Meeting Number APC14/3
Confirmed

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2015

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

MINUTES

14.180	Considered	The minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2014 (APC14/75/1).
14.181	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

14.132	Reported	By the Chair that there were no matters arising not otherwise considered on the agenda.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES REGULATIONS

14.133	Considered	Revised Mitigating Circumstances Regulations (APC14/73/1).
14. 134	Reported	By Dr Walsh that the MITs Working Group had reviewed the operation of the procedure one year after implementation. There were a number of key points to note:

- That the overall number of MITs submissions was markedly reduced (25% reduction)
- That the guidance provision was much improved
- The acceptance rates are comparable to previous year(s)
- Staff workload has been reduced (by pre-screening of MITs by MITS Board Chair and 1 other Board member) – 43% are dealt with at this stage.
- Academic Appeals had reduced by 42%.

Ongoing work has been identified in educating students and staff through workshops (for staff) and work with GCUSA on student awareness. Standardised data collection methods have been developed and ownership will be transferred to Governance and Quality Enhancement during this trimester.

14. 135	Discussion	Members asked how "appeals" were being dealt with at the moment. Mr Stephenson reported that students were using the complaints procedure to appeal decisions. There were a number of issues arising from the trimester A examination diet relating to bad weather and doctors' letters.
		Members agreed that there needed to be consistency across the Schools and the issues experienced in GSBS should be reviewed. It was also felt that no appeal route should be implemented at this time.
14. 136	Resolved	1. That the MITs Working Group report back to APC on any issues identified. 2. That there should be no appeal mechanism at this stage. (**MITS WG**)

RESEARCH-TEACHING LINKAGES REPORT

14. 137	Considered	A report on research-teaching linkages at GCU (APC14/68/1).
14. 138	Reported	By Professor Kirby that the report was intended to highlight the links between teaching and research and more specifically the University Research Strategy and Strategy for Learning. Underpinning the report were surveys from a sample of students and staff.
14.139	Reported	By Professor Gartland that the paper proposed a flexible level-appropriate approach to integrating research into the curriculum specifically tailored to the University and its requirements.
14.140	Discussion	Members welcomed the proposals and felt that they would provide a good underpinning to teaching and CPD and represented a great opportunity to enhance the student experience
		The specific position of articulating students was discussed in the context of potential limits on the parity of student experience, in spite of the greater flexibility of modern HN units. It was agreed that dialogue with FE partners (via GCU Lead) would be productive in communicating the University's expectations regarding enquiry-based learning.
		Members also noted that there was a general lack of understanding of research impact amongst staff and that this highlighted the need to embed awareness of research impact to a much greater degree. It was felt that there was an opportunity for the University to get a competitive edge (in relation to REF assessment) in research impact and this necessitated a greater understanding of research impact and the REF requirements to demonstrate this. To this end there should cross reference with the University Research Committee and the CREDO programme of academic research development.
		The authors clarified for the Committee that "enquiry-led" and "research-led" were not interchangeable but were distinct and all-encompassing in the context of the report. Some members felt that the report would benefit from some further clarification of these definitions.
		Members discussed recommendation 2 (*Increase the proportion of staff engaged*

in research). It appeared too vague as most academic staff would be on research-teaching contracts in any case so the level of engagement would have to be more specific.

It was also suggested that there could be a category for research-led teaching as part of the annual Learning and Teaching Awards.

14.141	Resolved	That the report is approved and recommended to Senate subject to the following minor amendments:

1. At paragraph 5.4, line 11 the text is amended to read "Student Experience Framework"; (**PK/KG**)
2. That there is clarification of the terms "enquiry-led" and "research-led";(**PK/KG**)
3. That recommendation 2 is made more specific in terms of the level of staff engagement; (**PK/KG**)
   and that
4. That there is dialogue with FE partners in relation to expectations of curriculum research content (**Director GCU Lead**);
5. That there is consideration of adding a category for research-led teaching to the Learning and Teaching Awards.(**GCU Lead**)

POSITION STATEMENT ON COMPLAINTS and DISCIPLINE

14.142	Considered	A mid-term statement on student complaints and discipline in session 2014-15 (**APC14/70/1**).
14.143	Reported	By the Secretary that the report compiled mid-session related to both student complaints and student disciplinary cases.
14.144	Resolved	That the mid-session report is noted.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATIVE REPORTS

14. 144	Considered	Partnership and Collaborative Arrangement Reports – part 2 (outstanding reports) (APC14/69/1).
14. 145	Reported	By Mrs Henaghan that the partner for the BA (Hons) Interior Design is the City of Glasgow College. The programme shows good completion overall but the report does not confirm that the University's student feedback policy is being adhered to and this requires to be followed up.
		There are two outstanding reports to come to APC namely that of INTO and Work Based Education. She confirmed that they would be brought through for ELISR.
14.146	Discussion	Mr Gaughan reported that there were problems getting class representatives for this programme.
14. 147	Resolved	That the report is approved with appropriate follow up action. (**G&QE**)

QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

14.148	Considered	The revised GCU Qualifications Framework (APC14/71/1).
14.149	Reported	By the Secretary that the Framework document had been updated to take into account a number of other regulatory changes, in particular the updated assessment regulations, where there was any overlap with the Qualifications Framework. At same time the opportunity was taken to make structural changes to the document in order to make the document more user friendly, remove anachronistic references and to update terminology in line with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

The key amendments are:
1. Introduction of maximum periods of registration in line with the revised University Assessment Regulations.
2. Removal of progression points in taught postgraduate programmes in line with the revised University Assessment Regulations.
3. Clearer definition of the limitations of mixing credit levels between undergraduate and taught postgraduate (SCQF levels 7-10 and SCQF level 11).
4. Consistent application of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework terminology throughout.
5. Extracts from *QAA Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland 2001* removed.

14.150	Discussion	It was noted that some anachronistic terminology persisted in the draft document and should be removed before publication.
		Members thought that mode of study should include "at a campus" rather than "on campus" to reflect the different geographical locations of GCU students.
14.151	Resolved	That the document is recommended to Senate subject to the textual amendments described above (**G&QE**).

GCU LONDON THEMATIC REVIEW REPORT AND ACTION PLAN RESPONSE

14.152	Considered	GCU London Thematic Review Report and Action Plan Response (APC14/74/1).
14.153	Reported	By Mrs Henaghan that the QAA report did not specify any particular areas for attention but an action plan had been produced to fulfil the aim of continuing enhancement. Some aspects of the action plan, e.g. student involvement and compliance of programme handbooks, were common to programmes in Glasgow. Admissions was devolved so there was an internal audit action to monitor adherence to University policy.
14.154	Reported	By Dr Amrane-Cooper that there were some areas that clearly required to be addressed and others which had been dealt with. The key areas to be addressed were in data handling and a campus disaster plan.
		She felt it would be more useful to revise the plan based on the existing risk register for GCU London.
14.155	Resolved	That the action plan is revised on basis as described above. (**Dean, GCU London**)

STUDENT PROGRESSION AND COMPLETION

14.156	Considered	An overview of 2013-14 progression and completion for full-time undergraduate and taught postgraduate students (APC14/57/1).
14.157	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the report was an executive summary of the student progression and completion data for 2013-14. The key points to note were:

- Students exiting with an ordinary degree are below 10% for the first time.
- Articulation exceeded the Scottish Funding Council target and articulating students as a cohort performed less well than the overall student population.
- There was an improvement in the performance of taught postgraduate students.

- There was an improvement in the performance of international students.

14.158	Discussion	Members discussed the articulating student cohort and acknowledged that whilst the figures were in the context of a 38% increase in student numbers, there were issues to be addressed. It was also noted that the figures did not include nursing students.
		The difficulty of accurately analysing taught postgraduate within an academic session were also discussed.
		Ms Hulsen reported that this analysis was for APC information and the full HESA figures would be reported to the University Court.
		In response to another query, Ms Hulsen stated that the progression and completion data for students with collaborative partners was not currently collected.
14.159	Resolved	That the report is noted.

STRATEGY FOR LEARNING OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR 2014/15: PROGRESS UPDATE

14.160	Considered	A progress update on the implementation of the SfL operational plan for 2014/15
14.161	Reported	By Professor Whittaker that, as agreed at the previous APC meeting, the operational plan had been refined to focus on key priorities: online learning; student engagement; social entrepreneurship; and peer support for staff. The areas for discussion related to peer support and feedback suggesting that staff would like to engage but lacked time and support from peers to do so.
14.162	Discussion	The Chair stated that he was not sympathetic to arguments about lack of time. Schools had agreed to embed the SFL priorities and it was their responsibility to address any issues.
		School members were not aware of any negative feedback from staff in relation to engagement with peer support.
14.163	Resolved	That the progress report is noted.

MODULE FEEDBACK SYSTEM PILOT REPORT

14.164	Considered	The *EvaSys* Module Feedback Pilot Report with recommendations from the Learning and Teaching Subcommittee (LTSC) (APC14/66/1).
14.165	Reported	By Professor Whittaker that following discussion at LTSC, it was being recommended that the online licence for *Evasys* should be purchased, subject to the approval of the business case by the University Executive Board.
		It was acknowledged that while the *Evasys* system did not fully meet the ideal specification by mirroring the National Student Survey format, it did provide useful feedback and was the most time efficient option for implementation.
		Implementation would require staff resource, IT system integration and training.
		The proposal was locate the management of the process in Governance and Quality Enhancement, subject to the appropriate resourcing being made available.
14.166	Discussion	Members asked why there was not further exploration of a bespoke solution. Professor Whittaker replied that it was largely down to timing as a bespoke

solution would take another two years to develop and implement. Also although a bespoke system would save on upfront *Evasys* licencing costs and the additional resource costs, development costs of a bespoke system were as yet unquantified. However she stated that there was the possibility of further exploration of a bespoke system with *Evasys* implementation as a solution in the short and medium term.

Members asked if the *Evasys* solution would be fully online. Professor Whittaker replied that the proposal was to buy the online licence. The system would have to be integrated with GCU IT systems (ISIS, GCU Learn).

Some members voiced caution over implementation of the system and raising expectations of what it could accomplish. There were also questions about how it would gather feedback on services, such as library provision.

Members asked what the alternatives to *Evasys* were. Professor Gartland informed the Committee that, having undertaken the original evaluation report, the alternatives were *CRT Viewpoint* (an off the shelf system) or a bespoke system. He added that the *Evasys* system was already used in numerous UK HEIs and the quality of the questions would be the major determining factor in its successful operation.

14.167	Resolved	1. That proposal to recommend *Evasys* is approved in principle, subject to Executive Board approval of the business case (**G&QE**). 2. That local arrangements for module evaluation persist for trimester B (**ADLTQs/GCU Lead**).

SHLS- CONCEPT PAPER

14.168	Considered	Professional Doctorate Physiotherapy (pre-registration) (APC14/55/1).
14.169	Discussion	One member noted that as the programme was a research degree it crossed two networks and therefore
14.170	Resolved	That the programme is approved in principle and forwarded to the Higher Degrees Subcommittee for comment.

SHLS- ACADEMIC/BUSINESS CASES

14.171	Approved	Academic Case for an Accelerated Pre-registration Nurse Education Master's route for Graduates (APC14/67/1).

GCU LONDON CONCEPT PAPERS

14.172	Approved	The following GCU London programme proposals: 1. MSc Global Marketing (APC14/48/1). 2. MSc Global Fashion Marketing (APC14/49/1). 3. MSc Luxury Brand Marketing (APC14/50/1). 4. MBA Luxury Brand Management (APC14/51/1). 5. MSc International Management and Business Development (APC14/52/1).

GCU LONDON ACADEMIC/BUSINESS CASES

14.173	Approved	The following GCU London programme proposals: 1. MSC Fashion Business Creation (APC14/58/1). 2. MSc Digital Fashion Strategy (APC14/59/1). 3. MSc Global Marketing (APC14/60/1).

    4. MSc Global Fashion Marketing (APC14/61/1).
    5. MSc Luxury Brand Marketing (APC14/62/1).
    6. MBA Luxury Brand Management (APC14/63/1).
    7. MSC International Management and Business Development (APC14/64/1).

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP 2014-15

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

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT FRAMEWORK

14.175   Received   The GCU response to QEF consultation. (APC14/72/1).

ADMISSIONS SUBCOMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE
14.176   Received
GGAP/COLLEGE CONNECT PROGRESS UPDATE FOR FEBRUARY 2015
14.177   Received   A brief summary of progress in relation to the GGAP/College Connect operational plan(APC14/73/1) imbibing
LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE
14.178   Received   1. Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on November 2014 (LTSC14/34/1).
    2. Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on December 2014 (LTSC14/46/1).

ACADEMIC APPEALS OVERVIEW 2013-14
14.179   Received   Academic Appeals Overview Report 2013-14 (LTSC14/48/1).

Ag/apc/December2014/minutes