



Meeting Number APC15/2
Confirmed

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2015

PRESENT: Mr N. Alexander, Professor T. Buggy (*vice* I. Stewart), Professor I. Cameron, Mrs M. Henaghan, Professor T. Hilton, Mr S. Lopez, Ms J. Main, Ms S. McGiffen, Mr V. McKay, Mr R. Ruthven, Professor V. Webster (Chair)

APOLOGIES: Dr L. Amrane-Cooper, Dr S. Rate, Dr M. Sharp, Mr M. Stephenson, Professor B. Steves, Mr I. Stewart, Dr N. McLarnon, Professor R Whittaker

BY INVITATION: Dr N. Andrew, Ms D. Donnet,

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P. Woods (Secretary)

MINUTES

15.057 Considered The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2015 (**APC15/13/1**).

15.058 Resolved That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

Criterion of a Teaching Timetabling and Room Booking Policy (*Arising on 15.012*)

15.059 Reported By the Chair that the project was underway and staff were being invited to information sessions. Staff feedback was also being collected to inform the process. It was a major culture shift for staff but would become easier once the process was embedded.

15.060 Reported By Mr Lopez that the expectation was that any changes would be agreed with at a high level.

Report on Nullification of Module (*Arising on 15.016*)

15.061 Reported By the Chair that the report had been approved by Senate on 9 October 2015.

QUORACY OF ASSESSMENT BOARDS

15.062	Considered	A report on quoracy at summer and autumn Assessment Boards (APC15/14/1).
15.063	Reported	By Mr Lopez that the University regulations governing the operation of Assessment Boards have provision to allow inquorate Assessment Boards to proceed, in what would be expected to be exceptional circumstances, and inquoracy must be reported to Registry and Quality Enhancement. This report collated, for the first time, the feedback data from Schools on quoracy at Boards. The significant aspect to note was that 1 in 5 boards in the summer and autumn Assessment Board period were inquorate.
15.064	Reported	<p>By Professor Cameron that the figures were not acceptable but he assured members that action was already being taken, in that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An operations group (SMG and AHoDs) had been set up within the School to investigate all of the issues relating to Assessment Board quoracy.• Each Assessment Board composition was being reviewed to ensure that Boards are constituted properly - poorly constituted Boards were a contributing factor to the figures.
15.065	Reported	By Mr McKay that he agreed that the figures were not acceptable and there were similar investigations going on within SHLS. In addition to the issues already discussed there was a need to explore the wider reasons for the inquoracy. For the School this meant looking at the number of separate Boards in the School (i.e. currently 62) and exploring methods of reducing the burden. It was also important to ensure that Board members understood their role and to ensure each Assessment Board composition is relevant and fit for purpose.
15.066	Reported	By Professor Hilton that GSBS were similarly reviewing the membership of Boards and timetabling of Boards. The issue of annual leave clashes had been raised by staff members as an issue.
15.067	Discussion	<p>Members felt that annual leave may have contributed to the figures but it should be possible to address this at a local management level. The Boards are timetabled well in advance so there should be strategies to flag any potential quoracy problems in advance.</p> <p>Members also discussed the following as potential strategies for limiting factors that affect quoracy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Careful timetabling (in particular the scheduling of Boards with overlapping memberships)• External Examiner attendance and strategies to ensure that their role as a Board member is fulfilled (e.g. through written

statements, video/teleconferencing).

- A review of the regulations for the operation of Assessment Boards to ensure that the regulatory text is not contributing to the issues.
- Adopting a stricter approach than is currently taken to quoracy in Assessment Boards.

- 15.068 Resolved
1. That a wider review is undertaken by Schools to understand the challenges and report these back to APC (**Action: Deans of School**).
 2. To review the *Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Assessment* to ensure the wording is accurate and appropriate (**Action: Academic Registrar**).

REMUNERATION OF EXTERNAL PANEL MEMBERS

- 15.069 Considered A proposed policy on the Remuneration of External Panel Members and the inclusion of student representatives on panels (**APC15/15/1**).

- 15.070 Reported By Mrs Henaghan that the University was out of step with the rest of the sector in recruiting external panel members for approval and review activity and feedback from Schools/GCU London had highlighted difficulties in recruiting external panel members as a result of not offering any remuneration. In a UK-wide Academic Registrars Council survey, 90% of respondents reported that they pay members of programme approval, review and periodic review panels.

Related to the above, the University is committed to student engagement and ensuring the student voice is adequately heard and acted upon is at the heart of the review/approval process. The principle that students should also be paid for their work on ELISR (currently), review and approval panels (in the future) should be established. This would allow less reliance on GCUSA sabbatical officers

- 15.071 Discussion Members were supportive of the principles set out in the paper. The payment rates would be a matter for the Executive Board. Members also agreed that it would be more appropriate for the budget to be held centrally.

- 15.072 Resolved
1. That the recommendations be approved.
 2. That the budget for the remuneration should be held by Quality Enhancement. (**Action: Quality Enhancement**)

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS) 2015

- 15.073 Considered The Schools' NSS action plans for 2016 (**APC15/19/1**).

- 15.074 Discussion The Chair welcomed comments from members.

Members noted similarity in School Plan priorities although not an overall consensus. The Chair stated that she wanted greater consistency and meaningfulness in these plans going forward.

Members made further points about the plans:

- The proposed actions and outcomes were not specific in setting measurable targets for improvement.
- Statements about student feedback should be more focused and less generic.
- It should be recognised in all plans that student feedback is about quality as well as timing.
- The plans should complement the timetabling project.

15.075 Resolved That the above discussion is fed back to Schools (**Action: APC Secretary**).

GCU TURNITIN UK POLICY

15.076 Considered A proposed University policy for the use of *Turnitin UK* (**APC15/16/1**).

15.077 Reported By Professor Creanor that the LTQ Enhancement Network had been working on a proposal since last session following some staff complaints about inconsistency in approach to Turnitin across the University. Guidelines were developed and circulated but the feedback received from staff was that a policy was required. This draft attempted to reconcile these expectations whilst providing clarity around guidance for staff and students.

15.078 Discussion Members made the following points about the draft:

- That the draft paper read primarily as guidance with some policy aspects.
- That the policy aspects required be consolidating and separating from the guidance.
- The policy needs to be clear on how many submissions per assessment are to be allowed.
- The policy should be clear on what level of programme would allow formative submissions
- Turnitin is a proprietary name so should not be used in the policy title

Members also queried paragraph 3.4 which stated that similarity scores should not be the only reason for suspicion of plagiarism. Professor Creanor stated that this was a reminder that a similarity score was not proof of plagiarism in itself and some academic judgement was required to reinforce any suspicion. Members felt that there should be clearer guidance on this point.

15.079 Resolved That:

1. The proposals are welcomed.
2. That the draft is rewritten in the light of the above discussion to firm up policy and to separate policy from guidance.
3. That guidance is appended to the policy statement.
4. That the proprietary name "Turnitin" is replaced by a generic title e.g. online plagiarism detection tool. (**Action: Professor**

Creanor/GCU Lead).

STRATEGY FOR LEARNING

- 15.080 Considered A draft operational plan for the Strategy for Learning in 2015/16 (**APC15/17/1**).
- 15.081 Discussion Section 5 (Online module evaluation) was raised as an issue. The Chair informed members that there was a proposal to manage this operation centrally but there was no detail on the proposal as yet.
- Online learning was discussed at length with some members expressing concern at the University's state of readiness for delivering online programmes, particularly in relation to institutional infrastructure.
- The Chair acknowledged the concerns and agreed with a proposal to convene a half day meeting with all relevant stakeholders to address the issues being raised.
- Members welcomed the guidance that was being circulated by GCU Lead for comment.
- 15.082 Resolved That a meeting of all relevant stakeholders is convened (Schools, IT Services, Quality Enhancement, GCU Lead) to discuss and clarify issues in relations to:
- Institutional priorities
 - Resourcing for online learning
 - School readiness for delivery
 - How quickly progress can be made

(Action: Chair APC to convene)

COLLEGE CONNECT

- 15.083 Considered A draft operational plan 2015/16 for College Connect (**APC15/18/1**).
- 15.084 Reported By the Chair that the plan proposed a continuation of the College Connect Advisory Group with a smaller strategic level membership. College Boards had welcomed this so far.
- 15.085 Resolved That member's feedback any further comments to Professor Whittaker (**Action: APC Members**).

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP 2015-16

- 15.086 Approved The Terms of Reference and Composition and Membership 2015-16 (**APC15/2/2**).

Brand Marketing (**Action: Programme Lead /ADLTQ GSBS**).

2. That the target market and delivery modes for Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Human Resource Management are clarified (**Action: Programme Lead/ADLTQ GSBS**).

CONNECTING THE COLLEGE TO GCU STUDENT JOURNEY: AN EVALUATION

15.095 Received The final report of research into the Additional Articulation Places Scheme (**APC15/26/1**).

LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE

15.096 Discussion Confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 2015 (**LTSC15/22/1**).

ADMISSIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

15.097 Received Confirmed minutes of the Admissions Subcommittee meetings on 26 February 2015 (**ASC14/3/A2**) and 15 June 2015 (**ASC15/1/A2**).

Ag/apc/Nov2015/minutes