

## University of Glasgow

### Academic Standards Committee – Tuesday 15 April 2014

#### Update on Actions from 2011-12 and 2012-13 Reports

Jane McAllister, Senate Office

##### 1. Accommodation for Learning and Teaching

ASC had reported to EdPSC that accommodation for learning and teaching had been the area where constraints and challenges were consistently raised in all reports and that this was a continuing theme from previous years. EdPSC had advised that the following points would be flagged to David Newall, Secretary of Court, and Steve Sutton, Estates & Buildings.

- 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).

##### Update

The points noted above were flagged to David Newall, Secretary of Court, and Steve Sutton, Estates and Buildings. The response noted that several strands of work were in progress aimed at addressing these issues. These strands were being drawn together to inform a review of provision for large lectures. A report on the review and the contributing work will be considered by Principal's Advisory Group shortly and will be submitted to the next meeting of EdPSC (30 April) for consideration.

##### 2. Impact of increased PGT numbers on staff workloads

ASC had reported concerns regarding the heavy requirements placed on academic staff and the question of whether the University's workload model was fit for purpose. EdPSC was also asked to consider, as a matter of principle, the balance between expansion of the Taught Postgraduate provision and the capacity of academic staff to fulfil their other responsibilities during the summer months, particularly in relation to research activity.

Members discussed the impact of increased PGT numbers on staff workloads, particularly during the summer months and acknowledged that there was potential to create a volume of work that could cause stress for staff. It was agreed that this was not a matter that could be solved by EdPSC but that it should be taken forward. The Convener **agreed** to raise the matter at Senior Management Group during their strategic discussions.

##### Update

Although PGT growth has been discussed at SMG on several occasions, the impact of this on individual staff workload cannot be effectively quantified until workload modelling is fully established in the University. There is an ongoing project to introduce a workload modelling

tool across the University which should facilitate this. In the interim, the Convener of EdPSC has provided Deans of Learning and Teaching with student loads for every course at undergraduate and postgraduate level. These data are currently being sense-checked but should provide a basis to begin to identify inefficiencies in UG and PGT delivery that are contributing to increased workloads. In addition, RIO is working with Colleges to identify opportunities to rationalise the PGT portfolio. The University has also made significant investments in new staff over the last 18 months that will impact beneficially on student staff ratios. The most recent HESA data shows a reduction in the overall SSR for the University and this number is expected to reduce further as the effect of the new posts filters through into the HESA data.

### **3. Inductions for the January intake**

ASC had asked that EdPSC consider the principle of the January intake, which limited the opportunities for new students to participate in induction programmes and in courses that covered both Semesters 1 and 2. EdPSC noted a number of points including:

- January start offered better timescales for Chinese students going back into the employment market in China
- a general induction was offered in January at graduate school level. Its effectiveness had been reviewed and feedback indicated that it had improved.
- Accommodation and other support services need to be available as they are in September
- The same problems applied to other groups of students arriving outwith the standard times such as Semester Abroad students

EdPSC had agreed that co-ordinated effort was required to ensure consistent and improved student experience was provided for those arriving in January and that a working group should be set up to look at current practice and to identify opportunities for improvements.

#### **Update**

Unfortunately, there has not been capacity in terms of academic membership or administrative support to take this forward so far this session. However, the improvement of January induction provision would be raised again at the next meeting of EdPSC on 30 April. The Committee will be asked to consider whether concerns remain outstanding and the working group should now be taken forward.

### **4. Staff engagement with the annual monitoring process**

ASC had noted that the issue of staff engagement with the annual monitoring process remained a concern and that there had again been slowness in the submission of some of the CAMS. It was suggested that feedback to staff undertaking the annual monitoring was crucial in order to improve engagement and demonstrate that the process led to improvements. While action had been taken in recent years to improve the closing of feedback, it was suggested that this still required further attention.

#### **Update**

The Annual Monitoring process has been reviewed and a revised process is on the agenda for consideration.

**Note:** Issues raised in the PG CAMS would be considered by EdPSC at its meeting on 30 April 2014.