University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 24 May 2019

Responses to issues raised in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate College Annual Monitoring Summaries 2017-18

Dr Richard Lowdon, Senate Office

1. Process

As in previous years, the Undergraduate Annual Monitoring Summaries for each College were submitted to the Senate Office two weeks in advance of the November meeting of ASC. The Postgraduate Summaries were submitted to ASC two weeks in advance of the January meeting of ASC. The College Summaries were then reviewed by the Senate Office in order to identify any common themes. Following consideration of the College Annual Monitoring Summaries, ASC confirmed and identified additional themes that they wished to be raised. The Senate Office then contacted relevant services to seek updates and responses to these University-wide matters.

2. Key Themes

Responses were requested for the following issues:

- Quality and suitability of teaching spaces
- Student mental health
- IT Facilities
- Staffing
- EvaSys
- Assessment and feedback
- Progression
- Session dates and graduation dates
- Disability reporting and provision
- Student recruitment, marketing and admissions
- MyCampus
- English language proficiency
- Conference costs
- Postgraduate student survey
- Winter graduations
- University communications
- Course approval process
- Facilities and support available outwith the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

3. Quality and Suitability of teaching spaces

This was the most prominent issue highlighted in the College Summaries. Concerns focussed on the location, allocation and suitability of teaching spaces and the facilities available in these rooms:

I. Location and suitability of teaching spaces

"Space can be challenging, especially access to TEAL rooms. Views will continue to be made known to CMIS but the School feels that there is little opportunity to raise teaching space issues". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

"The histology labs are too small, resulting in classes being repeated 4 times". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

"Suitability of some teaching spaces for a 21st (or a 20th) century learning experience. Acoustics in some large halls (Kelvin Gallery is a standout case) is appalling and unacceptable". (Life Sciences)

"Where possible PGDE (primary) students (and staff) should have use of St Andrews Building for seminars/practical sessions to avoid excessive travelling around the campus (particularly when carting heavy resources/materials for seminars e.g. mathematics)". (Education)

"The unsuitability of the GUU Debating Chamber as a lecture theatre. Subjects with large classes (circa 500 students) noted that there are 'traffic jams' after these lectures as hundreds of students try to leave (and enter) the large lecture rooms created from Bute Hall and the Hunter Halls. It would be good to make sure everyone knows to go out one exit and in another. The janitors try to help with this, but perhaps some signage would make things clearer". (Social and Political Sciences)

II. Room facilities

"The quality of projection in the lecture theatres is poor (noted by staff and students). There appears to be no budget for replacement projectors". (Veterinary Medicine)

"Lack of computers and study space at QETLC and installation of power charging facilities at QEUH Lecture Theatre to allow students to use their devices for a full day teaching". (Life Sciences)

III. Timetabling and room booking

"CMIS continues to be difficult to use, particularly for the MBChB and BDS programmes. This system is time consuming to utilise. Further engagement with central teams to work towards a more efficient and pragmatic approach would be welcome". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

"CMIS - the ability to include all final year and Masters teaching is required to improve workload modelling". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

"The room booking system threw up several problems again this year. The roll-over of last year's data did not seem to work effectively as some events were missing from CMIS. Additionally, there were several events when rooms were not booked and the School was not informed of this. On enquiry, the room booking teams stated that rooms were simply not available. However, School staff were able to source rooms and inform the room booking teams what to book, or staff could access locallybooked rooms. These issues should have been flagged and School staff should not have to locate rooms themselves. Further, there were at least two instances where computer cluster rooms were booked that were too small for the class (30 computers for a class of 50 students)". (Life Sciences)

"The Current Directions in Life Sciences course was completely online. It proved confusing and ultimately impossible to schedule online webinars, as they are not allocated to a specific room in CMIS. As online delivery increases the ability to be able to add specific events to a student's timetable is essential and should be accommodated via CMIS". (Life Sciences)

"Room booking system, which is a university wide system, still has students travelling across campus". (Education)

"Some staff reported having 4 different rooms over a 10 week course and found this very disruptive to student learning. A more efficient process of room assignment and space optimisation needs to be identified". (Social and Political Sciences)

"There have also been issues about a lack of responsiveness from colleagues in Central Room Bookings". (Social and Political Sciences)

IV. Examination spaces

"The ability to plan examination and graduation dates further in advance is required". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

V. Travel between campuses

"There is still a problem with travel to and from Garscube. Even if all lectures are given on the Main Campus, a considerable number of students have to travel to Garscube to carry out their final year projects. On average this will cost each student approximately £100 over the course of the project by the cheapest public transport". (Life Sciences)

3.1 Response from Estates and Commercial Services

I. "Space can be challenging, especially access to TEAL rooms. Views will continue to be made known to CMIS but the School feels that there is little opportunity to raise teaching space issues". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

Response: There are currently only 3 TEAL rooms on the campus (2×60 seat and 1 $\times 30$ seat). These can be requested on any teaching event and normally only classes requesting this feature are allocated these rooms. However, with only 3 available it may not be possible to meet all demand.

Formal opportunities to raise issues with teaching spaces exist via the Management of Teaching Space group and Future Learning Spaces Project Board, with all Colleges being represented on both. There are also various other channels including direct contact with teams in Estates and Commercial Services, depending on the nature of the issue.

"The histology labs are too small, resulting in classes being repeated 4 times". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

Response: All Labs are locally-managed. Estates and Commercial Services could not comment on suitability but can assist Schools wishing to redevelop such spaces.

"Suitability of some teaching spaces for a 21st (or a 20th) century learning experience. Acoustics in some large halls (Kelvin Gallery is a standout case) is appalling and unacceptable". (Life Sciences)

Response: Space demands are such that a number of large, ceremonial-type spaces are now being used for teaching. They present a number of logistical and design constraints and whilst every effort has been made to adapt these and improve facilities within the space, there will always be challenges. Where new spaces are being created, such as those in the JMSL Hub, the design takes full account of the required acoustic properties and so significant improvement in the experience will be achieved.

"Where possible PGDE (primary) students (and staff) should have use of St Andrews Building for seminars/practical sessions to avoid excessive travelling around the campus (particularly when carting heavy resources/materials for seminars e.g. mathematics)". (Education)

Response: All classes are roomed based on the size and features required for that event. This means it is inevitable that a variety of venues will be used and restricting to just one location is not possible. Where information is provided pre-rooming, efforts are made to avoid excessive travel distances between locations especially where staff or students have back to back classes.

"The unsuitability of the GUU Debating Chamber as a lecture theatre. Subjects with large classes (circa 500 students) noted that there are 'traffic jams' after these lectures as hundreds of students try to leave (and enter) the large lecture rooms created from Bute Hall and the Hunter Halls. It would be good to make sure everyone knows to go out one exit and in another. The janitors try to help with this, but perhaps some signage would make things clearer". (Social and Political Sciences)

Response: Minimal use of the GUU rooms has been made over the past 2 academic years (no more than 3 classes per week and more-often only 1) in response to the feedback given previously. However, where there is no other space option on campus and no opportunity to reschedule the time of the class, there will continue to be a need to use this space.

Re: entry and exit from the large Halls – whilst there is signage in place we will review this and, where appropriate, replace or add to current.

II. "The quality of projection in the lecture theatres is poor (noted by staff and students). There appears to be no budget for replacement projectors". (Veterinary Medicine)

Response: Concerns about AVIT in rooms should be referred to Information Services. There is a budget for cyclical replacement of equipment in teaching rooms and they will be able to advise further.

"Lack of computers and study space at QETLC and installation of power charging facilities at QEUH Lecture Theatre to allow students to use their devices for a full day teaching". (Life Sciences)

Response: Noted. As this is a shared facility with the NHS any changes or repurposing of space would have to be jointly agreed. The feasibility of providing additional power sockets would need to be investigated.

III. "CMIS continues to be difficult to use, particularly for the MBChB and BDS programmes. This system is time consuming to utilise. Further engagement with central teams to work towards a more efficient and pragmatic approach would be welcome". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing) **Response:** The central team continues to work with Schools and School Timetablers on improving use of the system.

"CMIS - the ability to include all final year and Masters teaching is required to improve workload modelling". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

Response: As above, the team continues to work with Schools and would be pleased to address this specific issue with them.

"The room booking system threw up several problems again this year. The roll-over of last year's data did not seem to work effectively as some events were missing from CMIS. Additionally, there were several events when rooms were not booked and the School was not informed of this. On enquiry, the room booking teams stated that rooms were simply not available. However, School staff were able to source rooms and inform the room booking teams what to book, or staff could access locally-booked rooms. These issues should have been flagged and School staff should not have to locate rooms themselves. Further, there were at least two instances where computer cluster rooms were booked that were too small for the class (30 computers for a class of 50 students)". (Life Sciences)

Response: The roll-over of data is only applied to teaching events which have a course code and are 'live'. When the roomed timetable is published in June each year Schools are advised that there are likely to be unroomed events and on the actions required to resolve this. The central team then continues to work with and respond to changes and updates in order to allocate rooms and reviews all unroomed event on a daily basis to identify potential solutions. The central team does not have responsibility for, nor oversight of, locally-managed rooms – activity which is often not recorded on CMIS – hence the need for Schools to review availability in these spaces themselves.

There are no centrally-managed computer clusters, so any mismatch between room and class size would need to be addressed by the relevant local area.

"The Current Directions in Life Sciences course was completely online. It proved confusing and ultimately impossible to schedule online webinars, as they are not allocated to a specific room in CMIS. As online delivery increases the ability to be able to add specific events to a student's timetable is essential and should be accommodated via CMIS". (Life Sciences)

Response: This may need further detail to clarify the issue. However, events can be created in CMIS and, where there is a course code, students can enrol on them (thus having the event appear in their timetable) regardless of whether a room is allocated.

"Room booking system, which is a university wide system, still has students travelling across campus". (Education)

Response: Noted, but this is a consequence of the availability of space, not an issue with the booking system.

"Some staff reported having 4 different rooms over a 10 week course and found this very disruptive to student learning. A more efficient process of room assignment and space optimisation needs to be identified". (Social and Political Sciences)

Response: Prior to the timetable being published each year, a comprehensive review is undertaken to check consistency of room allocation. At this point, and providing the data is structured correctly, there would not usually be an inconsistent allocation made. However, where there is no consistent allocation available and therefore the event remains unroomed, the central team will liaise with the School on

their preferred option to resolve, one option being to allocate multiple rooms across the teaching block.

Should there be any subsequent (post publication) changes to an event (e.g. increase in size) rendering the original room unsuitable, an alternative room allocation within an already full campus/timetable may well provide less consistency.

"There have also been issues about a lack of responsiveness from colleagues in Central Room Bookings". (Social and Political Sciences)

Response: Further information would be required in order to comment on the specifics of this comment. However, responses to all logged calls and enquiries to the central team are normally made within 48 hours, even at peak times.

IV. "The ability to plan examination and graduation dates further in advance is required". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

Response: This should be referred to Registry who manage both.

V. "There is still a problem with travel to and from Garscube. Even if all lectures are given on the Main Campus, a considerable number of students have to travel to Garscube to carry out their final year projects. On average this will cost each student approximately £100 over the course of the project by the cheapest public transport". (Life Sciences)

Response: This is probably a matter for the School/College – unless the requirement is for the teaching events to take place at Garscube, in which case this should be requested on the event in CMIS.

4. Student mental health

The issue of student mental health was highlighted in several College Summaries. Concerns were raised about the lack of formal training for staff to support students with mental health difficulties, and the resources available to support students experiencing mental health issues:

- I. Colleges questioned what was known about the extent to which students were coming to the University with mental health problems and whether the problems developed during their studies. It was noted that students were often reluctant to disclose mental health issues at the point of application.
- II. Colleges queried whether additional support could be provided to known pressure points such as senior honours.
- III. Colleges queried whether if it would be possible to provide easily accessible information on what training was offered for different categories of staff.
- IV. Colleges observed that much of the work carried out by the Mental Health Group appeared to be reactive, rather than proactive.

4.1 Response from Dr David Duncan

I. Received wisdom is that it's a combination of both. Mental health issues of varying degrees of severity often develop in the 16-25 age group, but some students will have suffered issues throughout their lives or developed them in their early teens. There is generally a greater ability to recognise mental health issues than hitherto and a greater willingness to declare them, but some are still reluctant to do so.

- II. The same quality and level of service ought to be made available to all students regardless of what stage they are at; the type of support offered should depend on the individual's needs. However, it is recognised that people tend to come forward with issues at particularly stressful periods (such as during exams or when writing dissertations). The University, the student bodies and some schools run special destress events to try to help students through these periods.
- III. We are currently evaluating online materials which we hope to roll out so that all staff can achieve a basic level of awareness of mental health issues. In addition, we have trained over 300 people using the mental health first aid training package. Thirdly, we will shortly be piloting peer support training in the College of Arts. More specialist training is of course provided for counsellors and other professionals.
- IV. Some aspects of provision are reactive and will only be accessed when people feel they need them, but we are also keen to develop a more proactive dimension to our provision. The Director of Student & Academic Services is bringing a student wellbeing strategy to the next meeting of the Student Experience Committee in June. In the meantime, we are encouraging students to register with the Big White Wall – an online resource which gives advice on wellbeing and provides support for those who need help. Through the Big White Wall, students (and staff) can access support 24 hours a day, and can be in one-to-one contact with a professionally trained adviser within 30 minutes of logging on.

5. IT facilities

The College of MVLS AMS highlighted several issues in relation to IT systems and facilities:

- I. "Better support for Moodle functionality e.g. Open badges functionality, and training in Moodle". (MVLS)
- II. "Alumni access to Mahara (Portfolio) for at least five years after graduation". (Veterinary Medicine)
- III. "Wifi access at hospital sites where students should have access to eduroam". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)
- IV. "E-assessment software and assessment management systems that work, are supported and can be invested in". (Life Sciences)
- V. "Better computer cluster provision and support". (Life Sciences)

5.1 Response from Information Services

I. Open badges: The VLE Development Board identified this as an area for investigation, and badges were enabled in Moodle for schools to try locally but badges cannot be issued at a University level or exported. Qualifications are the responsibility of the Senate Office, and it would be inappropriate to use Moodle to give badges which appear to be University-approved qualifications. For policy in this area, ASC should refer this issue to EdPSC, rather than to IS or the VLE Development Board. Technical support for using badges can be obtained by contacting the IT Helpdesk.

Moodle training: Responsibility for Moodle training is distributed, with local Learning Technology support levels very variable across Schools and Colleges, pedagogical advice is available from LEADS but no central training resource is available in LEADS or IS dedicated to Moodle training. There are therefore likely to be gaps in

provision and training is a subject which will be reviewed as part of the VLE Review currently underway, chaired by Mark Johnston, Director of IT Services.

- II. There was consideration given to alumni access to IT resources several years ago but no funding was available as the business case was not considered strong. It is not practical or sustainable for existing authentication schemes to hold alumni login IDs indefinitely, but solutions which link student IDs with an external authentication source (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) could be considered if a business case now exists to commit resources to this. The Information Services IT Project Board will consider this request, but it is a policy issue for IPSC/EdPSC whether alumni should have access to specific IT resources, and other decision-making bodies to also meet the costs of this. In many cases this will mean additional costs as alumni are not entitled to suppliers student licensing discounts, and therefore the financial implications are required for the overall cost/benefit analysis inputting to a University decision. In the meantime, Mahara allows students to extract their portfolios before they leave the University.
- III. This is under the control of the hospital sites themselves. We are aware that there have been issues with the technicalities of the NHS connections to get Eduroam to work at their sites, although we believe this situation to be improving. We have a gateway arrangement into NHS GG&C which is really just to provide services into the TLC building at the QEUH but in effect covers a large percentage of the GG&C estate, which is proving popular. Aside from that, NHS trusts must themselves provide access to Wifi as this is not within the control of the University. We have obtained a list of NHS GG&C sites covered by Eduroam, which is attached (See Appendix 1).
- IV. It is within the remit of the Assessment and Feedback project under the World Changing Glasgow Transformation programme to review and improve all assessment and feedback processes and technologies in use across the University.
- V. MVLS computer lab support is provided by the College. However, Peter Mitchell, Director of End User Computing in Information Services will lead a review of laboratory provision for MVLS later this year and prepare some options for review by College management.

6. Staffing

Staffing, workload and administrative support were highlighted as key concerns in several College Summaries.

I. Staffing and workload

"More MPA staff to support L&T assessment analysis and review. This issue is further exacerbated by prolonged recruitment periods following posts becoming vacant and the release of time limited posts (6 month) which has a negative impact on quality of subsequent applicant and thus recruitment success". (MVLS)

"Shortage of clinically experienced staff to meet teaching demand. This has resulted in a requirement to use external staff which results in uncertainty in terms of availability and potential for inconsistencies in teaching and assessment". (Veterinary Medicine)

"There are a number of areas where teaching expertise is 'one deep' and loss of such staff has led to problems with delivery of teaching. Of particular concern are Small Animal Primary Care and Public Health. There is also no perceived plan with regard to succession planning regarding upcoming retirements and how the replacement of teaching capacity is coordinated between the School and Research Institutes. Of particular concern are Physiology, Parasitology and Anatomy". (Veterinary Medicine)

"Lack of flexibility in terms of employment is restricting how we can use Graduate Teaching Assistants in relation to teaching and assessment (BVMS1) and the HR processes involved in creating contracts for GTAs can be prohibitive". (Veterinary Medicine)

"Transparency across the University would be welcome. More could be done to acknowledge the impact of full workloads on staff morale, and of downward pressure on workload allocations, in the School of Education". (Education)

II. Administrative support

"Across the College, the large student numbers and lack of sufficient teaching administration continues to load excess burden on already overloaded academic staff". (Science and Engineering)

"Appropriate staffing in all job families to support teaching and facilitate succession planning". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)

"There is a real need to retain good administrative staff. There is a very high turnover of staff probably reflected by the low pay grade associated with programme support and the short, fixed term nature of appointments". (Veterinary Medicine)

6.1 Update from Professional Services Review

The issue of administrative support is currently being considered in the Professional Services Review, which has a remit to:

- Eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy and create more time for academics to devote to student learning, research and innovation.
- Ensure a better student experience.
- Ensure clearer ownership of all processes and performance metrics, end to end.
- Reduce duplication in activity between the centre, college and School, and ensure more joined up service provision.
- Deliver cost savings to allow for strategic reinvestment.
- Make better use of technology enabled solutions.
- Enable improved career pathways for professional services staff.

The Transformation Team are part way through the diagnostic analysis, working with the Director's of Professional Services from the four Colleges plus service leads from University Services. This stage of the project is heavily focused on data gathering and analysis. We are supplementing quantitative data from our systems with qualitative data from interviews. The potential options for how we organise and deliver our services are under development and will shortly be tested with project team members. Recommendations on the shape and scope of Professional Services Review will be discussed at the WCG Board on 18 April.

7. EvaSys

Issues with the management of course evaluation data were raised in several College Summaries. Concerns were also raised in the College of Science and Engineering AMS about students leaving inappropriate comments in survey responses:

- I. "The anonymous questionnaire systems such as EvaSys can lead to students making derogatory and personal comments against staff. This is contrary to the University's 'Full Stop to Bullying' campaign". (Science and Engineering)
- II. "EvaSys procedures that dictate that only the staff member delivering the course and the Head of School see the results of course evaluations means that any student dissatisfaction with teaching provision may go largely unrecognized. There is not an effective system for closing this particular loop either from a student perspective or with regards to the long-term health of the degrees we offer". (Geographical and Earth Sciences)
- III. "Loss of detailed evaluation of individual teaching staff and issues with regard to dissemination of the evaluation that is available due to EvaSys". (Veterinary Medicine)

7.1 Response from Senate Office

- I. The issue of students submitting derogatory and personal comments in anonymous course evaluation surveys was also raised in a recent Periodic Subject Review. Schools have been consulted to get a sense of the scale of the problem and thankfully the issue does not appear to be particularly widespread. Some text has now been added to the email that students receive inviting them to complete a survey, to remind them not to leave any inappropriate or abusive comments.
- II. This matter has been discussed directly with the School that raised it. It has been clarified that the Course Evaluation Policy allows the results of EvaSys surveys to be shared with members of staff other than the Head of School, as long as this has been agreed at an appropriate School/Subject-level meeting.
- III. The Course Evaluation Policy allows Schools to repeat question 1 "The lecturer explained things well" for every member of staff that teaches on a course. The course Evaluation Policy also allows staff to personalise questionnaires by adding their own questions after the "Core Question Set". These additional questions can relate to individual members of staff as well as the teaching team as a whole. As with the response to II., the Course Evaluation Policy allows the results of EvaSys surveys to be disseminated to members of staff other than the Head of School, as long as this has been agreed at an appropriate School/Subject-level meeting.

8. Assessment and feedback

Two of the College Summaries made reference to feedback turnaround times, e-assessment and assessment and feedback calendars:

- I. "There is a widespread view that the teaching and assessment calendar for Semester 1 is particularly onerous with substantial pressures on students and staff, leading to ill health, work bottlenecks, missed deadlines, and more re-sit assessments in the summer". (Interdisciplinary Studies)
- II. "The 15 working day assessment and feedback turnaround system should be reviewed to ensure time for staff to give provide adequate feedback given the increasing size of student numbers, particularly for the large level 1 and 2 cohorts.

There is a concern that the quality of feedback is decreasing because of this tight turnaround policy and that this lowering of quality is something that is exacerbated for staff working in shared offices and noisy environments". (Science and Engineering)

- III. "A concern that the SMDN are falling behind the sector in e-assessment, in part because there is not space or resource to develop appropriately". (Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing)
- IV. "Requirement for comprehensive e-assessment and assessment management software, to allow in-class secure online assessment, robust question banking, teaching staff feedback on question performance and student feedback in relation to ILOs". (MVLS)

8.1 Response from Professor Moira Fischbacher-Smith, Assistant Vice-Principal, Learning and Teaching

- I. This has been raised at Learning & Teaching Committee in the past, largely because of a perception that the time available for marking has reduced when in fact it has not. This comment from IDS probably reflects the growth in their student population and it may be that there is a benefit in a review of the assessment design and/or the allocation of marking across the teaching team. It may be best to raise this with the Dean of Learning & Teaching in the first instance, and then to see whether there is a way of rethinking how assessment is undertaken.
- II. This point has come up for Science & Engineering in their PSR and there are some forthcoming recommendations that it is hoped will assist here. Nonetheless, as this is a recurring point in AMRs and discussion more broadly, as convenor of A&FWG, I will raise this with the Assessment and Feedback Transformation Board as one of the policy considerations that are being debated at the moment.
- III. The University has been piloting a Laptop Loan Scheme in the Library and plans for new buildings in the future are that we will extend this approach. There is potentially an opportunity to implement a related approach for e-assessment and perhaps as the A&F transformation project again thinks through how this might work, we could do some pilots in MVLS.
- IV. This is something that would be considered by the A&F Transformation board. This would potentially form part of the specification for a new A&F approach and has been tabled as an area of priority for that project.

9. Progression

One issue noted by ASC was the concern regarding poor progression rates of students entering directly into Level 2 (Chemistry, Computing Science, Engineering). Across the College this was a problem particularly for students entering from Glasgow International College, and it was noted that there was a similar problem for students in Life Sciences (MVLS). ASC agreed that a specific response on this issue should be sought from the Joint Academic Management Board.

9.1 Response from Joint Academic Management Board

This matter was raised with the clerk of the Joint Academic Management, who noted that a report would be provided from the Board to ASC at a future meeting.

10. Session dates and graduation dates

ASC noted that it was of great importance to international students to have as much notice as possible of exam diets and graduation dates, and that this should be highlighted for response.

10.1 Response from Registry

Given the logistics and information required from Schools, it is not possible to provide individual examination or graduation dates any further in advance. However, it was noted that the graduation and examination periods were usually agreed and published on the Senate Office Website approximately two years in advance.

11. 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.

11.1 Response from Disability Services

This issue has been raised by colleagues in other Colleges on several occasions this academic year.

I have made colleagues in other Colleges and Institutes working with PGT/PGR students aware that some of these early disclosure issues in relation to post graduate students are related to funding, MyCampus and legal compliance requirements for GDPR and UKBA visa issues.

A student cannot register with our Service until they are fully financially and academically registered on MyCampus – this means they have to have secured and confirmed their tuition fee funding and, if appropriate, met UK BA visa requirements before they can register on MyCampus – this causes late registration for some PGT and PGR students. They also have to have signed the Student Contract – part of the registration process – in relation to GDPR and the sharing of personal sensitive information. Because of GDPR we cannot accept, collect and keep evidence of disability or medical evidence from prospective students until they have a firm place offer, accepted it and registered on MyCampus. Provision of evidence is a requirement of registration with this Service and having a needs assessment. Where students have severe and complex needs such as a wheelchair user, sensory impairment or multiple conditions, we will continue to try to meet with these individuals prior to registration with their consent, but this is not always possible and we are also aware that registration for PG students opens later than for UG students.

We as an institution have an anticipatory duty under the Equality Act to expect that there will be disabled PGT/PGR students on our courses and induction events and there will be disabled PGR/PGT students who will require academic supervision. Thus if staff follow and comply with the University's policies with regard to Accessible and Inclusive teaching and learning (AILP) and with regard to planning and organising accessible events, fewer specific add on reasonable adjustments will be required because staff will have been proactive in following good practice and ensuring that the majority of reasonable adjustments are mainstreamed. This benefits all students as well as disabled students.

We also note that not all Research Institutes and Graduate Schools have appointed Disability Co-ordinators to be their main point of contact with the Disability Service for disabled students on their courses. In our experience this can lead to students lacking awareness of how to access support and leads to late referrals to our Service – particularly after the exam deadline date, which is problematic for Registry Exams section.

There is often extensive internal and external additional funding available for disabled post graduate students from the Disabled Students' Award (DSA). Some individual PGR supervisors seem unaware of the support available for their disabled students and fail to refer their student for support until there is a crisis. We would encourage all supervisors to refer their disabled supervisees to our Service as soon as they are aware of a disability disclosure.

We acknowledge that there is pressure on rooms on campus, room planning is done far in advance of the start of the academic year and not all teaching rooms are accessible. Problems with the physical accessibility of rooms will continue to occur for a small number of PG students and this cannot always be resolved by anticipatory planning. In such cases alternative accessible rooms have to be sought at short notice, but when planning induction events, if the guidelines in the Accessible Events checklist (referred to above) are followed, then this problem can be pre-empted without the intervention, involvement or referral to the Disability Service. It is very important that at induction an emphasis on inclusion is part of the welcome that the disabled student receives from this University.

Finally, I'm aware that Central Room bookings are carrying out an impact assessment into extending the teaching day and if this is accepted, this may open up the possibility of greater availability of accessible rooms for teaching and supervision after 5pm.

Additional response from Dr David Duncan

This matter could also be addressed in the context of the review of the international student experience, which is now underway under the auspices of the Student Experience Committee.

12. Student recruitment, marketing and admissions

- I. The Schools of Culture and 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.
- II. 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.
- III. 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.

12.1 Response from External Relations

I. We were not aware of the specific issue with Culture and Creative Arts but were aware of the issue with Critical Studies, which did end up with Rachel Sandison's involvement last year. The issue was that there were some delays to Critical Studies applications being processed in Jan to March 2018 due to the admissions officer who dealt with these applications last year being on long term sick at that point in the cycle. The team were under significant pressure at that point in the year due to a 30% increase in applications, plus the University being closed for the snow, and so while this admissions officer's workload was covered as far as possible, it was not possible to provide a normal level of service. The nature of the application process for this School also exacerbated the problem as these applications are sent to the School for a decision and then returned to us to process the offer/reject and so there was a delay when applications were sent to the School and then another delay in processing the decisions when they came back. The delay caused the average turnaround time to increase by 3.5 working days for that period though there were possibly some specific applications that were delayed further. This issue was caused by a specific combination of factors all occurring at the same time and is unlikely to be repeated though we can't guarantee that it won't happen again (given current staffing levels in Admissions relative to application volume and other UK universities).

It's possible that it could be the same issue for Culture and Creative Arts as the same admissions officer handled a few programmes for that School but that School didn't raise the issue at the same time.

II. For information and context, last year the University created a sub-group of SMG, the Income Growth Group, chaired by Prof Frank Coton but including all Heads of College, the Principal, Senior Vice Principal, Vice Principal External Relations, COO and Director of Finance. The group has strategic oversight of portfolio development and student number planning against capacity/resource constraints. Discussions and decisions regarding the future size and shape of ASBS' PGT cohort, and that of other high demand areas, has taken place via this group. Determining optimum student numbers across programme plans has become business critical as it aligns to the campus redevelopment programme.

In relation to the specific issues raised, there were two reasons for being significantly over target in ASBS for September 2018 entry:

- 1) The admissions policy used for 2017 and 2018 entry, that was approved in both years by the School through the ASBS Admissions Committee, sacrificed some ability to control intake numbers in order to attempt to diversify the student body. This was because this policy required an equal consideration period in the early part of the admissions cycle as a condition for prioritising applicants coming from more diverse markets later in the cycle. This meant that all applicants in the first phase of the admissions cycle had to be treated equally no matter where they applied from or when in the phase they applied, meaning applications could not be closed early. For 2018 admission, higher entry requirement levels were set to control numbers from the largest market in the early part of the cycle, but this did not prove effective since we received significantly more applications than expected for 2018 entry. This policy has been changed, with agreement of the School's admissions committee, for entry in September 2019 to one that has a primary aim of controlling intake numbers and offer making has been restricted in a number of programmes when required in order not to overshoot intake targets.
- 2) The admissions deposit to registered student conversion rate for PGT ASBS in September 2018 was significantly higher than in previous year for reasons that are still unclear. This meant that a higher number of students registered for PGT programmes in the School than we would have expected given the offers made and deposits received. There has been no obvious reason identified for this significant increase in conversion rates, but we believe that this may have been

due to the actions of business schools at other universities who, for example, may have rejected more students than normal or closed programmes early. An applicant who pays a £2000 deposit normally has around a 60% chance of becoming a registered student but this can vary significantly between programmes and years, from around 50% to 75%, making predicted intake highly uncertain. As noted above, the policy used in 2018 limited our ability to control offers early in the application cycle but it did allow some control later in the cycle. However, as the intake was expected to be lower, based on historical deposits to registered student conversion rates, we did not limit offer making as early as we could have contributing to the intake significantly exceeding target.

III. We are not clear to what this is referring so would need more detail in order to review and respond, if relevant/applicable. PG Admissions have had no contact with the School regarding these issues and we are also not sure what UKVI regulations they mean, since there have not been any new, recent restrictions that affect us. The same applies for what is meant specifically by "required University support" for EU programmes – please can they provide more detail?

13. MyCampus

- I. 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.
- II. 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.

13.1 Response from Student Lifecycle Support and Development (SLSD)

I. This is similar to comments raised in the 2015/16 annual monitoring reports for which a response was provided:

"Increased flexibility required in MyCampus to accommodate master's teaching, which often involves specialist lecturers by experts and so have to be booked or changed at short notice" (College of MVLS).

Response: More detail may be required to understand this issue, specifically what is required or what is not working for the College. Room requests/bookings are actually made on CMIS, all updates and changes are requested/recorded there. MyCampus receives this information as part of an overnight interface in order to display the information. All users (students and staff) are encouraged to use the timetabling app for room information and updates.

Further detail was sought from the College Head of Academic & Student Administration in April 2019 following the comments in the AMR 2017/18 report which elicited the following response:

"It would appear that the issue has arisen due to a lack of understanding about the systems and real-time availability of timetable information/venue changes on the timetabling app, versus the overnight upload of changes that subsequently appear on MyCampus. There is, therefore, some work to be done in communicating clearer information to our academic colleagues; and certainly we will work on that in the college.

There remains the frustration that it is not always possible to schedule teaching in advance due to availability of guest lecturers, which means that changes have to be made at last minute/short notice or as soon as their availability is known. Clearly this happens frequently, and suitable accommodation is not always available under such circumstances; or the turnaround of the request is not always immediate, which impacts on communication of timetable details to students."

This relates back to the information provided previously, that the process is managed via CMIS rather than MyCampus. Systems rely on the timeliness and accuracy of data – inaccurate or missing data can cause processes to fail or produce a false, or 'unwanted', outcome.

II. Please see Appendix 2 provided by IT Services.

Background

The enrolment process at the University of Glasgow has been the subject of much discussion in recent years, including an audit by PwC in 2016 and the more recent NSS sub-group led by Jane Weir, Director of Student Services. It is also the focus of the new Student Journey project led by the Vice-Principal (Academic Planning and Technological Innovation) and the World Changing Glasgow Team.

The implementation of MyCampus introduced new challenges through integration of the student system with the teaching timetable in order to support self-service enrolment where previously the Schools and Colleges would have managed enrolment locally whereby students did not receive a personalised timetable. Subsequently, growth in student numbers and therefore demand, without growth in the estate to accommodate this, has added to the challenge.

Current process

A summary of the process as undertaken by students is as follows:

In August/September students complete two processes via MyCampus:

- 1. Registration an annual process of confirming the accuracy of the data we hold about students (important for our HESA Student Record) and confirming their reengagement with the University and their programme after the summer break.
- 2. Enrolment the process of choosing the courses they wish to study, ensuring these choices are permissible within the 'rules' of their programme/plan and that all pre-requisites and co-requisites have been met, and then enrolment onto the scheduled classes for that course building up their individual timetable.

Enrolment at the University of Glasgow is a supply-driven process – classes are initially scheduled by Schools based on the availability of academic staff and of suitable accommodation, informed by the number of students who have enrolled on the classes in previous years (noting that this does not necessarily equate to the demand for the course).

As such, demand for classes may often outstrip the supply. Where this happens, and a student is unable to enrol in their chosen classes, the student needs to repeat the process of choosing courses, ensuring the new choice complies with the rules of the programme/plan etc., and then choosing classes.

The integration with the teaching timetable reveals the complexity of delivery of the courses, with multiple tutorials having to be offered to satisfy demand within the constraints of the estate (available classrooms of the right size). Timetable clashes at the <u>class</u> level are frequently the reason for <u>course</u> choices needing to change. Some of these classes may be selected by the student, others may be auto-enrolled based on the choice of a related class. Clashes may happen multiple times and therefore the process may take considerable time – increasing the risk of classes filling up and reducing the students' chance of successful enrolment. Timetable changes as student demand becomes clear can also cause further difficulties for students.

MyCampus setup for courses and classes is entered and maintained by staff in the Schools – opening classes for enrolment, setting class sizes, setting controls at the class level – if any of these data are incorrect or incomplete this will cause issues for students during enrolment (or prevent enrolment). Equally when classes are filled because class size has been met, the system will prevent further enrolment.

Future

As this process has to be completed on MyCampus, the system is often blamed for the complexity of the process and for the frustration that causes. However, in examples where some of the complexity is stripped out of the process – for example for those programmes where there is less choice because of programme design, or because of cohort size, or where enrolment on courses and classes is restricted to specific student groups (or indeed prioritised for those groups), the MyCampus interface can be more straightforward to use. That is not to say that the user interface could not be improved, it could – however this would not change the complexity of the underlying business process.

It should be noted that MyCampus offers many different methods of enrolment – selfservice enrolment by the students is just one of them. Some Schools/Colleges already use enrolment controls to restrict enrolment, or indeed use the administrative block enrolment facility. MyCampus also offers the facility to capture student course choices at a much earlier point in the academic year (e.g. in the April prior to enrolment), however unless demand for courses is used to drive the supply then the same levels of frustration for students will most likely still occur.

In the short to medium term these alternatives to self-service enrolment can be explored by Schools with support from the Student Lifecycle Support & Development Team. In the longer term the full range of processes available within MyCampus, and opportunities offered by related/complementary software will most likely be considered by the WCG Student Journey project.

14. English language proficiency

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.

14.1 Response from External relations

All students admitted to ASBS at PGT level must meet the standard English language requirements set by the School of IELTS 6.5 with no subtest less than 6.0 and two subtest at 6.5 or equivalent. All students admitted to the School meet this requirement and all language

tests are verified online with the test provider or in the case of major pre-sessional courses, results are sent to Admissions directly by the course provider. We think there are probably two main reasons for the concerns noted by ASBS at PGT level:

- 1. The English requirements set by the University/School are set at a level that will allow a student to complete a PGT programme but not necessarily allow the student to reach their full academic potential. We believe that the research shows that an IELTS of around 7.0 in all skills is required for students to meet their full academic potential which is significantly higher than the School's current requirements. Unfortunately, raising the English language requirements would have a considerable impact on recruitment to PGT programmes in ASBS. Our modelling suggests that even just raising the requirement to IELTS 6.5 in all skills would likely reduce the number of PGT students in ASBS by at least 53%. For entry in September 2020, we are exploring the option of prioritising applicants who demonstrate a high level of English language ability on the application, which may lead to a small improvement in the standard of English of students admitted to the School.
- 2. Top Up or 3+1 Degrees for entry in September 2018, as in previous years, any student who had completed a degree in the UK was exempt from providing a language test. This included students who had only completed the final year of their degree in the UK (top up degree) and these students accounted for a significant number of students admitted to PGT study in ASBS (around 300-400). When the policy was introduced, top up degrees were rare and the exemption was really aimed at those who had completed 3-4 years of study at degree level in the UK. With an increasing number of students being admitted with top up degrees, it became clear, from those admitted in September 2017, that the language ability of these students was below what would be expected. We therefore changed the policy in summer 2018 so that students must have studied for a minimum of 2 years in the UK (or other UKVI designated English speaking country) before the language test is waived. This policy change took effect for entry in September 2019 so we should see an improvement with this year's cohort.

Additional response from Dr David Duncan

It is for academic units to determine the English language tariff applied to different courses and programmes. Students who cannot meet the requirements we set have the option of taking courses at Glasgow International College in advance of studying for degree programmes at the University.

15. 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.

15.1 Response from Catering and Events

We are keen to have an open dialogue with colleagues and if there are any specific instances that we can assist with, please do ask the parties concerned to contact Catering and Events directly.

In more general terms, you may be aware that the Conferences & Events function merged with the former Hospitality Services function in January 2019, creating the new Catering & Events service under one umbrella. One of the main aims of this merger was to facilitate

being able to deliver a more seamless service to the University, partly around cost to serve and delivery models for events such as conferences. Over and above that there are two pieces of work currently underway which will contribute to further developing our offer. Firstly, we are currently in the middle of a full review of the University's venue/room hire policy due for completion later this year, from which we expect to implement any recommended changes (including the likely introduction of a day delegate rate) and secondly the overdue development of the catering menu and proposition for delivered catering and events which aims to tackle concerns around quality and value for money.

In addition there has also been activity undertaken to develop our approach, and ways of working, with academic colleagues. Alongside various conversations with senior Administrators from various Schools, I have also been asked to participate in the 'Conferences and Events' workstream element of the Professional Services Review. This is a very exciting opportunity for all parties and will, I believe, allow for very valuable dialogue and sharing of ideas and best practice.

Lastly Robert Garnish (Director, Commercial Services) and I are due to meet with Professor Miles Padgett in mid-May to further discuss ways in which we can support the delivery of conferences for the University.

As I mentioned earlier, we are always keen to engage with our colleagues throughout the University and value specific examples from other institutions which can help develop our own best practice. I would always encourage our academic colleagues to engage with us as early as possible in the thinking/planning of an event as this allows us to not only provide advice and guidance but also address any perceptions or concerns they may have.

Additional response from Dr David Duncan

We are keen to encourage academics events on campus and can be flexible on conference costs, especially where fees are not charged to delegates.

16. 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.

16.1 Response from Planning and Business Intelligence

Last year, following the University leaving the HEA (Now Advance HE) and thus involvement in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Professor Frank Coton (Vice-Principal, Academic and Education Innovation) agreed the University would have a fallow year from PGT surveys. However, at the end of term, the Students' Representative Council requested that a survey be sent to PGT students. Consequently, a survey was produced in a short timescale to mirror the PTES. The survey was only open for 3 weeks as it was launched so late in the term, and the cohort was substantially smaller than for the PTES due to the timing.

The full PTES is being run in 2019, and the School of Education are fully involved in engagement with it as usual.

Additional response from Dr David Duncan

If low response rates remains an issue for future surveys, we might enlist the support of the SRC and the Communications Office to address this.

17. 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.

17.1 Response from Registry

Regarding the lack of a dedicated live screening venue for the Winter 2018 graduations, Registry's access to additional venues is very limited in the Winter because teaching is given priority. At the Winter ceremonies no suitable venues were available in which to set up a dedicated live screening venue.

Graduations are timetabled to take place within the graduation periods set out in academic session dates approved by Senate

(<u>https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/sessiondates/</u>), so it is not possible to hold graduations outwith this period.

Additional response from Dr David Duncan

A committee chaired by the Clerk of Senate, Professor Jill Morrison, is aware of this issue and is actively trying to identify ways to address it.

18. University communications

The College of Medical, Veterinary and 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.

18.1 Response from Communications

The Postgraduate College Quality Officer for MVLS has been contacted by the Head of Communications for further clarify on this matter.

19. Course approval process

ASC requested that the course approval process be highlighted for response, as a number of comments had been made about the complexity of the process.

19.1 Response from Senate Office

Comments on the Course Approval process are currently being reviewed and a full response will be provided to ASC in due course.

20. Facilities and support available outwith the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The issue of facilities and support (particularly for Online and Distance Learning students and students at the Dumfries Campus) for students outwith the traditional hours of 9-5 Mon-Fri was highlighted by ASC for comment. One of the concerns raised by the College of MVLS was the fact that discussion forums for ODL students needed to be monitored in the evenings and weekends and that staff workload models didn't always take this into account.

20.1 Response from Information Services and Professor Jo-Anne Murray, Assistant Vice-Principal, Digital Education

While students will use the discussion boards in the evening and weekends, there is no expectation that staff should respond. I have raised the issue with staff who support the MVLS online programmes to make them aware of this so that we can identify approaches to clarify that with the online students during their induction sessions.

Information Services have a small group of IT support staff who currently work in the Library until 11pm offering in-building support. We are now looking to supplement this group of staff so that they can cover the IT Helpdesk during the same hours.

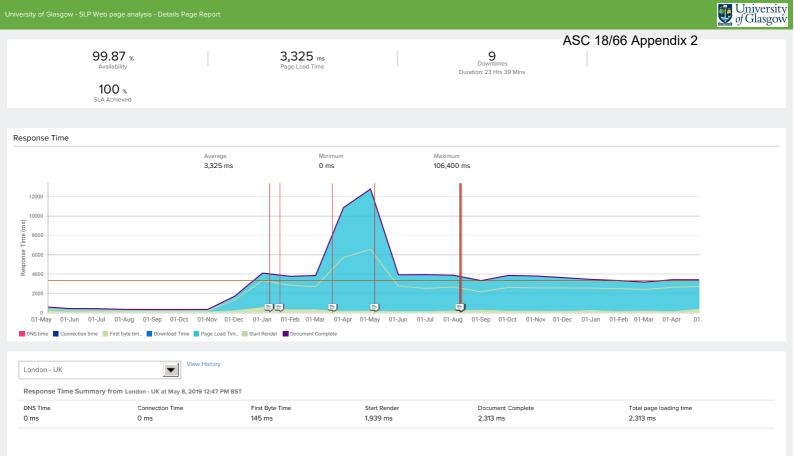
Additional response from Dr David Duncan

The opening of the James McCune Smith Learning Hub will see core services provided on campus on an extended basis.

Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Eduroam Sites

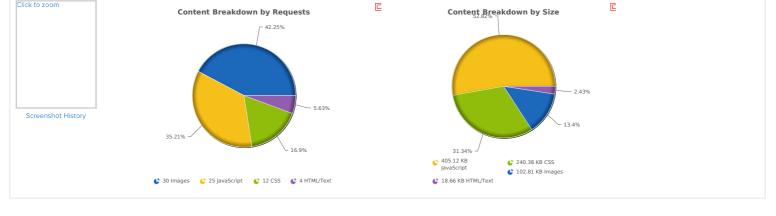
- Abbey House
- Abbey Mill Medical Centre
- Aranthrue Centre Renfrew
- Auchinlea Resource Centre
- Baillieston Health Centre
- Barrhead Health and Care Centre
- Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre
- Blythswood House
- Brand Street Resource Centre
- Bridgeton Health Centre
- Centre for Health and Care Plean Street
- Charleston Centre
- Clydebank Health Centre
- Crown House Mental Health and Homeless Services
- Drumchapel Health Centre
- Dumbarton Joint Hospital
- **Dykebar Hospital**
- Easterhouse Health Centre
- Eastwood Resource Centre
- Florence Street Mental Health Resource Centre
- Gartnavel General Hospital and Gartnavel Royal Hospital
- Glasgow Dental Hospital
- Glasgow Royal Infirmary
- Goldenhill Resource Centre
- Govan Health Centre/Elder Park
- Govanhill Health Centre
- Greenock Health Centre
- Hartfield Clinic Dumbarton
- Hunter Street Homeless Services
- Inverclyde Royal Hospital
- Johnstone Health Centre
- Leverndale Hospital
- Lightburn Hospital
- Monklands Beatson Lanarkshire
- New Renfrew Health Centre
- New Stobhill Hospital
- New Victoria Hospital (across the road from the old Victoria Infirmary)
- Orchard View (IRH grounds)
- Pollok Health Centre
- Port Glasgow Health Centre
- QEUH and Royal Hospital for Children
- **Renfrewshire House**
- Royal Alexandra Hospital

Sandyford Clinic Springburn Health Centre Springpark Mental Health Resource Centre Sterile Service Unit Greenock Templeton Business Centre Thornliebank Health Centre Townhead Health Centre TSSU Cowlairs Vale of Leven Hospital West Glasgow Ambulatory Care Hospital (walking wounded, old Yorkhill) Woodlands Mental Health Resource Centre



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No. of Requests	Total Objects	Images	Java Scripts	CSS	Total page size
71	71	30 (102.81 KB)	25 (405.12 KB)	12 (240.38 KB)	766.97 KB



Domain Summary

Domains	IP Address	No. of Requests	Size(KB)	Avg Response Time(ms)	Avg Throughput(KB/sec)
uogstaff.mycampus.gla.ac.uk	130.209.102.254	71	766.97	58	276.68

Global Status			Edit Locations	Updates					
🕒 London - UK (Pri	mary)			Next Poll May 8, 2019 01:47 PM					
				Site24x7 - Monitoring Service a year ago Content length modified 90% Site24x7 - Monitoring Service a year ago The site did not respond within 30 set Site24x7 - Monitoring Service a year ago The site did not respond within 30 set					
Down/Trouble Hist	ory								
Start Time to End T	ime		Duration	Comments					
Feb 23, 201	9 9:13:21 AM to Feb 23, 2019	10:13:39 AM	1 Hrs 0 Mins	Content length modified 9	90.0%	=			
Dec 28, 201	8 7:04:07 PM to Dec 28, 2018	8:04:22 PM	1 Hrs 0 Mins	Content length modified 9	90.0%	=			
Dec 28, 201	8 5:03:08 PM to Dec 28, 2018	3 6:03:23 PM	1 Hrs 0 Mins	Content length modified 9	90.0%	=			
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Availability and Re	sponse Time by Location								
Location	Availability (%)	Down Duration	Downtimes	Last Downtime	Response Time (ms)				
London - UK	99.47	3 days 21 Hrs 37 Mins	69	May 7, 2019 8:06:44 PM	3325				
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01-May 01-Jun 01-Jul 01-Aug 01-Sep 01-Oct 01-Nov 01-Dec 01-Jan 01-Feb 01-Mar 01-Apr 01-May 01-Jun 01-Jul 01-Aug 01-Sep 01-Oct 01-Nov 01-Dec 01-Jan 01-Feb 01-Mar 01-Apr 01-May									
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Response Time

Availability