

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 18 February 2011

Report from the University of Glasgow and the Scottish Agricultural College Liaison Committee Meeting – 22 November 2010

Dr Emma McLennan, Senate Office

[FOR APPROVAL]**1. Remit and Membership 2010-11**

The University of Glasgow (the University) and the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) Liaison Committee (LC) now included representation from the College of Medical Veterinary and Life Sciences rather than the Faculty of Biological and Life Sciences.

The Liaison Committee **recommends** to Academic Standards Committee the Remit and Membership ([Appendix 1](#)) **for approval**.

2. Annual Report from SAC for Session 2010-11*2.1 Future Validations*

- SAC had reported a new programme: the Pg Cert/ Dip/ MSc in Agronomy would be submitted to the University in due course with a view to validation in Spring 2012.
- Following consideration by the Collaborations Group, a decision was taken not to proceed with the proposal of the BSc/BSc (Hons) Golf Course Management.
- Two Subject Reviews, incorporating Revalidation of their Programmes will occur in 2010-11; these are the BSc Horticulture and the BSc Horticulture with Plantsmanship.

The Statements of Intent for the BSc/BSc (Hons) Garden Design and the Pg Cert/ Dip/MSc in Rural Business Management are attached (Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 respectively). SAC are seeking to validate the programmes in Spring 2012 for introduction in September 2012.

The Liaison Committee **recommends** to ASC for **approval** the Statement of Intent for the BSc/BSc (Hons) Garden Design ([Appendix 2](#)).

The Liaison Committee **recommends** to ASC for **approval** the Statement of Intent for the Pg Cert/ Dip/MSc in Rural Business Management ([Appendix 3](#)).

[FOR NOTING]*2.2 Minor changes to programmes*

The committee noted some minor changes to programmes which had been approved during Summer Powers. In each case draft module descriptors were sent for comment to a scrutiny panel comprising internal and external members and to the External Examiner before being finalised. The minor changes to programmes included:

Scottish Agricultural College and University of Glasgow
Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting of 22 November 2010

2.2.1 BSc/BSc(Hons) Green Technology

A new elective module (Sustainable Engineering and Architecture, SCQF level 10) was added in applied engineering to the Honours year. This followed the Green Technology core team proposal in response to feedback from students and the external examiner.

2.2.2 BSc(Hons) Applied Animal Science

The following elective modules be added to the programme framework:

- *Year 2*
Animal Behaviour
Animal Biology
Wildlife Management
Equine Studies: Equine Health

(the Year 2 modules were existing validated SQA HN Units).
- *Year 3*
Parasitology
- *Year 4*
Equine Nutrition and Grazing Management

2.2.3 BA (Hons) Rural Business Management

The title of the Year 3 module Economics Analysis for Business Decisions was changed to Economic Policy and Analysis, since this is a more accurate reflection of the content.

2.3 External Examiners' comments 2009-10

The committee noted information pertaining to External Examiners' comments. These included that:

- Programme Leaders had been asked to ensure that External Examiners were fully conversant with the Code of Assessment;
- SAC's procedures for internal and external moderation were complied with, including the requirement for External Examiners to see work in advance;
- There is evidence from 2009-10 reports that some individuals have not fully complied with SAC assessment procedures (Agriculture, Activity Tourism Management), and this will be followed up through the post-Annual Programme Review discussions between the Programme Leaders and the Vice Principal Learning/Group Manager;
- The Horticulture with Plantsmanship External Examiner had noted that the data handling aspect could be strengthened. The amount of experimental work in the curriculum had therefore been increased and the team is seeking to introduce an additional data handling module in Year 2.

[FOR INFORMATION]

2.4 New Campus at Ayr

The Liaison Committee was updated that the collaboration between SAC and University of the West of Scotland in the construction of the Ayr Riverside Campus, which offered shared teaching & learning and social spaces, was on schedule to open in September 2011. The building has already achieved recognition for its excellent environmental rating.

2.5 Going Further Project - Consortium of land based colleges

SAC reported the success of phase 1 of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funded formal collaboration between SAC and Scotland's Countryside Colleges (Barony, Elmwood and Oatridge) which act as feeder Colleges for SAC programmes. Phase 1 (cultural assessment) identified that there were no major cultural differences between the four Colleges and they could work effectively together. Phase 2 would look at longer-term training and skills needs of the land based industries and will recommend collaborative working approaches.

The consultancy report carried out by Oxford Economics and Consulting will be available from mid December 2010 and will include a capital investment review of facilities and estates at land based colleges. This will help to develop a strategy for tertiary education in the land based sector.

2.6 The 'Rural' University

SAC reported that Part of SAC's 2020 vision is envisaged as a formal collaborative venture between SAC, research partners and rural colleges. In 2008 the Board came up with the concept of 'Rural University', however since SAC is not large enough to become a University, the title could be considered misleading.

The notion of degree awarding powers had been discussed at length internally by a working group at SAC. It has been agreed that if SAC took the decision to progress taught degree-awarding powers, they would not currently follow this up for University of Glasgow joint awards.

It was reported that in addition to considering taught degree-awarding powers, the working group is also separately considering University College title. The value of the relationship between SAC and The University of Glasgow was noted; SAC were aware of the consequences should they agree to pursue University College title. The Convener reiterated the value of the relationship between SAC and The University of Glasgow whilst noting that the University would encourage such a process.

2.7 SAC Funding

SAC reported to the committee that SAC had begun a formal process to apply for funding for research from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) through submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF). No formal reply had been received to date, however there was a further possibility of a joint submission to REF in conjunction with The University of Edinburgh (EBRC Building).

**Scottish Agricultural College and University of Glasgow
Minutes of Liaison Committee meeting of 22 November 2010**

2.8 Recruitment

The committee was pleased to note that student Full Time Equivalent (FTE) numbers at SAC from the Session 2007-08 to 2010-11 had increased across all Teaching Groups although most markedly in Life Sciences.

2.9 External Examiners Appointments (2010-14)

The Academic Policy Manager (External Operations) verified that the nomination of Professor Philip Harris (Coventry University) as External Examiner for MSc Organic Farming (2010-14) had been submitted to the University of Glasgow.

2.10 Advisors of Studies

The Liaison Committee viewed the role of Advisors of Studies, with both pastoral and learning support responsibilities, as an important aspect of enabling retention. SAC's Advisers currently receive no formal training. However, the need for induction training for Advisors of Studies had arisen as a consequence of the internal review of student support services. The SAC Divisional Management Team would review these actions in due course

2.11 Plagiarism

SAC provided the summary table detailing cases of plagiarism at SAC. This information had been requested at the previous meeting and would become a standing agenda item. The table outlined cases of plagiarism at the SAC (by programme area).

Programme	Number of cases			
	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
Agriculture	6			4
Applied Bioscience etc			2	1
Countryside Management				
Horticulture etc			2	
Sports etc	1			
Tourism			1	
Rural Business Management				

The committee noted that the low levels of plagiarism were encouraging.

2.12 Obtaining Student Feedback

SAC's Course Evaluations had been all online for the first time in 2008-09, however SAC reported that feedback from Student Liaison Groups had uncovered that some students were unwilling to provide feedback online since some didn't believe it provided student anonymity. Some work was also required to better embed Moodle. The current evaluation package associated with Moodle was not in use, an alternative (link to 'Survey Monkey') was being utilised in place of paper feedback. SAC reported that better take-up of electronic feedback had been expected. Students in Session 10-11 had the choice of using Survey Monkey or posting some free text response on each module (course) on Moodle.

2.13 Student Feedback on Assessment

The committee noted that there was a recurring issue in annual monitoring reports about dissatisfaction with poor and late feedback on assessments. It was noted that students should be given a clear expectation of when they would receive assessments back. SAC reported that electronic submission of coursework and electronic feedback should lead to an improvement in the return of assessments since it would focus staff into providing feedback in a timely manner as well as negating the issue of students having to hold on to paper copies of work.

2.14 Certificate and Diploma of Higher Education

SAC noted that no further action had been taken over the idea of using the Certificate and Diploma of Higher Education as alternatives to HNC and HND awards. The SAC Liaison Committee meeting of 2009 had noted that the University did not validate Certificates or Diplomas of Higher Education as stand alone qualifications. These were exit awards for those unable to complete a degree programme. SAC confirmed that taught degree-awarding powers and University College title are among the topics being considered under the *Rural University* heading (as outlined in 2.6).

2.15 ELIR

ELIR visits to SAC took place in March and April 2010. It was agreed that a further meeting should be arranged in order to discuss the action plan of the SAC ELIR and also the findings of The University of Glasgow's ELIR. This extraordinary meeting would allow a sharing of feedback and an opportunity to discuss the way forward.

SAC reported that in the ELIR Reflective Analysis SAC had highlighted the potential opportunity to make the Annual Review Process (APR) more efficient, useful and interesting by streamlining the process. This was thought achievable through completion of proformas and more focus on quality enhancement plans and areas for improvements.

Whilst the ELIR team confirmed that the APR process was working well, SAC were keen to explore with the University if adoption of a similar approach could lead to a more efficient and effective process if it resulted in the channelling of more effort into finding novel ways of resolving problems or more systematic identification of good practice. This would also be discussed at an extraordinary meeting.

3. Publications/Publicity Material

SAC's Academic Services Manager had provided promotional material (the generic student handbook for 2010-11 and other programme information) to the clerk in advance of the meeting. The current draft Prospectus for 2011-12 would be passed to the Academic Policy Manager (External Operations) in early 2011.

The Academic Policy Manager (External Operations) reminded members of the purpose of the standing item, which was that, the first University of Glasgow ELIR had highlighted the need to closely monitor the publications of partner institutions. It was suggested that the extraordinary meeting to discuss the post ELIR action plans (in both Institutions) would provide an opportunity to discuss the best way to achieve this.