



Meeting APPC17/4  
**Confirmed**

## ACADEMIC POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2018

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Professor N. Andrew, Professor I. Cameron, Ms J. Fisher, Ms C. Hulsen, Ms J. Main, Mr V. McKay, Dr N. McLarnon, Dr S. Rate, Mr R. Ruthven, Mr I. Stewart, Professor V. Webster (Chair), Professor R. Whittaker, Mrs M. Wright	
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Professor A. Britton, Dr D. Chalmers, Professor R. Clougherty, Mr K.Campbell, Professor T. Hilton, Mr S. Lopez, Ms Y. Ogedengbe, Professor A. Morgan, Professor B. Steves	
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Mr P. Woods (Secretary)	
<b>MINUTES</b>		
017.128	Considered	Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2018 subject to the removal of detail at 017.117 (paragraph following "...GCU Dash." ( <b>APPC17/34/01</b> ).
017.129	Resolved	That the minutes be approved as a correct record.
<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>		
<b>Contextualised Admissions Policy (arising on 017.090)</b>		
017.130	Reported	By Ms Fisher that the definition of minimum entry tariffs had proved problematic.
017.131	Discussion	<p>The Chair stated that the guidance now was "for success" i.e. successful completion of the programme. There may be adjustments on entry tariffs for different categories of applicants but the minimum is what it says.</p> <p>Ms Fisher agreed stating that there was perhaps confusion with the normal entry tariff or what similar programmes are recruiting to but this meant the minimum required to complete the programme.</p> <p>Other members thought this was clear and the only discussion required with admissions would be about higher than minimum tariffs as the minimum is set at approval.</p>

		<p>Ms Fisher said that discussions were still required with academic schools at confirmation stage as the band between minimum and actual entry requirement was still a limited number. However knowing what the minimum entry was would be useful in recruitment particularly overseas students.</p> <p>The Chair noted that it would be good practice to review appropriateness of entry tariffs periodically but it was clear that programmes required to define A. minimum entry requirement and B. Actual entry tariff.</p>
017.132	Resolved	That minimum entry is the minimum required to complete on any given programme.
<b>Assessment Regulations Working Group (arising on 017.091-017.112)</b>		
017.133	Reported	By Mr McKay approved by Senate with minor changes.
017.134	Resolved	That Mr Lopez be asked to report back on feasibility introducing minimum marks bypassing major module change workflow.
<b>CROSS UNIVERSITY LEARNING AND TEACHING</b>		
017.135	Considered	A discussion item on cross University Learning and Teaching
017.136	Reported	<p>By the Chair that the discussion item was intended to focus on APPC's role as arbiter of learning and teaching issues and its role in seeking resolutions to issues that arise from School Boards, SMGs Programme Boards.</p> <p>The Chair envisaged that APPC would a task-oriented approach, taking evidence from these groups and establishing task groups to consider and bring back comprehensive proposals to APPC.</p> <p>As an example, the issue of investigating impacts of allowing resit at first available exam diet and/or allowing students to retrieve failed elements <i>before</i> the resit diet.</p>
017.137	Discussion	<p>Members welcomed the prospect of task-based actions and envisaged that this would work similarly to ARWG but focused on specific items as directed by APPC.</p> <p>Members were also in favour of action in relation to resits and could see advantages in allowing students to make good minor failed elements in coursework without waiting for the resit "diet". This could alleviate numerous cases of delay in graduating and being able to seek employment for relatively small failed elements of the programme. It was felt that there was an opportunity to provide better consistency than in the current resit model. It was also noted that one programme already requires this by approved exception for PSRB reasons.</p> <p>The parameters for immediate retrieval would have to be defined e.g. is this for marginal fails only; can it be done consistently in the available timeframe; should it be piloted.</p>

		Members felt that for reasons of continuity the task group should be chaired by an ARWG member.
017.138	Resolved	That a Task Group be established to look at this issue ( <b>Action: Chair APPC to appoint Chair</b> ).
<b>PROGRAMME APPROVAL CYCLE AND THE CMA</b>		
017.139	Considered	A verbal report from the Chair on the Programme Approval Cycle and the CMA.
017.140	Reported	By the Chair that the timescale of the Cycle was impacting adversely on PG student recruitment. At the moment the programme approval timescale is 4 weeks and it was proposed that to streamline this timescale the clerks of approval events will report a summary outcome within 24 hours of the event.  There were also circumstances where there could be consideration of whether an event was required or where it could be replaced by a proportionate light touch event.
017.141	Discussion	Professor Andrew stated that these proportionate changes would be acceptable in terms of sector QE/QA practice.  Members were supportive of streamlining where possible and cited GA/DA programmes as an example of where there is an approved University model mitigating the need for separate approval events.  Other examples of where streamlining could be applied is where there are existing University- owned programmes being rolled out at, e.g., London or GCNYC.  Members further discussed procedures for reapprovals and suggested a more light touch approach in cases where only minor changes are being made, possibly involving existing programme external examiners in this streamlined process.  Members agreed that overall the aim was achieve greater flexibility and agility within the QE/QA processes.
017.142	Resolved	Academic Quality to discuss options and bring to AQWG who will bring recommendations to APPC ( <b>Action: AQD/AQWG</b> ).
<b>ANNUAL MONITORING REPORTS –Areas for University Consideration</b>		
017.143	Considered	Areas for University consideration arising from Annual Monitoring Reports ( <b>APPC17/35/01</b> ).
017.144	Reported	By Professor Andrew that the paper highlighted areas of commonality for consideration of APPC.
017.145	Discussion	Members noted some areas of relevance such as staff development and

		<p>experience in areas such as digital skills but felt the report contained too many non- learning and teaching issues which required to be raised elsewhere.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the detail of these reports should be dealt with by LTSC with strategic recommendations being brought to APPC for decision..</p> <p>It was noted that Annual Reports had not been received from all areas and this should be followed up by LTSC.</p>
017.146	Resolved	LTSC consider revising this process to allow APPC oversight of strategic issues and Schools oversight of local issues ( <b>Action: AQD/Chair LTSC</b> ).
<b>ACADEMIC QUALITY WORKING GROUP – QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND ASSURANCE HANDBOOK</b>		
017.147	Considered	<p>Academic Quality Working Group (AQWG) recommendations for the updating and streamlining of the following QEAH Sections:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4. Programme Approval 5. Programme Monitoring 6. Programme Review 9. External Examiners (APPC17/36/01).</p>
017.148	Reported	By Professor Andrew that this was the outcome of the sub-groups' work. Recommendations were included and the sub-group chairs could answer any questions.
017.149	Reported	<p><b><u>Programme Approval</u></b></p> <p>Dr Rate explained that the aim was to streamline the approval process and be strategic from the beginning of the process. The “concept” stage would be approved at School Board before the “academic case” stage being considered at APPC.</p> <p>Secondly it was proposed that the Chair of Approval Panel would be empowered to approve final programme approval document instead of LTSC.</p>
017.150	Discussion	<p>Members were concerned that APPC may have to return proposals to development teams at the academic case stage more often. There was a feeling that strategic approval outside of School would still be required in the process and this could possibly be undertaken by the Deans Group. This would provide reassurance that market research had been done appropriately.</p> <p>Members were also concerned about the proposal for programme approval sign off and felt this was too much responsibility on an approval event Chair.</p>
017.151	Reported	<p><b><u>Programme Review</u></b></p> <p>By Dr McLarnon that there should be a clearer definition of what constitutes a major change. The key to streamlining would be identifying what categories could be decided at School level without requiring</p>

		additional approval by LTSC. In addition changes required to be aligned to each component part of a module to clarify what is required by any changes requested.
017.152	Discussion	Members were content that these matters be investigated further by AQWG.
017.153	Reported	<b><u>Programme Monitoring</u></b>  It was noted that there were different approaches currently and the aim was to standardise. This would involve identifying thresholds for modules, making these explicit and allow reporting by exception.
017.154	Discussion	It was felt that additional support and guidance should be provided to staff writing module descriptors to mitigate changes being required. The process for minor changes also required to be reviewed, as discussed above.
017.155	Reported	<b><u>External Examiners</u></b>  By Professor Andrew that there would be further work aiming to standardise contact.
017.155	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Concept papers to be considered by the Deans Group in the first instance.</li> <li>2. Academic/Business continue to be considered by APPC.</li> <li>3. There is further consideration of an appropriate mechanism to approve final programme approval documents (<b>Action: APPC/AQD/Governance</b>).</li> <li>4. AQWG will review and define the process for approving minor changes and consider what initiates change requests (<b>Action: AQWG</b>).</li> <li>5. AQWG consider and specify changes to the pro forma(<b>Action: AQWG</b>). .</li> <li>6. Proposals for standardised School monitoring process be brought forward (<b>Action: ADLTQs</b>).</li> <li>7. There is further consideration of how reporting by exception of performance against the thresholds for modules, progression and achievement of awards be implemented (<b>Action: AQWG</b>).</li> <li>8. That the Regulations for Appointment of External Examiners be updated to provide clearer guidance as noted in the report (<b>Action: AQWG</b>).</li> <li>9. That a subgroup of AQWG consult as appropriate SIMs implementation group on potential implications for the Student Information System development (<b>Action: AQWG</b>).</li> </ol>
<b>HESA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b>		
017.156	Considered	A report on university performance in relation to Hesa Performance Indicators ( <b>APPC17/37/01</b> ).
	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the report contained good news for the University in a

		<p>number of areas e.g. non- continuation after 1<sup>st</sup> year, very good. Widening participation figures expected soon.</p> <p>GCU's performance in the 2018 PIs demonstrated that the University was performing well in the context of the sector in Scotland, and against our Strategy 2020 KPIs.</p> <p>The key points highlighted were:</p> <p>Participation of under-represented groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proportion of entrants from state school or college has been maintained at 97%, remaining well ahead of the Scottish sector average of 86.5%.</li> </ul> <p>Degree completion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projected degree completion at GCU has increased by 1.8% from 79.1% to 80.9%, the highest rate ever achieved by GCU.</li> <li>We are ahead of the Scottish sector average of 80.6%.</li> </ul> <p>Drop-out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GCU's drop-out rate has improved by 1.5%, from 10.1% in 2017 to 8.6%.</li> <li>We are ahead of the Scottish sector average, which remains at 9.7%.</li> </ul> <p>Non-continuation after one year of study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GCU's non-continuation rate for all full-time first degree entrants is 6.8%, an improvement of 2.1% compared to last year, and the best rate that GCU has ever achieved.</li> </ul>
017.157	Resolved	That the report is noted and staff be thanked for their work in achieving this outcome.
<b>SFC OUTCOME AGREEMENT</b>		
017.158	Considered	A verbal report from the Director of Strategy and Planning on the SFC Outcome Agreement 2018.
017.159	Reported	By Ms Hulsen that the draft had been received and reviewed by Court. Feedback from SFC was satisfactory and a final draft being worked on now for approval by Executive Board and Court. The final version would be circulated to APPC. Student number targets were expected in May 2018.
017.160	Resolved	That the report be noted.
<b>EXCEPTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT</b>		
017.161	Considered	Exceptions Subcommittee Annual Report 2016-17 ( <b>APPC17/38/01</b> ).
017.162	Resolved	That the report be approved.
<b>GSBS –Concept Paper for approval: MSc International Economics and Social Justice.</b>		
017.163	Considered	A Concept Paper for approval: MSc International Economics and Social Justice ( <b>APPC17/39/01</b> ).

017.164	Reported	By Dr Rate that the programme proposed bringing together economics, social science and law. The School had recently discontinued an International Economics and Finance masters and this proposal was considered to be more marketable and a better fit with the University mission in terms of its focus on social justice and economics. An undergraduate qualification in economics would not be an entry requirement. The programme development was a research-led proposal both in terms of the department's research focus and the WISE Research Centre.
017.165	Discussion	Members asked why <i>international</i> was in the title. This was in response to previously received feedback that suggested <i>international</i> in programme titles was cited as off-putting to potential applicants.
017.166	Resolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the concept be approved subject to further testing of the programme title (<b>Action: Programme Development Team</b>).</li> <li>2. Discuss complementarity with SHLS (Masters in Public Health) and SWBE (<b>Action: Programme Development Team/SWBE/SHLS</b>).</li> </ol>
<b>SEBE/SWBE - Academic Case: BSc[Hons] Construction and the Built Environment [Quantity Surveying or Construction Management] Skills Development Scotland Graduate Apprenticeships</b>		
017.167	Considered	An Academic Case for BSc [Hons] Construction and the Built Environment [Quantity Surveying or Construction Management] Skills Development Scotland Graduate Apprenticeships ( <b>APPC17/40/01</b> ).
017.168	Reported	By Professor Cameron that the proposal tallied with the agenda for growth and the business model was tried and tested.
017.169	Resolved	That the academic case be approved subject to minor typographical changes i.e. programmes are GA not GLA.
<b>SEBE/SWBE – Academic Case: BSc Environmental Civil Engineering Graduate apprenticeship</b>		
017.170	Considered	An Academic Case for BSc Environmental Civil Engineering Graduate Apprenticeship ( <b>APPC17/41/01</b> ).
017.171	Resolved	That the academic case be approved subject to minor typographical changes i.e. programmes are GA not GLA.
<b>SEBE – Academic Case: Cyber Security levels 10 and 11 GA/DA (APPC17/42/01).</b>		
017.172	Considered	An Academic Case for Graduate Apprenticeship Cyber Security levels 10 and 11 ( <b>APPC17/42/01</b> ).
017.173	Reported	By Professor Cameron that level 10 would be based on the existing level 10 programme and that the level 11 would be a newly developed programme.
017.174	Resolved	That the academic case be approved subject to minor typographical changes i.e. programmes are GA not GLA.

<b>SENATE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17</b>		
017.175	Received	The Senate Disciplinary Committee – Annual Report 2016-17 ( <b>S17-28-01</b> )
<b>COMPLAINTS OVERVIEW 2016-17</b>		
017.176	Received	The Complaints Overview 2016-17 ( <b>S17-27-01</b> )
<b>LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE</b>		
017.177	Received	The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2017 ( <b>LTSC17/37/1</b> ).

Ag/appc/28March2018/minutes