

## University of Glasgow

**Academic Standards Committee – Friday 14 February 2014****Annual Monitoring Summary 2012-13**

Clare Barnes, Senate Office

**1. Process**

As in previous years, submission of the College Annual Monitoring Summaries were delayed due to the slowness in the submission of some of the School Summaries and there is concern about the staff engagement with the process. Annual Monitoring is currently under review to streamline the process and reduce the paperwork.

**2. Undergraduate College Annual Monitoring Summaries for 2012-13****2.1 Key issues**

Accommodation for learning and teaching is the predominant issue where constraints and challenges were consistently raised in all reports as has been the case in previous years. At the last meeting of ASC it was agreed that there were significant issues of concern which required further attention at senior level. EdPSC was asked to consider the following concerns about accommodation for learning and teaching that had been identified by ASC in its review of College Annual Monitoring Summaries for 2012-13.

- a. The process of room allocation - ensuring adequacy of rooms for specific purpose (function, size and accessibility);
- b. The quality of accommodation - ensuring all aspects of accommodation, including teaching tools, are in good working order, related to this was the need to ensure academic staff are fully involved in plans to refurbish teaching accommodation;
- c. Spread of accommodation timetabled consecutively - avoiding long distances between accommodation to ensure that students and staff have sufficient time to move from one location to another;
- d. Accommodation constraints which, during the current academic session, have resulted in the use of Saturdays for in-course assessments at both levels 1 and 2 (Adam Smith Business School).

It was agreed that these points, along with related discussion at the October meeting of EdPSC would be flagged to David Newall, Secretary of Court, and Steve Sutton, Estates and Buildings.

**3. Postgraduate College Annual Monitoring Summaries for 2012-13**

The PGT CAMS for the College of Medicine, Veterinary and Life Sciences has not yet been received.

**3.1 Key Issues**

There were common issues reported through PGT Annual Monitoring in relation to accommodation constraints and appropriateness of room allocations as had been identified in the UG summaries. In addition, particular issues were highlighted:

- a. The new room booking system requires commitment to teaching spaces far in advance of information about student numbers and teaching activities at required stages of the curriculum;

- b. The Business School noted that many systems seemed to have a UG focus and didn't recognise sufficiently special circumstances applying to PGT students. Specifically, issues were identified with; system of student support, session dates, PIP proposals and CMIS timetabling;
- c. The impact of increasing numbers of overseas students on the learning experience and on student services.

**4. Issues identified for attention of the attention of the University.**

The issues that have been reported in the College Annual Monitoring Summaries, for the attention of the University, have been compiled in Appendix 1 under the following themes:

- Adequacy of Estate
- Central Room Bookings
- Maintenance
- Technology in Learning and Teaching
- MyCampus

*PGT Specific*

- Internationalisation
- UG Focus

These issues will be forwarded as appropriate and responses and updates will be reported back to ASC.

## **Appendix 1 – Issues raised in College Annual Monitoring Summaries for attention of the University:**

### **Adequacy of Estate**

#### **Issue 1. Space**

SCCA: The recurring issue of 'space, space, space'.

COS: Teaching space as ever is at a premium. With the plans to deliver public lectures and an enhanced summer programme it is important that resources are available e.g. student summer residential accommodation, cafeteria facilities on site, good quality teaching space.

Law - DLP: The staff note that the standard of accommodation in the Alexander Stone Building is poor for the type of practical work being undertaken. This is likely to be an ongoing problem, as it is desirable to have 14 tutorial rooms in proximity, and the ASB is the only venue that provides it.

(ASBS) SPS: First, many programmes identified the quality, size and location of teaching rooms as being inappropriate and inadequate for their needs. Some programmes reported significant growth in student numbers but that room size was a very serious constraint on their ability to offer high quality teaching. Others suggested that the location of rooms was wholly inappropriate. School wide – accommodation, fit for purpose and increased large class lecture theatres provision.

#### **Issue 2. Lack of sufficiently sized lecture theatres**

SCS: The Anatomy theatre is not an appropriate space for the number of students and type of lecturing practised in English Literature. Given the loss of WILT, it is suggested that the ground floor lecture halls in Boyd Orr might be a better substitute.

Economics: As a result of increasing numbers, and the fact that we don't have large enough lecture theatres, we are forced to double teach some courses and this is problematic

#### **Issue 3. Other issues with lecture theatres**

SCS: Room 201 in John McIntyre Building was unattractive and its shape not helpful to lecturers. (Scottish Literature)

Humanities: The lecturing set-up in John Macintyre 201 needs improved: lecturers are stuck behind a lectern in the corner of the room behind monitors, resulting in a poorer student experience.

#### **Issue 4. Lack of sufficient space for small group teaching**

SVS, MVLS: Additional small group teaching spaces needed, this has been exacerbated by the delay in the GLASS building but the reductions in the size of the GLASS building will also potentially impact on future provision.

#### **Issue 5. Provision of 'specialist' teaching space**

MVLS: Development of Cochno house to create large group teaching spaces

Physics and Astronomy: Renovation of the Observatory. The astronomy intake has increased dramatically in the last five years and class sizes are likely to remain at this high level for the foreseeable future. The renovation of the observatory is only partially complete and a high priority should be given to renovating the remaining sections of the Observatory. This will alleviate space issues currently experienced by the large astronomy classes. We

note that the partially renovated space at the Observatory provides an excellent teaching space for astronomy labs.

Provision of a model-making facility to support product prototyping. This is a long standing defect recognised recently by the GTCS. To keep up to date with developments in the school curriculum our students need access to new equipment in an appropriate location.

### **Issue 6. Other Estates and Buildings Concerns**

College of Social Sciences: Kelvin Gallery – space too large

College of Social Sciences: The installation of air-conditioning within room 450a is required to make it more conducive to effective teaching and learning especially when the room is full and equipment is in use. (*This was raised in previous reports.*) Also, installation of a sink in R450

College of Social Sciences: G255 – seating uncomfortable

SMLC: Hetherington rooms, above all 118 and 133, have such thin walls that you can hear every word of a video in the next room – better insulation needed (French Level 2)

### **Central Room Bookings**

### **Issue 7. Appropriateness of room allocated**

SSPS: Matching class size to room capacity.

COS: Personalising teaching spaces: to create familiar environments for students returning to class each week – subject-specific images on walls, maybe materials brought in by students that could be pinned to notice boards. We'd benefit from making our teaching spaces less anonymous.

Education: [This specific concern was raised by the BA Comm Dev, which this year reports that most classes are scheduled outwith University accommodation.] Unsatisfactory teaching rooms allocated for the students remains unresolved – 'unsuitable and too small for the class sizes' despite this concern being raised on many occasions, e.g. previous AMR, a number of forums, the SRC. Students were given a room that is half the size of what is required for the entire academic year.

Education: Adequate provision of suitable rooms is 'a constant source of difficulty' when accommodating >40 students. Even the size of the lecture theatre causes timetabling difficulties and difficulties when moving to a different location.

MVLS: Darkened rooms for lectures requiring projection of images (e.g. allocation of Hunter Halls would be inappropriate.)

MVLS: Allocation of rooms without a blackboard where this is essential for teaching

MVLS: Allocation to rooms with insufficient seating

SMLC: Some of the rooms allocated by CRB are not suitable: too small, not enough space for the tutor to move around monitoring, limited opportunities for offering verbal feedback on the spot or for students doing group work. Admin staff did their best in requesting substitute rooms, but students and staff had to cope with whatever was left – better liaison between CRB and subject areas; size should not be the only criteria in allocating rooms (Russian Level 1, Spanish Level 2, German Levels 1 & 2, Italian Level 1, French Level 1, Comparative Literature Honours, Portuguese Level 2)

SCS: The 'best fit' policy adopted by Room Bookings sometimes lead to rooms being allocated for seminars which were laid out for lectures. This meant that students had to help move furniture, wasting valuable seminar time. Diagrams on doors with suggested layout did not match the items of furniture in the room. Relates to Maths Room 214 and 2 Uni Gardens Room 208. (Scottish Literature, Principia)

SCS: Gloag lecture theatre not identified correctly by room bookings, which led to confusion among teaching staff. (Scottish Literature)

Humanities: Repeated, serious problems with room allocations were reported across the School: rooms that were too small for classes were allocated, and several courses were allocated different rooms across campus on different days of the week. This causes substantial confusion amongst the student body and often results in students attending the wrong room, turning up late or missing lectures. Requiring lecturers to use different IT equipment across a variety of rooms increases the possibility of equipment problems (through staff confusion or equipment failure).

Humanities: Celtic reported problems with the rooms assigned to students with disability issues for exams. In one case it appeared that a room was assigned without any consideration of the requirements of the student. An official complaint has been made by the student.

MSc DAS: Very poor classroom venues for teaching and very poor booking system for classrooms; this resulted in students' official complaints on classroom venues and absence of planning being upheld.

MVLS: Allocation of rooms has been in some instances several weeks into the semester, this delays release of a finalised timetable;

MVLS: Problems with Central Room Booking Service

College of Science and Engineering: University Central room booking not allocating rooms suitable in capacity, location or facilities and then not responding to reasonable request for change.

Chemistry: (also noted by others) Room allocation in 2012/13 was chaotic, resulting in a travelling circus of students and staff. This was negatively commented upon by MSc students.

ASBS: Integration and fitness for purpose of IT systems was commented on by a number of Schools. noted that: 'timetabling, a shambles this year – resulting in a totally unprofessional induction and teaching experience; classes cancelled; moved; inadequate teaching space; teaching in the Hilton etc; additional costs to the School and negative reputational impact. In addition, this failure, linked to accommodation, has impacted throughout the year – plus it is linked to assessment and feedback'

### **Issue 8. Timing of allocation of rooms**

PGT MSc DAS: Classroom venues require to be confirmed before teaching begins. Most of our students are working and require prior notice about venue and dates for class teaching

PGT (ASBS) SPS: Many of the IT systems used by the University are seen as being unfit for purpose, and placing enormous and unsustainable demands on administrative and academic colleagues alike. The central room bookings system is inflexible, has an enormous lead-time and results, as noted above, in highly sub-standard outcomes.

EdD: The new room booking system requires commitment to teaching spaces far in advance of information about student numbers and teaching activities at required stages of the curriculum.

Computing Science: Room booking deadlines seem to be much too early clashing with exam board preparation – raising significant quality concerns.

### **Issue 9. Central Room Bookings -Other**

PgD Childhood Practice: Issue with room bookings, e.g. Practitioner Enquiry was double-booked with another course with the same name for the same day.

MSc Educational Studies: Currently, all classes are taught in evenings; considering providing some day-time classes for full time students. Room booking is a serious constraint to flexibility of provision though.

### **Issue 10. Location of allocated rooms across Campus**

MVLS: 2 hour teaching blocks that were split between two locations leading to delays and creating particular difficulties for students with mobility problems

Law: The Level 1/2 Convenor has indicated it would be appreciated if timetabling could ensure that lectures are held in the same place and at the same time from week to week

## **Maintenance**

### **Issue 11. Various Maintenance**

COS: The comfort of the learning environment is particularly important for the Centre for Open Studies. Students expect basic features to be working in rooms – like heating, adjustable lighting, adequate seating and table space, computing facilities. We often stumble in providing these basics, and getting these right is the priority

SCCA: FTV calls for improvement to the seating in the cinema and the general condition of the Gilmorehill Building including classrooms furniture and equipment so that the learning environment for Film and Television at Glasgow compares favourably with others in the UK.

College of Science and Engineering: Maintenance of rooms – broken seats not fixed

COS: Ease of moving furniture (tables on rollers, etc.) – the easier this is, the better. Many classes require slightly different set-ups; if we can change rooms quickly and efficiently, so much the better. It's something students have commented on: losing time because of setting a room up.

### **Issue 12. Temperature Control**

Economics: Temperature in Classrooms

SMLC: Colleagues and students also regularly complain that these rooms are overheated – heating should be better regulated (French Level 2, German Level 2)

Humanities: Problems with heating in teaching rooms were reported, notably in Maths Rm 204 and Kelvin 257.

College of Science and Engineering: Maintenance of rooms temperatures being too hot or too cold.

College of Science and Engineering: Refurbishment is given a higher priority than maintenance. Fixing what we already have should have at least the same priority as major refits.

College of Science and Engineering: Refurbishment of rooms – the opinions academics who lecture in the rooms seem to be given less weight than those who fit out the AV systems. Over-elaborate AV equipment is installed whereas one computer, projection system and a roller board would suffice for most lectures. See also the comment from Physics at the end of this list.

### **Issue 13. Video Links**

SMLC: Ongoing problems with video-links between lecture venues, specifically between Sir Charles Wilson lecture theatre and Boyd Orr 412. In addition to occasional failure of the link, there were unacceptably long time delays in transmission of lecture materials on-screen. This is particularly problematic for video clips, which can't be viewed in the lecture venue which is linked to. (Level 1 English Language)

Humanities: Problems with audio in video conferencing caused serious interruption to teaching in Kelvin 257 on both Philosophy 1K and 2M. Audience noise from a different classroom could be heard over the speakers in the main classroom, causing problems for both students and lecturers.

### **Issue 14. Presentation technology**

SMLC: Some rooms in the Hetherington need black-out facilities for film screenings, for instance 317, 217 and 129. (French Honours)

MVLS: Provision of extra screens half way down the James Watt 354 lecture theatre to allow use of this space by students in wheelchairs in line with the university policy on equality and diversity.

### **Issue 15. General AV/IT Issues**

SMLC: Equipment provided in teaching rooms varies a lot between rooms, and also from the description of the resources provided on the website – better equipment or at least more accurate descriptions needed (French Level 1 Beginners)

MVLS: More reliable WiFi access across campus.

MVLS: Upgrading IT provision in all teaching spaces.

### **Issue 16. Access to technology to permit teaching**

Social Sciences: Tutorial rooms 704-7 – visualiser required.

SMLC: Visualisers should be provided in all teaching rooms (French Level 1 Beginners)

SMLC: Some courses (French cinema, Travel writing) need to use 2 screens and some rooms are particularly well adapted: for example room 118 in the Hetherington building – priority for these rooms should be given to classes using this technology. (French Honours)

Equipment provided in teaching rooms varies a lot between rooms, and also from the description of the resources provided on the website – better equipment or at least more accurate descriptions needed (French Level 1 Beginners)

Computing Science: The lab space for level 1 is unsuitable for innovative learning and teaching techniques. We thought we were getting a new lab in summer 2013 but this did not

transpire. We feel that Computing Science should be treated differently from other schools in this respect due to this being our field, and our students need more up to date computing equipment than other fields.

Physics and Astronomy: Renovations of teaching space. Oftentimes, it appears that when teaching spaces and lecture rooms in particular are renovated, the renovation is carried out without consultation of teaching staff. Rooms appear to be set up for conference talks rather than as teaching spaces with data projectors installed and whiteboards removed or rendered impractical for use. This greatly restricts the flexibility of teaching that can be carried out in these spaces.

Economics: One lecturer identified the need for a PC projector to work in conjunction with a board as he needs to project and write on the board at the same time

## **Technology in Learning and Teaching**

### **Issue 17: Specialised Technology**

Humanities: Arts and Media Information Studies reported a lack of PCs capable of demonstrating sophisticated digital ideas in classrooms. VRML and Cortona plugins were not standard on CSCE computers either. It is requested that IT Services consult on subject requirements.

Physics: Developments in technology are made where appropriate to support student learning. However, we observe that many (if not most) students seem to prefer reading books and working through physics/astronomy/maths problems with pen and paper. In student lecture questionnaires last year, there were many favourable comments advocating “chalk and talk” over other methods of instruction; this is particularly true for the more advanced mathematical courses.

### **Issue 18. Use of Moodle**

MVLS: Centrally imposed limitations on access to full functionality of Moodle and Mahara and slow implementation of available bug fixes is severely constraining innovation and the ability to personalise the learning experience for students. Examples will be provided if required.

Chemistry: The expectation now that all course material should be on Moodle (and, in some cases, well before the course is taught) has a negative impact on students and staff alike. The attendance at lectures is decreasing. The level of annotating and active listening seems to be decreasing as well. Anecdotally, students are now relying very heavily on content provided on Moodle. This is to the detriment of engagement with A133

## **MyCampus**

### **Issue 19: MyCampus General**

SPS and Education commented on continuing problems with MyCampus.

Humanities: Tutorial enrolment on MyCampus should carry over to Moodle to facilitate group-specific Moodle activities.

### **Issue 20: Absence Recording**

Humanities: Greater specificity needs to be introduced to absence-recording on MyCampus to reduce the burden on administrators and conveners. Ideally, MyCampus would be able to generate a list of student absences from specified courses to save administrators or conveners digging for this information.



## ***Issues specific to PGT***

### **Internationalisation**

#### **Issue 21: Increasing numbers of overseas students**

Education drew attention to the impact of this on the learning experience of students. Both they and the ASBS noted the need for continued support for international students and the latter also noted the need in general to expand and enhance student learning and employability provision, with special attention to international students and the quality of English language ability of some students.

### **UG Focus**

#### **Issue 22: UG Focus of University Systems**

The Business School noted that many systems seemed to have a UG focus and didn't recognise sufficiently special circumstances applying to PGT students. One issue was the system of student support, other examples:

The University Sessions dates are scheduled around a UG year of study and not PG, as you know PG is a 12 month programme, therefore our students are confused by the session dates and the holidays as they do not apply to their programme of study, e.g. the vacation periods, the end of teaching etc. The summer period is for their dissertation study and not an opportunity to go on holiday for extended periods of time

When the University (Student Services in particular) circulate emails to students these are normally written to a UG audience, for instance only this week all PGT students received a graduation email from Registry advising students to enrol in the summer graduation. The PGT students do not graduate until the winter each year and this emails is confusing, we have asked for several years now for this email to be separated out for UG and PGT but have been told this is not possible.

PIP proposals, the terminology used here is very UG driven and separate templates perhaps for PG could be created which would take into account the 12 month period of the teaching/study

CMIS timetabling, 12 month programmes require teaching space throughout the year and especially in the summer for research methods and dissertation meetings, again the University system seems to be drive by the traditional UG timetable.

