

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 24 May 2019

Matters Arising

Ruth Cole, Clerk to the Committee

2. Matters Arising

2.1 *Progress Report on Issues Relating to GTAs (ASC/2018/2.1)*

At the October 2018 meeting, Academic Standards Committee received a report from Dr Nathalie Sheridan (LEADS) on a project looking at the role, training and support of Graduate Teaching Assistants. A progress report is now available [https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/commdoc/senate/LTC/Papers/LTC_2018_34.pdf] and this was considered in some detail at Learning and Teaching Committee in March 2019.

The report proposes that a Working Group be established to develop a GTA Code of Practice. It highlights key themes emerging from three different projects (LTDF funded project “Understanding the experience of Graduate Teaching Assistants and identifying ways to support their developing Graduate Attributes”, the GTA Symposium and University Services Innovation Fund (USIF) project “GTA provision”.) These projects ran in parallel with a Human Resources project which focussed on pay and conditions. Based on the themes emerging, the report proposes that the Working Group should consider:

- Identification of a named person within each subject/unit with ‘Postgraduates Who Teach’ (PGWT) responsibility
- Clarity of pay and recruitment, consistent with HR procedures
- Appropriate localised PGWT induction/training, including a PGWT handbook (supported by LEADS)
- Establish a mentoring network (including peer and on-line support)
- Specific assessment, feedback and marking support
- Providing access to space and resources within the organisational unit
- Encourage PGWT to be involved with teaching development, including course design
- Ensure PGWTs with protected characteristics are supported appropriately

In considering the report, LTC noted that further work was required in relation to pay which should include preparation time as well as time in the classroom. Clarity was also required in relation to hourly paid tutors, who were not all PhD students and therefore “GTA” was not useful terminology. Contribution of study and teaching was part of graduates’ pathways and for some the tutor role was an early career path that should have greater support and development requirements. It was agreed that support provided should also be consistent. It was noted that greater parity was also required in relation to the opportunity to be able to teach and that further work from a HR perspective would also be necessary.

2.2 *Annual Monitoring: Mental Health (ASC/2018/33.3)*

The response on the issue of mental health is incorporated into the main Annual Monitoring update at paper ASC 18/66.

2.3 *External Examiner Approval of Summative Assessment (ASC/2018/36.3)*

At the March 2019 meeting, ASC had noted ARSC’s conclusion on the current wording of the Code of Assessment in relation to the approval of assessment by external examiners. ARSC had noted that there was some variation in practice in different areas of the University in relation to external examiners’ involvement in approving coursework but there was consistency in requiring external examiners to consider, in advance, all examination papers. This had been reported to EdPSC, where a question was raised about what the position would

be where an external examiner was not available, or failed, to approve an exam paper. This issue would be referred to ARSC for consideration.