



Meeting APPC20/1
Confirmed

ACADEMIC POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020

PRESENT:	Professor N. Andrew, Ms. S. Docherty, Dr M. Ferguson, Ms C. Hulsen, Mrs M. McCann, Professor J. Lennon, Mr S. Lopez, Professor M. Mannion Dr N. McLarnon, Professor A. Nelson, Ms S. Pitticas, Professor A. Robertson (Acting Chair), Mr A. Rahoo, Dr S. Rate, Mr R. Ruthven, Dr U. Shahani, Professor B. Steves, Mrs M. Wright	
APOLOGIES:	Professor A. Britton, Ms J. Main, Professor A. Morgan, Professor V. Webster	
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs H. Brown, Ms D. Donnet, Dr A. Nimmo (Head of Academic Development – for item A.11), Mr P. Woods (Secretary)	
MINUTES		
020.001	Considered	Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2020 (APPC19/61/01).
020.002	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as a correct record.
MATTERS ARISING		
020.003	Considered	Any matters arising from the above minutes not otherwise covered on the agenda (APPC20/01/01).
Inclusion and Diversity (<i>Arising on 019.168</i>)		
020.004	Reported	By the Secretary that this item would be carried over into the forward programme of work for 2020-21.
APPC ANNUAL REPORT		
020.005	Considered	The Academic Policy and Practice Committee Annual Report (APPC20/02/01).
020.006	Reported	By the Secretary that the report had been prepared as in previous years as a summary of the work of the Committee during the previous session. Following agreement with the Chair of Senate it had now been agreed that meeting by meeting summary reports would be submitted to Senate instead of one annual report so this report was for the attention of APPC only.
020.007	Discussion	The acting Chair noted that more action-oriented language would be more effective and that this could be built into the forward programme to

		highlight outcomes as a result of the Committee's consideration of items.
020.008	Resolved	That the Annual Report be approved.
APPC FORWARD PROGRAMME		
020.009	Considered	The Academic Policy and Practice Committee forward work plan for Session 2020/21 (APPC19/57/02).
020.010	Resolved	That members inform the Secretary of any items to be updated and a column be added to show progress/completion (Action: APPC members/Secretary).
LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT		
020.011	Considered	The Learning and Teaching Subcommittee Annual Report to APPC (LTSC20/11/1).
020.012	Reported	By Professor Andrew that, like the APPC report, it captured the work of the Committee over the previous session. She also informed members that the Director of Academic Development would be taking over as Chair from this session.
020.013	Discussion	<p>The acting Chair stated that the relationship between LTSC, APPC and ETSE was under discussion with the APPC chair and this would be around clarification of roles rather than major changes.</p> <p>Professor Andrew stated that for LTSC it would be useful if there could be more thought generally around what should be included on agendas in addition to the required quality enhancement items and for the Committee to be a forum for debate and developing proposals for APPC consideration.</p> <p>Ms Hulsen welcomed the discussion and agreed it would be useful to clarify the expectations around reporting for the respective fora.</p>
020.013	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the LTSC Annual Report be approved. 2. That the discussion be noted for further consideration by the Chair of APPC.
ACADEMIC DELIVERY SESSION 2020-21 – STUDENT ENGAGEMENT		
020.014	Considered	Attendance & Engagement Policy Statement for 2020/21 (APPC20-14-01).
020.015	Reported	<p>By the Academic Registrar the policy statement provided an update on the operational adaptations to the Attendance & Engagement procedures for 2020-21 featuring the inclusion of GCU Learn data to supplement on campus card swipe data to take account of the current blended learning delivery model. He informed members that the review of the Policy, initiated at the last meeting of APPC, was ongoing and new Home Office guidance now provided greater flexibility to institutions and recognised the high level of compliance of the HE sector.</p> <p>With regard to GCU Learn data, the Academic Registrar clarified that nothing new was expected of module leaders but he drew members' attention to functionality within GCU Learn which allowed module leaders to view student engagement with GCU Learn.</p>
020.016	Discussion	There was discussion over whether there could be letter notifications to students in addition to the emails, in the context of potential illness or

		broadband issues. The Academic Registrar stated that this was not practical particularly during the pandemic when there were limited campus-based staff. The policy itself had not changed and email notifications could be suspended if there was notification of illness. Whilst Registry manage the process it was important to remember they were not responsible for actioning a withdrawal and students should be in regular contact with their departments. He reminded members that students can also appeal a withdrawal and If there were issues with illness or broadband connectivity this would be taken into account.
020.017	Resolved	That APPC endorse the Policy Statement and note the operational adaptations for 2020-21.
BANDED GRADING		
020.018	Considered	Proposed forward planning and paper for discussion on feedback matrices and a banded marking framework (APPC20/04/01).
020.019	Reported	By Professor Nelson that the purpose of this item was to ask APPC to approve further work on banded grading involving working towards a shared understanding of the marking rubrics which will underpin the banded grading framework. To further this aim it was proposed to establish a new Task and Finish Group to develop the GCU catalogue of rubrics and bring back proposals to APPC. At this stage it was also important to flag potential discussion on the use of one assessment rubric per level and potential impact on existing rubrics.
020.020	Discussion	Members were reminded that the ongoing work on Honours classification was considered a linked piece of work. It was also suggested that the consideration of Honours classifications and potential grade inflation was a related piece of work. In terms of timescale, Professor Nelson suggested that a pilot by tri C may be realistic.
020.021	Resolved	That the proposal to establish a new Task & Finish Group to develop the GCU catalogue of rubrics in relation to banded grading be approved (Action: Dean SHLS).
MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY		
020.022	Considered	An update on the University Mitigating Circumstances policy and procedure (APPC20/13/01).
020.023	Reported	By the Academic Registrar that temporary measures were introduced for 2019-20 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic but given the overall planning and adjustments in place for 2020/21, these amendments and other temporary changes to the Assessment Regulations will not continue into 2020/21. However, two aspects required consideration given the ongoing nature of the pandemic: i. The requirement for students to provide evidence as part of their MITs application;

		<p>ii. The threshold at which COVID 19's impact on a student's learning becomes a legitimate mitigating circumstance – based on the definition of MITS being for exceptional, serious, acute and unforeseen circumstances.</p> <p>The following recommendations were presented for consideration:</p> <p>i. The requirement to provide evidence is suspended for 2020/21 Trimester A, to be reviewed in January 2021 with respect to Trimester B, and again in May with respect to Trimester C</p> <p>ii. Only situations where a student has been directly impacted personally by Covid-19 (ill health, unforeseen caring responsibilities etc.) will be considered as a legitimate ground for MITS</p> <p>iii. In addition to the impact statement, students are asked to provide a statement on how their submission meets the criteria of being exceptional, serious, acute and unforeseen'.</p> <p>iv. The MITS web pages are reviewed and updated, ensuring clarity in guidance of what is and is not considered legitimate, including examples. Details of other support mechanisms to be highlighted, particularly in relation to any long term condition that may have an impact throughout an individual's studies</p> <p>v. Academic Staff are reminded of the options that are available and that where possible a deadline extension be provided instead of a non-submission and MITS. A presentation pack will be made available to staff and can be presented at meetings where requested.</p>
02.024	Discussion	<p>A member asked if, given the possible requirement for two statements, there would be two separate forms. The Academic Registrar clarified that there would be one form divided into two sections.</p> <p>The Academic Registrar agreed with the suggestion to add a declaration by the student for any MITs submission.</p>
020.025	Resolved	<p>That with the addition of a declaration by the student for any MITs submission, the recommendations be approved and recommended to Senate (Action: Academic Registrar).</p>
ELISR		
020.026	Considered	<p>Areas for University Consideration arising from Enhancement Led Internal Subject Review 2019-20 (APPC20/11/01).</p>
020.027	Reported	<p>By Professor Andrew that the paper highlighted areas for University consideration and also outlined how ELISR will be managed throughout 2020-21. These points and examples of good practice were outlined.</p>
020.028	Discussion	<p>Professor Andrew was asked how good practice was shared and she suggested that APPC had a role in discussing and making recommendations on areas for further consideration.</p> <p>The recommendation regarding timetabling (2.3) was highlighted and noted as pre-Covid and overtaken by events.</p> <p>Staff development under 2.3 and the role of personal tutor was also highlighted. Professor Andrew replied that this was included in the Academic Development Framework but possibly had now assumed greater</p>

		importance.
020.029	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That there is further consideration of strategies for sharing good practice (Action: Academic Quality) 2. There is consideration of any required refresh of the Academic Development Framework in relation to the (Action: Academic Quality and Academic Development).
SCHOOL ANNUAL MONITORING PROCESS 2018-19		
020.030	Considered	Areas for University Consideration arising from School Annual Monitoring Process 2018-19 (APPC20/10/01).
020.031	Reported	By Professor Andrew that similarly to the ELISR item, the paper highlighted areas for University consideration and also outlined how Annual Monitoring will be managed throughout 2020-21.
020.032	Discussion	The broad areas for consideration were noted. The actions, where relevant to APPC, were already in place or underway such as streamlining of Annual Monitoring Process, attendance monitoring and timetabling enhancements.
020.033	Resolved	That the paper be noted.
VLE MODULE RECORDS RETENTION		
020.034	Considered	Blackboard/GCULearn – VLE Module Records Retention Schedule (APPC20/05/01).
020.035	Reported	By Dr Nimmo that the paper outlined the new GCU Learn records retention schedule where modules would be deleted after a period of the current academic year plus 7 years. Staff communications on this would follow. Student results would be retained in the Student Information System and were unaffected. Exceptions existed for Turnitin records and records related to the Scottish Ongoing Achievement Record (SOAR) storage/archiving requirement. Solutions for these two exceptions would be sought separately.
020.036	Discussion	A member queried what would happen in terms of accessing a student/programme handbook. Members agreed that this was a separate archiving issue and unrelated to the VLE records retention, however it highlighted the importance of students maintaining their own records
020.037	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the updated RR schedule be noted. 2. That GCNYC are also made aware of this change (Action: Head of Academic Development).
GRADUATE OUTCOMES		
020.038	Considered	A report on Graduate Outcomes 2017-18 (APPC20/07/01).
020.039	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the report provided a high-level summary of the 2017-18 graduate cohort. The survey was administered centrally by HESA and graduates are surveyed approximately 15 months after completing their studies. HESA has labelled this open data release as experimental and cautioned that these statistics are not comparable with the results of the <i>Destination of Leavers from Higher Education</i> (DLHE), which the Graduate

		<p>Outcomes survey replaced. The process had proved to be quite challenging and there had been a low response rate as a result of problems with the survey process.</p> <p>The highlights were that GCU had performed well with 91% of graduates in all modes of employment (full-time, part-time or voluntary / unpaid work) and / or further study, above the Scottish sector rate of 89%. A total of 77% of GCU graduates in employment were in the highly skilled occupations, compared to the Scottish sector rate of 79%. At postgraduate level, 88% of GCU graduates are in a highly skilled occupation compared to 77% of undergraduates. There were further variations across the Schools.</p> <p>The data had been shared with the Schools and professional departments.</p>
020.040	Discussion	<p>Members discussed identifying areas for enhancement highlighted by the report and themes which could be developed under the broad heading of graduate attainment.</p> <p>Ms Hulsen was asked if it was planned to set these outcomes against a wider economic context. She responded that this was a challenge as the survey methodology (i.e. surveying 15 months' post-graduation) meant that the comparison was already outdated.</p> <p>Members discussed themes that could be developed such as the economic context, BAME attainment, highly-skilled employment indicators and work placements. They also discussed the appropriate forum for discussing and developing these themes.</p>
020.041	Resolved	<p>That it is recommended that areas for enhancement and themes which could be developed via the Enhancing the Student Experience Steering Group (ETSE) and thereafter fed into the APPC forward programme of work.</p>
PROGRESSION AND COMPLETION 2019-20		
020.042	Considered	<p>A report on first diet progression and completion for 2019-20 (APPC20/08/01).</p>
020.043	Reported	<p>By Ms Hulsen that the report had already been discussed with the Schools. The second diet results would be available at the end of September and could be considered thereafter for the full picture of the academic year.</p> <p>The highlights of the first diet outcomes were that there was an increase in progression at levels 1,2 and 3. There was a 2% decrease in completion at level 4. Honours classifications showed a further increase in firsts and a decrease in both 2:1 and 2:2 awards.</p>
020.044	Discussion	<p>Ms Hulsen informed members that the full report (including second diet) would include demographics.</p> <p>Members were in agreement that, even taking into account that 2019-20 was an exceptional year, the issue of grade inflation required serious attention. The flexibility introduced around the Covid-19 pandemic was also discussed as a possible factor in the increase in the number of first class</p>

		awards.
020.045	Resolved	That the issue is revisited in the context of the full year report when it is brought to APPC.
NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY		
020.046	Considered	An overview of National Student Survey 2020 Results (APPC20/09/01).
020.047	Reported	<p>By Ms. Hulsen that the outcomes had been widely circulated and the data was available on GCU Dash. It should be noted that during the survey period the University experienced the UCU action and the move to online teaching. The Office for Students (OfS) assessed the possible impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the data and concluded that the results could be published in full and without any adjustment.</p> <p>Overall GCU achieved an overall satisfaction score of 85%, a +4% improvement on last year. Some programmes showed a 90% or greater satisfaction rating although others were more average. Some programmes were not published as their numbers were too small to be published but we are aware that satisfaction amongst those students is comparatively low (75%) and they impacted on the overall NSS outcome.</p> <p>OfS have instigated a review of the NSS but SFC have advised to continue as normal at this stage. There would be more clarity later in September.</p>
020.048	Discussion	<p>The Acting Chair informed members that the paper had been considered by the University Court.</p> <p>ADLTQ for SHLS acknowledged there had been impact from the large nursing programme and informed members that work was being undertaken to address and improve the student experience.</p>
020.049	Resolved	That the NSS outcomes be noted.
ACADEMIC POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION & MEMBERSHIP 2020-21		
020.050	Considered	The Terms of Reference and Composition and Membership 2020-21 (APPC20/03/01).
020.051	Discussion	<p>Members noted a couple of required amendments were required to clarify the composition:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend Dean GCU London to <i>GCU London Senior Academic Lead</i>. 2. Amend Student Vice President to <i>Student vice President (1 VP nominated by the Students' Association)</i> <p>It was also suggested that terms of reference be clarified to note that the Committee's role in recruitment was in relation to academic policy and practice.</p>

020.052	Resolved	That subject to the above amendments the Terms of Reference and Composition and Membership 2020-21 be approved (Action: APPC Secretary).
PROGRESSION AND AWARDS BOARDS		
020.053	Considered	Minor Procedural Amendments to the, 'Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Progression and Award Boards and Associated Groups (APPC20/06/01).
	Reported	By the Academic Registrar that there was one minor change to embed the move to paperless Boards.
020.054	Resolved	That the amendment be approved.
UPDATES TO AQPP		
020.055	Considered	Minor updates for clarification (APPC20/12/1).
020.056	Reported	By Professor Andrew that there were no policy changes and the updates were routine housekeeping.
020.057	Discussion	Members noted the inclusion of decolonisation of the curriculum in templates and work being done more widely to promote global awareness of this issue.
020.058	Resolved	That the updates be approved.
LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION & MEMBERSHIP 2019-20		
020.059	Approved	The Terms of Reference and Composition and Membership 2019-20 (LTSC20/15/1).
LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE		
020.060	Received	1. The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020 (LTSC19/65/1). 2. The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2020 (LTSC19/90/1).
CHAIR'S ACTIONS		
020.061	Received	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A chair's action approving the proposed Programme Award title of BSc (Hons) Civil Engineering for the Civil Engineering undergraduate programme delivered under the Co-operation Agreement between Jinling Institute of Technology (JIT) and Glasgow Caledonian University (APPC19/63/01). 2. A chair's action approving a proposal to accept 4 additional/alternative online English language tests as a method of prospective students to GCU satisfying the English language condition of their offer of admission to the University (APPC19/64/01). 3. A chair's action approving the academic case for the MSc Professional Accountancy (ACCA Route) (APPC19/62/01).