



Meeting APPC20/2
Confirmed

ACADEMIC POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2020

PRESENT:	Professor N. Andrew, Ms. S. Docherty, Dr M. Ferguson, Ms J. Fisher (<i>vice</i> Ms S. Pitticas), Ms J. Main, Mrs M. McCann, Dr N. McLarnon, Professor S. McMeekin (<i>vice</i> Professor M. Mannion), Professor A. Nelson, Professor A. Robertson, Ms K. Roden (<i>vice</i> Ms C. Hulsen), Mr A. Rahoo, Mr R. Ruthven, Dr U. Shahani, Professor B. Steves, Professor V. Webster, Mrs M. Wright	
APOLOGIES:	Professor A. Britton, Professor J. Lennon, Mr S. Lopez, Professor A. Morgan, Ms S. Pitticas, Dr S. Rate	
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs H. Brown, Mr P. Woods (Secretary)	
MINUTES		
020.062	Considered	Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 (APPC20/15/01).
020.063	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as a correct record.
MATTERS ARISING		
020.064	Considered	Any matters arising from the above minutes not otherwise covered on the agenda (APPC20/16/01).
020.065	Reported	That report is noted with no matters arising outstanding.
APPC PROGRAMME OF WORK		
020.066	Considered	The Academic Policy and Practice Committee rolling work plan for session 2020/21 (APPC20/25/01).
020.067	Reported	By the Secretary that the format had been adapted to include a summary of outcomes of previous meetings and the items considered. Some items had been added to the forward programme.
020.068	Resolved	That revised guidance for assessment is added to the forward programme (Action: APPC Secretary).
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ENTRY CRITERIA		
020.069	Considered	Proposed Additional English Language Qualifications for Admissions Purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Baccalaureate

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IGCSEs (Cambridge and Edexcel): English as a Second Language • LanguageCert International ESOL • Malta: Bachelor degree from University of Malta • Occupational English Test (OET) • Singapore: Degree awarded by Singaporean University • Uganda Certificate of Education: English/Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE): English • Zimbabwe GCE O Level: English <p>(APPC20/18/01).</p>
020.070	Reported	By Ms Fisher that requests to add qualifications were received as part of the admissions process. 8 of these have been put forward for consideration, with a rationale for each of them.
020.071	Discussion	<p>Ms Fisher clarified that the online tests previously approved as an interim measure during the Covid-19 pandemic were unconnected to this request but would be reviewed later in the session.</p> <p>The Student President asked if the support for international students would be enhanced in line with the anticipated additional recruitment if these qualifications were approved.</p> <p>The Chair agreed that this was an important factor but should be considered separately in a broader discussion on support for international students. However, it was also noted that this proposal should be taken to SAGE for consideration before final approval by APPC.</p>
020.072	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the proposals be endorsed at this stage. 2. That the proposals be presented to SAGE before APPC approval is confirmed (Action: Admissions). 3. That the interim approval of online tests is reviewed in tri B and brought to APPC (Action: Admissions).
PROGRAMME AND MODULE ADAPTATION		
020.073	Considered	Programme and module adaptation academic session 20/21 - updated notes of guidance (APPC20/24/01)
020.074	Reported	By Professor Andrew that the updated guidance reflected QAA guidance for the rest of session 2020-21 and beyond.
020.075	Discussion	<p>On point 3.7 <i>Any revision to the assessment strategy should not increase the currently approved number of assessments. The assessment weighting applied to each assessment should not change</i> it was queried if this also implied that there should be no decrease of the number of assessments. Professor Andrew stated that the recommendation was that the number should stay the same where possible although a decrease was not ruled out. It was thought that any change in number of assessments would change the weighting so clarification of language was required.</p> <p>The Student President asked if students would be made aware in advance of any alterations. The Chair stated that it was essential that students were fully informed of changes as they apply to their</p>

		<p>discipline, or more generally. This is a requirement previously endorsed.</p> <p>Members further discussed the need to remind colleagues to maintain an accurate record of any changes to allow tracking of changes both temporary Covid-specific changes as well as permanent changes.</p> <p>Another member suggested including reference to “component” and or “element” to match the definitions in the University Assessment Regulations would help clarity for staff.</p>
020.076	Resolved	That APPC endorses the updated guidance subject to the agreed points of clarification noted above (Action: Head of Academic Quality).
DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY UPDATE		
020.077	Considered	An update by the Chair on digital accessibility compliance requirements and current progress.
020.078	Reported	<p>By the Chair a summary of progress to date of the Accessibility Project. The following was discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for staff on making digital content accessible was now available on LT site • Executive Board had endorsed the use of external expert company to support the creation of staff development resources and training – Module in GCULearn and additional training for those staff with Accessibility responsibilities. • The VLE Accessibility statement has been published • Module statement has been developed and will be included in Module Handbooks from Trimester B onwards • Extent of use of disproportionate burden by the University It was also intended to develop a clear University process to ensure all accessibility requests are captured and addressed but meantime the interim process appeared to be working well. Noted that numbers of requests so far were low. As previously discussed any policy or practice changes required as a result of digital accessibility compliance would come to APPC for consideration and approval as required.
020.079	Discussion	<p>Members discussed the training module and asked if it would address common issues already experienced by staff. The Chair replied the training should address common questions asked by staff. Regarding technology to support staff it was noted that different software options were being tested. The Communications and Digital Engagement team had agreed to test the module before release. It was important to understand what students were currently using for accessibility and the disability team had been consulted on this e.g. where students may be recording material or using transcribing software.</p> <p>It was also noted that a <i>Learning Capture Performance Rights Agreement</i> was being developed by University and TU colleagues.</p>

		Once approved this would be circulated to APPC. University Governance Department were ensuring any impact on existing University policy documentation e.g. Code of Student Conduct are addressed.
020.080	Resolved	That the agreement is circulated to APPC when ratified (Action: Chair).
ETSE UPDATE		
020.081	Considered	An update from the ETSE Steering Group (APPC20/23/01).
020.082	Reported	By the Director of Student Life that this was a summary of the wide ranging discussion at the last meeting of ETSE. School Plans were reviewed and cross-University priority areas were identified. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and remote learning were reflected in the plans. The cross-University priority areas were identified as: 1. Learning analytics and data 2. Graduate employability 3. Student mental health and wellbeing 4. Personal Tutoring
02.083	Discussion	The Chair asked that equality and inclusion be added and priorities should also be reflective of the revised Strategy for Learning. The committee welcomed the School action plans and prioritising impactful and achievable actions.
020.084	Resolved	That the direction of travel is endorsed subject to the addition of Equality and Inclusion as a priority area (Action: ETSE).
PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS		
020.085	Considered	College of Engineering, National University – Oman (CENU) Annual Report 2018-19 (APPC20/19/01).
020.086	Reported	By Dr Ferguson that the report provided an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the collaborative and partnership arrangements, particularly with regard to the quality of the student experience and associated academic standards. She reminded members that the partnership was governed by the Liaison Handbook which outlined roles and responsibilities regarding quality enhancement and the student experience. The report highlighted changes to the portfolio and outlined key objectives related to that and other aspects of the partnership:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain an oversight of programmes being taught out. • To explore opportunities to reshape and enhance the collaborative provision at NUST. • To ensure new delivery model continues to secure standards and quality of student experience for current and planned new portfolio. Delivery model informed by evaluation of existing delivery model(s). • Securing a robust new agreement which continues to be aligned with GCU's international development strategy, mission and values. • Integrating and embedding latest GCU strategies and policies into accredited provision and practice at CENU, Oman. • To enhance the standard and quality of Masters delivery. To underpin a more sustainable delivery model. <p>It should be noted that this report is based on AY 2018/19 activity and outlines plans for AY 2019/20 and beyond.</p>
020.087	Discussion	<p>Dr Ferguson was asked how the current delivery model was working in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Dr Ferguson replied that remote delivery was working well. Professor McMeekin echoed this comment and added that online delivery had been very successful with overseas partners. The move to online delivery had highlighted new options for future delivery.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there could be a note to contextualise the delivery model adaptations in response to Covid-19 in the 2019-20 report.</p>
020.088	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the 2018-19 CENU Annual report be approved. 2. That the 2019-20 includes a contextualised note to address Covid-19 pandemic impact (Action: ADLTQ-SCEBE).
PROGRESSION AND COMPLETION 2019-20		
020.089	Considered	Undergraduate Second Diet Progression and Completion 2019-20 Report(APPC20/20/01).
020.090	Reported	<p>By Ms Roden that the report provided an overview of 2019-20 progression and completion for full-time undergraduate students after second diet, and comparisons with 2019-20 first diet progression and completion data, and 2018-19 second diet data.</p> <p>The percentage of students eligible to progress at Levels 1 – 3 has increased significantly since first diet and is higher than the 2018-19 second diet eligible to progress figures, with an increase from 87% to 92% (Level 1), from 87% to 93% (Level 2), and from 88% to 91% (Level 3). The percentage of students at Level 4 successfully gaining an honours degree has increased by 1 pp from 89% to 90%.</p> <p>First Class Honours Awards had decreased slightly from the first diet</p>

		<p>report but had shown an overall increase of 6% to the previous year.</p> <p>Contextual factors in relation to actions taken by the University in response to the pandemic were outlined in the report.</p>
020.091	Discussion	<p>Members discussed the report. Better progression appeared to be linked to the alternative assessments and the approach to no detriment policy allowing students to submit as first attempt</p> <p>Members discussed potential learning points from the outcomes of the report from a pedagogic perspective. Alternative assessments had been reported by some programmes to have allowed students to demonstrate greater depth and produced better results.</p> <p>#Student Wellbeing reported fewer students seeking support pre-exam diet. This was also the experience of the Students' Association who reported a 60% drop in requests for support from the Advice Centre.</p> <p>It was highlighted that conventional examinations were often a requirement of PSRBs who tended to be very traditional in their outlook. However, PSRBs were also being required to adapt as a result of the current circumstances.</p> <p>The Chair agreed that the mitigation that the University had put in place should be kept in mind but there was also an opportunity to think more broadly about assessment and examinations and to feed this into the revision of the Strategy for Learning and conversations with staff and students.</p>
020.092	Resolved	That the outcomes of the report be noted.
LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE		
020.093	Considered	The Learning and Teaching Subcommittee Meeting Summary Report 21 October 2020 (APPC20/17/01).
020.094	Reported	<p>By Professor Robertson that he paper was a succinct summary of the discussions at the meeting and he highlighted the discussion on the Accelerate Pathway to HEA Professional Recognition and how to encourage senior staff to participate. The main barrier to participation was time but it was expected that the target for reaching fellowship would be met.</p> <p>The Committee considered also a report of the outcomes of the successful pilot on Academic Mentoring and received an update on Enhancement Themes where good work was being done by Academic Quality colleagues. He also noted that the Enhancement Themes conference had featured speakers from GCU.</p>
020.095	Discussion	Professor Robertson explained that numbers for senior fellow in Accelerate were good but for principal fellow it was less so. He informed the Committee that he would be happy to mentor any

		<p>members who wished to engage.</p> <p>A member asked there had been any feedback from LTSC on the Module Evaluation Questionnaire. Professional Robertson explained that it had been a more general discussion on the digital format and the possibility of additional questions. The Chair stated that it would be necessary to agree a core set of questions to provide longitudinal analysis. Ms Roden explained that work was ongoing to address the format and core questions.</p>
020.096	Resolved	That a mentoring group be established to support staff engaged in Accelerate (Action: Academic Development).
EXCEPTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20		
020.097	Considered	The Exceptions Subcommittee Annual Report 2019-20 (APPC20/21/01).
020.098	Reported	By the Chair that only one exception related to Covid-19 and placement learning outcomes and an outcome had been agreed with the PSRB to allow for paid or voluntary work in practice settings to be eligible if properly evidenced.
020.099	Approved	The Exceptions Subcommittee Annual Report 2019-20 (APPC20/21/01).
BANDED MARKING UPDATE		
020.100	Considered	An update on progress in banded marking consideration (APPC20/22/01)
020.101	Reported	<p>By Professor Nelson that the purpose of this item was to seek APPC's view on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The utility of this approach and helpfulness of the model. 2. The granularity of the bands. 3. Opinion on likely timescales.
020.102	Discussion	<p>Members were largely supportive of the proposed approach. A number of specific points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a perception of a band D being a fail? • That "compensatable fail" should be changed to marginal fail and "not successful" to unequivocal fail • Some programmes do not have progression e.g. to Honours so is this potentially misleading? • Descriptions overlap e.g. A+ and A both say excellent. This should be clarified. • Reconsider some of the descriptors especially where apparent overlap with other bands is evident in the taxonomy • That a draft should come back to APPC in January 2021. <p>Some members thought that the point about programmes not having progression i.e. being on one level could be interpreted differently in</p>

		<p>that students on that level should know what is their academic trajectory. This point was emphasised by the Student VP who stated that students are often not aware what is required to attain e.g. 1st class. It would be helpful to clarify for single level programmes but the first column was considered useful in defining the level students were at.</p> <p>Professor Nelson welcomed the feedback. On the band descriptions overlapping she thought that examples would help to clarify but she would consider this further.</p> <p>Members discussed the D band and it was noted that this had not been perceived as a fail in other HEIs using a similar framework.</p>
020.103	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That APPC endorses the proposed approach. 2. That the feedback provided in the discussion be taken into account in modifying the proposal. 3. That a postgraduate framework is developed for consideration. 4. That the revised UG model and PG model be considered at the next meeting of APPC in January 2021. <p>(Action: Dean SHLS)</p>
AOCB		
Graduate Apprenticeship Award titles		
020.104	Reported	By the Chair that inconsistency in award titles for Graduate Apprenticeship programmes had been identified, meaning award titles on parchments varied.
020.105	Discussion	A member also highlighted that on GCU Dash the programmes were all classified as part-time but were in fact full-time. These were possibly legacy issues originating in the initial approval of the programmes
020.106	Resolved	That proposals to resolve the inconsistencies in relation to Graduate Apprenticeship programmes are brought back to APPC for consideration (Action: Academic Registrar and Strategy and Planning) .
LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE		
020.107	Received	The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2020 (LTSC20/14/1) .
APPC SUMMARY REPORT TO SENATE		
020.108	Received	The summary report of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 (S20/4/1)