



Meeting APPC18/1  
**Confirmed**

**ACADEMIC POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2018**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Dr N. Andrew, Professor I. Cameron, Ms E. Fulton, Ms C. Hulsen, Dr F Kennedy ( <i>vice</i> Dr N. McLarnon), Dr J. Paterson ( <i>vice</i> Dr M. Ferguson), Dr S. Rate, Ms R. Simpson, Professor B. Steves, Professor V. Webster (Chair), Professor R. Whittaker	
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Professor A. Britton, Dr D Chalmers, Professor R. Clougherty, Ms D. Donnet Ms J. Fisher, Mr S. Lopez, Ms J. Main, Professor A. Morgan, Mr R. Ruthven, Mrs M. Wright	
<b>BY INVITATION:</b>	Ms C. Bowick	
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Mr P. Woods (Secretary)	
<b>Welcome</b>		
The chair welcomed Ms Simpson and Ms Fulton who were attending their first meeting of APPC as members.		
<b>MINUTES</b>		
018.001	Considered	Minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2018 ( <b>APPC18/56/01</b> )
018.002	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as a correct record.
<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>		
<b>Flexible Resubmission/Resits (Arising on APPCM 017.188)</b>		
018.003	Reported	By the Chair that the actions would be picked up at the next meeting when the Academic Registrar would be in attendance.
<b>RPL Policy (Arising on APPCM 017.199)</b>		
018.004	Reported	By Professor Whittaker that revisions would be brought to a future meeting.
<b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST</b>		
018.005	Considered	A Proposed Change to GCU Accepted English Language Test Score ( <b>APPC18/03/01</b> ).
018.006	Reported	By Ms Bowick that the Directorate of Internationalisation, Marketing and Strategic Enrolment had been informed that GCU was out of step with the

		majority of the sector with regards to the minimum language grade accepted for the NECO Secondary School Certificate qualification. Other HEIs accepted lower and this had resulted in us losing applicants to other institutions. It was proposed to mitigate for this by changing the accepted English language grade from C4 to C6 for programmes requiring IELTS 6 with no element below 5.5 and C5 for programmes requiring IELTS 6.5 with no element below 5.5. The international Committee had approved this change and the proposal was now being brought to APPC to formalise the change.
018.007	Discussion	<p>Members asked if there would be a mechanism to track entrants at this level and identify any issues at an early stage. Ms Bowick said this would be possible.</p> <p>The Chair stated that recommendations should be sought regarding support required to accompany this change. It was also important to note that certain programmes require IELTS at higher grade for professional reasons and this was not changeable.</p>
018.008	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the change be agreed.</li> <li>2. The impact on students be tracked in the Schools (<b>Action:</b></li> <li>3. That recommendations regarding support be brought back for consideration.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>(Action: Academic Development – English Language support)</b></p>
<b>MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY</b>		
018.009	Considered	Revisions to the University’s Mitigating Circumstances Policy ( <b>APPC18-04-01</b> ).
018.010	Reported	By Professor Andrew that essentially the School level was as normal. There would be a trial of the University level group. There was a greater emphasis on dealing with cases where mental health was a factor.
018.011	Discussion	<p>The Student President commended the changes. She made a number of points regarding consistency of text which she agreed to send to Professor Andrew.</p> <p>With regard to confidentiality it was felt there needed to be greater clarity with regard to potential disclosure.</p> <p>Professor Andrew informed members that the online form was still in development but would be ready for use during this academic session.</p> <p>Members also felt the following changes would be appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change chair to ADLTQ</li> <li>• State that Board “may” accept statement from the personal tutor</li> </ul> <p>It was also suggested that any potential specific requirements of PGR Students be reviewed in as part of Thematic Review working group’s work.</p>

		<p>The lack of an appeal process other than via academic appeal caused some concern about clarity of roles, i.e. could the Assessment Board Chair overturn a MITs decision?</p> <p>Chair reiterated that Assessment Boards would not be able to overturn MITs Board decisions.</p>
018.012	Resolved	<p>The revisions be approved and recommended to Senate subject to the amendments proposed above.</p> <p><b>(Action: Head of Academic Quality).</b></p>
<b>THEMATIC REVIEW OF THE POST-GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT EXPERIENCE</b>		
018.013	Considered	<p>Thematic Review of the Post-Graduate Research Student Experience <b>(APPC17/05/01).</b></p>
018.014	Reported	<p>By Professor Andrew that the thematic review had been undertaken in response to the ELIR3 where generally the student experience for PGRS had been identified as not great. The 2017 PRES outcome was also a driver.</p>
018.015	Discussion	<p>Members generally welcomed the report. The Chair stated that the Working Group should bring back an action plan for APPC to allow greater understanding of what the main concerns are.</p> <p>It was noted that the next PRES will feed into ELIR4 so an improvement in the student experience was required.</p> <p>Location was discussed and how much of a factor it was in student satisfaction. Physical co-location, embedding of PGR students in research centres or academic departments were all discussed.</p> <p>Some members felt that accommodation had been a factor in the poor PRES outcome and since then there had been a change of emphasis in how best to accommodate PGR students. It was suggested that the Yunus centre was a model of how greater student satisfaction could be engendered but the general PGRS experience was still a long way from that overall.</p> <p>Professor Steves stated that the key things from the last PRESE were accommodation and teaching support.</p> <p>Members accepted that work had been done since the last PRES but equally insisted that students need to know their concerns are being addressed. An action plan may identify things already being done but there are other issues that would emerge.</p> <p>Discussion about estates plans re PGRS accommodation.</p>
018.016	Resolved	<p>1. That the recommendations be approved.</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. That the working group develop an action plan for attention of APPC. <b>(Action: Head of Academic Quality)</b></li> <li>3. That the Research Student Experience Action Plan be circulated to APPC when it is ready <b>(Action: Director Graduate School)</b>.</li> </ol>
<b>ACADEMIC QUALITY POLICY AND PRACTICE</b>		
018.017	Considered	The new Academic Quality Policy and Practice (2018 V.1) handbook ( <b>APPC18-05-01</b> ).
018.018	Reported	By Professor Andrew that the revised handbook was the product of an intense period of change over the past year. Key to this change was the need to streamline processes, including forms and templates. Roles and responsibilities were no upfront in section 3 and the role of the Personal Tutor was included. Programme leader, module leader etc all refreshed. Support developed for new programme leaders through AQD.
018.019	Resolved	<p>That the draft be approved and recommended to Senate subject to the following amendments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Changes" to the syllabus should be defined as "updates".</li> <li>2. Updates to activity hours is retained as a major change.</li> <li>3. That, longer term, specific requirements for research degrees be considered as part of the thematic review working group remit.</li> </ol> <p><b>(Actions: Head of Academic Quality)</b></p>
<b>ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE</b>		
018.020	Considered	Update on the Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) ( <b>APPC18/06/01</b> ).
018.021	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That as the SEAP group would be meeting that afternoon, consideration of the SEAP would be deferred to a later date.</li> <li>2. That the update be noted as an interim update.</li> </ol>
<b>COMMON GOOD AWARD</b>		
018.022	Considered	An Evaluation of the Common Good Award pilot ( <b>APPC18/07/01</b> ).
018.023	Reported	By Professor Whittaker that the paper summarises the methodological approach taken to evaluate the pilot of the Common Good Award, the key findings and recommendations for further development to support its full implementation in 2018/19.
018.024	Discussion	<p>There was a discussion about use of digital badges and the chair was keen to retain them in spite of the proposal to remove as a "barrier".</p> <p>Technical issues in relation to digital badges were discussed which had proved to be problematic. Conceptually they were also thought to be a barrier to some groups of students.</p> <p>Some members expressed surprise that students see the digital badges as barrier to engagement whereas those who did engage were positive about the badges. Professor Whittaker informed members that the Careers Office had ideas on moving the concept forward.</p> <p>Members discussed the need to unpack the problems with digital badges</p>

		and explore a solution. It could be that some other form of recognition could be used but retaining the term.  Members felt that communications was critical in driving this initiative.
018.025	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the concept of digital badges is retained in some form.</li> <li>2. That the barriers to engagement issue are explored further.</li> </ol> <b>(Actions: Director AQ&amp;D)</b>
<b>PROGRESSION AND COMPLETION</b>		
018.026	Considered	A report on undergraduate first diet progression and completion <b>(APPC18/08/01)</b> .
018.027	Reported	<p>By Ms Hulsen that the report provided an overview of progression and completion for students on full-time undergraduate programmes following the first diet assessment.</p> <p>Overall the results were on a par with 2016-17. Points to note were that repeats and withdrawals were had decreased but there was variance of School performance, especially in relation to level 2 articulation. International student performance showed decrease in progression at levels 1 and 2 but an increase at level 3.</p>
018.028	Discussion	<p>Members felt there were some concerns in the report. These were specific to certain cohorts so targeting was required in order to resolve, programme by programme.</p> <p>There was a short discussion on the impact of not having examinations in level 1, trimester 1. The Chair stated that there was a need to review assessment loading across the board and examination strategies, with potentially a greater role for formative exams.</p>
018.029	Resolved	That the Schools review the information in the report to develop appropriate action plans. <b>(Action: Deans/ADLTQS)</b>
<b>STUDENT SURVEYS AND MODULE EVALUATIONS</b>		
018.030	Considered	Student Surveys & Module Evaluations 2017-18 overview paper <b>(APPC18/09/01)</b> .
018.031	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the paper pulls together the results of the NSS 2018, GCUES 2018 and the 2017-18 module evaluations to provide an at-a-glance overview of the results by theme.
018.032	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the overview be noted.</li> <li>2. That the overview feed into the Student Experience Action Plan.</li> </ol> <b>(Action: Director S&amp;P)</b>
<b>PROPOSAL TO REFRESH THE ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION AT GCU</b>		
018.033	Considered	A proposal from the Students' Association to refresh representation on Senate Standing Committees <b>(APPC18/10/01)</b> .

018.034	Reported	By the Student President that the proposal had been developed in line with the refresh of academic department structures.
018.035	Discussion	There was a long discussion about the proposals and the difference to current arrangements for PGR Students. Professor Steves pointed out a difference in numbers between  Members discussed the appropriate representation for School Boards. This would be agreed in the School Board refresh process.
018.036	Resolved	That current appointments be retained until agreement of arrangements for PGRS representatives is clarified ( <b>Action: Director Grad School/GCUSA</b> ).
<b>APPC ANNUAL REPORT</b>		
018.037	Approved	The Academic Policy and Practice Committee Annual Report to Senate ( <b>APPC18/02/01</b> ).
<b>LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE</b>		
018.038	Approved	The Learning and Teaching Subcommittee Annual Report to APPC ( <b>LTSC18/01/1</b> ) subject to correction of a typographical error.
018.039	Resolved	That the timing of meetings is reviewed to enhance attendance and better facilitate deadlines ( <b>Action: Dept. of Governance</b> ).
<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>		
<b>Department of Business and Management ELISR report "University level" action points</b>		
018.040	Reported	By the Secretary that colleagues in AQ&D had highlighted University level actions arising from the Business and Management ELISR report. These were: On reviewing areas of University-wide practice that can be enhanced, the panel found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Feedback from employers states that enhancement of the University's website could improve signposting. A more accessible and intuitive website would provide a "one door approach" for employers and also allow students to access the support they need. Currently, employers are dependent on established links but potential/new employers find it difficult to know who and how to contact staff with business enquiries or employment opportunities for students.</i></li> <li>• <i>There is a rise in the number of students requiring mental health related support. Whilst it is acknowledged that the University's central support provide an excellent service it was stated that this will be an ongoing demand and that there is limited support for staff to feel able to assist students requiring support. The panel felt that this should remain a high priority on the University's agenda.</i></li> </ul> The first of these had been dealt with by LTSC who had referred the Department to the University Website Project for bullet one.  Bullet 2 required a statement from APPC regarding support for students' mental health.
018.041	Reported	By the Chair that the University had a student mental health action plan which was being taken forward. It was important that staff be aware of this

		action plan.
018.042	Resolved	That staff communications are promoted more widely in regard to the mental health action plan ( <b>Action: Director Student Life/Student Wellbeing Manager</b> ).
<b>ACADEMIC POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION &amp; MEMBERSHIP 2018-19</b>		
018.043	Approved	The Terms of Reference and Composition and Membership 2017-18 ( <b>APPC18/01/01</b> ).
018.044	Resolved	That Vice Deans added to circulation lists and SharePoint. ( <b>Action: Department of Governance</b> ).
<b>AMENDMENT TO SCHOOL BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE (DATA PROTECTION; MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY)</b>		
018.045	Approved	An amendment to School Board Terms of Reference (data protection; management and security) ( <b>APPC18/10/01</b> ).
018.46	Reported	By the Chair that a refresh of School Boards would be implemented to take into account School refresh changes.
<b>APPC CHAIR'S ACTIONS</b>		
018.047	Received	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Academic and Business case for MSc International Economics and Social Justice (<b>APPC18/11/01</b>)</li> <li>2. A Concept Paper and Academic Case for the programme MSc Insurance and Sustainable Risk Management (<b>APPC18/12/01</b>).</li> </ol>
<b>LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE</b>		
018.048	Received	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2018 (<b>LTSC17/21/1</b>).</li> <li>2. The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2017 (<b>LTSC16/75/1</b>).</li> </ol>