

UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2019

- Present:** Dr T Boutaleb, Prof A Britton, Dr S Dolan, Prof C Donaldson, Dr M Ferguson, Prof P Gillies (Chair), Ms J Hulme, Miss M Jorgensen, Dr S Lodge, Prof G Loffler, Dr D Lukic, Dr J McCallum, Dr B McConville, Mr D McGallagly, Dr K McPherson, Prof. S McMeekin (Vice Prof. Cameron), Mr A Middleton, Prof J Miller, Prof A Nelson, Dr A Pierotti, Dr D Rankin, Miss R Simpson, Mr B Smith, Prof S Smith, Prof B Steves, Dr M Tong, Prof. V Webster and Prof B Wood.
- Apologies:** Dr D Chalmers, Mr J Doherty, Mrs C Hulsen, Mr A Killick, Prof J Lennon, Mr S Lopez, Prof M Mannion, Mr S Mattar, Mr T McAlear, Dr C Miller, Prof A Morgan (by phone), Dr S Ogden and Dr K Thomson.
- In Attendance:** Ms J Main, Director of Student Life
Mrs S Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer
Dr S Rate, Assistant Dean GSBS
Mr R Ruthven, Director of Library Services
Mrs D Donnet, Clerk to Senate
- Observers:** Mrs L Clark (Governance), Mr C Fitzgerald (Comms), Miss L Johnson (Executive Support), Mr A Lui (OD), Mr K McGee (Registry), Mr C Telfer (Comms), Mr A Webster (Court), Mr R Woodward (Court), Mr P Yetton (VISA).

Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair informed Senate that the meeting would be concluded by 11.15am prompt to allow colleagues to attend the funeral service for Professor Kevan Gartland. Professor Gartland had made a valuable contribution to the work of the University and would be missed by his friends and colleagues.

PART A (FOR CONSIDERATION)

Minutes

- 18.087 Received: The unconfirmed draft minutes of the meeting of Senate held 12th December 2018 (**Doc S18/33/1**).
- 18.088 Resolved: That the minutes be approved as an accurate record subject to the correction of a name in the Chair's Closing Remarks.

Matters Arising Briefing Note

- 18.089 Approved The Matters Arising Briefing Note (**Doc S18/43/1**).

Principal & Vice Chancellor and Executive Board Report

- 18.090 Considered A report from the Principal and Vice Chancellor and Executive Board to update members on substantive items considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Senate (**Doc S18/35/1**).
- 18.091 Reported
- i. GCNYC had received approval from Homeland Security to issue visas for students worldwide to study at GCNYC.
 - ii. The funding allocation had been announced and as anticipated there was no increase in funding, which will mean a 1.8% decrease in funding in real terms. Nursing numbers still had to be confirmed and it was hoped that there would be an increase in numbers here. Overall, the funding position reaffirmed the need for the University to be entrepreneurial
- 18.092 Resolved To note the report and the oral updates.

January 2019 Exams

- 18.093 Considered A report informing Senate of action undertaken following the unavailability of GCULearn over the Christmas break (**Doc APPC18/23/02**)
- 18.094 Reported
- i. The DVC (Academic) informed Senate that whilst the upgrade to GCULearn had been scheduled for over the Christmas break as that was a period of traditionally low usage, the upgrade over ran slightly and as a result of this there was concern from the student body about the impact the downtime would have on forthcoming assessments. In close collaboration with the Students' Association, Schools and professional support departments, a number of mitigating actions had been put in place to ensure that students were not academically disadvantaged by the downtime.
 - ii. It was acknowledged that the communication to students and staff prior to the downtime was sub-optimal, and that lessons would be learned for this for future upgrades
- 18.095 Discussed It was raised that one of the mitigating actions in place was the opportunity for early retrieval of failed assessments to allow students to graduate in July. Senate was informed that this was an issue that had already been under exploration, and its introduction on this occasion on an exceptional basis would be reviewed and discussed with staff and students to ascertain whether this was something that should be introduced as part of the regular assessment calendar, and report on this would be submitted to Senate
- 18.096 Resolved Senate noted the update and thanks were expressed to all who responded to the situation and supported students over the holiday period and at the start of semester.

Review of School Boards Terms of Reference and Composition

- 18.097 Considered A report outlining the outcome a review of School Board Terms of Reference and Composition.
(Doc S18/45/1)
- 18.098 Reported That no changes to the Terms of Reference were proposed, but the revised composition included increased representation from students and the professoriate, and an overall majority of elected members over ex officio

members.

18.099 Agreed To endorse the Terms of Reference and revised composition of School Boards.

Assessment Regulations Working Group - Assessment Procedures Staff Handbook

18.100 Considered The Assessment Procedures Staff Handbook
(Doc S18/44/1)

18.101 Reported The Assessment Procedures Staff Handbook had been reviewed following consultation with staff and students. The revised document signposted staff to all assessment regulations and policies and the associated staff responsibilities at all stages of the assessment process.

18.102 Discussed i. It was raised that the Handbook stated that student work should be retained for one calendar year from the date of the Assessment Board, and it was queried whether this was sufficient, especially in light of the need to review student work in cases of academic misconduct. It was further raised that student work previously had to be retained for one year after completion of studies. It was therefore agreed that further consideration of this be given.

ii. Clarification around the award of credits to allow students to graduate with a generic award was requested

18.103 Resolved To approve the publication online of the Assessment Procedures Staff Handbook subject to the clarification of the matters raised at 18.102 above.

Assessment Regulations Working Group – Banded Marking Scheme

18.104 Considered A report outlining the result of initial discussions regarding the introduction of a banded marking scheme.
(Doc S18/41/1)

18.105 Reported By the Chair of the Assessment Regulations Working Group that work had been undertaken to consider whether there were any barriers to the introduction of banded grading to replace the current method of numerical grading used within the University. Following this initial work, further detailed exploration of the matter by a task and finish group had been approved by Academic Policy and Practice Committee and Senate's views on the proposals were sought.

18.105 Discussed i. It was noted that banded marking was already being used by a large number of HEIs, and whilst there were some challenges in specific subject areas, overall it was considered a positive approach to providing results and feedback to students, as well as providing more clarity in the marking process.

ii. The need for detailed analysis and evidence to support a move to banded grading was stressed and it was requested that sector benchmarking be undertaken.

iii The Student President advised that there were mixed views within the student body, and requested that draft proposals be submitted to SAGE for consideration.

18.106 Resolved To endorse the establishment of the task and finish group, and that a detailed report be submitted to SAGE and Senate in June 2019 if possible.

UK Degree Classifications

- 18.107 Considered A report outlining work that had been undertaken to look at UK Degree Classifications by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA).
(Doc S18/42/1)
- 18.108 Reported
- i. By the DVC (Academic) that analysis had shown that there had been an upward trajectory in the awarding of upper degree classifications (first class and 2:1) across the UK. Whilst there were potentially a number of factors involved in this shift, and variations in the increase between different institutions, it was considered that the sector should address the matter in order to protect public confidence in the honours degree classification system.
 - ii. Within the University there had also been an increase in the awarding of first class and 2:1 degrees, although not to the same extent as the overall sector increase. Degree classification calculations differed from programme to programme, and two core schemes and nine additional schemes were currently used.
 - iii. The matter had been discussed at APPC where it had been noted that the University was contributing to discussion of this matter in the sector. APPC had approved the establishment of a task and finish group and an outline of activity in order to gain a greater understanding of the position within the University.
- 18.109 Discussed
- i. The upholding of academic standards was considered to be essential, however it could appear as if students and HEIs were being punished for being successful. It could also be that the marketisation of higher education in certain parts of the sector had resulted in an increased focus on results. Furthermore, as many graduate recruiters required a 2:1 minimum, this too may have had an impact, in terms of both students and HEIs knowing employers' expectations.
 - ii. The UKSCQA work had also stimulated debate around the use of GPA instead of degree classification.
- 18.110 Resolved Senate welcomed and endorsed the work to be undertaken by the task and finish group, and requested that consideration of GPA be included in the programme of work and that an update report be submitted to the next meeting of Senate.

Research Matters, Trimester A, 2018-19

- 18.111 Noted
- i. Research Matters, a report informing Senate of good news stories in research from across the University, including an update on activities in the Graduate School, during Trimester A of 2018/19
(Doc S18/26/1)
 - ii. That information on commercial research activities would be incorporated into future reports.

Draft Code of Practice for REF2021

- 18.112 Received The Draft Code of Practice for REF2021
(Doc RMG/18/02/04)
- 18.113 Reported
- i. By the PVC Research that following guidance issued in January 2019, the Draft Code of Practice for REF2021 had been prepared. The Code was currently the subject of consultation that closed that day and Senate's views were requested.

- ii A key element of the Code was inclusiveness, however it was recognised that not all staff would be included. Initially the identification of staff with “significant responsibility for research” would be made by Schools and associated research centres based on data from the research repository. The next step would be the identification of “Category A submitted staff” and the allocation of staff to Units of Assessment, followed by the selection of outputs to be submitted.
- 18.114 Discussed
- i It was highlighted that some staff may not have sufficient publications in the research repository to meet the criteria for “staff with significant responsibility for research” for justifiable reasons (such as maternity leave), and Senate was reassured that this was a preliminary identification stage only, and staff in this situation would be identified at a later stage in the process.
 - ii The need to ensure that staff who were not submitted were supported was raised, and the Principal reiterated that the REF was an institutional exercise, and as such it was not possible to include all staff, and support would be available for all staff not included.
- 18.115 Resolved
- i To endorse the Draft Code of Practice and that any further comments should be submitted to the PVC Research by close of business that day.
 - ii To note that a final draft would be submitted to Court on 14th March with the final version of the Code to be submitted to the SFC for approval in April 2019.

PART B (FOR FORMAL APPROVAL)

School of Health and Life Sciences: Programme Withdrawal

- 18.116 Approved The withdrawal of the BSc Paramedic Practice programme.
(Doc APPC18/28/01)

Research Degrees Committee

- 18.117 Approved The award of 12 PhDs, 1 PhD by previous publication and 1 Prof D.
(Doc S18/37/1)

Honorary Appointments

- 18.118 Noted The following honorary appointments awarded by the University Executive Board:

Post	Title	Field of expertise	School
Honorary Fellow	Maureen McPake	Radiotherapy/Oncology	SHLS
Honorary Professor	Neil Craig	Public Health	Yunus Centre
Honorary Professor (extension)	Ann Marie di Mambro	Media and Journalism	GSBS

Senate and Standing Committee Calendar of Meetings 2019/20

- 18.119 Approved The proposed calendar of meetings for Senate and Standing Committees for Session 2019/20.
(Doc S18/38/1)

Chairs Action

- 18.120 Noted That the following Chair's Action was taken since the last meeting of Senate:
Approval of the additional role of "Chief Operating Officer" to the Composition of the Honorary Degrees Committee.
(Doc S18/39/1)

PART C (FOR INFORMATION)

Academic Appointments

- 18.121 Received A paper on academic appointments made since the last meeting of Senate.
(Doc S18/40/1)

Academic Policy and Practice Committee

- 18.122 Received The confirmed minute of the meeting of the Academic Policy and Practice Committee held on 7th November 2018.
(Doc APPC18/21/01)

University Research Committee

- 18.123 Received The confirmed minute of the meeting of the University Research Committee held on 20th November 2018.
(Doc REC18/10/01)

School Board/Boards of Senate Minutes

- 18.124 Received The confirmed minutes from the under noted meetings of Boards of Senate:

Glasgow School for Business and Society held on:

- i. 17th October 2018 **(Doc GSBS/SB/18/03/04)**

School of Health and Life Sciences held on:

- ii. 5th October 2018 **(Doc HLS/SB/18/010)**

GCU London held on:

- iii. 17th July 2018 **(Doc GCUL/SB/18/7)**

Date of Next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of University Senate will be held on Friday 31st May 2019 at 09:30 Hrs in The Lantern.