University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 18 November 2011

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

Ms H Butcher, Clerk to the Committee

Progress is reported on the following actions identified at the previous meeting of ASC.

Outstanding Response from IT Services

This has been received and is provided in Appendix 1.

Referral of Issues relating to AV in Teaching Space to AV-IT Services

These were referred to AV-IT Services and their response is provided in Appendix 2. In response to point 3, enquiries were made with Social Sciences and it has been confirmed that issues with facilities in the Main Kelvin LT have been resolved.

Issues for RIO requiring clarification

Both issues have been followed up with the relevant Colleges:

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)

The College Quality Officer is still on maternity leave, an alternative member of staff to respond to RIO's query about auditing has not yet been identified.

2. 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)

The School of Veterinary Medicine have advised that the comment related to marketing and promotion of the programme in general. The programme has a novel, 'block' structure with on-campus and distance learning and up until 2010/11 had entry points at different times in the year. They report that this issue should now be resolved as RIO have since taken on processing applications for this programme and, accordingly, the links between those involved in RIO and the School should now be closer.

Progress on actions relating to the Chief Advisers Sub-Committee

1. 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)

   Response: The Convener of CASC raised this with the Chief Advisers and the Committee agreed that the implementation of MyCampus and online enrolment guidance would have resolved this issue.

2. 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)

   Response: This was discussed at the first meeting of CASC in 2011 and the Chief Adviser for Science agreed to raise this with Senior Advisers.

3. A number of students had to transfer from Arts Faculty to do the Designated Degree in Psychology. This is because within Arts designated degree programmes do not allow students to take a fill 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)

   Response: Mr Cartmel and Dr Curry confirmed this was a known issue with the Arts designated degrees. The Convener agreed to raise this with the College of Arts and the Chief Adviser in Arts who was not present at that point in the meeting.

Progress on action from EFL (guidance for overseas students on writing scientific reports)

Colleagues in Student Learning Service and English as a Foreign Language Unit, Carol Collins and Anneli Williams, met in September to discuss what might be the requirements for this request and identified that the need might be more in the SLS area than in that of EFL as it seemed to be more to do with structure and form than language. Carol Collins agreed to progress this by talking to Susan Jamieson in MVLS to identify exactly what was required. A meeting with Susan is currently being organised after which further information will be fed back to ASC.

ASC is also asked to note i) that issues relating to student intakes from Glasgow International College have been referred to the GIC Joint Strategic Management Board and a response should be provided to ASC in February; and ii) that the suggested modification to the Student Carers Policy to include provision for student carers to highlight special circumstances which could impact on examination timetabling has been referred to the SRC and this is being taken forward with input from the Registry.

Annual Monitoring 2009-10

Sandy Macdonald

November 2011

IT Issues in Teaching Spaces

For the attention of and response from the Director of IT Services

The Quality Officers' Forum recently reported to Academic Standards Committee on the Annual Monitoring for session 2009-10. Full details of ASC's consideration of this report are provided in item ASC/2010/62 of the minutes of the meeting of 27 May 2011 available at: https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/commdoc/senate/ASC/Minutes/minutes_2011-05-27.htm

ASC was advised of a number of items which Quality Officers had raised for your attention, and ASC agreed that responses must be sought for these issues. It was noted that the annual monitoring reports had revealed that many academic staff were concerned that, in the past, issues raised for the University were not addressed and this was undermining staff confidence in the annual monitoring process.

The undernoted issues were raised and a response to each of these is required for ASC. I have also sought further detail from Dumfries and have added the comments I have received from Don Macleod to this information. I would be grateful if you could provide your response by Friday **2 September 2011** at the latest.

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.

We have no record of faulty DVD players, though we are aware that some users of DVD players do have difficulties. In general we endeavour to deal with all faults that are reported as quickly as possible and in more than 50% of cases, we fix the problems within 24 hrs and in 95% of cases it is fixed in less than 7 days, so no such problem should persist as long as the class in the following week. Our ability to respond does depend on faults being reported, as our maintenance visits to the 200 CRB teaching spaces cannot be frequent enough to catch all faults before they affect teaching.

In our experience such problems invariably involve DVDs that have been burned by users as opposed to commercial DVDs. We are working on documentation that will explain some of the major pitfalls in burning a DVD, since if the DVD is not properly terminated, it may work in some computers and not others and frequently will not work in a dedicated DVD player. Similar problems may be experienced with CDs that have been burned by users.

It is worth noting that IT services run AV training courses for staff, bookable at:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/it/training/teachingaidsincludingmoodle/

There is also an on-line quick start guide available at:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/avit/centralteachingroomfacilities/quickstartguide/

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).**

There were known problems with the Video Link between Glasgow and Dumfries. UoG IT Services used to be responsible for the management of this link, but responsibility passed to the University of the West of Scotland in 2009 and since then there have been a number of technology and capacity issues. We have raised these issues with UoWS at a series of meetings and in the last year these problems have largely disappeared. We continue to monitor the situation and to raise issues as and when they occur.

It is puzzling the Sir Charles Wilson LT is mentioned, as this LT does not have Video Conferencing facilities.

Over the period in question, the links on campus and with Strathclyde have not caused difficulties of which we have been made aware.

- **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.**

On-the-spot technical support for Video Conferencing facilities is provided by janitors in the buildings in which the VC rooms are located. In our experience, these janitors endeavour to ensure that they are available around the start time of such sessions, as they have a schedule in advance, although on occasion there will be problems caused by sickness or other absence.

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.**

During the time period under consideration, the PCs in these two locations were owned and managed by the Department of Accounting and Finance. This year IT Services took over the management of these PCs and they are now maintained to the same standard as those in other CRB teaching spaces, with appropriate releases of software.

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

Centrally funded Video Conferencing facilities are installed in CRB teaching spaces so as to ensure that they are in locations where they are most effective, and provide the facilities for the widest spectrum of users. If particular Schools wish to have facilities, it is their responsibility to fund them from their own resources. IT Services can of course provide advice in specifying suitable equipment and obtaining cost estimates if required.

Medical Faculty

Transfer of sound/audio to adjacent teaching room in Gardiner Institute

- **Requested by MSc(Med Sci) Cardiovascular Sciences (Faculty of Medicine PGT)**

As far as we can discern, this is a requirement for a specific School and as such they (or their Faculty – now College) bear the responsibility for funding such a development. IT Services are willing to provide advice if requested and help to specify equipment and provide costings, but there is no central funding for developments in School teaching spaces, and developments in CRB teaching spaces are prioritised in relation to the overall benefit for the teaching estate.

Crichton Campus

Problems with Video-Conferencing link quality

Improvements required. (Dumfries Campus)

Further information from Dumfries on the situation:

Answers to a series of questions concerning the Video-Conferencing issues provided by Dr Ron Macleod from Crichton to Marjory Wright.

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

The link is initiated 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 Tandberg 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.

IT Services Response

During the academic year 2009/10 after the handover of technical infrastructure for Crichton to the University of the West of Scotland, there were a number of problems with the Video Conferencing link. At a series of meetings, IT Service gave advice and help to UoWS to help them get into the position of being able to run a reliable and technically appropriate service and by the end of that academic year the problems had been resolved. We continue to monitor the situation and to raise issues as and when they occur.

Annual Monitoring 2009-10

Brian Husband

November 2011

IT Issues in Teaching Spaces

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ASC was advised of a number of items which Quality Officers had raised originally for the attention of the Director of Estates and Buildings, these have subsequently been referred to IT Services.

There were 4 main AV issues extracted from the full report. These are noted below:

1) The Gloag room (room 330, 8 The Square): Teachers complain that standing on the raised teaching dais means overhead data projector shines directly in the eyes

2) Maths 325/326: Projection screens are too small and poorly located.

3) Kelvin lecture theatre: whiteboards and improvement in AV needed.

4) Adam Smith, Room 915: whiteboards and improvement in AV needed.

There were another 2 issues that are related to AV highlighted, these are:

5) The Concert Hall and its teaching equipment are inadequate for teaching.

6) G255 Unreliable tablet

There were over 50 upgrades that took place all over campus during summer 2011 in order to improve the AV facilities in centrally booked rooms. Although, we might wish to improve every space on a rolling annual basis naturally this is budget-allocation dependent.

IT Services always welcome feedback, preferably as full and unambiguous as possible, from all types of end-users including academic and admin staff, the student body and CRB. If the issues raised in the QO report had been raised earlier, more of them might have been addressed at the time that they were noted, in the most recent upgrade programme over the summer or included in a budget request. In general we endeavour to deal with all faults that are reported as quickly as possible. In more than 50% of cases, we fix the problems within 24 hrs and in 95% of cases it is fixed in less than 7 days, so no equipment fault should persist as long as the class in the following week. Our ability to respond does depend on faults or issues being reported, as our maintenance visits to the 200 CRB teaching spaces cannot be frequent enough to catch all faults before they affect teaching.

1) Stair Building Gloag Room (330)

The issue raised is a particular concern in a number of locations on campus and is primarily a result of the dimensions and shape of the teaching space:

- a relatively narrow room, with a low ceiling

- the position, size and height (from the fixed-floor-level) of the raised dais on which the lecturer stands

The best solution to this problem would be to remove the raised platform dais or lessen its height from the fixed floor level. If it was completely removed, then a suitably-sized lectern could be positioned at one or other side of the room allowing the lecturer to stand out of the beam of the projector.

This raised platform dais removal would need a major input from E&B and we understand that they have no plans to make such a change in the next year.

No immediate plans to deal with this problem.

2) Maths 325/326

Notification of the problems associated in Mathematics Rooms 325/326 were fed back in time for the summer 2011 upgrades, therefore action was taken as follows:

- New 2.4m Electric Screen installed at centre of the teaching wall
- Existing smaller 'centre' screen repositioned at LHS of the teaching wall for OHP/Visualiser/Document Camera.
- Visualiser/ Document Camera installed.
- 'OHP screen up' and 'OHP screen down' buttons added to increase flexibility.

Action taken to rectify the problems.

3) Kelvin lecture theatre

From the level of detail provided, it is unclear which lecture theatre in Kelvin this issue refers to or precisely what the issues to be addressed are. If more information is available then IT Services can investigate this for possible inclusion in the next round of AV budget requests.

More Information Required

4) Adam Smith Room 915 (T315)

IT Services would agree that the AV set-up within this space needs to be improved.

Certainly, with regard to the AV forward strategy the eventuality would be to make this a dual data-video projector, visualiser/document camera location similar to modern CRB room designs. This would make the room more flexible and therefore allow a variety of teaching styles to be accommodated.

The room would be further enhanced if E&B could also improve the general fabric at the same time. IT Services will consult with E&B over their plans to improve the general fabric as part of the E&B upgrade programme plan and add this room to the AV upgrade programme next summer.

To be added to AV upgrade schedule.

5) The Concert Hall

The Concert Hall is at present not a CRB space and due to a variety of constraints does not have permanently installed AV equipment. IT Services AV unit supply portable AV equipment for teaching sessions during each semester. This consists of: Data Projector, stand and screen.

Due to the flexible use of this space this equipment has to be installed and removed regularly to allow rehearsals, concerts and recording projects to take place. The ideal solution would

be to have the space permanently equipped. Issues arise here due to the design of the space, Historic Scotland considerations and ownership.

IT Services will continue to have dialogue with the Music department on the best way forward for AV in this space.

Continuing dialogue to find a permanent solution.

6) Gilbert Scott Room G255

The interactive tablet was replaced in August 2011, as part of the summer upgrades, with a standard AMX touchscreen control panel as found in other CRB locations.

This is a much more reliable system and should remove any problems found with the previous control panel.

Action taken to rectify the problem.