Excerpt from FQAEO report to ASC.

10.2 Areas identified for action by the University

The following points have been identified for action by the University (and, where possible, for the attention of specified individuals):

10.2.1 Ongoing Accommodation Issues

- Inadequate accommodation for practice-based work in Music and Theatre Studies. This is a major source of frustration and a matter of regular attention over the last 10 years. The lack of adequate response is undermining faith in the Annual Monitoring process and affecting staff morale
- Capital redevelopment at the Dental Hospital and School. The lecture theatres and seminar rooms are now of a high standard and the lift and window replacement programmes are delivering positive results. However, the eventual outcome of the re-design project established by the NHS remains unclear, particularly in the current financial climate, and there is still significant major refurbishment required
- Problems with Central Room Bookings persist. In particular, these relate to communication issues, unsuitable allocations, and the serious shortage of small tutorial space across the University. More flexibility over timetabling/room allocation is requested as well as the allocation of in-house teaching spaces for each department by CRB as far as possible to aid both lecturers and students
- A number of classrooms across the University are unsatisfactory on account of weak technology, occasional lack of cleanliness, and the absence of effective controls for temperature and humidity
- Lecture theatre 222 (Kelvin Building) is a key teaching space for P&A, yet the blackboards are unusable, the AV equipment has problems and there are several broken chairs
- C407 (Joseph Black Building) is cramped and suffers from poor sight lines
- Mcall lecture theatre electronic blinds systems are ineffective

[Action: Director of Estates and Buildings; and for bullet points 1 and 2, Vice Principal Strategy & Resources]

FQAEOs propose that a refurbishment schedule for learning and teaching space is published (and updated) as a matter of routine on *MyGlasgow* so that staff can keep track of developments called to attention via annual monitoring **[Action: Director of Estates and Buildings]**

It is worth noting that the Education Policy and Strategy Committee has recently established a working group to determine the future strategy for investment in learning and teaching space and the outcome of that Working Group is awaited with interest.

10.2.2 Generic issues

The Group highlighted the following recurring themes for the attention of ASC:

- Staffing - major concerns were expressed about pressures on staff, including shortages (from positions not being replaced following departures or retiral), cuts in support/contract staff, and consequent workload for remaining teaching staff. Departments had limited ability to cover staff absence and there was reliance on retired staff to provide teaching. There was also a lack of demonstrators/support staff for practical classes. Staff morale is particularly low in FBLS, Dentistry and Medicine
- New Academic Year Structure – colleagues are increasingly concerned about the structure of the academic year, and in particular the imbalance between the 1st and 2nd semesters. The first semester is considered to be too short with insufficient time for consolidation, feedback and revision. Lecturing staff had been forced to compress the course material to leave room for revision and tutorials ahead of the December exams. There had also been a reduction in turn-around time for marking the May exam diet due to changes in the exam timetable and earlier submission deadline to Registry **[Action: Academic Structures Implementation Group]**
- Examinations - difficult timetable arrangements mean that some examinations are taking place in the evening. Request for examination schedules to be adjusted to permit more time for marking **[Action: Academic Structures Implementation Group]**
- AMR form considered to be too long and overly complicated. **[Action: already taken by Senate Office]**
- More PGT scholarships to enhance programmes with low student numbers and support UK/EU participation to sustain interest, applications and participation rates from wider international groups
- Revision of PGT admissions procedures to include more thorough screening of applications before they are forwarded to Programme Conveners and the routine involvement of PGT programme staff in decisions regarding offers of places on PGT programmes **[Action: Director of Recruitment and International Office]**

10.2.3 Faculty-specific issues

Faculty of Arts

- Use of Turnitin software variable not universally helpful in Arts
- Difficulty in translating marks for study years abroad. Working Party set up to report to the UG Studies Committee during Session 2009-10
- Review underway concerning appropriate scrutiny of GTA marking
- Revision to the timing of AMR cycle: support for June submission date for departments but this would not include review of External Examiner reports
- Revision week - official status? If not, earlier start to the exam timetable **[Action: Academic Structures Implementation Group]**
- SMLC - stress caused by renovations to the Hetherington Building in 2008-09. Request for rethinking of how renovations are carried out during teaching weeks and staff using teaching spaces consulted about refurbishment **[Action: Director of Estates and Buildings]**

Faculty of Biomedical &Life Sciences

- Refurbishment of Biology 1 laboratories and SCENE vital. 209 in the Graham Kerr Building also in urgent need of refurbishment **[Action: Director of Estates and Buildings]**

Dentistry

- Rollover of centralised lecture theatre bookings did not happen this year, with the result that some of the lectures immediately preceding Anatomy dissection could not be timetabled to take place in an Anatomy lecture theatre **[Action: Director of Estates and Buildings]**
- The teaching laboratory on Level 8 of the Dental Hospital and School (Room K27) is in need of refurbishment to bring it into line with the other teaching facilities within the building **[Action: Director of Estates and Buildings]**
- Continue to recognise the valuable contribution of staff whose main role is teaching, as well as research active staff within the University, with equal opportunity for career progression **[Action: Vice Principal Teaching & Learning]**

Faculty of Education

- The current University Travel Agency is considered to be very expensive for students when booking field trips **[Action: Head of Procurement, University Purchasing Office]**
- Short semesters, and long gap between end of course and examination, are not appropriate for part-time students **[Action: Academic Structures Implementation Group]**
- A reduction in the size and complexity of the Annual Monitoring Report form would focus the reporting process **[AMR form has been revised for Session 2009-10]**
- No major changes in the organisation of administrative staff for programmes. However, further discussions underway due to the introduction of new Research and Knowledge Transfer groups within the Faculty and recent University restructuring

Faculty of Information and Mathematical Sciences

- Psychology requests examinations schedules to be adjusted to permit more time to maintain quality in the marking process **[Action: Academic Structures Implementation Group]**
- The provision of careers advice tailored to designated degree students was suggested by Psychology to enhance the course for students **[Action: Director of Careers Service]**
- There is some concern that some students are not coming to the attention of the Disabilities Service through self-referral. With some students there does seem to be some misplaced concerns about confidentiality and also misunderstandings about the status of mental illness as a disability. Given the excellent and extensive publicity for this service it is not clear how these issues can be overcome. However it is clear that there are some artificial barriers that stop students getting prompt assistance from the beginning of their course **[Action: Director of Student Disability Service]**

Faculty of Law, Business and Social Sciences

- A lead on Advising and Support is awaited and expected from the Centre **[Senate to receive a report on 3 June 2010)]**
- There continues to be a need for evaluation as to whether the new code of assessment is being applied effectively **[Action: Academic Regulations Sub-committee]**
- A need for greater 'reporting-back' to departmental QA&E officers of issues identified and subsequently referred to other Faculty/central committees or working groups for action **[Action: Faculty Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officers]**
- Management highlighted concerns as to the reliability of the University's IT infrastructure, particularly in relation to Turnitin at Levels 1 and 2: technical problems are stressful, add to administrative burden on support staff, and generate considerable increases in email traffic and work for teaching staff
- Law reports greater dissatisfaction over the timetabling of examinations, with more than ever being squeezed into a tighter time frame **[Action: Academic Structures Implementation Group]**
- Management requests further guidance and clarification of best practice in the translation of overseas grades attained by Glasgow exchange students **[Action: Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching]**
- Economic and Social History notes that the joint honours outcome data on the planning office website is confusing and unclear, making it impossible to obtain the figures with ease, confidence or accuracy **[Action: Head of Planning Services]**
- It may be desirable to consider whether external examiners can be assisted and encouraged to help identify enhancement themes, and possibly also comment upon assessment feedback arrangements **[Action: already taken by Senate Office – revised form for Session 2010-11]**

Faculty of Medicine

- Clinical capacity/teaching in hospitals – this was a key issue last year and continues to be an issue. In Year 3 there will be additional students from St Andrews, therefore additional capacity will be required. There has been some progress on this; however, more is required which will necessarily involve negotiations with the NHS **[Action: Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources)]**
- Both staff and students alike found the first term very long and tiring. Require a "reading week" in week eight of session one. Not all teaching can be fitted into the 11 week timetable given that many teaching staff have NHS contracts. It has been difficult to get rooms for exams in the assessment period **[Action: Academic Structures Implementation Group]**
- Loss of the September weekend was seen as not family-friendly and there were transport difficulties for staff and students due to the reduced service
- The process of obtaining ethics approval for student projects is unnecessarily lengthy and complicated. Simplification would enhance the learning experience for students and quality of life for staff as the project period is short in relative terms **[Action: Faculty of Medicine Ethics Committee]**
- Concerns about space shortages due to the closure for refurbishment of the Queen Elizabeth Building at Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Also the main lecture theatre (out with CRB) used for delivery of the programme was closed in November for refurbishment. This was meant to last three weeks but took nine months – CRB were unable to provide any alternative accommodation on several occasions. (Tennent Lecture Theatre, Western Infirmary) **[Action: Director of Estates and Buildings]**

- The timing of the IT updates to the Computing Clusters requires review. In light of the earlier start of the academic session there was insufficient time to ensure all necessary software was available, especially with software licences expiring at the end of August **[Action: Director of IT Services]**

Nursing

- Accredited CPD courses generate fee income for the University, but unlike UG or PG degrees, there is no support for admissions. It would be enormously helpful if applications could be logged centrally on DAS **[Action: Director of Recruitment and International Office]**