (which will also be published) as this shows the considerable variation across schools and levels;
- Over half programmes at level 1 have no written examinations;
- In contrast all but 4 programmes at level 2 have written examinations;
- This pattern changes again in levels 3 and 4, suggesting that we may need to review practice at level 2 to identify why a different pattern is followed;
- Some programmes have consistently high proportions of written exams across all levels eg optometry, accountancy, LLB and it will be important to compare this data with similar competitor programmes once the full data set is published.

12.016	Discussed:	Members noted the paper and also the volume of effort, undertaken by all involved in a relatively short timescale that had gone into returning the University's final submission to HESA in time for the 22 August deadline. Members concurred with the concerns regarding the variability of Learning and teaching activity and the need to establish whether or not the data is accurate and how this correlates with published promotional material, particularly in relation to placement activity. Similarly members agreed that some detailed analysis of the number of written examinations at Level 2 in comparison to Levels 3 and 4 required to be undertaken to establish the underlying reasons for this. After further debate, Members noted the issues set out in Para 8.1 – 8.3 of the paper and agreed the recommendations and actions laid out in Recommendations 1 – 6.
12.017	Resolved:	i. That, as a matter of priority, the Careers Service should, together with Schools, review issues relating to graduate-level employment; **(Action: Schools/Careers Service)**

ii. That a full review of learning and teaching activity, particularly placement activity, should take place to ensure the validity of centrally held information;
(Action P & P and DGAQ)

iii. That a full review of assessment data should take place to ensure the validity of centrally held information;
(Action P & P and DGAQ)

iv. That the DGAQ should continue to be the keeper of the approved and definitive University register of programmes/KIS returnable programmes ; That this Register should be expanded to include information essential for KIS (eg AOS codes);
(Action: DGAQ)

v. That the procedure for communicating new programme developments/withdrawals should be reviewed;
(Action: DGAQ)

vi. That the portfolio of KIS returnable programmes should be fixed by the end of January of the preceding year ie, January 2013 for programmes running in 2014/15 (these programmes would be included in the August 2013 KIS submission);
(Action: DGAQ)

vii. That changes to the portfolio after that date should be by exception only;
(Action:DGAQ)

viii. That the DGAQ should continue to be the keeper of the approved and definitive list of programme PSRB accreditations;
(Action: DGAQ)

ix. That this register requires to include all information required for KIS and requires to be maintained regularly to reflect any changes in status;
(Action: DGAQ)

x. That a process should be developed so that accrediting bodies not on the KIS list can be identified and reported to HESA by December of each year;
(Action: DGAQ)

xi. That Programme Specifications should be held centrally by DGAQ and be made available online/electronically;
(Action: DGAQ)

xii. That Programme Specifications should be reviewed against required KIS content;
(Action: DGAQ)

xiii. That this review should also look at consistency of style and content across the University;
(Action: DGAQ)

xiv. That the Programme Specification template should be reviewed to insure information required for KIS is captured;
(Action: DGAQ)

xv. That module activity definitions should be reviewed and streamlined;
(Action: Schools/DGAQ)

xvi. That this review should also be undertaken during annual module monitoring and the approval of new modules;
(Action: Schools/DGAQ)

xvii. That P & P and ISIS OBSU should develop processes to ensure corrected information from this year's exercise is fed back into ISIS; this review will provide the baseline for future reviews by DGAQ;
(Action: P & P/ ISIS OBSU)

12.018   Noted: The following issues and actions currently ongoing:-

i. greater integration of key university systems is essential if the University is to repeat this exercise efficiently on an annual basis;

ii. issues uncovered during the KIS process are being reported to the ISIS Enhancement Board in the first instance;

iii. the Executive Board wishes Senate to review Learning and Teaching and Assessment data each year prior to submission;

iv. as a result, next year's process requires to be brought forward in order for the internal data to be complied and signed off by the end of May in order to be considered at the June meeting of Senate;

v. DGAQ will develop a revised KIS timetable of key dates in consultation with the KIS Working Group;

vi. a process requires to be identified to allow currently live KIS data to be reviewed for accuracy during the year it is available;

vii. the KIS Working Group has agreed that Marketing will be responsible for checking the content of wepages and that DGAQ, as owners of the definitive list, will be responsible for flagging changes to programme status or data.

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

12.019   Considered: The results of the 2012 National Student Survey at University level and by School (Doc APC12/13/1)

12.020   Received: A summary table detailing headline results across all Scottish HEIs

12.021   Reported: By the Director of Policy and Planning that

	i.	a full report of the NSS 2012 results had been submitted to the Executive Board and Schools;
	ii.	an NSS Summit would take place immediately following APC to share results and discuss ways to improve participation and outcomes in advance of the 2013 NSS;
	iii.	improving the student experience has been a key strategic imperative for the University for many years and the NSS is considered a key mechanism by which the University can learn from and respond to student feedback;
	iv.	the NSS is considered the benchmark of student satisfaction with learning and teaching across the UK, and the outcomes of the survey feeding into league tables and the KIS;
	v.	achieving overall satisfaction of a minimum of 85% is one of the University's 2015 KPIs and significant efforts were made to raise awareness of the NSS amongst students and staff and the overall improvement in satisfaction of 3% to 85% in 2012 is welcomed;
	vi.	Each School was currently preparing an NSS Action Plan which will come to the December meeting of APC for consideration;
	vii.	improving student satisfaction is a Court KPI for 2015.

12.022	Discussed:	Members noted from the tabled paper circulated by the Director of Policy Planning that, whilst GCU had performed well in the headline results there were certain areas where the results were disappointing. In particular, it was noted that GCU had lobbied, unsuccessfully, to have wording relating to questions about Student Unions amended to allow respondents to appreciate that GCU had a Students' Association, rather than a Union. As a result of this it was believed that results relating to the satisfaction in this area were negatively skewed.
12.023	Resolved:	That

	i.	the paper be noted;
	ii.	that all future plans to support the engagement of staff and students with the 2013 survey be fully endorsed.

CONCEPT PAPER - GSBS

12.024	Considered:	A concept paper from the Glasgow School *for* Business and Society regarding the proposal to re-introduce the award of LLM. (Doc APC12/5/1)
12.025	Discussed:	Members welcomed the proposal which, it was noted, was fully in line with University key priorities and contributed to GSBS Strategic Goals. It is the intention that the target market for the LLM in Global Business Regulation will be , almost exclusively, international students with British Council market research evidencing an increase in projected student numbers coming to Scotland from the Asia and the Far East.
12.026	Resolved:	That, pending approval by APC of resource, staffing and infrastructure requirements for delivery at GCU London, the concept paper be

approved.
(Action: ADLTQ GSBS)

CONCEPT PAPER - SEBE

12.027   Considered: A proposal from SEBE to enhance the Engineering Framework with the addition of three new programmes:-
MSc Power Electronics (PG)
MSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering (PG)
MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering (UG)
(Doc APC12/11/1)

12.028   Discussed: Members did not consider that the proposal demonstrated sufficient market research to justify the addition of three new named programmes and that the narrative contained within the proposal appeared to focus largely on the rationale for undergraduate proposal.

12.029   Resolved:

    i.   That the Concept paper is not approved;

    ii.   That the proposal should be re-visited in tandem with robust market research

    iii.   That, once the findings of market research are available, if appropriate, the proposal should be re-considered by APC;

    iv.   That, in re-drafting the proposal, the narrative to support it should pay close attention to both undergraduate and postgraduate provision.

(Action: ADLTQ SEBE)

AcceleRATE CPD (LEARNING AND TEACHING) POLICY AND FRAMEWORK 2012

12.030   Considered: The AcceleRATE CPD (Learning and Teaching) Policy and Framework 2012 (Doc APC12/6/1)

12.031   Reported: By the Head of GCU LEAD, that:-

    i.   the policy updated and extended the existing Senate approved CPD (Learning and Teaching) Policy and Framework 2008;

    ii.   the AcceleRATE Framework has been accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to allow GCU, through GCU LEAD, to confer, on behalf of the HEA, professional fellow recognition in line with the UK Professional Standards Framework 2011;

    iii.   the AcceleRATE Policy and Framework offers a formal taught CPD route (as per existing 2008 policy) and an additional Recognition of Prior Informal Learning (RPiL) route appropriate for experiences staff wishing to engage in CPD in learning and teaching and gain professional recognition.

12.032   Discussed: Members welcomed the paper and congratulated all staff involved in securing the successful accreditation by the HEA. After some discussion it was agreed that the paper should be forwarded to Senate in order to formally approve the mechanism for accreditation of GCU staff.

| 12.033 | Resolved: | That the paper be approved and forwarded to Senate for final approval. |

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION

| 12.034 | Approved: | The Terms of Reference and revised Composition
(Doc APC12/7/1) |

EXTENSION TO PROGRAMME PROVISION – MSc WEB SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT (.NET)

| 12.035 | Approved: | A request from SEBE to extend the currently approved PT MSc Web Systems Development (.NET) programme to include a Full Time delivery mode. (Doc APC12/10/1) |

WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND PROGRESSION – GCU WORK AND STUDY RESEARCH REPORT 1

| 12.036 | Approved: | The detailed revised rationale and methodology
(Doc APC12/8/1) |

APC ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

| 12.037 | Approved: | The Annual Report of the Academic Policy Committee
(Doc APC12/9/1) |

EXCEPTIONS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

| 12.038 | Approved: | The Annual Report of the Exceptions Committee(Doc APC12/12/1) |

LEARNING AND TEACHING SUB COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

| 12.039 | Approved: | The Annual Report of the Learning and Teaching Sub Committee
(APC12/13/1) |

LEARNING AND TEACHING SUB COMMITTEE

| 12.040 | Approved: | The confirmed minutes of the Learning and Teaching Sub Committee meetings held on 25 April 2012 and 13 June 2012
(Docs LTSC11/56/1 and LTSC69/1) |

CHAIR'S ACTIONS

| 12.041 | Reported: | That the following Chair's Action has been taken since the last meeting of APC:- |

Generic Awards and International Students

i.   That, with immediate effect, the option to transfer to a generic award is no longer made available to international students who hold a Tier 4 visa;

ii. That international students currently registered at GCU on a Tier 4 visa, who have failed on their named programme of study with

a maximum of 40 credits outstanding and who wish to exit with an undergraduate or postgraduate award of the University be appropriately advised of their options which are:

a. Returning to their home country to apply for a non-Tier 4 (student visitor) visa that will allow them entry to the UK for a short period of time to undertake up to a maximum of 40 credits;
b. The possibility that they may be able to access a module/s that can be undertaken via a distance learning mode from their home country