University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 4 October 2013

Matters Arising: Periodic Subject Review: Update on Actions identified by ASC from Previous PSR Reports

Mrs Catherine Omand, Senate Office

1. ASC/2012/67.1.1 Celtic & Gaelic

ASC had approved the report and its 12 recommendations, subject to amendment of Recommendation 7. Clarification for Recommendations 1 and 11 had been sought.

The Convener of the Review Panel accepted the recommendations for Recommendations 1 and 7 and these were amended accordingly. However, she was of the opinion that the Review Panel had not been prescriptive in relation to Recommendation 11 and recommended dialogue to address any issues the subject area have. The Recommendations were therefore amended to read:

Recommendation 1

> Whilst the Panel appreciates the value of the current research leave strategy, the Panel considered that, in its current form, it placed considerable pressure on the Head of Subject and the Teaching staff. Therefore the Panel **recommends** that the Subject Area reflect on the current research leave strategy in order to identify potentially difficult periods and to ensure that a relatively even balance between teaching commitments and research level is maintained for staff.

Recommendation 7

> The Panel **recommends** that the subject area should review its handbooks for all courses to make them more consistent in terms of presentation of general student information.

Recommendation 11

> The Panel **recommends** that the Head of School Administration discuss the use of room 202 with Estates and Buildings to identify how improvement in access could be made.

These amendments had been approved by the Convener of ASC under summer powers.

2. ASC/2012/67.1.2 School of Engineering

ASC had approved the report and its 13 recommendations, subject to amendment to Recommendation 1 and further clarification of Recommendations 2 and 8. The Convener amended the recommendations as follows:

Recommendation 1

> With a view to ensuring high level of student satisfaction and thus avoiding any potential reputational issues, the Review Panel **recommends** that additional resources are identified to support the overseas developments in the short term both to address the concerns about the impact on staff workload in Glasgow and the other operational issues relating to UGS highlighted throughout the report. In addition, the Panel recommends that the Head of College be invited to clearly identify the benefits of the collaboration to the School.

Recommendation 2

> The Review Panel **recommends** that the School considers ways to strengthen the sense of identify with the University felt by Singapore students, including additional teaching sessions by UoG staff in Singapore. One further suggestion from Singapore staff would be to consider providing a University of Glasgow T-shirt with student induction packs. Similarly, the School should consider introducing the opportunity for additional social interaction while the UGS students are in Glasgow for the Overseas Immersion Programme with local Glasgow students or students working in Glasgow during the summer.

Recommendation 8

> As no discretion is possible in relation to the duration of examinations, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School liaise with the Senate Office on any proposed changes to the duration to ensure that they comply with the regulations set down by Senate.

These amendments had been approved by the Convener of ASC under summer powers.

3.   *Guidance notes for PSR Panel Members*

ASC had suggested that some further guidance be provided to PSR Panel Members regarding the provision of evidence-based support for recommendations to ensure that recommendations accurately reflected what the Panel had decided and the need for recommendations to be clearly expressed so as to avoid misinterpretation of the Panel's intention.

The Senate Office has updated the Panel and Administrator PSR guidelines. The Senate Office has also introduced for 2013-14 a further requirement: following Panel Convener approval of the draft Report, the Senate Office Panel member will forward the draft report to an independent reviewer for advice/feedback on the recommendations stipulated, prior to distribution to the School/Subject.

4.   *ASC/2012/40.1.1 Further Update on Progress: School of Life Sciences*

In relation to Recommendation 2, while it had been noted that good progress had been made with developing workload and finance models, ASC sought a further update on the full roll-out of these processes.

A progress report was also sought in relation to Recommendations 3 and 11 regarding the review of ILOs and programme specifications,

For recommendation 9, it was suggested that clarification should be given on how students would be advised of the pre-arrival online information pack that had been devised. ASC also suggested that it was reasonable to provide this resource online due to reasons of practicality and flexibility and that reference to distribution costs for international students should be removed as this should not be a significant factor given that appropriate resources should be allocated to accommodate recruited international students.

The School of Life Sciences update on recommendations is attached as Appendix 1.

Periodic Subject Review: Update on Responses to Recommendations Arising from the Review of Life Sciences 27 and 28 October 2011

Recommendations to be updated:

Recommendation 2

The Review Panel **recommends** that the College puts the highest priority on putting effective workload and financial models in place to ensure that both teaching and research are properly supported within the College in 2012-13 and to prevent divisions from developing between research and teaching staff. [paragraph 4.8.5]

For the attention of: **The Head of College**

For Information: **The Head of School**

Joint Response: Head of College and Head of School (February 2013)

Significant progress has been made to address this recommendation.

A Working Group was established within the College in 2011 and at the meeting of College Management Group on May 31st 2012, the College Secretary brought forward proposals for a workload model that will capture both teaching and research contributions: this is being trialled in the School of Medicine and the Institute of Molecular, Cell and Systems Biology in session 2012-13. The intention is that the trial will test the principals of the model and allow recommendations for refinement to be advanced, as required. These pilots will also provide an indication of the resources required and the most efficient means of inputting and collecting data.

In parallel, the School of Life Sciences has been working in partnership with Estates and Buildings through 2012 and into 2013 to establish effective processes for capture of data on teaching activities associated with courses run from the School. This makes full use of Facilities CMIS, the University's space management software. This will allow reports to be generated on teaching contact hours for staff irrespective of their membership of Schools or Institutes, data that can be transferred to the workload model.

Similarly, research outputs captured on Enlighten, decisions on output quality from the College's REF Assessment Panel and measures of esteem will contribute to the model. In time, the on-going project to develop a Research Management System should be able to contribute data from PAFs that are currently only held as paper copy.

Together, these measures should ensure appropriate recognition of the full breadth of academic activity and to prevent divisions emerging between research and teaching staff.

With regards to the distribution of finance, the School of Life Sciences provided data to College Finance team in November 2012 that can be used to determine the distribution of teaching income between Schools and Institutes according to class sizes and staff contributions. Currently, teaching income is held at College level pending agreement between College and the University Finance Director on the principles of a resource distribution model.

Updated response: October 2013

As part of the School's engagement with the Managing Teaching Space project in preparation for session 2012 - 13, extensive efforts were made to input data on staffing to the University's room booking software, Facilities CMIS. This was a substantial undertaking that required training for academic and administrative staff and the allocation of significant amounts of staff time at many levels. That said, one of the benefits has been that the School was able to run reports in May and June 2013 that captured staff contact hours direct from the FCMIS database. Individualised reports were circulated to staff so that additional data could be collected and errors could be corrected but the School is now in strong position to monitor staff contact hours for the purposes of workload modelling. The School's Head of Administration has publicised the potential to other HoAs in MVLS.

The School's Head of Administration has also worked closely with the College's Finance team to develop a process for distribution of teaching resource between the College's School's and Institutes. This is currently limited to the distribution of resource for undergraduate courses and programmes but the data now feeds into income and expenditure accounts for Schools and Institutes in MVLS. This provides greater transparency on the distribution of workload associated with running courses and programmes and reinforces the financial importance of these contributions.

Recommendation 3

> The Review Panel **recommends** that the School review its Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for programmes and courses, ensuring that they encompass development of knowledge, intellectual skills and transferable and/or key skills and that assessment criteria match the developed ILOs such that the attainment of the ILOs aligns constructively with the published course aims. [paragraph 4.2.2]

For the attention of: **The Head of School**

Response (February 2013):

The School has been in contact with staff in the Academic Development Unit of the Learning and Teaching Centre and enhanced guidance has been provided. This includes a glossary of terms that will assist course and programme teams as they undertake a review of ILOs. A glossary of active verbs associated with different levels of Bloom's taxonomy has been of particular assistance.

Given the range and scale of the School's existing provision and the limitations of staff time, we hope that Academic Standards Committee will appreciate that it will take some time to make significant progress against this recommendation.

As a starting point, it was the School's intention to begin systematic review and revision of UG ILOs for courses associated with the BSc programme in Pharmacology during the 2012 – 13 session but other issues intervened, specifically difficulties with room bookings and the need to train key members of staff in the use of Facilities CMIS to try and avoid the risk that problems in room bookings recur next session. Embedding all course events in FCMIS will help the School with workload modelling (*Recommendation 2*) and the allocation of teaching duties for staff the College's Schools and Research Institutes (*Recommendation 5*).

That said, we hope ASC will be reassured that in bringing forward new proposals, course and programme teams are make use of the guidance received from the ADU and

drawing on their advice. This has been the case for new course and programme proposals for PGT in the School (MRes Bioinformatics: new programme and course proposals; MRes Biomedical Sciences: modifications to existing programmes and new course proposals).

Our intention is thus that all upcoming programme and course proposals will be compliant with the Panel's recommendations and that review of ILOs for existing provision will take place as time and staff commitments allow.

Updated response: October 2013

As the School offers around 200 courses, ASC will appreciate that meeting this recommendation in full is going to take time. Progress has been impeded to some extent by the need in session 2012-13 to input and check timetabling data on FCMIS but the School is taking every opportunity to progress this matter as courses undergo revision. A series of significant phases of course and programme review are pending and so progress on this task will gather pace.

Recommendation 9

The Review Panel **recommends** that Postgraduate Taught students are sent an information pack prior to arrival, including information about induction and timetables and that they are given an early opportunity to meet with their peers. [paragraph 4.6.3]

For the attention of: **The Head of School**

Response (February 2013):

Sending out printed documentation to PGT students is impractical and inflexible when staffing and teaching locations are subject to late change. The costs for distribution to international students are also prohibitive.

The College Graduate School has developed online resources[1] that provides information to meet the Panel's recommendations in this area. In addition, the School has made substantial efforts through 2011 – 12 and into the current session to create course structures for the School's PGT programmes that can be embedded into MyCampus. In parallel, we are working to ensure that all teaching events are schedules into Facilities CMIS, the University's timetabling software. For 2013 – 14, this should ensure that timetables for formal taught courses are available to students online[2] in advance of the start of session enabling them to better plan their travel arrangements.

Induction for all the School's PGT programmes now include a number of social meetings to ensure that students are able to meet their peers at an early stage and form friendship groups.

It is notable that students travelling from individual countries to study in Glasgow now set up Facebook groups so that they can interact in advance of arrival.

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[1] http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/enrolmentinduction/

[2] http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/mvls/graduateschool/enrolmentinduction/ and available to staff through MyGlasgow at https://sharepoint.gla.ac.uk/staff/myglasgow/default.aspx

Updated response: October 2013

Over the last 12 months, the School has made increased us of marketing software ("Campaign Helper") that is now being used for communication with applicants at an early stage, follow up and conversion activity, and pre-session communication. The distribution of pre-arrival information sits comfortably within these plans. One feature of the software is that it enables the School to monitor whether recipients have opened messages and clicked through to access information from other sources. We see it as an efficient and cost effective approach to the distribution of pre-arrival information. We would be happy for reference to distribution costs for printed matter to be removed.

Recommendation 11

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School review its Programme Specifications to ensure that each one is distinctive to the programme, and contains the relevant information for, all available degree pathways. [paragraph 4.1.1]

For the attention of: **The Head of School**

Response (February 2013):

The School will take this forward in parallel with its efforts to address *Recommendation 3.* Where new programmes are being developed (*eg* we are working with the School of Psychology to bring in a joint Honours degree in Psychology and Neuroscience; proposals for an Honours programme in Nutrition are also at an early stage), a natural opportunity will arise for us to create specifications that are distinctive and we will use this to review specifications for other programmes in cognate areas. Given the large number of Honours programmes that are delivered from the School, review in other areas will be taken as time and opportunity allows.

Updated response: October 2013

See response to Recommendation 3 above.