

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 25 January 2019

**Update on Progress Made Against Recommendation 1 (Transition)
Arising from the Academic Review of Glasgow International
College (GIC) held on 26 March 2015**

Douglas Aiton, College Director, Glasgow International College

Recommendation 1 (Transition)

The Panel **recommends** that GIC and UoG address issues, especially around independent learning, for Foundation students making the transition from the College to the University. Although we are aware that the Transitions Project is running (for students going on to Social Sciences), and that GIC has initiated a mentoring process, we feel that more could be done to address transition issues. Specifically, this recommendation contains the following elements:

1. GIC should review the way in which students are supported throughout their programme to encourage a transition from being highly supported to a more independent mode of study that better matches expectations of UoG.
2. UoG should review ways in which highly supported students who enter second year are supported to become more independent. With the two institutions working together, the transitions project in the College of Social Sciences has helped student transition and UoG should look at how it can further work with GIC on induction plans to aid transition.
3. GIC should embed the mentoring process, perhaps even making it a compulsory activity, in order to ensure that students who currently do not take advantage of it do so in the future. Mentoring is especially relevant for students who are least likely to take it up voluntarily since they are likely to be most in need of help and most likely to benefit from it.
4. UoG also needs to look at mentoring and what it can do to help GIC ensure this works to the advantage of students who may find the transition difficult. This is particularly the case for Foundation students who enter UoG at Year Two.
5. There is a lack of awareness amongst GIC students as to what it might be like to study at UoG, what is expected of them and how they need to take control of their own learning. It seems that some students are surprised and unprepared for life as a UoG student and GIC and UoG should work together to address this, perhaps utilising the experience of GIC alumni to try to make UoG more visible to GIC students generally and in more detail.
6. Bearing in mind that Foundation Certificate students enter UoG at Year Two, UoG should reconsider how it scaffolds student advice to fill any gaps which may arise due to GIC students starting later than most of the rest of their UoG cohort who will mostly have come from school and started in Year One together.

[Paragraphs 3.1.3/4/7/8/10]

For the attention of: **GIC Senior Management, CBoS**

For information: **JAMB**

Response from the Director of Glasgow International College

The following is a further update on action taken to address the various issues highlighted in Recommendation 1 (Transition) from the Academic Review of Glasgow International College (GIC) held on 26 March 2015.

The Panel **recommends** that GIC and UoG address issues, especially around independent learning, for Foundation students making the transition from the College to the University. Although we are aware that the Transitions Project is running (for students going on to Social Sciences), and that GIC has initiated a mentoring process, we feel that more could be done to address transition issues. Specifically, this recommendation contains the following elements:

1. *GIC should review the way in which students are supported throughout their programme to encourage a transition from being highly supported to a more independent mode of study that better matches expectations of UoG.*

The tutorial system increasingly provides the scaffolding around the development of independent learning skills. Students are involved in the target setting process through 1:1 tutorials with their Personal Tutors. This support is tapered, with more sessions on a student's arrival, and fewer points of contact as they get closer to study at the University.

Our virtual learning environment has developed to be a platform for self-study, and we are digitising self-assessment tests so students can become less reliant on face to face contact for progress indicators. The increased emphasis on diagnostic tests through online platforms should help students become more independent and self-reflective in regards to establishing their own academic levels.

The Curriculum Review accepted by JAMB in December 2018 puts self-study and student choice closer to the core of student experience. For example, the 'spine' of the new curriculum is a Research Project module in which students will apply their study skills into an area that is important to their future study.

2. *UoG should review ways in which highly supported students who enter second year are supported to become more independent. With the two institutions working together, the transitions project in the College of Social Sciences has helped student transition and UoG should look at how it can further work with GIC on induction plans to aid transition.*

Transitions events are run for all students from GIC who enter the colleges of MVLS and S&E, including a talk from a former GIC student who provides advice on how to succeed at UoG. Please see the note below on practice in Computing Science.

Within Engineering, staff from LEADS for Students run support classes within mathematics courses. These provide a straightforward way for all students including direct entrants to make informal contact with LEADS and gain support for their study skills.

3. *GIC should embed the mentoring process, perhaps even making it a compulsory activity, in order to ensure that students who currently do not take advantage of it do so in the future. Mentoring is especially relevant for students who are least likely to take it up voluntarily since they are likely to be most in need of help and most likely to benefit from it.*

The appointment of the International Student Support Officer in the college of Social Sciences has facilitated a structured approach to mentoring sessions that is compulsory and timetabled for all students. Mentoring is embedded for UG Social Sciences students through the sessions ran as part of the Transitions Programme, as detailed above. Where other Colleges have not been able to replicate this post exactly, there is support offered for our student mentors who reach out directly to the cohort and provide similar functions.

Additionally all students have access to our Mentoring Scheme and are encouraged to take part. This provision keeps some former students in touch with the college and provides transition information route for mentees.

4. *UoG also needs to look at mentoring and what it can do to help GIC ensure this works to the advantage of students who may find the transition difficult. This is particularly the case for Foundation students who enter UoG at Year Two.*

As listed above the mentoring scheme mentioned above has been embedded successfully into our programmes. At an informal level, direct entrants are generally paired with experienced students for laboratories in Sciences and Engineering. This improves social integration as well as providing first-hand tuition in basic laboratory skills.

5. *There is a lack of awareness amongst GIC students as to what it might be like to study at UoG, what is expected of them and how they need to take control of their own learning. It seems that some students are surprised and unprepared for life as a UoG student and GIC and UoG should work together to address this, perhaps utilising the experience of GIC alumni to try to make UoG more visible to GIC students generally and in more detail.*

The Transitions programme, run by the post mentioned above, has helped to formalise for Social Sciences students the introduction to University life in a series of talks and signposting sessions at the University. In other Colleges, the Colleges have arranged introductory sessions to help students with making the adjustment into University study. Mentoring is embedded for UG Social Sciences students through the sessions ran as part of the Transitions Programme, as detailed above. Transition has already been added to the remit of the Joint Academic Management Board and the role of the Subject Moderator has been re-defined to include considering students' performance at the University on progression. This should help ensure that there is constant review of student performance and subsequent alteration to the schedule.

6. *Bearing in mind that Foundation Certificate students enter UoG at Year Two, UoG should reconsider how it scaffolds student advice to fill any gaps which may arise due to GIC students starting later than most of the rest of their UoG cohort who will mostly have come from school and started in Year One together.*

The Transitions Programme and its counterparts across the other colleges has been developed specifically to meet this need.

Engineering at UoG reviewed the academic problems encountered by students from GIC. The outcome was shared with GIC, who developed a new 15 credit module to address the major topics whose coverage needed to be strengthened. Students who entered UoG from 2017 onward benefitted from this tuition.

Computing Science at UoG include students from GIC in their Faster Route programme, which includes sessions from LEADS for Students to enhance students' study skills. The progress of these students is monitored closely and further support is provided to any students identified as being at risk.