

## University of Glasgow

## Academic Standards Committee - Friday 8 October 2010

## Actions Arising from Annual Monitoring Report (Session 2008-09)

Ms Helen Butcher, Clerk to the Committee

## 1. Items Referred to Convener of ASIG

Faculty	Issue raised	Response
Generic - new Academic Year Structure	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	In 2010-11 ASIG will conduct a comprehensive review of the new academic year. ASIG will consult all schools, and will take full account of concerns already expressed about the shortage of revision time in semester 1, about the time available for marking in semester 2, and about the lengths of the examination periods. It is hoped that ASIG will be able to recommend changes to the academic year that will address all these concerns.
Generic - examinations	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	
Arts	Revision week - official status? If not, earlier start to the exam timetable.	
Education	Short semesters, and long gap between	

	end of course and examination, are not appropriate for part-time students.	
Information & Mathematical Sciences	Psychology requests examinations schedules to be adjusted to permit more time to maintain quality in the marking process.	Response awaited.
Law, Business & Social Sciences	Law reports greater dissatisfaction over the timetabling of examinations, with more than ever being squeezed into a tighter time frame.	Response awaited.
Medicine	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.	Response awaited.

## 2. Items Referred to Estates & Buildings

Generic - Central Room bookings	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 lectures and students.	More specific information would be required with examples of particular instances in order to respond without generalisations. 1) Due to the volume of requests received by CRB it is recommended that communications to CRB be made through named School contacts rather than one off requests from various different staff, and that this process plays a very large part in improved communications between CRB and Schools. In addition, it is recommended that School contacts use the University's room booking software as this in turn assists departments in obtaining the most up-to-date position on their data even at the busiest times for CRB. 2) CRB cannot always accommodate to School timetabling requests at peak hours etc. With regard to small tutorial space, additional rooms have been made available for the current session within the Alexander Stone building. Generally CRB do have to work with competing demands and within constraints of overall available space, and its location and quality.
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Generic - Accommodation	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.	Items in relation to technology should be referred to IT Services for a response and issues regarding cleaning should be referred to Campus Services.  No lecture theatres or class rooms have humidity control. Temp control in many of the spaces will not have local control. Where temperatures are too low or high these should be reported to Helpdesk. The normal temperature to be achieved is 21 DegC although a normal range is between 18 and 25 degrees
	Lecture Theatre 222 (Kelvin Building) key teaching space for P&A, yet the blackboards are unusable, the AV equipment has problems and there are several broken chairs.	Issues relating to AV equipment should be referred to AV IT Services for a response. Estates and Buildings has inspected this room and there are no defective or broken chairs. All outstanding repair works in respect of blackboards is complete.
	C407 (Joseph Black Building) is cramped and suffers from poor sight lines.	Estates have undertaken a Condition Survey of all CRIB Let's. Currently the 6 poorest Let's have been refurbished to Condition A standard. The University's approved Capital Plan has supported a programme of LT refurbishments for the next 5 years. The refurbishment programme is prioritised based on condition. While C 407 does not feature in immediate refurbishment proposals. The last row of seating has been identified as having poor sight lines. Obstructed view emerges during times when the LT is at capacity.
	Mcall LT electronic blinds systems are ineffective.	We are still trying to gather information regarding this point.
	ASC endorse FQAEOs proposal 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	Professor Frank Coton VP Learning Teaching has developed 2 working groups to advance proposals to refurbishment learning and teaching spaces. Both working groups have a wide representation of academic colleagues.

	annual monitoring	
Arts <sup>1</sup>	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.	A new double music booth was developed and installed in the 1st floor of the Alexander Stone building during the summer of 2010. The College of Art's and AD Estates (Projects) have been in discussion to identify appropriate space to install additional music practice booths. Estates and Music are currently exploring options to re locate two practice booths from the Common Room in Alexander Stone Building following feedback from students.
Arts	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	Estates endeavour to liaise closely with colleagues during refurbishment projects. The Hetherington projects point of contact from the Faculty was the Head of Department, Department administrator and an academic colleague. The project was overseen at a monthly Progressing Committee chaired by Pro VP Robin Leake.
Biomedical & Life Sciences	Refurbishment of Biology 1 laboratories and SCENE vital. 209 in the Graham Kerr Building also in urgent need of refurbishment	Estates Projects Services have undertaken a survey of all UG Lab spaces to establish current condition. Professor Coton's Working Group will work with AD Estates Projects over winter of 2010 to develop a prioritised lab refurbishment programme. The University's Capital Plan has identified funding to advance a lab refurbishment programme from 2011 subject to funding availability.
Biomedical & Life Sciences	Improvements over the last year of rolling programme of centrally booked teaching spaces. Short-term upgrade of AV facilities on Level 9, Boyd Orr Building. However, lack of clear instructions on use of equipment remains an issue and poor trouble-shooting	It is not possible to comment on non-specific time /week related issues except in a general sense which is that CRB accommodation is a fixed resource and cannot be available to suit all School timetabled events.  This should be referred to AV/IT Services for a response.
Dentistry <sup>1</sup>	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	Assistant Director of Estates and Head of College have quarterly meetings to discuss new and emerging refurbishment opportunities. Major Projects in the Dental Hospital tend to be in partnership with NHS. Estates would welcome proposals by the NHS to further recent successful refurbishment projects in the Hospital.

<sup>1</sup> Also brought to the attention of Vice-Principal Strategy & Resources

	outcome of the re-designed project established by the NHS remains unclear, particularly in the current financial climate, and there is still significant major refurbishment required.	
Dentistry	Rollover of centralised LT 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 LT.	The lack of a named contact for the Dental School caused considerable problems for CRB in previous Sessions. Now that a contact has been named CRB hopes communications with the School will improve and this will escalate once an updated training time has been agreed with the contact. While CRB does try to update all departmental data for those Schools it is inevitable that those Schools with CMIS Facility user contacts fair much better as there is a very large demand on CRB time overall.
Dentistry	The teaching laboratory on Level 8 of the Dental School (Rm K27) is in need of refurbishment to bring it into line with other teaching facilities	Assistant Director of Estates and Head of College have quarterly meetings to discuss new and emerging refurbishment opportunities. Major Projects in the Dental Hospital tend to be in partnership with NHS. Estates would welcome proposals by the NHS to further recent successful refurbishment projects in the Hospital.
Dentistry	A high resolution scanning digital microscope has been purchased with NHS funding. Will have impact on various teaching modules. Further capital investment is required to refurbish the classroom in which teaching will be delivered.	Assistant Director of Estates ( Projects) would welcome an approach from the Head of MVLS College with proposals to refurbish microscopy space.
Medicine	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 Nov for refurbishment. This was meant to last 3 wks but took 9 months - CRB were unable to provide any alternative accommodation on several occasions (Tennent LT, Western Infirmary)	The University is working in partnership with NHS who wish to refurbish the Queen Elizabeth Building. All colleagues have been relocated to Tennant Building on the Western Infirmary site. It is anticipated the NHS will approve the project in November 2010. work can then start on a 18-24 month NHS led refurbishment project. UG colleagues will return to QEB following works.

### 3. Items Referred to Vice-Principal Learning & Teaching

Dentistry	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.	There is a working group chaired by Prof. Nolan looking at P&DR and performance expectations linked to promotion. The V-P (Learning and Teaching) has provided input into the evolving processes to ensure that the valuable contribution of staff whose main role is teaching is properly recognised.
Law, Business & Social Sciences	Management requests further guidance and clarification of best practice in the translation of overseas grades attained by Glasgow exchange students	A University working group is being formed to look at this very issue. The remit of the group includes providing guidance on best practice. It will make recommendations on this to the Learning and Teaching Committee that will be incorporated in the new assessment policy for the University.

### 4. Items Referred to Recruitment & International Office

Generic - PGT admissions procedures	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	For all of the Postgraduate Taught programmes administered by RIO, the following screening takes place as part of the Admissions procedures:scrutiny/authenticity of transcript, original and translation; established process and procedure for ranking institutions; quality checks on supplementary documentation; authenticity of header paper for academic references;online verification of IELTS and TOEFL; checking passport details; highly trusted sponsor status, checking funding is in place, bank statements and sponsor award letterThis is accepted 'best practice' for Admissions. If the Group feels this procedure should be amended further then specific suggestions can be forwarded to Robin Gordon, Acting Head of Admissions who will consider these.
		In terms of the involvement of PGT programme staff in decisions regarding offers of places on PGT programmes, PGT Programme Conveners have named contacts to deal with directly in the Admissions Team. RIO has a range of decision making powers. For some Faculties/Departments the decision is made solely by RIO; for others it is referred to the Department for comment; and for some the decision sits with the Department. Robin Gordon has also introduced more regular contact meetings with each of the Faculties to ensure issues are dealt with quickly/smoothly. However, it is worth noting that the University's PGT Admissions Strategy (endorsed by SMG) is to centralise as much decision making as possible within RIO going forward. During 2011 RIO will be working with the new College Graduate Schools to see how we can facilitate this in practice, once the new Campus Solutions System is in place in

		Autumn 2011.
Medicine	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.	This has already been actioned (December 2009)

#### 5. Item Referred to Convener of ARSC

Generic - Code of Assessment	There is a need for evaluation as to whether the new code of assessment is being applied effectively.	This is under consideration by the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee and will be reported to ASC directly in the reports from that committee.
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#### 6. Item Referred to Procurement Office

Education	The current University Travel Agency is considered very expensive for students when booking field trips	<p>Extract from travel policy: field trips</p> <p>"It is recognised that field trips have certain features which may make it different from a standard business trip. It is therefore acceptable to obtain alternative quotes although IAT should be invited to quote. The trip leader must ensure that the chosen firm is reputable, that is to say, for the avoidance of doubt, the trip leader and the Head of Department must be satisfied that they have considered all of the relevant risk factors in making their choice of supplier."</p> <p>Therefore, departments can seek other quotes but advisable to make enquiries to local Purchasing Officers, in the first instance</p>
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#### 7. Item Referred to Careers Service

Information & Mathematical Sciences	The provision of careers advice tailored to designated degree students was suggested by Psychology to enhance the course for students	Response awaited.
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## 8. Item Referred to Disability Service

Information & Mathematical Sciences	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.	The Disability Service and the Counselling Service would be happy to respond to an invitation from the Level 1 teaching team in CS to deliver a joint brief presentation to Level 1 CS students to raise awareness of mental health issues and to clarify any concerns about disclosure, confidentiality, stigma and appropriate types of support. This could happen at the end of the 1st teaching semester in December prior to the first diet of exams when anxiety levels are often high.
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## 9. Item Referred to Planning Service

Law, Business & Social Sciences	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	Planning Office has had a look at the figures on the exam grade profile site for Economic and Social History under departmental outcomes. In the table there are results for the whole faculty for each level (which is used as a comparison) and then results for that specific department. The 399 figure for 2008-09 comes under the faculty column. For the Economic and Social History department the figure is 120 for joint honours. This figure is also thought to be incorrect and this is being checked. We agree that the layout of the exam grade profiles could be improved. For information, this was a report that was set up some years ago and we have asked the Student Lifecycle Project to review this report. In addition, as an interim measure we are in discussions with MIS to hopefully get their help with creating a new exam grade profile database, to make the data more readable/easily understood/accurate. If anyone has got any suggestions that they would like to put forward that they feel would help with understanding the results then please send them on to me and we can highlight them to MIS.
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## 10. Item Referred to Vice-Principal Strategy & Resources

Medicine	Clinical capacity/teaching in hospitals - key issue last year and continues to be this year. 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	Response awaited.
Arts <sup>2</sup>	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.	
Dentistry <sup>2</sup>	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-designed project established by the NHS remains unclear, particularly in the current financial climate, and there is still significant major refurbishment required.	

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<sup>2</sup> Also brought to the attention of Estates & Buildings

### 11. Item Referred to Medical Ethics Committee

Medicine	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	Response awaited.
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### 12. Item Referred to IT Services

Medicine	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	The IT review took place and the relevant license renewal dates altered to reflect the new semesters and MVLS requirements. In addition we have moved the licensing methodology to a license server approach and this should further reduce the likelihood of similar problems arising.
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**Email Sent to academic staff on 11 June 2010:**

**Message Sent on Behalf of Professors Watt and Beirne:**

Dear Colleagues

We wish to draw your attention to the report on annual monitoring for 2008-09 which was submitted to Academic Standards Committee (ASC) on 28 May 2010 and is available online at: <https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/commdoc/senate/ASC/Papers/asc0983.pdf>. This report is the culmination of the work undertaken by the University's Faculty Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officers (FQAE0) Group which considers annual monitoring reports for undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. The aim of Annual Monitoring is to encourage reflection on the operation of courses and programmes with a view to maintaining standards and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching. It is carried out by Course or Programme Leaders who provide annual monitoring reports to their FQAE0.

The 2008-09 report highlights a number of significant actions which need to be addressed at University level. ASC endorsed these actions and will seek an update on progress with these to be reported to its meeting in October 2010. ASC recognised and acknowledged the concerns raised by the FQAE0 Group over (i) lack of progress with serious issues which have been raised regularly in annual monitoring reports over a number of years, and (ii) lack of feedback on actions which have been taken to address issues.

Point (i): ASC will take steps to emphasise to relevant managers the pressing need for action in response to long-standing concerns.

Point (ii): ASC will ensure that progress with actions is reported back to the FQAE0 Group, and to the new Quality Officers Group to be created following restructuring. Since Schools will be represented directly on the new Quality Officers Group, we believe that this will facilitate rapid feedback to Course and Programme Leaders within Schools.

The annual monitoring for 2009-10 is starting now as Course Conveners embark on undergraduate annual reports. Revisions to arrangements for Quality Officers under the new College and School structures will be confirmed soon. In the meantime, if there are any matters you wish to discuss relating to the 2008-09 report please contact one of us, or your FQAE0 (list of current FQAE0s is attached).

Professor David Watt  
Convener of ASC

Professor Martin Beirne  
Convener of FQAE0 Group