



Meeting Number APC13/4
Confirmed

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March and 2 April 2014

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| PRESENT: | Professor I. Cameron (<i>vice</i> Professor D. Greenhalgh), Mr N. Clark, Dr A. Jones, Mr M. Jones, Mr M. Lamb, Ms J. Main, Ms S. McGiffen, Mr V. McKay (<i>vice</i> Professor V. Webster), Mr R Ruthven, Professor B. Steves, Mr I Stewart, Professor R Whittaker (Vice-Chair), Professor J Wilson (Chair). |
| APOLOGIES: | Professor D. Greenhalgh, Mr S. Laing, Professor V. Webster |
| BY INVITATION: | Ms J. Blaber, Ms J. Bruce, Ms M. Henaghan, Mr S. Lopez, Ms M. MacMillan, Professor J. Pugh, Dr S. Rate, Dr N. McLarnon, Ms K. Roden, Ms K. Thomson, |
| IN ATTENDANCE: | Mr P. Woods (Secretary) |

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS AND ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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| 13.119 | Reported | By the Chair that the Assessment Regulations had been revised to modernise the University's academic regulatory processes and in preparation for the next ELIR. Accompanying that process, the associated regulations and policies had been reviewed and updated accordingly. |
| 13.120 | Considered | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary of proposed changes to the Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Assessment Regulations (APC13/49/1). 2. University Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes (APC13/50/1) 3. University Assessment Regulations for taught Postgraduate Programmes (APC13/51/1) 4. Collated feedback from the consultation process (APC13/52/1). |
| 13.121 | Reported | By Professor Pugh that so this had been a attempt to comprehensively restructure the academic regulatory framework through the APC Assessment Regulations Working Group and consultation both internally and externally. In doing so the opportunity to modernise all associated polices has been taken. |
| 13.122 | Reported | By Mr Stewart that further consideration was required with regard to the regulations for the MEng degree and definition of a standard structure that |

matched the professional standards of the sector. Members discussed using module credits associated with a particular level at other levels (e.g. Level 11 at Honours) and there was a general feeling that, while not wishing to remove all flexibility, that this type of modular combination should not be encouraged.

- 13.123 Resolved
1. That a section defining specific regulations for MEng is included. **(G&Q/SEBE)**
 2. That level 11 modules are not used at level 10 (amend the QF). **(G&Q)**
 3. That level 10 modules are not normally used at level 11 and any case for this must be ratified by the Exceptions Subcommittee. **(G&Q)**
 4. That the Assessment Regulations (and associated regulations) are harmonised with regulations for postgraduate research students and assimilated where appropriate. **(G&Q/Graduate School)**

13.124 Discussion: Members welcomed the new drafts and recommended a number of changes.

13.125 Resolved: That the Assessment Regulations be approved subject to appropriate review of the collated feedback and the following amendments:

1. At section 17 (*Failure at the re-assessment diet*) further consideration is given to articulating (in the Assessment Regulations and in guidance on Module Development) how elements of module assessment may be “carried” in cases where modules are in excess of 20 credits. **(G&Q)**
2. At section 20 (Undergraduate document - *Merit or distinction for Unclassified Awards*) and section 18 (Postgraduate document - *Merit or distinction for Postgraduate Awards*) the merit calculation range is amended to 65-69%. **(G&Q)**
3. The calculation for compensation of internal components is specified. **(G&Q)**
4. That paragraph 21.8 is merged with section 21.7 and/or made more specific. **(G&Q)**
5. For clarity “deviations” from the regulations are called “exceptions”. **(G&Q)**
6. That sections 14.3 and 14.4 are reconsidered to include the option of “normalisation on an exceptional basis” and its most appropriate location. **(G&Q)**
7. That a FAQs section is created. **(G&Q)**
8. That the new regulations are implemented from September 2014 with appropriate communication to herald this with the wider University community and partners in delivery of programmes (e.g. CCEO). **(G&Q)**
9. That an appropriate term of review is specified (say 5 years – consult lawyers). **(G&Q)**

Code of Student Conduct

13.126 Considered Code of Student Conduct (APC13/57/1)

13.127 Reported By Professor Pugh that the code was not complete and advice was sought from APC generally and in particular on the harmonisation with the SHLS fitness to practise procedures.

13.128 Discussion Various issues raised and discussed.

- 13.129 Resolved
1. That there should be harmonisation of the University Code of Conduct and the SHLS fitness to practice procedures. **(G&Q/SHLS)**
 2. That, under 6.2, the authority to suspend students should be delegated to the relevant PVC not the University Secretary (where there is a potential conflict of interest). **(G&Q)**
 3. That under 3.1.1 (and elsewhere), informally is changed to a more

- appropriate phrase (e.g. “at Departmental level”) **(G&Q)**
4. That under 3.1.1, “privacy” is changed to “confidentiality”. **(G&Q)**
 5. That under 3.4, the word “normally” is removed. **(G&Q)**
 6. That under 3.4 the phrase “legal capacity” requires further definition. **(G&Q)**
 7. That under 3.4, legal representation needs to be considered more generally. **(G&Q)**
 8. That under 3.7.1 (bullet 1) must be clearer on who decides on the seriousness of an offence. **(G&Q)**
 9. Plagiarism and ghost writing are conflated throughout and consideration should be given to using a common root e.g. “use of a third party’s intellectual property”. **(G&Q)**
 10. That under 3.7, a sanction involving a form of community payback should be considered. **(G&Q)**
 11. That under 3.10, it should be clarified that the dismissal is by the University Secretary and the Chair of University Court. **(G&Q)**
 12. That the sanction of removing additional attempts from Taught Postgraduate Students is discontinued **(SDC)**.
 13. That the procedures are harmonised with fitness to practise procedures operated by SHLS **(G&Q/SHLS)**.
 14. That, in line with 13.123 (4), PG Research Student procedures be harmonised with the Code of Conduct. **(G&Q/Graduate School)**

Policy on the Operation of Assessment Boards

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| 13.130 | Considered | Policy on the Operation of Assessment Boards (APC13/53/1) |
| 13.131 | Reported | By the Head of Registry that this document was an attempt to bring clarity and consistency to the operation of Boards. |
| 13.132 | Discussion | Members discussed certain aspects of the policy. |
| 13.133 | Resolved: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That confirmation of membership is by the Programme Board. 2. That quorum is confirmed by the Assessment Board before the beginning of each meeting. 3. That 5.8 is removed. 4. That a timescale for producing Assessment Board minutes is specified i.e. within 3 weeks. 5. That Chair’s Actions required to signed only by the Assessment Board Chair. 6. 11.1 and 11.3 should be harmonised i.e publish within seven working days. 7. 6.9 is changed to reaffirm that all students are referred to, however briefly. <p>(Actions by Registry)</p> |

Regulations Relating to Taught Student Registration, Suspension of Studies and Withdrawal

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| 13.134 | Considered | Regulations Relating to Taught Student Registration, Suspension of Studies and Withdrawal (APC13/67/1) |
| 13.135 | Reported | By the Head of Registry, that this was a new regulatory document which attempted to codify regulations relating to taught student registration, suspension of studies and withdrawal for the first time. It did not, at this stage, include Postgraduate Research Students. |
| 13.136 | Discussion | Members discussed the category of associate students and how they could be |

integrated.

There was debate about the timing of suspension i.e. where a student's circumstances should be considered under to Mitigating Circumstances.

- 13.137 Resolved:
1. Further consideration of associate students.
 2. That there be a review of sector practice regarding timing of suspension and inserted at XXX of the Assessment Regulations.
 3. Consideration is given to changing "suspension" to "time out" or similar phrase.

(Actions by Registry)

Policy on the appointment and responsibilities of External Examiners

- 13.138 Considered Policy on the appointment and responsibilities of External Examiners (APC13/54/1)
- 13.139 Reported By the Secretary that some small modifications had been made to ensure compliance with the QAA Quality Code, in particular the route for raising serious concerns to the Principal and VC (section 2.7).
- 13.140 Discussion Members felt that "responsibilities" and "duties" were being used synonymously so "responsibilities" should be used throughout.
- 13.141 Resolved: That subject to the minor amendment proposed above, the regulations be approved. **(Actions by G&Q)**

Regulations relating to Graduation and Awards

- 13.142 Considered Regulations relating to Graduation and Awards (APC13/63/1)
- 13.143 Reported By the Head of Registry, that the substantive change was the section on posthumous awards.
- 13.144 Resolved:
1. That at 7.5 the text will read "the School disregard and clear the debt".
 2. That 7.6 be removed.
- (Actions by Registry)**

Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations

- 13.145 Considered
1. Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations (APC13/55/1)
 2. A report from the Registry Operations Manager (PBS Compliance) recommending withdrawing extra time allocation for non-anglophone students in examinations (APC13/48/1).
- 13.146 Reported By Professor Pugh that a report (APC13/48/1) was pertinent to the updated regulations in that the provision of additional time for non-anglophone students had been removed as a result of recommendations in the report. This was to avoid potential challenges from UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and home students with regard to the policy.
- 13.147 Resolved
1. That the withdrawal of additional time is approved.
 2. At 4.5, the allowance of dictionaries is also removed.
- (Actions by Registry)**

Policy on Alternative & Special Examination Arrangements

- 13.148 Considered Policy on Alternative & Special Examination Arrangements (APC13/59/1)
- 13.149 Resolved That the policy is approved with minor typographical changes.
(Actions by Registry)

Policy on Academic Appeals

- 13.150 Considered Policy on Academic Appeals (APC13/62/1)
- 13.151 Resolved
1. That the policy is harmonized with PGR Students regulations.
 2. That the mechanism for scrutiny of the appeal is reconsidered.
- (Actions by G&Q)**

Guidance on the Procedure for applying for an exception to University Academic Regulations

- 13.152 Considered Guidance on the Procedure for applying for an exception to University Academic Regulations (APC13/66/1)
- 13.153 Resolved That the guidance is approved.

Standard Operation Procedure for Scheme of Invigilation

- 13.154 Reported: Standard Operation Procedure for Scheme of Invigilation (APC13/58/1)
- 13.155 Reported: That the guidance is approved.

Policy on the consideration of Mitigating Circumstances

- 13.156 Considered Policy on the consideration of Mitigating Circumstances (APC13/56/1)
- 13.157 Reported By the Secretary that there had been no substantive changes to the policy and any changes were simply to update references in light of the new Assessment Regulations.
- 13.158 Resolved That the update is noted.

Policy on Creation and Administration of Unseen Exam Papers

- 13.159 Considered Policy on Creation and Administration of Unseen Exam Papers (APC13/60/1)
- 13.160 Reported By the Registry Operations Manager (Assessment) that the document was subject to change.
- 13.161 Resolved That the Policy is updated and brought back to APC.
(Actions by Registry)

Guidance on Preparation of Assessments

- 13.162 Considered Guidance on Preparation of Assessments (APC13/61/1)
- 13.163 Resolved That these sections are reintegrated.
(Actions by G&Q/Registry)

Policy on Student Performance Feedback

- 13.164 Considered Policy on Student Performance Feedback (APC13/65/1)
- 13.165 Resolved That policy is reconsidered in light of the Feedback for Future Learning activities and brought back to APC
(GCU Lead/ Feedback Enhancement WG)

Policy on Project and Dissertation Supervision

- 13.166 Considered Policy on Project and Dissertation Supervision (APC13/64/1)
- 13.167 Resolved That this section required review. **(Actions by G&Q)**

THE QUALITY CODE MAPPING

- 13.168 Considered A paper mapping GCU reference points to the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (APC13/68/1).
- 13.169 Reported By Mary Henaghan that the document was in 3 sections : a)QAA Quality Code Expectation; b) Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality; c) Information about Higher Education Provision
- 13.170 Discussion
- 13.171 Resolved
1. School Governance arrangements are formalised to include an admissions group **(ADLTQs)**.
 2. The Student Experience Framework is reviewed for induction commitments and/or policy statements. **(G&Q)**
 3. The timeframe of the Student Experience Framework from 2013-2017 is changed to 2013-2020. **(Director Student Experience)**
 4. That changes to the APA requirements are approved by APC before implementation. **(G&Q)**
 5. Section B5 Student Engagement: that the *Engage* team review this section; linkage of Students' Association class representative impact project is considered.
 6. RPL Policy and Guidelines are reviewed in context of updates to the

- Assessment Regulations (**Director GCU Lead**).
7. External Examiners: that the conflict of interest is built into the guidance for appointments; External Examiner names are included in Programme Handbooks; that External Examiners are consulted at the next briefing session on the desirability of making annual reports available to students. (**G&Q**)
 8. Section B8 *Programme Monitoring and Review*:
 - i. There was a general need to improve dissemination of good practice. (**G&Q**)
 - ii. The Bologna Process directives required to be integrated into GCU processes. (?)
 - iii. That the feedback arrangements include Postgraduate students. (**G&Q**)
 - iv. The opportunities for students to be involved in the process are built in and included in the QE Handbook. (**G&Q**)
 - v. Ensure that Academic Appeals and Student Complaints procedures are updated in line with new assessment Regulations.
 9. Chapter 10 *Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*: That a position statement on current partners is brought to next meeting. (**G&Q**)
 10. Chapter 11: *Research Degrees*: That Research Degrees regulations harmonise with all other University regulations where appropriate. (**G&Q/Graduate School**)
 11. Clarification of the HEAR project position is made available to APC (**HEAR Subgroup**).

MODULE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

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| 13.171 | Considered | The proposed revisions to the module evaluation questionnaire (APC13/69/1) By Professor Whittaker that the Working Group had been charged with defining a process and making recommendations for future options. Two systems had been considered and the Group had recommended a pilot of EVASYS. |
| 13.172 | Reported: | |
| 13.173 | Discussion | <p>Members made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing was crucial as it would be difficult to implement a pilot for the current trimester. • The current system was unsatisfactory in that there was no School or institutional overseer of the feedback. • That module by module questionnaires are burdensome on students and limit the number of respondents. • That an National Student Survey (NSS) style survey would be the most appropriate style and would be most likely to garner the best response. • EVASYS could not be adapted to provide a NSS style questionnaire and therefore would not provide what the Committee considered to be the most effective method of module evaluation. |
| 13.174 | Resolved | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That EVASYS is not piloted. 2. That the ADLTQs define an institutional requirement before further consideration of IT systems.(ADLTQs) |

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION OF APC AND ALL SUBCOMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS OF APC

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| 13.175 | Considered | The current terms of reference, composition and subcommittee structure of |
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- the Academic Policy Committee. (APC13/70/1)
- 13.176 Reported: By the Secretary that the paper was a description of the APC subcommittees and working groups with the decisions made at the last meeting noted.
- 13.177 Resolved:
1. ADLTQs become full members of APC. **(G&Q)**
 2. The Head of Governance and Quality Enhancement and Director of UK Recruitment and Outreach are both added to the composition of APC. **(G&Q)**
 3. The Director of Marketing and Communications is removed from the composition of APC. **(G&Q)**
 4. That the composition of the External Examiners Subcommittee is defined. **(G&Q)**
 5. That the Admissions Committee is revived and is made a subcommittee of APC. **(Director Global Admissions)**
 6. That a mechanism for incorporating the Enterprise Education Subcommittee remit is discussed. **(Director GCU Lead/Chair of Enterprise Education Subcommittee)**

Ag/apc/smMarch2014/minutes