



Meeting Number APC14/1  
**Confirmed**

## ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2014

**PRESENT:** Mr J. Gaughan, Ms M. Henaghan, Dr A. Jones, Mr M. Jones, Ms S. McGiffen, Ms C Hulsen, Professor J. Lennon, Mr R Ruthven, Mr M. Stephenson, Mr I Stewart, Professor V. Webster, Professor R Whittaker (Vice-Chair), Professor J Wilson (Chair).

**APOLOGIES:** Professor I.Cameron, Ms J. Main, Dr N. McLarnon, Dr S. Rate, Professor B. Steves, Ms E. Wilson

**BY INVITATION:** Ms J. Brown, Mr A. Wersun  
**IN ATTENDANCE:** Dr N. Andrew, Mr P. Woods (Secretary)

### MINUTES

14.001 Considered The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2014 (APC13/70/1).

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

### MATTERS ARISING

#### *Module Evaluation Questionnaire (Arising on APCM13.185)*

14.003 Reported By Mrs Henaghan that this would be dealt with as part of the preparations for ELIR.

#### *Blended Learning Report (Arising on APCM13.195)*

14.004 Reported By the Chair that the issue surrounded the value of some statistics included in the report as there was no mechanism for amalgamating statistics for access to GCU Learn via the web (generally) and access via the mobile app (specifically) and it potentially presented a misleading comparison.

14.005 Resolved That the report is revised to remove potential confusion (**GCU Lead**).

14.006 Discussion By the Chair that there were gaps in the progression and completion reporting, specifically in relation to collaborative arrangements.

14.007 Resolved That the collaborative reports are brought to the December APC (**G&QE to collate**).

*Assessment Regulations and Associated Regulations, Policies and Procedures (Arising on APCM13.195)*

14.008 Reported By the Committee Secretary that the following had been agreed by the Assessment Regulations Working Group (ARWG):

- Suspension of studies section was removed and placed in Student Registration, Suspension of Studies and Withdrawal.
- Normalisation was not included in the Assessment Regulations text but a statement “Where it is considered that an irregularity in the module assessment has occurred, guidance should be sought from the Department of Governance and Quality Enhancement” was included.
- Review of Project/Dissertation guidelines – as ADLTQs have been co-opted to the ARWG this item has been included in the ARWG workplan.
- Carrying of modules – ARWG agreed to allow carrying of up to 40 credits at the discretion of the Assessment Board and this was included in the final version of the Assessment Regulations. The issue will be further considered by ARWG during 2014-15.

*The revised Quality Enhancement and Assurance Handbook (Arising on APCM13. 199)*

14.009 Reported By Mrs Henaghan that the final version was now complete.

14.010 Discussion The Chair asked if there was a statement in the Handbook relating to periodic portfolio refresh. Mrs Henaghan replied that there was not a statement currently but that it could be added.

14.011 Resolved That further consideration is given to adding a statement about periodic portfolio refresh in the next update (**G&QE**).

**ELIR PREPARATION UPDATE**

14.012 Reported By Mrs Henaghan that the reflective analysis was almost complete but progression and completion data required to be incorporated. Also:

- For the Part 1 visit there would be a rehearsal Dr Nicky Andrew is leading the thematic review of Learning Development Centres which would form one of the required case studies along with student feedback.
- The Advance Information Set was almost completed.
- The ELIR workshop at GCU London had been well received.
- There will be a mock ELIR in February 2015 led by Professor Terry Mayes.

14.013 Resolved To note that the date for the mock ELIR is 9 February 2015.

**STRATEGY FOR LEARNING OPERATIONAL PLAN 2014-15**

14.014 Reported By Professor Whittaker that the key features to note were as follows:

- Schools’ Action Plans – a recognition that these should link to NSS action plans and avoid overlap.
- Online Learning – the aim was to develop 2 or 3 fully online learning programmes
- Peer Observation and Review - the PGLTHE pilot had completed and was now ready to roll out

14.015 Discussion Members discussed the preparedness of the University for:

- Peer review
- Online programmes
- Internationalisation of the Curriculum

It was felt that each School would have differing views and positions on peer review.

There was a discussion around what constitutes online learning and specifically about distinguishing it from blended learning and distance learning. Members also felt that the development of (fully) online programmes, whilst the long term aim, was not straightforward and some members were cautious about the technology infrastructure being sufficiently developed to implement it. It was suggested that it may be useful, in the first instance, to look at the baseline for activity in each School and proceed from there.

Regarding internationalisation of the curriculum, members discussed whether or not APC had a role now that the International Committee was established to oversee the implementation of the Internationalisation Strategy. It was felt that there may be some crossover.

14.016 Resolved: That the action plan is reformatted to produce a priority-focused version emphasising the following priorities:

- Engage
- Online Learning
- Peer review
- Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (AshokaU)

#### **GGAP/COLLEGE CONNECT UPDATE**

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|---------|------------|--|
| 14. 017 | Considered | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GGAP/College Connect Update (APC14/03/1).</li> <li>2. Research narrative of GCU Articulating Students: Progression and Completion Reports (APC14/04/1).</li> </ol> |
| 14. 018 | Reported   | By Professor Whittaker that student progression and completion numbers were not included in the report but would be reported to the Scottish Funding Council in December.                                    |
| 14. 019 | Reported   | By Ms Hulsen that targets had been exceeded in 2013-14 and the numbers were currently above target in 2014-15. Targets for 2015-16 would be agreed at School level.  |
| 14. 020 | Resolved:  | That the update is noted.  |

#### **ENHANCEMENT LED INTERNAL SUBJECT REVIEW (ELISR) ACTIONS**

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| 14.021 | Considered | Issues for University consideration extracted from the reports of ELISRs which took place in March 2014 (APC14/08/1).  |
| 14.022 | Reported   | By Mrs Henaghan that the report related to the 2013-14 ELISR output. The issues raised were unrelated to APC's remit and not normally within the scope of ELISR. The guidance for the current ELISR round was more focused regarding the information required. |

## **OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

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| 14.023 | Considered | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Outcome Agreement 2015-16: Guidance and Approach (APC14/05/1).</li><li>2. Self-Evaluation Report: Outcome Agreement 2013-14 (APC14/06/1).</li></ol>   |
| 14.024 | Reported   | <p>By Ms Hulsen that the guidance was presented for information. Strategy and Policy were working with Schools to develop the outcome agreement submission and were consulting with the Students' Association and College Connect specifically on widening access.</p> <p>The first draft would be ready in early November 2014.</p>   |
| 14.025 | Reported   | By Ms Hulsen that the Self-Evaluation Report was a look back to the University's achievements against the 2013-14 Outcome Agreement.   |
| 14.026 | Discussion | Members discussed collaborative arrangements, in particular the programme(s) provided for business via (the former) Scottish Centre for Work-Based Learning as referenced in the report, and current monitoring and reporting mechanisms for partnership and collaborative arrangements. It was agreed that annual reports for these arrangements would be requested as part of the review of Partnership and Collaborative Arrangements in December 2014. |
| 14.027 | Resolved   | That the documentation is noted.   |

## **EXTERNAL STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS 2014**

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| 14.028 | Considered | An overview of the results for two external student surveys - the 2014 National Student Survey and the spring 2014 International Student Barometer survey (APC14/07/1).   |
| 14.029 | Reported   | <p>By Ms Hulsen the overview was of the results for two external student surveys - the 2014 National Student Survey and the spring 2014 International Student Barometer survey.</p> <p>School action plans related to the NSS would be requested for end of October 2014 covering specific areas for improvement.</p> <p>The ISB was more disappointing than the NSS outcomes with improvement required in overall satisfaction, recommendation and learning.</p> |
| 14.030 | Discussion | Members discussed strategies for improvement. It was felt that correlating areas of achievement would be a way of identifying good practice that could be rolled out in other areas. Ms Hulsen stated that data for ISB was aggregated at School level and as such could not be more specifically disaggregated to programme level. However action plans related to the NSS would specify areas for improvement.  |
| 14.031 | Resolved   | That the Committee notes the report.  |

## **STUDENT PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK – DRAFT POLICY**

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| 14.032 | Considered | Draft revision of GCU Policy on Student Performance Feedback. (APC14/09/1). |
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| 14.033 | Reported | By Professor Whittaker that the University Student Feedback Policy had been out of step with developments under <i>Feedback for Future Learning</i> and had been updated in line with published <i>Feedback for Future Learning</i> principles. |
| 14.034 | Resolved | That the policy be approved and recommended to Senate ( <b>G&amp;QE</b> ).  |

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS**

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| 14.035 | Considered | The annual review of student complaints (APC14/11/1).   |
| 14.036 | Reported   | <p>By Mrs Henaghan that this was a report on the procedure adopted in 2013-14 in line with a requirement to adopt the model complaint handling procedure published by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).</p> <p>Training and briefings had been undertaken by the Department of Governance and Quality Enhancement and there was now a trained pool of 18 Stage 2 complaint investigators. This pool was still too small and needed to be expanded.</p> <p>Stage 1 (frontline) complaints required to be formally recorded and to reinforce this message refresher briefings would be undertaken throughout the University, including GCU London and the Business Academies.</p> <p>There would be an interim report for session 14/15 prepared for consideration by appropriate Committees in February 2015.</p> |
| 14.037 | Resolved   | That the interim report on student complaints is accompanied by similar position statements for plagiarism/cheating and student discipline ( <b>G&amp;QE</b> ).   |

**SUSTAINABILITY LITERACY TEST – PROPOSED PILOT**

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| 14.038 | Considered | The Sustainability Literacy Test is a tool that allows PRiME signatories worldwide to assess the degree to which their curricula are designed in a way to produce “sustainability literate” graduates (APC14/10/1).   |
| 14.039 | Reported   | <p>By Dr Wersun that the context of the SLT was the Strategy for Learning commitment to produce global citizens and enabling students to deal with complex global challenges.</p> <p>The SLT is a tool that allows PRiME signatories worldwide to assess the degree to which their curricula are designed in a way to produce “sustainability literate” graduates. It encompasses various categories of sustainability e.g. social, business, economic, environmental and the computer based test sets 50 randomly generated questions in a half hour test. The test is suitable for all levels of student and there is immediate feedback on completion.</p> <p>He proposed that the Committee endorse piloting of the SLT, with a view to University-wide adoption in the medium term and set out four proposals for potential implementation:</p> <p>1: For GCU to become one of only 20 or so in the world “Full SLT Players”, universities such as Bristol and University of Wales Trinity St. David, that plans to invite all students in the University to take the test in 2014/15.</p> <p>2: To ask the Deans of GSBS and SEBE, as Schools that arguably are ones to</p> |

which the sustainability agenda is most relevant, to arrange for all GSBS and SEBE students (All levels at UG and all PG) to take the test in 2014/15.

3: To ask Deans of all three Schools, to pilot the SLT before the end of Academic Year 2014/15, on at least one large postgraduate programme, and Levels One and Four of one major undergraduate programme.

4: To ask Deans of all three Schools, to pilot the SLT before the end of Academic Year 2014/15, on at least one large postgraduate module, and Levels One and Four of one major undergraduate module.

- 14.040 Discussion Members were generally supportive of the concept but had some concerns about implementation in terms of overload and survey fatigue among students.
- Various ways of implementing the test were discussed including embedding within a module, a separate diagnostic test within a module and a wholly separate drop-in test.
- Different cohorts could also be sampled as a benchmark of sustainability awareness e.g. test Levels 7 and 9 and compare results. Members also discussed the possibility of incentivising the test to encourage take up from students.
- 14.041 Resolved
1. That a pilot is endorsed in principle.
  2. That the three Schools define their preferred mode of pilot (**Deans/ADLTQs**).

#### **FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS**

- 14.042 Considered The findings and recommendations of a recently completed institutional research project which aimed to explore the extent to which flexible learning policy at GCU was being translated into flexible learning practice (APC14/22/1).
- 14.043 Reported By Ms Brown that the key recommendations for APC were to do with standardisation of terminology in relation to distance learning, adoption of QAA definitions of work-based learning and distance learning, and related to data recording within the University.
- 14.044 Resolved That the report is referred to LTSC for consideration (**GCU Lead/LTSC**).

#### **EXPLORING THE TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT GCU**

- 14.045 Considered A proposed programme of institutional research explore the taught postgraduate (PGT) student experience at GCU (APC14/12/1).
- 14.046 Resolved That the proposed programme of research is approved.

#### **ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP 2014-15**

- 14.047 Approved The Terms of Reference and Composition and Membership 2014-15 (APC14/12/1) subject to an update of members' roles in the composition (**G&QE**).

## ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

14.048 Approved The Academic Policy Committee Annual Report (APC14/13/1).

### GCU LONDON CONCEPT PAPER

- 14.049 Considered: Pre-sessional English language programmes and undergraduate programmes to be offered at GCU London in conjunction with INTO (APC14/14/1).
- 14.050 Reported: By Professor Lennon that the paper put forward two proposals for approval:
1. That GCU London, as part of wider plan to incorporate undergraduate provision, proposed to re-establish a collaborative partnership with INTO to provide pre-sessional English language programmes. This would commence on 27 October 2014.
  2. That an undergraduate portfolio is introduced at GCU London for students completing the INTO diploma. This would be based on the current collaborative model between GCU and INTO which operates in Glasgow and where a student completing the INTO diploma is offered entry to year 3/SCQF level 9 of a specified portfolio of GCU programmes. This would commence in September 2016.
- 14.051 Discussion: Members felt that there a number of key issues that required further discussion and clarification:
1. Linkage with the new Governance arrangements at GCU London
  2. Reapproval of foundation pathways and articulation of the proposed portfolio with the GCU Schools' portfolio refresh.
  3. Any implications for student visas.
- 14.052 Resolved: 1. That the proposal to offer pre-sessional English at GCU London in collaboration with INTO be approved.  
2. That the proposal to introduce an undergraduate portfolio at GCU London be approved in principle, subject to further discussion and clarification in terms of the issues noted above (**GCU London**).

### SEBE – WITHDRAWAL OF PROGRAMME

14.052 Approved Withdrawal of MSc Design Practice and Management (**APC14/15/1**).

### SEBE - CHANGE OF PROGRAMME AWARD AND ADDING NEW STREAMS

14.053 Approved A proposal to change the current MA in 3D Design for Virtual Environments to an MSc and adding three new award streams:

- MSc 3D Design for Architecture
- MSc 3D Design for Computer Games
- MSc 3D Design for Visual Effects (**APC14/16/1**).

### SEBE – CONCEPT PAPER

14.054 Approved The concept paper for MSc Climate Justice (**APC14/17/1**).

### GSBS – ACADEMIC CASES

14.055 Approved 1. MSc Risk Management (Oil and Gas) (**APC14/19/1**).

2. MSc Accounting and Finance (Islamic Finance) (**APC14/20/1**).

#### **LEARNING AND TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE**

14.056 Received Confirmed minutes of the meetings held on:  
1. 24 April 2013 (**LTSC12/40/2**)  
2. 21 August 2013 (**LTSC13/19/1**)  
3. 11 December 2013(**LTSC13/32/1**)  
4. 26 June 2014 (**LTSC13/56/1**)

14.057 Received Composition and Membership 2014-15

#### **ENGAGE: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, RETENTION AND SUCCESS**

14.058 Received An update on the Engage student engagement initiative (**APC14/21/1**).

#### **CHAIR'S ACTIONS SINCE LAST MEETING**

14.059 Received  
1. MSc Sustainable Urban Environment (**APC13/87/1**)  
2. MSc Water Resource Engineering and Management (**APC13/77/2**)  
3. MSc Health and Social Care Education (**APC14/23/1**)  
4. Admissions Subcommittee – Composition and Terms of Reference (**APC14/24/1**)

Ag/apc/October2014/minutes