

## University of Glasgow

### Academic Standards Committee - Friday 7 October 2011

#### Actions Arising from Annual Monitoring Report (Session 2009-10)

Ms H Butcher, Clerk to the Committee

#### A Responses from University Officers

The responses received to date are provided below along with the issues requiring attention shaded in grey.

##### *A1 International Director and Head of Student Recruitment*

**Issue 1:** Clarify to both staff and students the University's position regarding auditing of courses by International Students who are not doing the course for credit. (Faculty of Arts)

Unclear about this question. RIO does not have an auditing role as such?

*The Senate Office has sought clarification from the College of Arts but the QA officer who submitted the report is currently on maternity leave and no one else can clarify. This will be followed up in Semester 1.*

**Issue 2:** More purposeful leadership regarding GU use of student exchanges, both ways. More than one report commented on contradictory signals being given out about the value of exchanges to the Faculty/University, and a need for clarity around how these exchanges can and should operate (including in relation to the translation of marks from international institutions for home students who spend a year abroad). (Faculty of Arts)

RIO is currently in the process of finalizing a strategy on Student Mobility. This paper recognizes these issues and concerns, along with many other aspects of the process, and how it needs to be improved. Upon approval by ISG and SMG, this strategy will be aggressively implemented over the next 12 months

**Issue 3:** Arrangements for induction of students starting in January should be reviewed in light of what is offered to students starting in September. (Faculty of Engineering PGT)

Avril McGregor contacted the College of Science and Engineering to discuss this in July 2011 but has had no response to-date. However, given the limited time at this time of year, there is a small induction/orientation of 2 to 3 days organized by central student services and they are willing to look at ways to incorporate this or expand this with any College specific induction programme.

**Issue 4:** RIO needs to implement tighter entrance criteria and make greater efforts to ensure the student mix is more balanced on some programmes (Management, Economics).

Whilst our recruitment strategy aims to drive a greater ethnic mix across the Business School in particular, it is also recognized and appreciated that the admissions process can play a key role in selecting students for entry into the School. This has already been implemented to a limited degree in 2011, whereby through very close working between Admissions and the Business School student numbers for each course have been the subject of myopic focus. As well as controlling absolute numbers of students, focus has been given to the ethnic mix of the students being admitted to ensure a much improved

environment for staff and students. Additional focus will be given to this point for 2011/12 and recommendations devised with the School driving changes whilst also ensuring that we are not seen to be discriminating against one or more groups of students.

**Issue 5:** RIO needs to extend its international work to increase the marketing of less established programmes to help Programme Convenors increase their recruitment numbers. RIO also needs to produce programme brochures (Sociology).

RIO are currently promoting a number of programmes across the 4 colleges through the production of print materials; however as more students move to digital/online searching for finding programmes, we are increasing the amount of advertising we do on key search engines like Find-a-Masters, Hotcourses, Prospects etc. Not only are we promoting the University generally we are investing a lot of money promoting specific programmes; this year our push was on new programmes but next year we hope to invest in programs where there is need.

**Issue 6:** Concern exists regarding the quality and accuracy of information sent by RIO to prospective students (Urban Studies, Management)

RIO has in 2010 initiated a monthly Admissions Meeting with Social Sciences which allows issues like this to be resolved quickly. RIO also now manages all applications for Social Sciences which has allowed us to improve the quality and accuracy of information sent out to students, as there is one central database now used to show the status of students. Many of the concerns over speed of response are historical and relate to the 2008-09 and 2009-10 cycle before SMG approved additional resource in Admissions to respond to the significant rise in applications. This has reduced the turnaround time to two weeks; with the target of reducing it further to 1 week in the year ahead.

**Issue 7:** Greater efforts need to be made to improve the way the University monitors the conversion of offers into acceptances and attendance as this will enable convenors to improve course planning and avoid the room booking problems associated with unpredictable student numbers (Management, Politics). Convenors in Management suggest a fees deposit system should be created to facilitate the collection and communication of this data, and enable marketing activities to be targeted towards areas in need of attention. (Management)

A pilot process was successfully implemented during the 2010/11 Admissions cycle to introduce deposits for students applying to particularly high demand courses within the Business School. This was introduced in April 2011 (mid-cycle) and progressively extended across most of the Business School courses by June 2011. A £1000 deposit was introduced. This process was successfully used to help determine the student's real intent to attend Glasgow University, and has proven extremely useful in helping predict registrations (and student conversion). RIO are proposing implementing deposits for 2012/13 cycle.

**Issue 8:** MLitt in Victorian Literature (SCS) argues for **admissions decisions not being transferred from academics to RIO**. They write: "We have worked with RIO, and are eager to continue doing so, in terms of streamlining and enhancing the application and admissions process. However, it is imperative for the survival of the degree that decision making on applications remains with the convenor of the Programme. This is directly related to recruitment and marketability – the academic reputation of the Programme is the vital asset we have for marketing. The close relationship between the academics who run the

Programme can build with prospective students through direct involvement in acceptances not only ensures best possible conversion rates (of admissions offers into admitted students), but also enhances the degree Programme and future conversion to postgraduate research. The decision to offer a place to a student on a literary-studies degree has to be on the basis of academic assessment of writing samples and references, and to hand this over to RIO, in the case of English Literature PGTs, would be gravely damaging, and indeed I anticipate would bring about the end of the Programme". (Faculty of Arts PGT)

The unique nature of some courses, and the need for retaining academic involvement in the decision making process is recognized. RIO are working hard with all these areas to ensure the right balance is struck between improved process efficiency (through centralization), and academic decision making. The approach adopted in ALL these situations is NOT to mandate centralized decision making, but move progressively towards a more centralized, more efficient process through building better lines of communication and confidence levels with the academic teams. This is exactly the case with the MLitt referred to in this report. Situations like these are seldom clear cut and only through working closely together can the relative benefits of centralization versus retained academic involvement, and in many cases a hybrid solution needs to be developed.

**Issue 9:** Two SCS MLitts also request **better tracking of applicants**, since advance information about which students will turn up is required for planning for staff resources. (Faculty of Arts PGT)

We do track applicants in all programs although appreciate very detailed information needs to be sourced through bi-query. Next year the new SLP system should allow us to pull information on applications very quickly, giving snapshots at any one time of the status of applications for each program, subject area or College.

**Issue 10:** Humanities request "a more efficient system of **online programme applications** ... particularly for the submission of **references**". (Faculty of Arts PGT)

This is recognized and will be implemented as part of the SLP implementation for next cycle.

**Issue 11:** SCCA say that slowness and other **problems in the admissions process** at the beginning of 2010 affected their 2010-11 intake. (Faculty of Arts PGT)

This point is noted and our cycle time for application processing is now down to 2 weeks, with a plan to reduce further for the start of the 2011/12 cycle. A monthly report was introduced, to report data (including application processing) to all Colleges, including Arts, during the 2010/11 cycle.

**Issue 12:** Assistance with marketing of postgraduate programmes. (Faculty of Education PGT)

In the past few years, RIO has worked closely with the Faculty of Education to market their programmes in their main market of Canada and looked at opening up opportunities in the USA. They have also been very closely involved in the development of the distance learning programme in Oman which will have its first cohort in 2011. RIO staff are always available to discuss with staff from education the specific marketing opportunities for any given programme within any given country or region and the first point of contact would be the College's liaison person within RIO who is Lisa Ballantyne. In addition, the RCMO in the College of Social Sciences, Adriana Torres, has a lot of

experience in this area and would be happy to assist; Education may want to approach her or arrange regular meetings to outline/identify and monitor key marketing activity.

Each year Adriana develops a marketing plan to support and promote College programs and to generate awareness of the College amongst prospective students. A full marketing plan outlining her activity can be provided if need be.

**Issue 13:** Computing Science focused on the issue of retention of control over intake by the school. This was prompted by the intake of students from the Glasgow International College which they claim had a negative impact on one of the programmes this year (MSc in Information Technology). They did not vet the students that were admitted through GIC, and were not given information about students previous educational history. They would want the University must to ensure that GIC to release the student files, so they have an understanding of the prior abilities of students. (FIMS PGT)

(I do not think this is an Admissions input - this refers, I think, to the agreement that students from GIC are not vetted, but accepted if they pass their foundation course - this is broader than Admissions and is more about the overall contractual relationship with GIC)

**Issue 14:** Responses from RIO have been "variable". There seem to have no appreciation of our target market and our different time line, even though there has been considerable correspondence. (Vet Medicine PGT)

Admissions do not process applications for Vet Medicine – it is unclear which area of RIO this comment about responsiveness relates to.

**Issue 15:** The quality of some overseas students and their English Language skills remains a concern. Rigorous screening by the RIO of applicants coming from Glasgow International College is absolutely essential: IELTS 6.5 *must* be enforced and the academic background of candidates be of the correct field and level for entry to a Masters programme. (Vet Medicine PGT; FBLIS PGT)

(Like Issue 13 above, I think this is a GIC issue again - not an Admissions question).

**Issue 16:** Improvement of the admissions process to reduce turnaround times, and increase communication with applicants - Requested by MSc(Dent Sci) Primary Dental Care; MSc(Med Sci) Health Care; MSc(Med Sci) Medical Genetics; MSc(Med Sci) Cardiovascular Sciences (Faculty of Medicine PGT)

The College of MVLS are the only College where the decision making for PGT programmes remains within the College at a convenor level. As has been reported consistently throughout the 2010/11 cycle this process is highly inefficient, and contributes to delays in turnaround time and multiple, confused communications both internally and externally with the applicants. It is critical that as we enter the 2012/13 cycle that steps are taken to centralise decision making where possible with RIO Admissions. Steps have been taken in recent weeks to progress towards centralisation of some of the MVLS courses and this will make a difference, but focus needs to be maintained to drive this to the levels achieved in other Colleges - whereby only a very few courses which cannot be managed centrally remain with the academic bodies.

**Issue 17:** PGT Programmes to be notified of dates when RIO are visiting 'target' countries - Requested by MRes Molecular Medicine (Faculty of Medicine PGT)

A calendar of activity is produced noting travel dates however we can try to improve communication by sending frequent alerts to Colleges on upcoming travel plans.

The two following issues were initially referred to RIO, however it was agreed that neither were directly relevant to that area, and both had in fact been considered by the PGT Working Group which reported to EdPSC in June 2011.

**Issue 18:** University needs to increase the number of places on in-session English classes (Economics).

**Issue 19:** Develop further and increase level of language support for International students. (Faculty of Education PGT)

In June EdPSC had approved the following recommendation which would be taken forward during 2011-12 and would cover the above issues: **Recommendation 7:** *EdPSC should consider the broad issue of language support for overseas students and the potential for the Student Learning Service to support this area should be explored.*

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### *A2 Senior Management Group*

**Issue 1:** We are constantly under pressure to introduce changes in response to student feedback and to implement new University policies, all of which seem to increase staff workload and take away time for designing and delivering innovative teaching (the more interesting parts of our job!). To ensure the programme is adequately staffed/supported, the University should take this increasing administration into account in the workload model, or should look at ways of reducing bureaucracy. (Medical School)

Senior Management Group has recognised that workload modelling has been inconsistent across the University and the full range of academic activity has not always been represented in workload allocations. Work is currently underway to establish a consistent and inclusive approach to workload modelling across the University and this is expected to be completed later this year. The revised Learning and Teaching Strategy also makes a commitment to reducing the bureaucracy around teaching. Where specific issues are identified, these should be fed through College Learning and Teaching Committees for consideration and action at University level. <sup>x</sup>

**Issue 2:** Many course coordinators expressed anxiety over the future of their subject area as well as that of specific courses in Glasgow University as the full impact of the University restructuring together with the forthcoming budget cuts are not known. This uncertainty, together with the current trends of increasing student numbers, decreasing staff and continuous — and often non-budget-related — wide-ranging changes everywhere create a stressful, sub-optimal teaching and learning environment. This is a serious issue in need of attention and many staff members emphasise in their reports that this is the single most important task for the university to improve our current delivery of teaching. Business side of things is obviously necessary but our business is research and education, lest we forget. (FBLs)

In the academic year 2009-10 the University was in a very uncertain financial environment. At the same time, a major restructuring process was underway. The financial position of the University is now much clearer and, as a result of a number of actions already taken, much more secure. The academic implications of this have been openly debated at Senate. The restructuring process has also been completed and the effects of this are continuing to be monitored. The revised Learning and Teaching

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<sup>x</sup> Alternative process suggested for addressing this issue.

Strategy reaffirms the University commitment to improving the delivery of teaching and SMG fully endorses this strategy.

**Issue 3:** Most reports emphasised the importance of **dedicated Subject support staff**, whose numbers have been reduced by restructuring. It is essential that the College and University monitor this situation, which threatens to make staff less effective and to diminish the student experience. One report mentions the importance of clerical support throughout the entire PGT process, from admissions to aftercare. (Faculty of Arts PGT – School of Critical Studies, School of Culture & Creative Arts, and School of Modern Languages and Cultures reports)

It is recognised that all academic activity must be well supported. In this respect, Colleges are continuing to evolve their support structures to provide the most effective support for their subjects both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Heads of School have direct input to this process through the College Management Committees.

**Issue 4:** A number of reports talk about the **pressure of restructuring** and the **pressure to provide new and revised PGT programmes**. Reports emphasise the **importance of consultation** of Schools and Subjects by the College and University on plans to make changes to PGT programmes (their structure, administration, or admissions processes), and concerns are expressed about these pressures diminishing the student experience. (Faculty of Arts PGT)

SMG recognises the commitment and effort shown by all staff during the restructuring process and in successfully growing our PGT provision. The provision of new and revised PGT programmes has involved broad consultation with staff throughout Schools and Research Institutes. RIO has also worked closely with the Colleges in developing and refining the admissions processes that support these programmes.

**Issue 5:** 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. (Dental School)

SMG fully recognises the valuable contribution of staff whose main role is teaching. In recent years this has been reflected in changes to promotions procedures and through an increase in appointments/promotions to University Teacher and Senior University Teacher positions. At a more senior level, there continues to be promotions to and appointments at professorial level through contributions to teaching and scholarship. The development of a dedicated track for Learning and Teaching professors for the professorial zoning process is also underway.

**Issue 6:** Ensure that staffing levels and skill-mix are maintained / increased to cope with the expected numbers of students in the coming years. (Dental School)

The staffing levels within Schools are reviewed during the annual budget setting process. As a result, there are currently a number of appointments being made to support student growth in specific areas of the University.

**Issue 7:** The **importance of websites** is also mentioned in many reports. Funds are requested to revamp postgraduate web pages, given how essential they are to prospective students. SCCA's report complains that restructuring has left the University's website "in a mess", undermining international recruitment. In this context, it is important to note considerable anecdotal evidence that **Subjects consider it essential that they retain clear and easily located identities** on University and other websites since prospective international students, and other key external "consumers" of GU's webpages, will inevitably

search by Subject—not School or College—for staff lists and course information (including, sometimes, information intended primarily for current students, e.g. course handbooks). (Faculty of Arts PGT)

SMG recognises the importance of the web site and has made additional investment in the University web presence in the current year. Further developments, such as the introduction of a sharepoint portal for students are in train for the coming months.

**Issue 8:** “It is essential to **maintain the full spectrum of modern languages** currently on offer in SMLC if we are to continue to attract overseas students who are mainly interested in studying European culture and cinema (as they are coming from a mainly North American or Asian background). So far the programme has attracted students from the USA, from Japan and from Canada (apart from EU countries such as: Greece, Spain, Belgium and France).” (Faculty of Arts - School of Modern Languages and Cultures)

This area has been subject to a Court review that has recently reported its findings. The School of Modern Languages and Cultures (SMLC) will continue to teach the full, current range of modern languages and at the levels presently taught.

**Issue 9:** Flexibility with budgets: Some programmes requested budget flexibility as PGT programmes tend to run from September to September, whilst the University’s end of financial year occurs at the end of July. The MSc (Dent Sci) Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery reported that the requirement for funds to attend conferences and fulfil the research project is greater in year two of this programme. As the Enhanced Fee cannot be carried over from one year to the next, it would be highly beneficial to have a smaller Enhanced Fee in year one, and the larger balance of an Enhanced Fee in year two. (Faculty of Medicine PGT)

This should be resolved at College level within the annual budgeting cycle.\* There are many activities that span the financial year end and these have to be considered when setting the annual budgets for operational units.

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### *A3 Head of the Registry and Head of the Equality and Diversity Unit*

**Issue 1:** Address concerns about after-hours (6pm and Saturday morning) exams (impacting particularly on students with childcare responsibilities). (Faculty of Arts)

Due to the number of exams required, the use of some evening and weekend exam slots is unavoidable if examinations are to be timetabled in the periods allotted and if the guideline of no more than two exams in a three day period for a student is to be met. For example there were 1219 exams in the Spring 2009 diet. Of these 19 exams were scheduled to finish after 6pm (Monday to Friday) and 60 were scheduled on a Saturday. There were 375 exams in the Winter 2009 diet. In this diet no exams were scheduled to finish after 6pm (Monday to Friday) and only 16 were timetabled on a Saturday. There are no evening or weekend exams in the resit diet. However, it is acknowledged that the use of evening and weekend slots for examinations is not ideal and may pose a problem for some students we therefore seek to mitigate the problem by minimising the number of exams scheduled at these times.

Both Registry and EDU are not aware of any formal process specifically for students with caring responsibilities to highlight there is a problem with their exam timetable. Students who may have specific problems with the published timetable do contact

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\* Alternative process suggested for addressing this issue.

Registry either directly or via their School. Registry looks at the problems on a case by case basis and would try to work out a solution with the School.

However it is noted that in the Religion and Belief Equality Policy we have the following statement;

*B3.5 Consideration in examination timetabling requirements will be given to requests from students whose religious observance may result in absence on certain week days or at weekends, or at other times for specific religious festivals, but only if such requests are made early around the time of class enrolment. Later requests, especially if made after examination timetables have been published, may not be granted.*

If ASC felt it was appropriate we could consider inserting this into a relevant student policy relating to those with caring responsibilities. This places the emphasis on the student to highlight if they have special circumstances and Registry could try and accommodate this in when setting the exam timetable.

**Issue 2:** Address concerns about the late publication of the exam timetable (impacting particularly on international students). (Faculty of Arts)

Registry publish a timetable of dates and deadlines relating to examination activity on our website each year. [www.gla.ac.uk/services/registry/students/exams/examdatesdeadlines/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/registry/students/exams/examdatesdeadlines/) these include our target dates for publication of detailed exam timetables. Timetables are published as soon as the timetabling process allows. In the case of the Winter and Spring diets this is approximately 4 weeks before the exam diet begins. We are not aware that there was any deviation from this timescale in academic session 2009.

Exam periods are published in the university session dates. These are approved by Senate and are published on the Senate Office website [www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/sessiondates/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/sessiondates/), the current students website [www.gla.ac.uk/students/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/students/) and on Registry's. Both Registry and EDU feel it is reasonable to expect students to be available for this designated exam period, which is published in advance of the actual exam timetable.

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#### A4 Head of the Registry

**Issue 1:** Facilitate the publication of exam results by Subjects. At present, students receive only an aggregate course mark and – short of contacting the course convenor (extremely impractical for a course with 100s of students) – cannot find out their exam grades. This doesn't help the overall performance in exams. (Faculty of Arts)

MyCampus will allow Schools to record the result for each component of assessment in Gradebook. Students will be able to view the results of these components through the Student Centre in MyCampus.

**Issue 2:** The Statistics 1C examination (for about 350 students) was scheduled for the Saturday afternoon of the May holiday weekend. This made it extremely difficult to recruit the large number of invigilators required to cope with the main examination as well as several students who had special requirements. It was suggested that Registry should urgently reconsider the advisability of holding examinations on Saturday afternoons, especially on holiday weekends. (FIMS)



Invigilation for exams held in main exam diets has been managed by Registry since the April 2011. Schools are no longer required to provide invigilation for examinations held during main examination diets.

**Issue 3:** Exam timetable: the May diet was too compressed, leading to some highly undesirable timetabling, too short an exam preparation period in some subjects, and some unsuitable rooms being used. There was also some suggestion of inequity in examination timetabling in Level-3: in some programmes, both papers were examined early and close together; in others, they were more spread out with more revision time and some evidence of better results in the second paper. One particular complaint was examinations next to the Department of Music's Studio where audible drum practice was in progress: this is not acceptable. (FBLs)

A provisional timetable is circulated to the designated examination co-ordinator in each School for comment as part of the normal process of timetabling. Feedback is taken seriously and where possible requests for reasonable changes to the timetable are acted upon. We are aware of the issue of occasional disturbance to examinations taking place in Hunter Hall West from activity in the Concert Hall by the Department of Music. This was last discussed with Music in correspondence on 5th May 2011 and we will work with them to try and minimise disruption from music exams and so recitals and concerts can be scheduled outwith the exam diet period.

**Issue 4:** A lot of staff time is spent chasing students who have poor attendance only to find that the student has already withdrawn. An effective method for notifying course coordinators immediately a student withdraws from the University would be very helpful. (Faculty of Physical Sciences)

Both student attendance and self-reported absence information can be recorded in MyCampus. Campus Solutions will automatically generate attendance rosters for every class, although use of these is not mandatory. The default setting in Campus Solutions is 'full attendance'. School staff will then update class rosters where a student has not attended. This information may be directly keyed into the system by the person leading the class or may be recorded on a hard copy of the class roster and then keyed into the system. Alternatively, those Schools who are using bar code scanning to capture attendance data will continue to do so, uploading the spreadsheet generated by the bar code software to Campus Solutions to update the student record. Schools will be able to report on this data and use this to identify students who may be at risk and require additional support or have ceased to attend their programme and need to be withdrawn.

**Issue 5:** Improve the process and efficiency of registration and fee payment for distance students. Difficulties with postal applications at Registry and systems and structures required to support part time students (noted MSc IE). (Faculty of Education PGT)

MyCampus will allow all students to pay their fees and enrol in classes on-line beginning in academic session 2011-12.

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#### *A5 Director of the Equality & Diversity Unit*

**Issue 1:** Rethink the gathering of information from students and staff about how equality and diversity issues are dealt with in the classroom and curriculum. (Faculty of Arts)

In relation to student feedback, during session 2010/11 the mandatory equality questions included were reduced to the following;

- |    |  |           |
|----|--|-----------|
| 4. | Within the context of this course I have felt:   |           |
|    | (a) included   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|    | (b) fairly treated   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|    | (c) appropriately supported  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. | Where relevant, teaching staff on this course handled issues relating to equality and diversity sensitively and appropriately. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Included in the optional questions, these are relevant to equality;

- |     |  |           |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 16. | In this course I found references and attitudes to the following acceptable:   |           |
|     | (a) race   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|     | (b) disability   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|     | (c) religion/belief  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|     | (d) age  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|     | (e) gender   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|     | (f) sexual orientation   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. | I was happy with the attitude of teaching staff towards students whose first language is not English                                       | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. | Teaching staff appeared to have a good grasp of national and cultural differences and were even-handed in their dealings with the students | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. | Teaching staff were helpful towards students with obvious disabilities and made every effort to include and assist them as required        | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. | The approach to teaching during this course helped me to think more deeply about issues of equality and diversity                          | 1 2 3 4 5 |

However, overall the number of equality related questions have reduced.

This information on this is available on the Senate Office website - [www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/gea/studentfeedback/questionnaire/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/gea/studentfeedback/questionnaire/)

#### *A6 Director of the Student Lifecycle Project*

Ensure that within the new system subjects that are not taught at school do not get 'lost' and that complementary subjects (e.g. languages for History of Art students) are flagged appropriately when students are making their choices. (Arts UG)

Colleges and Schools need to consider how best to flag these subjects through the enrolment advice to students contained in their enrolment web pages (linked to the MyCampus enrolment process) and the advice contained in advisement rules which form part of MyCampus and are built by staff in Schools.

#### *A7 Convener of the Chief Advisers Sub-committee (Clerk of Senate)*

There needs to be an improved awareness amongst Academic Advisers of the differences between the two Level 1 Mathematics streams (1R/1S and 1X/1Y). There are too many students taking 1X who are actually planning to drop Mathematics beyond Level 2 (Mathematics)

The Convener of the CASC will request that Chief Advisers draw attention to this issue in relation to Mathematics and other subjects that operate separate streams at Level 1. The Convener will also investigate with the Student Lifecycle Project team whether instructions/information can be added to such courses to be visible to students at the enrolment stage.

Many students are confused about what a designated degree is, i.e. what it's worth and what they can do with it. It would be very beneficial for the students if more information was available explicitly explaining this (Psychology)

The Convener of CASC will ensure this is discussed and actioned at the first meeting of CASC in session 2011-12.

A number of students had to transfer from the Arts Faculty to do the Designated Degree in Psychology. This is because within Arts designated degree programmes do not allow students to take a full 120-credit L3 course. Whilst students praised their advisers of studies, this was still a confusing process for students and the process could be improved in future. (Psychology)

The Convener of CASC notes that the Level 3 Designated Degree course in Psychology was expanded from 80 credits to 120 credits to allow students to focus on psychology and to enable research-led teaching to take place. This means that any designated degree students registered in the Faculty/College of Arts who wished to study psychology at L3 would have to transfer to the College of Science and Engineering. The Convener of CASC will ask the Chief Advisers to review the processes for transferring registration to a different college and to recommend improvements.

Computing Science outlined concerns for the support for the Academic Advising. They will be losing a number of advisers through retirement over the next two years. As the School prepares to accommodate this loss of experience, they felt it was unlikely that will be able to significantly increase their current advising provision (Computer Science)

Concerns were expressed that the University is preparing to cut back on the role of the adviser of studies by introducing a system whereby students will receive automated curriculum advice via Campus Solutions (a new campus-wide software system that will be deployed next summer). The School is concerned about the impact on students if such an important aspect of the advising role is undertaken by computer (Computer Science)

The Convener of CASC notes the concerns raised by Computing Science, however, the issues raised have been overtaken by the transitional arrangements for the introduction of the new Advisory System that have been put in place for 2011-12. The School of Computing Science is encouraged to raise any remaining concerns directly with the College Chief Adviser.\*

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#### *A8 Clerk of Senate*

**Issue 1:** The number of scholarships should be increased (Politics).

**Issue 2:** SCS urge the creations of **scholarships** "for the diversification of the student body". (Faculty of Arts PGT)

The Clerk of Senate is sympathetic to requests for more scholarships, but the creation of scholarships is not in the CoS's giving. This is a matter that should be discussed by the relevant College Board with advice from the relevant Dean of L&T or Graduate Studies,

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\* Alternative process suggested for addressing this issue.

depending on whether they refer to undergraduate or graduate scholarships.\* As there are financial implications, the relevant College Board would make a decision. For research degree scholarships are a matter for the VP for Research. A clearer definition of what is meant by 'the diversification of the student body' would also be needed.

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#### *A9 Convener of the Education Policy & Strategy Committee*

##### Consideration of effective ways of supporting distance education students (Faculty of Education)

We are running a pilot project this coming academic year to evaluate Big Blue Button (BBB) software as a platform to provide effective academic support for distance learning students. A number of parts of the university will engage in this pilot which is being supported by strategic investment. If successful, we will roll this out to other Schools and Colleges that hope to develop distance provision. We are also, independently of this, talking to private providers who have established systems for the learning support of distance students with a view to exploring partnership opportunities. There is an increasing trend towards distance provision in the sector and so we are anticipating demand for this kind of support across the university in the future.

The University has introduced a new student feedback questionnaire apparently without giving adequate consideration to the overhead involved in collating responses. The previous questionnaire that the School formerly used was certainly not ideal, but at least the responses could be collated via OCR. However for 2009-10, due to the lack of administrative support within the school, the task of collating the Likert-scale responses and summarising the written responses fell to (academic) course coordinators. The University of Glasgow aspires to be one of the top 50 research intensive universities in the world. This surely cannot be achieved if academic staff are spending their time on activities such as totting up student responses to evaluation questionnaires (Computer Science)

Statistics made use of the new university-wide student questionnaire in all its classes in Session 2009-10. This questionnaire had not been made available electronically, so the department had to return to using paper-based questionnaires. This seemed to increase response rates but hugely increased the workload of administrative staff in transcribing responses on to electronic spreadsheets (Statistics)

There were a number of negative comments concerning the new feedback questionnaire and its administration, with a few reports requesting that the university revise it (FIMS)

Student questionnaires need reviewed. Consideration should be given to finding ways to improve response rates and link comments made with the programme origin of respondents (Sociology, Urban Studies).

Issues 2 – 5 above are all related. The lack of processing capability is exactly why we delayed the widespread introduction of the form. The form is now available on Moodle with an integrated analysis function. Three Colleges also have scanning systems in place that are capable of carrying out OCR on printed forms and IT services are leading a project to look at methods of increasing responses to on-line versions of the form. We will continue to review the use and effectiveness of the form.

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#### *A10 Vice Principal Learning & Teaching*

Further promotion of continuing professional development in learning and teaching for academic staff to raise status of teaching within the University. Improve mentoring for

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\* Alternative process suggested for addressing this issue.

probationary staff and clarify relationship between probation targets and P&DR (PGCert AP). (Faculty of Education PGT)

We offer a broad range of professional development opportunities for staff in the areas of learning and teaching. These include the annual university L&T conference sessions and workshops and the seminar series run by the Learning and Teaching centre. These are all publicised to staff. This is in addition to external opportunities through, for example, the HEA. The University has a clear policy on probation and provides guidelines for mentors. The probation and P&DR processes are well defined and should operate well together. If there are concerns that this is not the case in specific areas of the University, these concerns should be raised with the College HR team<sup>x</sup> in the first instance.

Technical support for programmes delivered via e-learning: Requested by MSc(Med Sci) Sport and Exercise Medicine. The programme has not received any technical support from the University to date, as the Faculty purchased the license for Adobe Connect, which is not centrally supported (Faculty of Medicine PGT)

The Big Blue Button (BBB) pilot project on distance learning will look at other software solutions and evaluate support requirements. We are also in the process of developing an IT roadmap in support of Learning and Teaching that should help to identify and plan for future requirements in terms of support. At present, we do not have a unified approach to e-learning at the University and the BBB pilot is aimed at determining the best way forward in this area. Until we have done this, support for e-learning initiatives will continue to be provided locally and should have been considered and planned for during the development of the programme.

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#### *A11 Vice Principal Strategy & Resources*

Most reports emphasise that the recruitment levels and sustainability of PGT programmes, which the University seeks, require funds for **adequate marketing**, dedicated to specific programmes and targeted at key markets (e.g. in North America). (The point is made, for example, by two School of Critical Studies MLitts and a School of Culture and Creative Arts (SCCA) MLitt). (Faculty of Arts)

The marketing provision in RIO has increased substantially over the past two years in line with increase in student numbers. RIO is organized on a matrix structure providing dedicated support to regions and to colleges. Most colleges will also respond to business cases to supplement the effort of RIO. It is rare for marketing staff to allocate time exclusively to support to a single course due to likely return on investment. However RIO can aid with the inclusion of course information in broader marketing literature.

SCCA argues for maintaining suitable spending on **books for the Library**, since, for example, Art History still depends strongly on printed and expensive books that are not readily available in other libraries. (Faculty of Arts PGT)

The Library budget has increased ahead of inflation (at the expense of other central consumable budgets) over the past few years. Each college is allocated a proportion of the budget for spend in their areas. Some colleges supplement this spend from their own consumable budgets. Any significant issues should be raised with the appropriate college representative on the library committee.<sup>x</sup>

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<sup>x</sup> Alternative process suggested for addressing this issue.

SCCA speaks of the unsatisfactory conditions for music lectures—mentioned also in student feedback—as reported in previous AMRs, and asks the University to “fulfil its longstanding commitment to a **new building for Music**” (Faculty of Arts)

Request noted. However the new building for music is not currently seen as a priority by SMG or Court and is not included in the 10 year capital plan. New projects can be added to the capital plan by means of the appropriate budget holder (Heads of College or Secretary to Court) presenting a business case to SMG. New music practice pods are planned in 13 University Gardens and Estates are looking at methods for improving the environment of the Concert Hall. The university is working with Glasgow Life on the development of the Kelvin Hall. This MAY provide a solution for Music in the medium to long term.

Computing Science requested that the University bring pressure to bear on the Scottish government to resume its previously successful separate support for the MSc in Information Technology degree whose graduates have always fed strongly into the technical infrastructure of Scotland. (FIMS PGT)

Noted. The Government and the funding council may fund specific interventions to help the economy if aligned with their current strategic objectives. In the current climate lobbying is more likely to be successful when led by industry rather than universities.

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#### *A12 Director of Corporate Communications*

**Issue 1:** Search Engine Optimisation: The university websites and pick up by search engines need to be improved and monitored as several programmes have slipped down the list produced doing a Google search and the individual pages picked up by the search engine relate to old pages in the website and to not so useful pages. The programme prospectus pages are not being picked up by Google directly. (Faculty of Medicine PGT)

This seems to be from some time ago and refers to the old Faculty of Medicine, so it's unclear whether this is referencing the old structure where departments published programme information within their own sites, rather the current structure, where all programme content is gathered centrally [both for usability and to optimise for search engines].

However, a recent presentation of an academic study into the visibility of University websites to search engines, based on a survey of the 38 members of the Russell Group and the 1994 Group, placed Glasgow as third most visible.

<http://iwmw.ukoln.ac.uk/iwmw2011/talks/weideman/>

The Webteam have done a great deal of work to ensure that the structure of the website is as search engine friendly as possible: work borne out by the results above. Corporate Communications has also written copy for programme entries to ensure that expected search terms are placed prominently within copy. Corporate Comms also run a series of "Writing for the Web" workshops which assist academics and others throughout the University in writing for the web in an accessible manner, but also so as to maximize search engine optimization.

The completion of work to migrate from old faculty and department websites to the new college and school structure will also help with search engine optimisation.

#### *A13 Director of the Senate Office*

**Issue 1:** Increased support for staff detecting plagiarism: The MRes Molecular Medicine requested that Senate be more supportive of staff who detect and report plagiarism. The Programme Director of this particular programme wrote to the Senate Assessor for Discipline in light of a plagiarism issue but felt that despite devoting an enormous amount of work to this case that the outcome letter appeared to trivialise the situation. (Faculty of Medicine PGT)

The Senate Assessors are very appreciative of the effort expended by staff as a result of discovering, investigating and reporting cases of suspected plagiarism. It is essential that staff feel that such effort is worthwhile.

The outcome letter issued to students does not include every detail of the discussion at interview, and cannot fully capture the tone. It therefore may be read quite differently by the student than by someone who was not present in the meeting. Furthermore, no two cases are identical and, on occasion, there may be extenuating circumstances brought to the Senate Assessors' attention which have led to poor academic practice. Each case is therefore treated according to its individual factors. The Senate Assessors always make very clear to students the seriousness with which the University views such matters, the need to preserve the integrity of our degrees, and the imperative for them to change their behaviour. The key outcome of a meeting where the allegation is upheld is that the need to punish the student is explained and the need for a change in behaviour made clear.

There is also a balance to be struck between punishing students and helping them towards changing their practices. It has been the policy of the Senate Assessors for Student Conduct for some time to focus on "re-education" the first time they deal with a student, but to be much more punitive with students they encounter on a second occasion. The Assessors believe that the very low rates of reoffending they see suggests that it is effective (they see fewer than 5% of students on more than one occasion). It is made clear to students in the interview, and is restated in the letter, that the consequences of committing a second offence are severe, putting their future at the University of Glasgow in serious jeopardy.

**Issue 2:** Staff training required on student policies and procedures: The MRes Molecular Medicine felt it would be useful to have a training session on Codes of Conduct, to help determine when a particular policy or procedure would apply, to ensure that disciplinary matters were dealt with swiftly and appropriately. (Faculty of Medicine PGT)

Information has been published on the Senate Office webpages on student conduct which outlines various policies/procedures which can be used when there are concerns about student conduct ([www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/workingwithstudents/studentconduct/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/workingwithstudents/studentconduct/)). This has been forwarded to the MVLS Graduate School, along with the offer of a follow-up briefing session if it is considered necessary.

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#### *A14 Director of the Learning & Teaching Centre and the Head of the EFL Unit*

**Issue 1:** Online resource for overseas students on scientific report writing: It has been suggested that it would be helpful if the Learning and Teaching Centre and EFL Unit could generate an online resource providing advice and guidance on writing scientific reports for overseas students. The information on the web site at the moment, seems to be predominantly aimed at essay-writing. (Medicine PGT)

The action so far is to initiate setting a meeting between Carol Collins, Effective Learning Advisor for Medicine, and Anneli Williams, Course Director for the International Pre-masters in Medical Science Pre-session course in the Language Centre EFL Unit. It would help to know who in Medicine made the comment so that we can meet their needs specifically. Sorry we have not got any further with this, but June, July and August are the busiest times for the Language Centre. We have had 450 students to teach this summer. We are happy to provide a further update.

*Head of Learning and Technology (Learning & Teaching Centre)*

**Issue 1: School of Critical Studies reports student complaints about the slowness of Moodle.** (Faculty of Arts PGT)

The School was approached but was not able to provide additional information on the issues raised. I discussed the issue of Moodle slowness with IT Services and they agreed that it was not possible to investigate issues of slowness this long after the event as it is not possible to review logs or performance data at this remove. It is also necessary to have specific detail as the slowness could be related to any one or a number of factors (such as network, user PC, etc) which are not necessarily related to Moodle itself. IT Services actively monitors all its services and responds appropriately, but it is essential that if there are service problems that they are reported promptly through the HelpDesk at the time that they occur.<sup>x</sup> The appropriate data is then available and investigation can produce improvements to the service for those suffering the problems.

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*A15 Head of the College of Arts*

**Issue 1: SCCA request another lecturer in Popular Music Studies.** (Faculty of Arts)

All cases for posts are a matter of budgetary prioritization and should be addressed through the School to CMG, where they need to be supported by savings, income and a business case.<sup>x</sup>

**Issue 2: Music requests that its separate identity be maintained in the new structure.** (Faculty of Arts, SCCA)

The identity of subjects in the restructuring of the University was approved in 2009-10.

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*A16 Head of the College of MVLS and/or the Dean Learning & Teaching*

**Continue to increase clinical capacity to cope with the direct entry of approximately 30 additional students to Year 3 in 2010.** (Medical School)

These additional students were accommodated in session 2010-11. A range of initiatives are ongoing within the Medical School to ensure that there continues to be sufficient clinical capacity. These include work on Service Level Agreements with each of the partner Health Boards, accountability for Additional Cost of Teaching projects led by NHS Education, and curriculum review and reform to ensure greater NHS engagement.

**Discussion between University and NHS to facilitate the above by ensuring that contracts are appropriate, that teaching is included in Consultant contracts and that SPAs are not removed.** (Medical School)

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<sup>x</sup> Alternative process suggested for addressing this issue.



A high level Service Level Agreement has been reached with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Agreements are in progress with the other Boards. More detailed i.e. individual unit level, agreements are underway.

Ensure that lecture theatre & FRS accommodation is prioritised for Year 3 – numbers expected to be about 275 students in 2010-2011 but may be 290+ in subsequent years. (Medical School)

There is ongoing concern within the Undergraduate Medical School about availability and capacity in lecture theatres in the University for the large numbers of students in year 3. Class scheduling for 2011-12 is being done manually as part of the Student Lifecycle Project and this will evolve for the 2012-13 academic year when new procedures and processes will be in place to support the use of Facility CMIS for automated room allocation and production of online student timetables. Staff in the Medical School are fully involved in this process.

Increase resources for Year 3 – recruitment becoming difficult from NHS staff with full job plans, clinical academics are not all being replaced. (Medical School)

See above. It is hoped that the planned changes to the structure of year 3 will make it more attractive for NHS clinicians to become involved in teaching.

It would help to maintain good IT support within the Medical School to ensure efficient preparation of examiner data (Medical School)

There are no plans to reduce support. A College IT manager has been appointed and a strategic planning group appointed to support him. This issue will be addressed within that group.

To ensure that software is available to enable psychometric analysis of the OSCE data. (Medical School)

A budget was identified and software ordered at the end of the last academic session however the company providing and supporting the software went into receivership. We are currently working to identify if the software can still be used or if we will have to find an alternative provider.

To ensure that room availability can be introduced for extra academic days during the final 2 years of the course (Fridays are a possibility) (Medical School)

See above at item 3.

Whilst the transition to a structure based upon Colleges and Research Institutes has apparently been successfully implemented there remains considerable uncertainty among those members of staff who deliver the Course as to their position within the University. (BSc MedSci)

An attempt was made to try to identify which staff were uncertain so that their uncertainties could be allayed but they could not be identified. The College Human Resources Manager confirmed that all staff have now received letters to indicate whether they are in Schools or Institutes (assimilation took place 12 months ago). Each member of staff has a line manager who is either in a School or an Institute. The position should not impact on ability to deliver the BMedSci as members of Institutes are expected to teach.

It is also not immediately apparent as to how FTE's will be assigned within the College with regards to those with "School" or "Institute" (or joint) appointments. (BSc MedSci)

See answer to question 8. There are no issues related to a split of FTEs between Schools or Institutes. It is not clear why this issue has been raised or what staff are concerned about but there is no reason for concern.

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### A17 Director of Estates & Buildings

Appendix 1 shows the issues identified for the Director of Estates and Buildings.

#### **Response:**

The Vice-Principal (Strategy & Resources) has provided the following comment regards the ASC process in the past and this still stands.

*“ASC should be aware that there is a clear process of Estates and Buildings meeting regularly with the Heads of College regarding their estates priorities. Heads of School need to ensure that their needs are raised with the Head of College.<sup>x</sup> We have a master-plan for capital spend that is approved annually by SMG and Court. The desire for work to be conducted always outstrips available resource – there is therefore a need to set priorities. If ASC raise a new issue then almost certainly if this is to be tackled we will need to drop another refurbishment already programmed. The fact that ASC state “The lack of adequate response is undermining faith in the Annual Monitoring process and affecting staff morale” does not mean that we have not considered conducting the work – rather that it has not been given a high enough priority when added to the overall capital plan. I accept that the process has not always been transparent, however the procedures put in place over the last 12 months ensure that the complete 5 year capital spend profile is available for inspection by those who wish to see it and is regularly updated with the full input of the Heads of College and SMG”.*

I have elaborated on this further below:

#### Section A

##### General

All of the Universities non-pay investments in the Estate are now identified in the University Court approved Capital Plan which is aligned to the University’s Strategic Plan. E&B does not have any funding outside of the Capital Plan which is directly controlled by the Vice-Principal (Strategy and Resources). The funding directly linked to Learning and Teaching spaces maintenance, refurbishment and development is within the following priorities in the plan as of May 2011:

Projects completed in 2010-2011

- **07/142 – Boyd Orr Lecture Theatres 1 & 2:** Refurbishment.
- **09/306A – Alexander Stone Lecture Theatre:** Refurbishment.
- **09/306B Rankine Lecture Theatre (£455k):** Refurbishment
- **Var/4A Small projects:** Small (<£100k) projects to react to in year opportunities – this line was used to record projects already committed prior to establishment of first capital plan in 2010. Funding line Var/4B (Priority 2) now used to allocate funds to new projects
- **08/193 – Development of West Registry for seminar rooms:** Conversion

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<sup>x</sup> Alternative process suggested for addressing this issue.

- **08/158 Refurbishment of Alexander Stone for Law:** To enable growth of teaching in Law through transfer of diploma from Strathclyde.
- **09/315 Glasgow International College Phase 4:** Creation of new space for GIC to accommodate more students in line with business plan.

#### Priority 1

- **TBA/2 – Seminar Room and Lecture Theatre Programme (£750k):** Upgrades of teaching spaces to improve quality student experience. Priorities determined in discussion with Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning) who chairs a Teaching Infrastructure working group of EdPSC. Projects expected to be completed within the next 24 months include, but are not restricted to:
  - Refurbishment of Graham Kerr 224
  - Changes to internal layout of the WILT
- **TBA/3 – Teaching Laboratory Programme (growing to £1M/year from mid 2012/13):** Upgrades of teaching laboratory spaces to improve quality student experience. Priorities determined in discussion with Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning) who chairs a Teaching Infrastructure working group of EdPSC. Projects expected to be completed within the next 24 months include, but are not restricted to:
  - Refurbishment of Boyd Orr Level 10.
- **Main/1, 2, 3, 4 5 (Total £7M/Year):** Revenue spend to ensure legislative compliance, fabric repairs and annual maintenance programmes.
- **TBA/20 WILT extension (£1M):** Proposal to extend seminar rooms in WILT complex to provide a better teaching cluster – primarily for taught postgraduate students but also for summer conferences and undergraduate teaching.

#### Priority 2

- **Var/1 General refurbishment (£1.5M/year):** 5 major budget holders given budget to make minor alterations and refurbishment of their infrastructure.
- **Var/4B Small projects (£2M/year):** Small projects to react to in year opportunities. Prior to 09/10 this line was approximately £7M/year. Some of this has been moved to laboratory and lecture theatre refurbishment. Overall budget now reduced. Projects over £100k funded from this allocation will be explicitly identified in the Capital Plan. Reducing budget below £2M would stop most small refurbishment and realisation of in-year opportunities. Projects expected to be completed within the next 24 months include, but are not restricted to:
  - Move of Economics to the Gilbert Scott Building
  - Collocation of new integrated research grants team
  - Relocation of RIO, Disability Services, Student Counselling and Residential Services as part of review of student services in Fraser Building
  - Best use of Gregory Building

#### Priority 3

- **TBA/4 Development of Vet Teaching Centre (£6M):** Will provide expanded and better teaching space, social space and catering facilities. Improves student experience. Project being scoped as part of the design of the Virology building.
- **TBA/1A Redevelopment of Thompson Building (£3M):** 1<sup>st</sup> phase of development to improve Anatomy suites (will improve CPD ability). CAPEX approved.

The Capital Plan is funded to Priority 3 on an ongoing basis; there is a further priority 4 and 5 listing. There are ongoing changes to the Capital Plan so there are other investments that may be made over and above those listed and some may change in scope. Initial changes to the plan are approved by Senior Management Group (SMG). E.g. further investment in teaching spaces within the John McIntyre building has been raised in priority and approved.

The prioritization of refurbishment in specific Learning and Teaching Spaces is led through the Teaching Infrastructure Working Group chaired by the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching). In addition to this there is a Management of Teaching Space (MTS) Project Board established with Secretary of Court as chair and includes Vice-Principals (Learning and Teaching) and (Strategy and Resources). The scope of the project is to integrate all Central, College, School and Research Institute teaching space in a single management system linked with Campus Solutions with an overall aim of increasing utilization of this space across the University. This work has commenced and in 2012-2013 it is expected that all room bookings will be done in a University wide process. It has included the recruitment of a Teaching and Space Planning Manager based in estates to lead on the project implementation. The project will also involve providing room facilities data to users across the University and a continuous improvement approach to room allocation, timetabling and fit out.

College space refurbishment should be funded through the Capital Plan College General Refurbishment budgets where funds permit and prioritized by Colleges, Schools and RI through their Management Groups. Other than specific projects in the Capital Plan CRB space refurbishment and maintenance should be funded through the Capital Plan Maintenance allocation where funds permit and prioritized by the Estates Operations Team within E&B.

Items 1 to 17 excluding 8

The combination of the SMG and University Court prioritization of the Capital Plan, prioritization by the Teaching Infrastructure Working Group and the MTS system development project is aimed at continuous improvement of the approach to investments in the types and numbers of learning and teaching spaces available on the campus and the sharing of these spaces to maximize utilization, identify correct specifications and further prioritize investments. CRB space is a third of the available teaching space on campus and the combination of this and College held space being visible on one booking system will improve the visibility of space across the campus and promote sharing of space across Colleges and Schools. The issue of lecture repeats and the need for further investment in large lecture theatres should be business case representations that Colleges should make to the Teaching Infrastructure Working Group for consideration following endorsement by their College Management Group.

Item 8

E&B has to work within tight timescales of availability of space for many refurbishments and in some cases this has to be done while there are ongoing needs for occupancy while works are carried out. E&B will take all reasonable steps to minimize any disruption to users but in a few occasions this will not be possible.

## Section B

The high volume of points in section B is taking longer to follow up given the amount of detail involved. I don't think it is the best use of everyone's time in raising these types of issues through the ASC Annual Monitoring process, as I've highlighted before. Most of

these items should be raised through the E&B helpdesk where users can track their own works requests progress.\* I recommend that this is the approach in future and is the established method of dealing with E&B operational matters. It is worth noting that a number of issues are AV-IT related, particularly for LBSS/Social Sciences and E&B would not be able to action these. I recommend contacting AV-IT Services for a response on these.

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#### *A18 Convener of the Academic Standards Committee*

The disparity between the length of semester 1 in comparison with semester 2, and the associated difference in the time available to prepare for exams, is a continuing issue both for staff and students. The University should consider whether the current structure of the academic year is providing students with the best conditions for learning, particularly given the compression of the first semester due to December examinations. (Faculty of Engineering)

This issue was clearly highlighted in the comprehensive review of the new Academic Structures which was undertaken in 2010-11. The Academic Structures Implementation Group has strongly recommended lengthening semester 1 and has proposed a number of options for changing the semester structure from 13+17 weeks to 14+16 weeks (see: <https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/commdoc/senate/EC/Papers/EC/2010/50-c.htm>). This was considered by EdPSC in June 2011 and will be forwarded to Senate for consideration in October 2011.

Staff (and in some cases External Examiners) have commented on the use of 90 min exams. These are felt to be too short to allow proper examination for student's understanding of the subject. (Faculty of Engineering)

At ASC's request, the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee has reviewed the current regulations on exam durations, in consultations with all Schools (including Engineering). ARSC decided not to recommend any changes to the regulations, and ASC concurred at its meeting on 13 May 2011.

Increased access to programme information for external examiners: The MRes Molecular Medicine has suggested that external examiners be granted access to a shared drive on the University server, to obtain documentation related to the programme and the Exam Board. Alternatively, a secure web site could be set up for this purpose. (Faculty of Medicine PGT)

This request is not very clear but it does not seem to be an ASC matter anyway. Access to programme documentation (programme specs) is already openly available. The Senate Office has also confirmed that external examiner access to School documentation through Moodle is currently under discussion between the Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching), the Learning & Teaching Centre and the Senate Office. If implemented, this will provide considerable information for external examiners on-line, albeit with restricted access. Alternatively, the new external examiner database could be developed to allow Schools to upload documentation on the database for external examiners to access. This will only be taken forward if the Moodle option is not pursued.

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\* Alternative process suggested for addressing this issue.

## **B Responses Outstanding**

To date, no response has been received from the following.

*B1 Director of IT Services (Raised in Annual Monitoring Report to ASC)*

Transfer of sound/audio to adjacent teaching room in Gardiner Institute - Requested by MSc(Med Sci) Cardiovascular Sciences (Faculty of Medicine PGT)

Problems with Video-Conferencing link quality – improvements required. (Dumfries Campus) – *further detail provided by the School of Interdisciplinary Studies is shown in Appendix 2*

### Faculty of Arts

The AV equipment in two separate rooms in Adam Smith was inadequate: DVD players were not working and the generic instructions for AV/IT equipment were not helpful. (Comp. Lit.)

Videolink: concerns were raised about the repeated failures in the videolinks with Dumfries from the Sir Charles Wilson building (Philosophy 1K) and Kelvin Building LT 257; between WILT & Kelvin (English Language), and Boyd Orr 412 and Strathclyde campus (German 1A). Whilst technical support is usually on-hand, classes starting at 11.05am have had difficulties finding assistance due to scheduled tea breaks: standby provision should be clearly indicated.

### Faculty of Law, Business and Social Sciences PGT

The software, particularly Microsoft Office, needs to be ungraded on pcs in Forehall and Business School Lecture theatre as students have problems opening PowerPoint presentations created using more up-to-date software.

Video conferencing equipment needs to be installed in the Central and East European Studies' seminar room (Central & East European Studies).

### Matters identified for the attention of the Director of Estates & Buildings

**Section A** highlights generic concerns relating to learning and teaching spaces which have been raised repeatedly in recent years by a range of Departments and seem to have no straightforward solution. The issues identified in **Section B** below relate to specific learning and teaching spaces, many of which will already have been reported to Estates and Buildings when they were first identified and may already have been looked at. It is accepted that some of these may no longer be live issues but it was agreed that they should be reviewed systematically and a response provided for the Subjects concerned.

#### **Section A**

1. The need for an improved supply of large and small, well equipped rooms is an on-going concern (Mathematics).
2. There is a paucity of rooms that can be use for large group, non-traditional teaching. It is important that methods such as group work and other non-lecture based methods are catered for even for big classes (which we will always have in psychology). If we are to embrace more flexible methods then the appropriate physical spaces need to be provided. Traditional lecture halls are not conducive to these methods and small seminar rooms are too small. This limits the ambitions of the Department/School to innovate in teaching (Psychology).
3. Several Class Co-ordinators reported problems with obtaining suitable accommodation for small tutorial groups (usually about 10 students) and medium-sized workshops (usually 15-20 students). This was felt to be largely a result of the over-recruitment of students across the University, but there was a general impression that Central Room Bookings had been over-stretched and unable to respond in a timely manner to requests from departments at the beginning of the 2009-10 session, adding considerable strain to departmental academic and administrative staff (Statistics).
4. Several AMRs noted the need for one or two LARGE lecture theatres to avoid need for so many lecture repeats. (FBLs)
5. To ensure that room bookings have facilities available for larger numbers of students (including the 25 extras from St Andrews (Medical School)
6. Lecture theatre upgrades were noted, but there are still poor designs (podia too far to one side), lack of AV instructions and poor trouble-shooting. Estates and Buildings are encouraged to consult widely when planning the refurbishment of teaching spaces. (FBLs)
7. Frustration about the lack of consultation with academic staff over the upgrading of lecture theatres (and the lack of confirmation that comments from academic staff in annual monitoring reports about problematic aspects of upgrades to learning and teaching spaces have been taken on board). This relates both to design (lecterns are not, now, universally provided and the poor redesign of some spaces make working with a laptop for a powerpoint presentation physically uncomfortable) and to scheduling of building/ repair works. (Faculty of Arts)
8. Ongoing construction works in the Modern Languages building (now Alexander Stone building) during term time meant not only noise pollution during teaching sessions, but also problems with dust and fumes which had Health & Safety implications. (Faculty of Arts)

9. There are repeated pleas for the nature of the teaching session to be taken into account in room bookings, in particular to ensure that seminar interaction is not impeded by inflexible, cavernous spaces. In addition, where classes have outgrown their booked rooms, solutions need to be found *during* the semester. (Faculty of Arts)
10. Please restore the photos of lecture rooms in the section of the CRB website dealing with equipment and layout supplied. This is particularly valuable when increased class sizes mean rooms need to be rebooked at short notice. (Hispanic.)
11. Seminar space continues to be at a premium in 65 Oakfield Avenue (Classics).
12. Improvements required to Central Room Bookings, in particular for timetabling to reduce the length of time required for courses to be allocated a room. (Faculty of Education)
13. Development of a new teaching block on the Garscube campus as per the submitted plans. (Vet Medicine)
14. Repairs to Cochno House and development of Cochno farm to bring it in line with modern farming practice. (Vet Medicine)
15. SCS reports that **limitations on teaching space** (as well as quality and diversity considerations) require evening teaching when insufficient staff are available. This problem, SCS argue, threatens the effort to recruit more PGT students. (Faculty of Arts PGT)
16. SCS also reports student complaints about the **size and temperature of teaching rooms** (MLitt in Creative Writing). (Faculty of Arts PGT)
17. Accommodation: Examine feasibility of booking University accommodation on Sundays. (University teaching spaces apparently cannot be booked on Sundays during study weekends. EdD programme hires Sunday teaching spaces at commercial rates). Better facilities for evening and weekend teaching were also requested (MSc PLE). (Education PGT)

## Section B

*For the attention of the Director of Estates & Buildings*

### Faculty of Arts

1. Gilmorehill Centre (especially 217a & 217b): the heat in these rooms was intolerable – specifically and increasingly between Jan-March 2010 – with temperatures of 27-29 degrees impacting negatively on student concentration and ability to participate in seminar activities. Despite repeated appeals to Central Room Bookings and E&B throughout the semester, this situation was not resolved. The key problem (a broken cooling system) has now been identified but, as of June 2010, there appears to have been no specific action taken. Staff are concerned that this will not have been remedied by the beginning of the new session. Although the problems this year were particularly acute, inconsistent heating/ventilation throughout the building has been reported in these AMRs for a number of years, but with no appreciable improvement. Students – who similarly raise this issue year-in year-out in their evaluation forms – are increasingly frustrated (Theatre/ FTV).
2. Hunterian lecture theatre: lack of heating in winter (Comp Lit), stifling in warm weather (French 2).



3. Hetherington Building (118): overheated or insufficiently ventilated throughout the year. (Italian 1B).
4. 2 University Gardens (208): unacceptably cold temperatures with staff and students having to wear coats and scarves during class (Italian Honours).
5. Modern Languages (204): extremely cold for a long period at the beginning of the year (Catalan).
6. Sir Charles Wilson Lecture Theatre: Students complained it was freezing at 10.00am. They were told that work on the defective boiler (closed down for reasons of economy and damaged over the Xmas/New Year freeze) was underway – and had been for the best part of two months. There are also problems with sound in this space as students arriving early for the next lecture have caused serious and continued disruption throughout the year. (Philosophy 1M & 1K)
7. Jebb room, 67 Oakfield Avenue: problems with heating and ventilation (the rooms either too hot or too cold) and lack of natural light make this an uncomfortable teaching space (Greek 2).
8. The inadequacy of performance and practice space for Music is a general problem noted at the front of this report. With particular reference to the BEng in Electronics with Music the following is noted: “the poor acoustic environment in the recording studios and the Concert Hall, with massive sound leakage both in and out of these spaces, and the poor state of old audio cabling under the floor of the Concert Hall. The technological infrastructure within the space is woefully outdated but is beyond the scope of the funding available through the College of Arts equipment funding committee. How should we address this?”
9. Carnegie Room, C305 Joseph Black Building – no telephone for contact regarding data projector troubleshooting
10. The lighting in Lecture room 209, 2 University Gdns is so bright as to make powerpoint and overhead projector screens very difficult to see: this has been reported to E&B but no action taken (History Honours).
11. Main Lecture Theatre (208) in the Alexander Stone Building badly needs refurbishment – also frequently smells very strongly of gas (Archaeology).
12. The lecture theatre in the Rankine Building (Room 408) was often in a terrible state, with litter strewn about the room and the furnishings at the front of the theatre covered in chalk dust; there were also problems with the technology in this room, which did not always function reliably (Classical Civilisation 2B).
13. No lectern is available in the Mathematics Building, Lecture Room 325. (Eng Lang)
14. White boards need to be properly maintained (Catalan, Portuguese), and chalk dust cleaned up (Eng Lit 2A).
15. The Gloag room (room 330, 8 The Square): students are unable to see the board, there is poor ventilation and uncomfortable seating. Teachers complain that standing on the raised teaching dais means overhead data projector shines directly in the eyes (AMI 2).
16. The Concert Hall and its teaching equipment are inadequate for teaching (BEng Electronics with Music).

## FIMS

1. **Computer Science Level 1:** We had some problems with unsuitable tutorial rooms being allocated. The unsuitability results from the fact that we have classes in which the students begin with an hour in a tutorial room and then move to our lab in the Boyd Orr building; so, for example, a tutorial room in the St Andrew's Building is not suitable because 15 minutes of the class would be wasted in walking across campus. It seems difficult to prevent these problems from arising with the central room allocation, but it is usually possible to change the rooms once problems have been identified.
2. **Computer Science Level 2:** Mathematics 516 was a good location for lectures, but is not ideal for our disabled staff member.
3. **Computer Science Level 3:** Previously reported problems with Maths 325/326 having projection screens that are too small and poorly located remain. The computing laboratory in Boyd Orr 720 has a tendency to overheat.
4. **Computer Science Level 4:** Some students were unhappy with Sir Alexander Stone 204 (aka room 5). It is a very wide room and some students have difficulty seeing the whiteboards, depending on where they are sitting. It has also been very cold on occasion due to problems with the heating system.
5. **Mathematics Level 1 (1R, 1T):** There is a lack of good quality larger lecture rooms with blackboards and small rooms for tutorials. Considerable disruption and confusion was caused to students by the ad hoc arrangements we were forced to make to deal with this shortage
6. **Mathematics Level 1 (1X and 1Y):** The lectures took place in room 515 in the Mathematics Building. Due to a problem with a broken air-conditioning unit, teaching during the first 6 weeks of the term was made unnecessarily difficult because of the extreme heat in the room. Most of the lectures took place with both sets of doors open
7. **Mathematics Level 2:** Several lecture theatres had poor blackboard facilities essential for the effective teaching of Mathematics. Also there were serious accommodation problems for 11am section of the 2D course and for the 12 noon section of 2F.
8. **Mathematics Level 3:** Lectures were held in the Mathematics Building which is suitable for our needs. There were problems with the rolling blackboards in 417 and maybe the Department should consider replacing the black boards in 416 and 417.
9. **Psychology Level 3:** The main issue is the allocation for lectures of too many different lecture theatres on different days, even causing students to have to move between lecture theatres on a Wednesday when we have three successive hours of teaching but are not allowed to remain in the same location.
10. **Statistics 1Y and 1Z:** The lecture room was well provisioned, with appropriate equipment. The tutorial rooms were not always suitable. Sometimes they did not contain the required equipment, e.g. black or white boards and some tutorials had to take place in a computing lab, which was inappropriate.
11. **Statistics Level 3:** The lecture theatre (capacity of 90) is well provisioned, with appropriate equipment. Given the increased numbers of both Combined and Single Honours Statistics students (from 26 to 35), the provision of computing facilities was more difficult although switching the computer lab used on Thursday sessions was sufficient to adapt to this. Should numbers continue to grow, provision of additional computing facilities will be almost certainly vital.

### Faculty of Medicine – Dental School

1. The teaching laboratory on Level 8 of the Dental Hospital and School (Room K 27) is in need of refurbishment to bring it into line with the quality of the other teaching facilities within the building.

### Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

1. The teaching spaces, toilets and changing facilities at Cochno were noted as being inadequate.
2. Heating in the Ilay lecture theatre requires attention.
3. Power supply for student laptops in lecture theatres other than the Ilay.
4. New fixed screen needed in teaching laboratory 2

### Faculty of Law, Business & Social Sciences PGT

1. G255 - unreliable tablet and curtains need repaired/replaced.
  2. G466 – bad acoustics, lack of control over air conditioning, broken blinds.
  3. Kelvin lecture theatre – whiteboards and improvement in AV needed.
  4. Forehall – poor acoustics, seating not conducive to using laptops and whiteboards rarely cleaned.
  5. All blackboards should be replaced by whiteboards (Accounting & Finance, Urban Studies).
  6. Pin security door entry systems have lead to instances where staff and students have been locked out of 67 Southpark Avenue and 15 Southpark Terrace (Urban Studies).
  7. Seminar Room in Hetherington Building, peculiar shape and layout not conducive to postgraduate study. Poor sound insulation meant class disturbed by sound track from audiovisual materials in next room and internal alarm that beeped continuously.
  8. Adam Smith, Rooms 915 and 718 – air conditioning noisy and ineffective.
  9. Adam Smith, Room 915 – whiteboards and improvement in AV needed, and lighting poor.
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## Appendix 2

### *Clarification provided for Director of IT Service wrt issues highlighted for Dumfries Campus*

- How the link is provided to Dumfries and the name of the technical contact;

the link is provided by the University of Glasgow, but received in Dumfries by University of West of Scotland technical staff (the Dumfries Campus shares infrastructure with its campus partner, which provides IT capability as part of a 2007 agreement. Local head of IT is Stephen Patterson [stephen.patterson@uws.ac.uk])

- The nature of the technical quality issues;

pixelisation of the image, occasional audio loss, disunity between image and audio. These most frequent during periods of high internet use across campus, limiting available bandwidth for V-C Links. Because IT infrastructure is managed by UWS, the V-C Link must pass through the internet and from GU's internal system to UWS's network cloud. This complication problematises the process and diminishes the quality of the link.

- Frequency of early termination of the links;

infrequently: around twice per semester

- Whether this continues to be an issue.

All of the issues above continue to be 'live' problems, although the frequency and severity of them has been mitigated slightly by a very willing support staff at GU and UWS. With ageing technology at the Dumfries Campus and additional problems regarding bandwidth, there is no 'quick fix' here that I know of. The V-C link does, on the whole, remain credible and fit for purpose, though this may change as time wears on and there is no investment in updated CODECS or projection facilities. On the issue of early termination of links / breakdown of links, GU operates the Tanberg digital recording facility which can make recordings of lectures made in Glasgow available to affected students online in the event of link failure. The V-C link is an important part of the teaching and learning experience in Dumfries. Negotiation regarding investment in hardware would help mitigate the above partially.