

**UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**  
**Academic Standards Committee**

**Minute of Meeting held on Friday 14 November 2008 in the  
Melville Room**

**Present:**

Dr J Aitken, Dr V Bissell, Professor G Caie, Dr P Cotton, Dr Q Cutts, Professor N Evans, Mr T Guthrie, Mr M Hastings, Professor R Hill, Dr P Innes (*vice* Dr D McCafferty), Dr T Munck, Professor D Watt (*Convener*), Mr J Wightwick.

**In attendance:**

Ms H Butcher, Dr F Boyle (*by invitation*).

**Apologies:**

Dr S Johnston, Ms H Macpherson, Dr P Skett, Dr A Whittaker.

**ASC/2008/20. Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 3 October 2008**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

**ASC/2008/21. Matters Arising**

*ASC/2008/21.1 DipHE Requirements for MA Liberal Arts and MA Applied Health & Social Policy (ASC/2008/3.2)*

It was noted that colleagues at Dumfries campus had confirmed that from next academic session, the above degrees would include a minimum of 80 Level 2 credits in the requirements for the DipHE exit award.

*ASC/2008/21.2 Review of PGT Generic Regulations (ASC/2008/5)*

Members noted that the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee had met in October to prepare the consultation document for the above review. The consultation would be circulated to faculties in early November with a response deadline of 19 December 2008.

*ASC/2008/21.3 Summary of Actions Arising from ASC Scrutiny of DPTLA Reports on 30 May 2008 (ASC/2008/6.1)*

It was noted that the Clerk of Senate had agreed to take forward a review of policy on GTA Statutory Training.

*ASC/2008/21.4 Report from the Faculty Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officers on Annual Monitoring for Session 2006-07 (ASC/2008/7)*

The Committee received an update on matters arising from the FQAEO Report discussed at the previous meeting. The following matters were noted:

- progress was ongoing in relation to guidance for staff on the Disclosure Scotland process for Peer Assisted Learning;
- the Directors of Estates and Buildings and IT Services had been advised of the recommended standard facilities for all central learning and teaching space, and a report on progress would be provided at the February meeting of ASC;
- the issue of student access to departments out of hours had been raised with the VP (Strategy and Resource), the Secretary of Court and the Security and Janitorial Services Manager. The Secretary of Court had requested that any concerns regarding access be raised directly with the Security and Janitorial Services Manager. It was confirmed that access to specific facilities in TFTS and HATII had been restricted to office hours because of the expense of providing out of hours janitorial cover. Members noted a potential solution might be for access to be provided without janitorial cover, after discussion with the Security Manager.

*ASC/2008/21.5 Moodle and Assessment – Guidance on Summative Assessment (ASC/2008/9)*

Members were advised that EdPSC had agreed to ASC's recommendation that the Guidance on Online Quizzes should be disseminated to relevant staff.

**ASC/2008/22. Convener's Business**

The Convener drew members' attention to the Quality Update (see minute ASC/2008/30) and reminded them of the forthcoming Enhancement-Led Institutional Review which was scheduled for 2009. The two-part visit was expected to take place in October and then late November/December 2009. The review would focus on two aspects of quality – audit and enhancement, and ASC would be involved in the activity surrounding it.

**ASC/2008/23. Approval of Double/Multiple Degrees: Proposed University Policy**

The Director of the Senate Office, Dr Aitken, introduced a paper which recommended a policy position for the University with respect to 'double' or 'multiple' degrees. A double/multiple degree was defined as the awarding of two or more degrees by two or more universities for the same programme of study. They differed from the more familiar and longer-established joint degree model, where two or more universities developed and approved a single degree. Members were advised that, currently, Senate scrutinised proposals for double degrees on a case-by-case basis, which protracted the approval process. In view of the increasing prevalence of such awards (involving the great majority of the University's senior UK peers), and the risk of losing academic/business opportunities as a result of the current stance, the paper recommended that treatment of proposals for such degrees should no longer to be treated exceptionally. Instead proposals should be considered [by Faculties and PAGs] against agreed guidelines for the award of double/multiple degrees. (Senate would still be asked to consider and approve such proposals, but the need for an in-principle consideration every time a case arose would be removed.)

The paper had been strongly endorsed by EdPSC and would be recommended

to Senate for approval.

Committee members were also supportive of this proposal and agreed that double degrees potentially offered benefit to the University in terms of the development of strategic partnerships. It was also noted that they offered potential opportunities for collaborative research projects. These degrees were more straightforward to establish in practical terms than joint degrees, and would assist with the University's internationalisation strategy and engagement with the Bologna process. The Clerk of Senate drew attention to the European Diploma Supplement which would be issued alongside these degrees and would provide a full explanation of partnership arrangement involved.

After consideration by Senate in principle, specific guidelines concerning terms for double degrees would be developed by the Senate Office.

**Action: Senate Office**

#### **ASC/2008/24. Report from Code of Assessment Working Group – Progress on Guide to Code of Assessment**

Members were invited to provide comment on the draft of the new Guide to the Code of Assessment which had been circulated out of Committee.

The revised Guide had been prepared by the Code of Assessment Working Group and had also been submitted to EdPSC and Learning and Teaching Committee for comment. Members agreed that the new Guide was far more accessible than the previous document. There was some comment on the length of the document, although it was shorter than the previous version. Members therefore suggested that it was important to ensure that the various sections of data could be easily accessed by users. It was noted that the document would be published on-line and in web format with sections and hyperlinks.

#### **ASC/2008/25. DPTLA Business**

##### *ASC/2008/25.1 Consideration of DPTLA Reports during 2008-09*

Members received an overview of ASC's role in considering reports relating to the University's departmental reviews of teaching, learning and assessment. It was noted that the Committee received review reports, updates on progress with meeting recommendations, plus annual overviews of recommendations and good practice identified in reviews.

The paper also provided an overview of the role of academic members in reviewing these reports, and allocated forthcoming reports to pairs of members.

##### *ASC/2008/25.2 12 Month Update Report: Sociology, Anthropology & Applied Social Sciences*

The Committee considered the update report for the above review which had been held in November 2007. It was noted that the Panel Convener had congratulated the Department on the progress made so far and was satisfied that the recommendations had been given appropriate consideration, as far as possible. ASC agreed that a further update on progress on recommendations 2, 6 and 8 should be submitted to the

Committee in October 2009. The Committee did not consider it necessary to receive any further update on recommendations 3 and 9.

The Head of Department's response to recommendation 4 was noted. Members considered that this response implied that there had been an encouragement to provide hard copies of Moodle material. Members did not consider this to be the case, as this recommendation simply highlighted that students and staff needed confirmation of what material was available on Moodle and what was available in hard copy instead. It was agreed that this should be clarified with the Head of Department.

**Action: Senate Office**

#### *ASC/2008/25.3 Update Report: Aerospace Engineering*

Members received a report on progress with recommendations arising from the above department's review which had been held in May 2007. The Committee was pleased to note that progress had been made with the 16 recommendations made at the review. Members agreed with the Panel Convener's recommendation that a further update on recommendations 1 and 8 be provided to ASC in November 2009.

**Action: Senate Office**

#### **ASC/2008/26. Reports from 3 Year Degree Monitoring Boards**

The Committee received a report from the Clerk which drew attention to the fact that reports from Three Year Degree Monitoring Boards were no longer being submitted to ASC. The Three Year Degree Board for Science had been disbanded in 2003 because the BSc in General Science had been withdrawn and the three year degrees in designated subjects were monitored by the Undergraduate Studies Committee. Three year general degrees in the Faculty of LBSS - the MA (Social Sciences), and the Faculty of Arts - MA General Humanities and MA (General) remained in operation, and in both cases reports had last been made to ASC in April 2005.

Difficulties in reporting had been highlighted in terms of the collection of data regarding student cohorts for these degrees. Following extensive discussion the following points were noted.

- Students' eligibility for the award of these degrees was checked as a manual exercise in both LBSS and Arts. This process did not involve Boards of Examiners as no academic judgement was required – academic judgement occurred in the assessment of each course, and each course result was then checked against the general degree criteria in terms of credit volume and grade point average (GPA).
- The profile of each degree had been established at the point when regulations were approved and at this point there would have been scrutiny of the academic integrity of the degree award.
- Similarly to level 1 and 2 courses delivered on Honours programmes, the monitoring of standards took place at course level (e.g. annual course monitoring and external examiner reports etc.). It was noted that Honours degree Examination Boards did not check that level 1 and 2 requirements had been met and that occasionally students at the end of their programmes of study were found to be 20 credits short of the minimum requirement to graduate.

- The requirements for the various three year degrees available in the Faculty of Arts were recognised to be extremely complex and difficult to understand for both staff and students. Advisers of Studies were heavily relied upon for their knowledge of these criteria and the judgement of each student's eligibility to graduate. It was pointed out that the level of complexity was a reflection of the diversity of programmes available to students, and there were concerns that any streamlining of these requirements would have a negative effect on student success rates.

In conclusion, it was agreed that ASC should consider the detail of each faculty's processes to ensure that they were sufficiently robust in terms of the assurance of standards. Members were concerned that there appeared to be an over-reliance on one or two individuals in the process of awarding general degrees to students. The faculties of LBSS and Arts would therefore be requested to report on their processes for determining the award of the three year general degrees to students in order for this matter to be considered further.

Reference was made to the current Student Lifecycle Project which was to deliver a new student information system for the University. It was agreed that it was essential for the information requirements relating to the three year degrees to be factored into this development. Members suggested that the most effective way to do this would be for members of the Project Team to meet with the Chief Advisers involved with these degrees. Some members expressed concern that the current round of consultative workshops were taking place with very little representation from academic staff. Many staff had not been aware of the workshops, and others who had been invited had not been able to attend due to teaching commitments. All of these matters would be drawn to the attention of the Director of the SLP.

**Action: Clerk**

#### **ASC/2008/27. Report on Late Course Approvals**

The Committee received and noted its annual report on the number of courses which had been approved after the University deadline (approval should be completed before the start of the academic session in which the course is to be delivered). The report showed, by Faculty, the number of approvals for 2008-09 courses which had been approved between September and November 2008. Data had been drawn from both the CCIMS and PIP systems as the Faculties of Science and LBSS had been operating under the PIP pilot.

The Committee noted that the number of late approvals in the Faculty of Arts had reduced compared to last year. It was noted that the number of late approvals had risen markedly in all but one of the four faculties operating within PIP. Currently the PIP system was unable to distinguish between late approvals and approvals made live late. It was reported that the numbers in FBLS reflected proposals which were made live late due to late entry of administrative data (which was not required for approval, but was required for courses to be made live on the system). It was reported that this explanation could also apply to the other faculties within PIP. Members noted that late entry of administrative data caused the same difficulties for student registration as late approval of courses. It was agreed that the late approval of administrative data in PIP would be reported to the PIP Project Board as a matter of concern.

**Action: Clerk**

### **ASC/2008/28. Report from Faculty Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officers Group**

ASC received a report from the recent FQAEO Group meeting held on 29 October 2008. The Committee approved the revised remit and membership of the Group. Members also noted that the FQAEO Group had approved a proposal for standardisation of the format of Faculty Annual Monitoring Reports to ensure that consistent information was provided from each faculty in these reports.

### **ASC/2008/29. Scottish Agricultural College: Response to Validation / Re-validation Reports for Academic Session 2007-08**

The Committee received and noted a report which outlined the SAC's responses to the conditions and recommendations set by the validation panels at the various events in 2007-08.

### **ASC/2008/30. Quality Update**

The Director of the Senate Office introduced a paper on the forthcoming Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) of the University. It was noted that the review assessed the University's performance in maintaining academic standards and maintaining and enhancing academic quality. This exercise was comparable, for our Learning & Teaching activity, to the RAE. The review would be conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for HE (Scotland) (QAA).

Members noted that the University's ELIR was scheduled to take place in 2009-10. Subject to final confirmation, it would take place in October & November of 2009. (The visit to the University would be in two parts; the first part for two days, the second for five. There would be meetings with students and staff at both parts.) The documentation for the review (primarily, the University's assessment of its own performance on quality and standards - the Reflective Analysis) would be required by the summer. It was intended therefore that a late draft of the Reflective Analysis would be submitted to Senate in June 2009.

The paper confirmed that ELIR was twin pronged: part of the exercise was devoted to checking that the University was properly maintaining effective arrangements for quality assurance and maintaining standards; the other was to assess the effectiveness of our approach and activities designed to enhance the student learning experience. A judgement would be made on the University's ability to maintain standards which would be expressed in terms of the team's 'confidence' in the University in this regard. (It would also, helpfully, be expressed using the same terminology as is used for the English system of institutional review.) The University would be notified of this judgement about one week after the second part of the visit. There would be two reports: a summary which would be published, designed for the layperson, and a technical document, intended to aid those more directly involved.

The first ELIR at Glasgow was in 2003. There had been some changes to the process in the interim. Notably, an overseas member would be added to the visiting team (total complement: six), and a closer scrutiny of collaborative activity was expected. The postgraduate research experience was also expected to receive more attention.

It was noted that a Steering Group involving a broad range of University staff

and student representatives had been established to oversee preparations for ELIR.

ASC also received an update on how the University had dealt with actions following the last ELIR, in 2004. This reported that considerable activity had taken place and good progress made. A small number of areas required work and these would be prioritised and accomplished in advance of the next ELIR.

The University's Academic Framework Guide – in effect, our Academic Quality Handbook - was updated in the light of recently revised guidance from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and was now available on the Senate Office Website in two formats:

in html - "[http://senate.gla.ac.uk/qa/aqf\\_guide/index.html](http://senate.gla.ac.uk/qa/aqf_guide/index.html)"  
[http://senate.gla.ac.uk/qa/aqf\\_guide/index.html](http://senate.gla.ac.uk/qa/aqf_guide/index.html) or as

a pdf file - "[http://senate.gla.ac.uk/qa/aqf\\_guide/aqf\\_guide.pdf](http://senate.gla.ac.uk/qa/aqf_guide/aqf_guide.pdf)"  
[http://senate.gla.ac.uk/qa/aqf\\_guide/aqf\\_guide.pdf](http://senate.gla.ac.uk/qa/aqf_guide/aqf_guide.pdf).

As reported previously, the Guide was developed by the Senate Office and set out the arrangements for academic quality enhancement and assurance employed by the University, together with rationales for the various activities. It also explained how the University relates to the wider Scottish national QA/QE framework. (NB: the Guide contains no new requirements.)

The Guide was primarily designed as a web-based document and to take advantage of the improved accessibility of web resources/web use. The reader was therefore able to access (i) brief summary information about the various processes and procedures; but also, by following further links, to drill down to (ii) more detailed descriptions and beyond to (iii) the full underlying statement of policy/procedure itself.

### **ASC/2008/31. Measuring and Recording Student Achievement - Pilot of Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)**

The Committee received for information a paper about the forthcoming pilot of the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), the development of which had been a recommendation from the Burgess Group (Measuring and Recording Student Achievement). The pilot would be conducted in 18 institutions across the UK, including the University of St Andrews. Subject to the success of the pilot, the target for introduction of the HEAR across the UK was 2010/2011.

### **ASC/2008/32. Any Other Business**

#### *ASC/2008/32.1 Reserved Business*

No items of reserved business were identified at the meeting.

### **ASC/2008/33. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Academic Standards Committee will be held on **Friday 20 February 2009** at **9.30am** in the **Carnegie Room**.

*Prepared by: Ms H Butcher Clerk to Committee [h.butcher@admin.gla.ac.uk](mailto:h.butcher@admin.gla.ac.uk)*

*Last modified on: Tuesday 3 March 2009*