

ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2012

- PRESENT:** Professor M Mannion (Chair), Professor J Wilson, Professor C Parker (vice Professor D Greenhalgh), Dr N Andrew (vice Professor N James), Mr R Ruthven, Mr I Stewart, Mr M Andrews, Mr S Ward, Professor R Whittaker, Professor D Smith, Professor B Steves, Mrs C Hulsen
- APOLOGIES:** Mr P Henry, Professor D Greenhalgh, Professor N James
- BY INVITATION:** Professor E McFarland, Ms P Anderson, Ms J Main, Professor K Gartland
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Ms J Malcolm (Secretary)

Secretary's note: Professor Whittaker assumed the Chair for items A8, A11 and Part B and Part C of the agenda

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed the recently appointed Director of Library Services and the Director of the Graduate School to their first Academic Policy Committee meeting. He also wished to welcome the newly appointed Director of the Student Experience who, it was anticipated, would attend all future meetings 'by invitation'. The Chair also wished to note, on behalf of the Committee, his thanks to Ms Heather Marshall, Senior Librarian who attended APC prior to the appointment of the new Director of Library Services.

MINUTES

- 11.210 Considered The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Academic Policy Committee meeting held on 7 March 2012 (Doc APC11/57/1).
- 11.211 Resolved: That, with the inclusion of Mr Simon Ward in the Apologies, the minutes be confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.
(Action: JKM).

MATTERS ARISING

Foreign Language Provision (arising on APCMin 11.157)

- 11.212 Reported: By the Chair, that the Executive Board had approved the use of the Open University for Postgraduate foreign language provision.

Learning Development Centres (arising on APCMin 11.159)

- 11.213 Reported: By the Chair that,
- i. the embedding of the Learning Development Centres within the Schools was on-going;
 - ii. consequently it had not been feasible for an overview paper, containing statistical usage figures to be prepared for this meeting of APC;
 - iii. he intended to visit each of the LDCs during June and anticipates a paper coming to the first APC meeting of the next Trimester.
(Action: ES)

Module Feedback (arising on APCMin 11.160)

- 11.214 Reported: By the Chair that,
- i. GCULearn has a facility to allow module leaders to request feedback;
 - ii. although this has been notified to all Module Leaders, it is not clear whether this is being fully utilised;
 - iii. further investigation of this issue will take place and an update provided at the next APC meeting.
(Action: KG)
 - iv. The Electric Paper company (an external supplier and developer of electronic module feedback software called 'Evasys') will be invited to return to the University to demonstrate, the capabilities of Evasys for a wider audience.
(Action: KG)

National Student Survey (arising on APCMin 11.163)

- 11.215 Reported: By the Director of Policy and Planning that,
- i. the final response rate to the most recent NSS was 64%;
 - ii. that 25 Subject Groups would be published which represented the highest publication rate to date;
 - iii. that data would be populated in July with results available in August;
 - iv. that an NSS Summit was being held in early September which would allow GCU to get feedback on comparative performance;

Managing Student Placements (arising on APCMin 11.173)

- 11.216 Reported: By the Chair that,
- i. subsequent to APC approval in May the paper was passed to the

Director of the Student Experience for information and comment;

- ii. some adjustments would be made to the document in light of UKBA requirements;
- iii. once these amendments had been made, and on the assumption that the substance of the original paper approved by APC is not affected, it is anticipated that the final paper will go to Senate for approval on 15 June 2012.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook (arising on APCMin 11.

- 11.217 Reported: By the Secretary that,
- i. the revised Handbook would be launched to coincide with the start of the new academic year;
(Action: DQAQ)
 - ii. discussions were ongoing to ensure all staff were made aware of the revisions to the handbook;
 - iii. It was likely that this activity would be combined with a wider briefing programme to provide an overview of the new Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Quality Code.
(Action: MM, DGAQ)

HEAR Implementation

- 11.218 Reported: By the Chair that,
- i. The HEAR Implementation Group was now being led by Nichola McLarnon from the School of Health and Life Sciences;
 - ii. He was due to meet with Dr McLarnon shortly to discuss progress and identify timeline for future updates to APC

Assessment Regulations (arising on APCMin 11.188)

- 11.219 Reported: By the Chair that,
- i. subsequent to the last meeting of APC, further discussions had taken place between Chair and members of the Assessment Regulations Working Group;
 - ii. it is anticipated that the short to medium term implications of changing the Assessment Regulations (considered by APC in March under paper APC11/42/1) will result in significant change;
 - iii. the Working Group has been asked to continue its work under the Chairmanship of Professor John Pugh and to oversee a gradual roll out of the recommendations over a longer time period.

Fergusson Institute of Advanced Studies, Pune (arising on APCMin 11.196)

- 11.220 Reported: By the Chair that

- i. the proposal approved at the last APC meeting was not now going ahead as originally planned;
- ii. any pertinent updates will be notified to APC for discussion and approval as required.

School of Engineering and Built Environment Summer Schools (arising on APCMin 11.199)

- 11.221 Reported: By the Secretary that ,
- i. the approval of the new development was now being progressed via normal quality assurance processes;
 - ii. it had been agreed, via discussions between the School and the Directorate of Governance and Academic Quality that there would be no need for a full re-approval event.

ELIR Response (arising on APCMin 11.203)

- 11.222 Reported: That the institutional response to the most recent Enhancement Led Internal Subject Review will go to Senate on 15 June 2012 and once approved will be sent to the QAA.

FEEDBACK ENHANCEMENT IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

- 11.223 Considered: An update report from the Feedback Enhancement Implementation Group (FEIG) (Doc APC11/61/1)
- 11.124 Reported: By the Chair of the Feedback Enhancement Implementation Group that,
- i. the Group had met on twelve occasions since September 2011 and considerable progress had been made;
 - ii. a Feedback Implementation Plan and Objectives had now been approved by APC which would be progressed over a period of at least two years;
 - iii. a range of initiatives and activities had now been delivered including;
 - a. a “Feedback Fair” took place recently, attended by over 100 academic staff which showcased practical examples of feedback tools and interventions;
 - b. the Higher Education Academy sponsored Feedback Enhancement Seminar series;
 - c. a “Feedback Interventions in Practice” workshop led by School of Health and Life Sciences staff was also delivered at the Enhancement Themes National Conference in Edinburgh;
 - iv. the appointment of a Feedback Enhancement Professional Officer will also assist in making further progress against the Senate agreed objectives;
 - v. he wished to thank the all staff who have contributed to the success of the above initiatives, including members of the FEIG.

11.225 Discussion: Members welcomed the update paper provided by the Chair and commended the work of the Group to date. It was agreed that a timeline for planned activities would be provided to a future meeting of the Committee. Further it was agreed that the Group would work to ensure that best practice in relation to ongoing work with teachers in local secondary schools and colleges is effectively promulgated. It was also noted that the NSS results due to be published in August will provide us with a valuable commentary on students' perceptions of the effectiveness and timeliness of feedback.

- 11.226 Resolved:
- i. that the update report from the Feedback Enhancement Implementation Group be approved;
 - ii. that the Group produce a timeline and Project Plan which outlines the timescales for future planned activity;
(Action: KG)
 - iii. that the Group considers ways in which best practice can be shared in relation to work currently being undertaken with local secondary schools and colleges.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

11.227 Considered: A review of current GCU provision and a proposal for a new GCU wide approach to academic advising (Doc APC11/62/1)

- 11.228 Reported: By Dr Nicola Andrew, author of the review, that,
- i. the focus of the report was the review of current academic advising practices across GCU and the provision of recommendations to be considered for introduction across the University from academic session 2012/13;
 - ii. although there is no evidence to suggest GCU has any significant issues in relation to Academic Advising there does appear to be some ambiguity around the role and purpose of the activity;
 - iii. the introduction of KIS in Scotland will allow students to make judgements about the quality of student support before applying for a place at University, thus further strengthening the arguments for the introduction of robust practice standards;
 - iv. the paper reviews current provision across GCU and makes a number of recommendations for a new University-wide approach to academic advising.

11.229 Discussion Members welcomed the report and commended Dr Andrews for her thorough and robust review. After detailed discussion, Members suggested that a short life working group be established to ensure a managed approach to the implementation of the guidelines contained within the report.

- 11.230 Resolved:
- i. that the review be noted and approved;
 - ii. that a short-life working group, chaired by Dr Andrew, be established to ensure a managed approach to the

implementation of the guidelines contained within the report;

- iii. that membership of the Working Group should be agreed after consultation between the Chair of APC, the Director of the Student Experience and the Chair-designate of the Working Group.

WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND PROGRESSION – GCU WORK AND STUDY RESEARCH REPORT 1

11.231 Considered: A GCU work and study research report from the Centre for Research and Lifelong Learning (Doc APC11/63/1)

11.232 Reported: By Dr Anderson, the report's co-author, that,

- i. this report presents the main findings from Phase One of the Work and Study research project;
- ii. it also presents the progress and initial findings from Phase Two and the rationale and proposed methodology for Phase Three for which APC approval was sought;
- iii. Phase One specifically focused on full-time undergraduate third, fourth and fifth year students;
- iv. That, although the Executive Summary presents the overall findings, some key highlights include:-
 - a. Evidence suggests there is a more generalised upward trend in the number of full-time undergraduate students who undertake paid work whilst studying;
 - b. evidence suggests that the proportion of GCU students who are working whilst studying is higher than the UK average;
 - c. evidence suggests that the proportion of GCU students who are working more than 21 hours per week is also higher than average;
 - d. evidence suggests that working more than 21 hours per week is linked to an increased propensity to weekdays and nightshift working;
 - e. as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) define full-time work as 16 hours and over per week, the notion of students and "part-time" working no longer applies to all students;
 - f. 60% of male students are working 16 hours per week or more;
 - g. that 26% of students from Scotland's most deprived areas work more than 21 hours per week which is twice as much from students from Scotland's least deprived areas;
 - h. these findings directly link to and help inform the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) Outcomes Agreements because the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and gender are two of the main 'basket of measures' the SFC employs in its operationalisation of widening participation.

11.233 Discussed: Members welcomed the report and noted that it was useful to have confirmation of what was generally recognised informally as a major issue facing students at the moment. After detailed discussion it was agreed that the findings of the paper should be noted and further debate instigated at University level to address some of the key findings. The rationale and methodology for Phase Three of the project was welcomed but members cautioned for the need for more work in this area before final approval was provided.

11.234 Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted;
- ii. That the report be forwarded to Executive Board so that action arising from the key findings can be agreed;
- iii. That Phase Three of the research project be approved subject to the production of a more detailed rationale and methodology;
- iv. That the detailed revised rationale and methodology be provided to the next meeting of APC for information only.

INTERIM EVALUATION OF THE SFC OUTCOME AGREEMENT FOR REGIONALLY COHERENT ACCESS AND EMPLOYABILITY PROVISIONS (FORMERLY WARP) ACTIVITIES

11.235 Considered: An interim evaluation paper from GCU LEAD and associated recommendation (Doc APC11/64/1)

11.236 Reported: By the Head of GCU LEAD that:-

- i. the Widening Participation and Progression (WPP) Team in GCU LEAD had been tasked with leading, managing and co-ordinating the activities associated with meeting the University's commitments detailed in the Outcome Agreement for Regionally Coherent Access and Employability Provision (formerly WARP and Part-time Incentive Premium) with the Scottish Funding Council;
- ii. the paper provided an update on the extent to which the University is on course to meet the outcomes through the activities agreed with the SFC in the Outcome Agreement;
- iii. the paper draws attention to the central tenet of the provision which is regional coherence with a particular focus on the MD20 group (students from the lowest deprivation quintile (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation));
- iv. although significant activity is underway with a view to meeting the agreed outcomes, the interim evaluation has revealed some key findings in terms of lack of awareness of the focus of the regional coherence funding and of which activities have been funded through this stream.

11.237 Discussed: A detailed discussion took place regarding the paper with Members noting that if the University is to meet the targets agreed with the SFC, awareness of the activities funded through this stream require to be

raised in Schools; in particular, this includes the work of the Learning Development Centres which are entirely funded through WARP/Regional Coherence monies. It was agreed that the Outcome Agreements should be circulated to Deans and Heads of School Administration to ensure these were debated appropriately by School Boards and SMTs.

11.238 Resolved:

That, to ensure the current range of cross-University activities can demonstrate impact in terms of the SFC Outcome Agreement for Regionally Coherent Access and Employability (RCEA) Provision (formerly WARP) Activities, the following recommendations are approved:-

- i. a campaign to raise awareness should take place within Schools and other funded areas to emphasise the purpose of Regionally Coherent and Employability Provision (formerly WARP and PTIP) funding and its aims to deliver coherent access and employability provision for GCU's regional area;
- ii. in raising this awareness, it should be understood that key aspects of the Outcomes Agreement include increased collaboration with employers and regional academic partners and more flexible learning pathways to meet the needs of learners (from School, College or the workplace) in GCU's region;
- iii. to ensure that strategic planning is linked to this, awareness should also be raised in Schools and other funded activities about which areas are funded through the WARP/RCAE funding streams;
- iv. that Schools and other funded areas should work with the WPP Development Team to agree a set of outcomes to meet the requirements of the Outcomes Agreement;
- v. That the recommendation in (iv) above should involve the WPP Development Team working closely with ADLTQs and LDC Directors to ensure close alignment of the strategic direction of each LDC with the outcomes specified in the Outcomes Agreement related to progression and retention;
- vi. Schools and other funded areas should be encouraged to develop new activities which meet the requirements of the Outcomes Agreement. In particular, it should be noted that the future funding is largely dependent on the achievement of the outcomes specified in the Outcomes Agreement and will be targeted at those Institutions with a strong regional focus;
- vii. Additional activities in 2012/13 should be undertaken to explicitly meet the outcomes related to regional coherence and workforce development ie,
 - a. To improve regional coherence to meet the needs of students, education providers and employers (2011- 13);
 - b. To increase the proportion of flexible provision targeted at meeting workforce development needs (2013-14);
 - c. To strengthen employer relationships with regional, national and international companies (2011-14);
- viii. As GCU will require to demonstrate evidence of impact of funded

activities in relation to the Outcomes Agreement (as well as using this data to inform future development), there should be a review of data collection within the LDCs;

- ix. Schools and other funded areas should work closely with WPP Development Team to link already established student enhancement activities (induction, transition support, feedback, flexible entry including RPL, blended learning, CPD, employability and graduate attributes, student mobility) and evaluate their impact more explicitly in relation to the Outcomes Agreements.

21ST CENTURY GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

- 11.239 Considered: A Paper from the ADLTQ, School of Health and Life Sciences, providing a status update in terms of implementation of the Graduate Attributes (Doc APC11/65/1)
- 11.240 Reported: By the Chair that,
- i. the paper represented a progress report on the work of the Graduate Attributes Implementation Group which had been set up to oversee embedding of the GCU Graduate Attributes into the wider curriculum;
 - ii. a comprehensive programme of future work was also included for information.
- 11.241 Discussed: Members welcomed the detailed progress report and commended the Group for their work thus far. The programme of planned activity was also noted.
- 11.242 Resolved: That the update report and programme of planned activity be approved.

KIS UPDATE

- 11.243 Considered: A paper from the Director of Policy and Planning, providing an update on KIS implementation (Doc APC11/66/1)
- 11.244 Reported: By the Director of Policy and Planning that,
- i. the paper provided an update on the University's preparations for the submission of KIS data in August 2012 prior the publication of KIS in September 2012;
 - ii. 128 programmes would be KIS returnable;
 - iii. that a 'FAQs' briefing would be published shortly in Caledonian Connected.
- 11.245 Discussed: Members welcomed the paper and, in particular, noted the significant effort employed by a variety of staff in all areas across the University to ensure that GCU met all deadlines associated with KIS preparations.
- 11.246 Resolved: That the paper be noted.

STUDENT INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY STRATEGY

- 11.247 Considered: A strategy proposal to support and increase international student mobility (Doc APC11/67/1).
- 11.248 Reported: By the Chair that
- i. in line with its “globally networked” strategic goal, the University is committed to encouraging UG, PG and PGR home students to develop an international ethos and perspective;
 - ii. a key dimension of this is the promotion of student international mobility, defined for the purposes of this paper as “any form of study or work which takes place within a student’s programme or as part of an organised University overseas visit”. It was important to ensure that the university implements the strategy correctly to ensure that it fully meets and addresses the desired aims and objectives;
 - iii. this commitment is highlighted most recently in the University Strategy document, which sets out the KPI of growing the proportion of students participating in international exchanges to 5% of the home student population;
 - iv. this commitment has been further reinforced by significant planned investment in international exchanges, including a significant number of new partnership agreements in the USA, China, India and South America;
 - v. In supporting work and study overseas, the University has also recently agreed a new partnership with the OU to deliver Modern Foreign Language provision to PGT and PGR students from the start of the next academic session (see APCMin11.212);
 - vi. A dedicated Staff and Student International Mobility Sub Committee has recently been created, charged with advising the University on the development of a strategic and coordinated approach to student mobility (see APC Min11.096);
 - vii. That the aim of this strategy is to articulate the University’s strategic aim in the area of international mobility and unpack its ambitions into manageable objectives and specifically, it has two important features, namely:-
 - a. An attempt to move mobility beyond the traditional “study exchange” format to embrace work experience, intensive programmes and innovative ICT-supported activities, such as “virtual mobility”, where students can study at an overseas institution without physical relocation;
 - b. An emphasis on providing structured support for students to reflect on and articulate their international learning experience in a way which differentiates them in a competitive labour market.

- 11.249 Discussed: Members welcomed the strategy proposal and accompanying action plan and noted the various issues highlighted within the paper for further consideration:
- i. The external environment and the need to convince employers of the benefit to students;
 - ii. The need for the university to invest in the strategy to ensure its success;
 - iii. The need to ensure comparability of award/provision with partner institutions;
 - iv. The need to support students on their return to ensure that they can fully recount and document their experience in a beneficial manner.
- 11.250 Resolved:
- i. That the paper and action plan be approved;
 - ii. That the paper be forwarded for further discussion at Executive Board in relation to the longer term resource issues associated with effectively embedding the GCU Student International Mobility Strategy.

POSTGRADUATE PROGRESSION AND COMPLETION 2010/11

- 11.251 Considered: A paper from the Director of Policy and Planning on Postgraduate Progression and Completion for session 2010-11 (Doc APC11/68/1).
- 11.252 Reported: By the Director of Policy and Planning that,
- i. The attached paper reported on progression and completion of taught postgraduate students in 2010-11;
 - ii. The paper presented a summary of the position by School and also reports on performance of international taught postgraduate students;
 - iii. Policy and Planning has been working to expand its reporting of student performance, which has historically focussed on full-time home undergraduate students in line with the HESA performance indicators;
 - iv. As the ISIS student record system does not have calendar functionality, it is more challenging to undertake analysis of progression and retention of postgraduate and part-time students which have different start dates and programme lengths;
 - v. The attached report is the first time a detailed analysis of postgraduate level performance has been undertaken;
 - vi. The intention is to submit a report on postgraduate progression earlier in future years, alongside the undergraduate reports which are compiled in December.

11.253 Discussion Members welcomed the paper and noted the intention to provide annual reports on postgraduate progression.

11.254 Resolved: That the paper be approved.

STAFF, STUDENT INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY SUB-COMMITTEE

11.255 Approved: The confirmed minutes of the Staff, Student International Mobility Sub-Committee meeting held on 29th February 2012 (Doc SSIM11/03/2).

LEARNING AND TEACHING SUB-COMMITTEE

11.256 Approved: The confirmed minutes of the Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee meeting held on 25th January 2012. (Doc LTSC11/44/1).

ACADEMIC CASE

11.257 Approved: The academic case from the School of Health and Life Sciences to introduce an honours top-up award for a number of named School programmes (Doc APC11/58/1).

CHAIR'S ACTION

11.258 Reported: That the following Chairs Action had been signed since the last meeting:-

- i. A request from GSBS to add the MSc Management to the GCU London programme portfolio (Doc APC11/59/1)

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

11.259 Received: The Calendar of Meetings for Senate and its Standing Committees for session 2012/13 (Doc APC11/45/1).