

**University of Glasgow****Academic Standards Committee – Friday 25 January 2019****Summary of Postgraduate College Annual Monitoring Summaries  
2017-18****Dr Richard Lowdon, Senate Office****1. Process**

As in previous years, the Postgraduate Annual Monitoring Summaries for each College were submitted to the Senate Office two weeks in advance of the January meeting of ASC. At the last Quality Officers Forum, the College of Science & Engineering agreed to merge their Undergraduate and Postgraduate Summaries into a single reporting point in November, so this summary only relates to the other three Colleges. The College Summaries have been reviewed by the Senate Office in order to identify any common themes. These are presented below. Following its consideration of the College Annual Monitoring Summaries, ASC is asked to confirm that the themes identified below are an accurate reflection of the issues raised by the Colleges. The Senate Office will then seek updates and responses from the relevant sources to these University-wide matters.

Areas of good practice have also been identified in the College Summaries. These have been broken down into themes and will be sent to the Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service (LEADS) for wider dissemination.

**2. Key Themes for University attention**

The Postgraduate Annual Monitoring Summaries contained many of the themes reported through the Undergraduate summaries. These themes included:

- Suitability and quality of teaching spaces
- Student mental health
- IT facilities
- Staffing
- EvaSys
- Assessment and feedback
- External examiners
- Plagiarism

In addition to the themes identified in the Undergraduate Reports, individual comments were received on the following topics:

- Disability reporting and provision
- Student recruitment and admissions
- MyCampus
- Student fees
- Standards of English
- Conference costs

- Postgraduate student survey
- Winter graduations
- University communications
- Periodic Subject Review

## **2.1 Disability reporting and provision**

The College of Arts noted that disability reporting by students at postgraduate level was less common than at undergraduate level. Concerns were expressed that this could cause issues at very short notice for both the University's Disability Service and the subject area, particularly in relation to timetabling changes and the provision of specialist support. The College expressed the need for a system whereby student disability could be reported to relevant groups much earlier, to ensure that obligations to students were met in a timely manner and without undue pressure on staff.

## **2.2 Student recruitment and admissions**

The Schools of Culture & Creative Arts and Critical Studies reported issues during 2017-18 relating to the admissions process, including offer letters not being sent out due to the discontinuity of staff in the Marketing, Recruitment and International Office.

The Adam Smith Business School reported that the number of students was increasing every year, which intensified room booking and student engagement issues. Students were also dissatisfied with large classes specifically in the first semester. The School suggested that student admissions should be more closely controlled to ensure that class sizes were less difficult to manage and more predictable.

The School of Education noted that they required continued support for Tier 4 students and that the UKBA regulations might have an impact on the School's recruitment of international students. The School also required University support for EU funded programmes within a pre-Brexit UK.

## **2.3 MyCampus**

The School of Critical Studies reported service and reliability issues relating to MyCampus. In particular, the School noted that students had experienced problems navigating course enrolments and that interfaces were not intuitive for staff.

The College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences reported that MyCampus was too inflexible to accommodate Masters teaching, which often involved specialist lecturers by experts, which meant that it was not always possible to schedule in time to make room bookings or to notify students of room changes.

## **2.4 Student fees**

The College of Medical, Veterinary & Life Sciences expressed concerns about student fees being changed without consultation and noted that some students in the same programme had been charged different fees. Concerns were also highlighted about the requirement to pay fees ahead of registration, which was an issue for many students who were funded by employers. It was suggested that simpler registration procedures could help with this.

## **2.5 Standards of English**

Concerns were raised in the Adam Smith Business School that the standard of English was lower than might reasonably be expected for both specialist and generalist students. This had a major bearing upon the ability of students to engage with theory and participate in class discussions.

## **2.6 Conference costs**

The School of Critical Studies expressed concerns about the cost of hosting conferences at the University, particularly the costs of booking rooms, refreshments, and other services offered by Conference Services. The School reported that conferences at comparable institutions such as Edinburgh, Lancaster and Liverpool were free of charge for postgraduate students.

## **2.7 Postgraduate student survey**

The School of Education reported that very little information had been provided to lecturers about the new postgraduate student survey. This resulted in a lack of promotion by staff, and low response rates.

## **2.8 Winter graduations**

The School of Critical Studies raised concerns that the winter graduations did not have the same facilities as the summer graduations. In particular, it was noted that there was no overflow room for the family and friends of graduating students who could not get tickets for the ceremony. Concerns were also expressed that the ceremonies clashed with undergraduate teaching, making it difficult for staff to attend the ceremonies of their postgraduate students.

## **2.9 University communications**

The College of Medical, Veterinary & Life Sciences highlighted concerns about the large amount of campus-only relevant communications received by online distance learning students, and enquired about the possibility of these emails being filtered.

## **2.10 Periodic Subject Review**

The School of Education expressed disappointment that panel members on the recent Periodic Subject Review of Education did not recognise the quality of the Doctorate in Education and other School programmes in its report.

## **3. Good practice**

There were a number of common themes reported in the good practice section of the College Summaries. These included the following:

- Student support and inclusivity
- Innovative teaching practices
- Graduate attributes
- Student feedback

### **3.1 Student support and inclusivity**

One of the most prominent good practice themes was the development of strategies and events to support students in their learning and to enhance inclusion.

“A new component has been added to the Philosophy MSc Research Methods, Minorities in Philosophy, aimed at educating MSc students of the problems associated with underrepresentation of minorities in Philosophy. Philosophy is also developing a PG Women in Philosophy Group”. (Humanities)

“One-on-one tutorials or assessment sessions”. (College of Arts)

“Increased ‘induction’ skills provision to students, spread throughout the first semester, including expectations of self-directed learning and good academic practice”. (Adam Smith Business School)

“Dissertation support for staff and students through a blended model of workshops and individual supervision, extended to include series of short methodology talks”. (Education)

“Students were separated into mixed groups (combining students who graduated from different Universities) and asked to take part in a social treasure hunt around the west end of Glasgow, the aims of which were (i) to introduce students to each other and assist them in fostering new relationships from the outset of the Diploma, relationships that will help form the basis of their “network” when trainees, and (ii) to help students feel welcome at the University of Glasgow, and in the West End”. (Law)

“The senior diploma team (the Director and Deputy Director) implemented an open door policy, to support students. The students showed a high degree of enthusiasm for this policy”. (Law)

### **3.2 Innovative teaching practices**

The use of innovative teaching practices and issues-based learning scenarios to enhance the student experience was mentioned in several of the College Summaries.

“Inputs and real-life issues-based learning scenarios from professionals representing various agencies at a regional level: education services, the NHS, Police Scotland, social services”. (Interdisciplinary Studies)

“MSc Health Professions Education are using some of the programme materials to create a series of HPE Bytes, to offer as free CPD to NHS colleagues who teach our UG medical students. This should have the effect of supporting UG medical education and attracting individuals to apply to the programme. Disseminated it at a conference for local NHS clinicians”. (College of MVLS)

### **3.3 Graduate attributes**

Every College Summary made reference to good practice in relation to practitioner engagement and developing graduate attributes such as communication skills.

“A number of students have been matched to practitioners, sheriffs and judges in order to be mentored by someone working in the area in which the respective students have an interest”. (Law)

“Veterinary Public Health used an Equity card carrying actor to develop students’ communication skills. Recommended for any programme where difficult conversations may occur”. (Veterinary Medicine)

“Conservation Management of African Ecosystems: Students greatly appreciated the media training session, which involved a mock radio interview around a contemporary conservation topic. Training of all students in scientific communication has improved project quality”. (MVLS)

### **3.4 Student feedback**

The College of Social Sciences Annual Monitoring Summary included several examples of good practice relating to student feedback.

“The lecturer of International Macroeconomics and Policy convenes small groups in his office of interested students towards the end of the course to review content, delivery etc to bolster feedback”. (Adam Smith Business School)

“During the review year the student representatives undertook, on their own initiative, a survey of student satisfaction. This was very useful as a supplement to EvaSys, and had the special advantage of being a survey of common opinion, rather than the opinion of a specific course”. (Law)