



Unconfirmed

ACADEMIC POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2019

PRESENT:	Professor N. Andrew, Professor I. Cameron, Dr M. Ferguson, Ms E. Fulton, Ms C. Hulsen, Ms J. Main, Mrs M. McCann, Mr S. Lopez, Dr N. McLarnon, Professor A. Nelson, Ms S. Pitticas, Dr S. Rate, Mr R. Ruthven, Dr U. Shahani, Ms B. Stevenson, Professor B. Steves, Professor V. Webster (Chair), Mrs M. Wright	
APOLOGIES:	Professor A. Britton, Dr D Chalmers, Ms D. Donnet, Professor J. Lennon, Professor A. Morgan	
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr P. Woods (Secretary)	
Welcome		
The Chair welcomed members Dr Shahani who was attending her first meeting as an elected academic staff representative.		
MINUTES		
19.051	Considered	Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2019 (APPC19/13/01).
19.052	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as a correct record.
MATTERS ARISING		
APPC Annual Report - arising on 019.012		
19.053	Reported	By the Secretary that the amendments required by APPC were made and the report was submitted to Senate.
LTSC Terms of Reference – arising on 019.018		
19.054	Reported	By the Secretary that discussions to reconcile the terms of reference of LTSC and APPC were ongoing.
Student survey policy and MEQ proposals for 2019-20 – arising on 019.038		
19.055	Reported	By the Chair that the Student Survey Policy was approved by Senate and open comments were supported. It was clarified to members that abusive feedback would not be used.
19.056	Discussion	It was noted that the briefing session for Deans had been helpful and would also be useful for module leaders to clarify the customisation option (i.e the

		4 additional questions from a pre-defined question bank or 3 from the question bank, plus 1 question of their own creation). Members agreed that, ideally, the “extra” questions should be re-used as standard questions in future MEQs to avoid repeating work.
APPC FORWARD LOOK		
19.057	Considered	The Academic Policy and Practice Committee forward work plan for Session 2019/20 (APPC19/04/01).
19.058	Resolved	By the Chair that the University Working Group on Advancing Racial Equality at GCU would be expected to report during this session and this should be added to the forward programme (Action: Secretary APPC).
BANDED MARKING		
19.059	Considered	A presentation providing an overview of the emerging response to the banded marking consultation.
19.060	Reported	<p>By Professor Nelson that the consultation process had involved a mixture of students and (mostly academic) staff, using various methods such as face-to-face, email, and survey. Many respondents were already familiar with the concept of banded grading. The consultation had raised a number of questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the problem we are trying to fix? • Staff concern about carefully developed rubrics being discarded. • Will there be more than one scheme? • There are assessment types where banded grading doesn't work e.g. OSCEs, clinical portfolios, some media related assessments, skills based pass/fail assessments, multiple choice questionnaires • Concern that it is too complicated. • Concern that it could lead to grade inflation. • How would this be implemented (phasing or big bang)? • Would SIMs be able to cope with banded grading? • Can it be piloted? <p>Many respondents noted that a form of banded grading is already used in a number of areas but with a final mark allocated.</p> <p>With regard to the next steps, the Task and Finish Group will review all of the feedback, make a final selection of a model that works for GCU and begin development of rubrics (or adapt existing rubrics).</p> <p>It was anticipated that the work of the Group would impact on the work of degree classification mapping.</p>
19.061	Discussion	Members discussed the suggestion that banded grading is not regarded as a priority by some staff. Other members contended that recurring contentious discussions on marking and marking borderlines show that it is something that staff are concerned about and that it is raised frequently by both staff and external examiners.

		There was further discussion on how many bands were needed for greater granularity in 70+ % and under 40% (e.g. to determine compensation, quick resubmission, outright fail). A member suggested that it is more likely that students who fail will request a percentage mark although other members felt that this could be addressed by appropriate feedback.
19.062	Resolved	That next steps proposed by the Task and Finish Group are noted and endorsed.
ELIR 4 REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS		
19.063	Considered	The Reflective Analysis Document for ELIR 4 (APPC19/11/01).
19.064	Reported	By the Chair that the deadline for submission was 28 November 2019. The reflective analysis was very detailed and many people had contributed feedback.
19.065	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Library name change is included (i.e. first mention of the Library should be Sir Alex Ferguson Library and “the Library” thereafter) (Action: Academic Quality). 2. That the project team be thanked for their work preparing the document.
MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY UPDATE		
19.066	Considered	Proposed amendments to the University’s Mitigating Circumstances Policy (APPC19/17/01).
19.067	Reported	By the Academic Registrar that there had been some further changes since the last meeting, the main one being in relation to retrospective MITs timescales, which was now set at 3 working days. He informed members that the MITs policy had been updated a number of times since it was first introduced e.g. to accommodate GDPR, Fitness to Study and other issues and having reviewed sector practice in this area he proposed a root and branch review of the approach to MITs, in consultation with all stakeholders.
19.068	Discussion	<p>Members welcomed the proposal and asked for a timeline for the review. The Academic Registrar stated that he hoped that it would be possible to complete by the end of this academic session. Members supported this as necessary to address the administrative burden of MITs and to better define the purpose of MITs.</p> <p>The Students Association President was content with updates proposed but requested further information about development of an electronic form. The Academic Registrar replied that discussions with Information Services were ongoing and different models being examined. There were questions around provision of evidence to be resolved but the aim was to try to get something in place for May 2020.</p> <p>Members discussed the flexibility to deal with complex cases allowed by the the University level board. Linkage to a student’s RAP would also simplify the process without repeated form filling. Where information comes to light</p>

		<p>outwith published timescales, we want the flexibility to make sensible decisions in the student's best interests.</p> <p>Fitness to Study was also a factor to incorporate into the review.</p> <p>The following changes were suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At 2.1.2 remove "notification to module leader" • Section 6 – substitute "normally" for "must". • 6.2 Say "Chair + 1 member"
19.069	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. APPC welcomes the proposed review. 2. APPC approves the revised Policy with the amendments noted above (Action: AQ).
REVIEW OF LEVEL 1 TRIMESTER A FORMAL EXAMS PRACTICE		
19.070	Considered	A verbal report by the Academic Registrar.
19.071	Reported	<p>By the Academic Registrar that in 2010 there had been a Senate resolution to remove first diet examinations for level one students (with exceptions for PSRB). The Assessment Regulations had been modernised since then but this resolution had never been codified as a regulation.</p> <p>After more recent programme reapprovals had reintroduced level one examinations (for around 300 students), it seemed appropriate to review the resolution.</p>
19.072	Discussion	Members were in favour to reconsidering this decision. There were mixed views about the benefit of examinations at level one but there was an argument to say there was developmental benefit and removal of all examinations may have a detrimental effect on performance in level 2 examinations.
19.073	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. APPC endorses a reassessment of the 2010 decision. 2. That the trimester A examinations for level 1 programmes should proceed as envisaged.
REPORT ON NON-QUORATE ASSESSMENT BOARDS 2018-19		
19.074	Considered	A report on the non-quorate Assessment Boards in 2018-19 (APPC19-19-01)
19.075	Resolved	That the Schools be commended for the improvement in attendance.
STUDENT DISABILITY		
19.076	Considered	Students with Disabilities and RAPs 2019/20 (APPC19/18/01).
19.077	Reported	By the Director of Student Life that the paper was an update on the numbers of students likely to require alternative examination arrangements in

		<p>January 2020. This followed a campaign of awareness raising by the Disability Team and higher number of disability disclosures.</p> <p>Currently efforts were being made to streamline the process and reduce waiting times for appointments to see disability advisers . An additional 1fte disability advisor appointed to help with the increasing number of disclosures, year on year.</p> <p>The Disability Service was liaising closely with Registry to ensure that alternative examination arrangements were in place ahead of the Registry deadline.</p>
19.078	Discussion	<p>By the Academic Registrar that the process was improved from last year although there were a number of impacts on spatial resources for examinations to be factored in. This would be monitored closely.</p> <p>The Chair also informed members that the Disability Team were in the process of sourcing a CRM to enhance data management.</p>
19.079	Resolved	That the overview be noted.
2020-21 OUTCOME AGREEMENT GUIDANCE		
19.080	Considered	The 2020-21 Outcome Agreement Guidance (APPC19/20/01).
19.081	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the paper was presented in order to give the Committee a sense of SFC and Scottish Government priorities. The focus of the guidance document was in three sections ('The Learner', 'The System' and 'Research and Innovation') plus additional guidance on CoWA and WARF reporting requirements.
19.082	Resolved	That the update be noted.
UNDERGRADUATE FIRST DIET PROGRESSION AND COMPLETION 2018-19		
19.083	Considered	Undergraduate Second Diet Progression and Completion 2018-19 (APPC19/21/01).
19.084	Reported	<p>By Ms Hulsen that the report provided an overview of 2018-19 progression and completion for full-time undergraduate students after second diet, and provides comparisons with 2018-19 first diet progression and completion data, and with 2017-18 second diet data.</p> <p>Detailed progression and completion data had been provided to Schools at programme Level and is available on DASH.</p> <p>Key points to note include: Undergraduate students – the proportion of students eligible to progress at Levels 1 to 3 has increased significantly between 1st diet and 2nd diet, to 87%, 87% and 88% respectively and Level 4 completion is 89%. Final progression data will be available in December.</p> <p>Articulating students – at second diet the eligible to progress percentage has increased significantly to 89% for Level 2 and 88% for Level 3; and at Level 2</p>

		<p>is higher than the non-articulation comparator.</p> <p>International students – for all levels there has been an increase in eligibility to progress and completion after second diet, to 95% (Level 1), 69% (Level 2) and 84% (Level 3). Level 4 completion is at 86%, compared to 89% for home/EU students. The highest percentage required to repeat is at Level 2.</p> <p>Honours degree classifications – from first to second diet the percentage of honours degrees awarded at first class decreased from 30% to 28%, and at upper second class from 55% to 52%. The percentage at lower second class increased from 15% to 19%. The percentage of those gaining first class honours degrees remain higher than in 2017-18 in each School.</p>
19.085	Resolved	That the report be noted.
REVISED ELISR SCHEDULE 2018-23		
19.086	Considered	Revised ELISR Schedule 2018-23 (APPC19/22/01).
19.087	Reported	By Professor Andrew that the schedule had to be changed as a result of Scottish Funding Council timelines and as QAA have notified the University that deferrals negotiated with Schools cannot be implemented without approval from SFC.
19.088	Discussion	<p>Members felt that the schedule was very challenging for Schools and asked if there was any possible alternative. Professor Andrew indicated that there was sympathy for the position staff were in and efforts were being made to streamline the process and to make it as light touch as possible.</p> <p>Other members were interested to find out how this position could have arisen. Professor Andrew noted that School restructuring was a significant factor. AQD would be in touch with the relevant staff and would provide support.</p>
19.089	Resolved	That the schedule be approved subject to negotiations by the DVC with QAA/SFC to see if any leeway was possible (Action: DVC/AQ).
AMENDMENTS TO ACADEMIC POLICY AND PRACTICE		
19.090	Considered	Amendments to Academic Policy and Practice (APPC19/23/01).
19.091	Resolved	That the amendments be noted.
APPC & LTSC TERMS OF REFERENCE		
19.092	Approved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated APPC terms of reference (APPC19/01/02). 2. Updated LTSC terms of reference (LTSC19/01/02).
TERMS OF REFERENCE AND STANDARD OPERATIONS OF PROGRESSION & AWARD BOARDS AND ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES		
19.093	Considered	The Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Progression & Award Boards and associated activities (APPC19/16/1).

19.094	Reported	<p>By the Academic Registrar that the changes were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change of Title from Assessment Boards to Progression & Awards Board to better reflect the activity and responsibilities delegated from Senate to these boards. 2. An update of the Membership and Composition of PABs to reflect that these should be Departmental wide groupings, although allowing for approved variations when necessary. 3. The formal requirement to have module review meetings within Departments. 4. The formal requirement to have mid-term student progression review meetings at the end of each trimester when a PAB is not meeting. 5. The formalisation of the requirement of all Chairs Actions for SCQF levels 9 and above to be signed off by a Head of Programmes & Planning or Academic Registrar. <p>There were other minor updates around terminology and role titles.</p>
19.095	Discussion	<p>A member asked if January Assessment Boards were now formalised. The Academic Registrar stated that January Boards were formalised as mid-term student progression review meetings.</p> <p>Members asked if it could be made clearer that module marks would not change following the mid-term student progression reviews to ensure consistency.</p> <p>In Section A (Review of Module Performance) it was clarified that point 2.3 allows for variation on module performance reviews i.e. either Department or Programme. There was further discussion on assessment board review of module assessment performance and how this was currently inconsistent between Schools and Departments.</p> <p>It was suggested that review of module assessment should specifically be tied to an assessment board. A more comprehensive module review (i.e. not just marks) could be considered at the forum described in section A.</p> <p>It was agreed that there was no need for a pre-board for mid-term/January. Module performance and “at risk” candidates only needed to be considered. For long thin modules, there was no requirement for a Board as the modules were not complete. With regard to external examiner presence it was agreed that written confirmation was sufficient.</p>
19.096	Resolved	That the document be updated in line with the above comments (Action: Academic Registrar).
ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE		
19.097	Considered	Proposed terms of reference, membership and work plan for 2019/20 (APPC19/24/01).
19.098	Reported	By Dr Rate that the subcommittee would have the same members as the ARWG and meetings would now require a quorum. The terms of reference

		were slightly updated. The workplan would also be slightly updated to show linkage between TESTA and Banded Grading and add review of the TESTA pilot.
19.099	Discussion	It was noted that references to APPC and Senate should be only to APPC and there should be a statement on AOB work as requested by APPC. The Chair stated that she did not want the subcommittee to be a catch all for any regulatory development work. It's main role would be to provide an annual sense check of the assessment regulations.
19.100	Resolved	That the terms of reference, membership and work plan be approved subject to the minor amendments detailed above (Action: ARSC Chair/Clerk).
PROGRAMME WITHDRAWALS		
Biological and Biomedical Sciences (BIO)		
19.101	Approved	Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences (BIO) proposal for the withdrawal of the following programmes: BSc (Hons) Microbiology MSc Biomolecular and Biomedical Sciences MSc Clinical Microbiology MSc Food Bioscience MSc Pharmacology (APPC19/25/01)
U2B		
19.102	Approved	U2B proposal for the withdrawal of the BA (Honours) Counselling and BA(Honours) Cognitive Behavioural Therapy programmes (APPC19/26/01).
Nursing and Community Health		
19.103	Approved	A proposal from the Department of Nursing and Community Health for the suspension (from 2019-20) and withdrawal (from 2020-21) of the PgC Education in Academic and Practice Settings (PgC EAPS) programme (APPC19/27/01).
ENTRY CRITERIA –DESE CERTIFICATE		
19.104	Approved	Proposed changes to the University's postgraduate entry criteria in relation to the Portuguese DESE (APPC19/06/01) subject to minor correction in paragraph 2 (i.e. should say 10 out of 20).
LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE		
19.105	Received	The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 14 August 2019 (LTSC19/18/1).
APPC CHAIR'S ACTION		
19.106	Received	A chair's action approving the review of Contextualised Admissions Policy (APPC19/12/01)