THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Minute of the meeting held on 29 May 2019 (2.00pm – 5.25pm).

Present: Professor E Hancock (Convener), Mr F Antoniazzi, Dr H Bain,, Ms J Bolger, Ms M Buchan, Ms E Corry, Ms I Crawford, Mr J Dunphy, Dr N Emmison,, Ms J Guest, Mr T Kouider, Mr T Lauterbach, Mr S Matthew, Dr R McDermott, Ms F Roberts, Mr L Smith and Mrs V Strachan.
Apologies: Dr S Burgess, Ms E Cargill and Mr A Johnston.
In Attendance: Dr D Cockburn, Ms L Ginsberg, Ms L Jack, Dr S Maxwell and Mrs F McLean Whyte (Secretary).

		Action
1.	**MINUTE**	

The Committee **approved** the *Minute of the meeting of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee held on 27 February 2019,* reference QAEC/19/3, and noted a *Matters Arising Report*.

1.1 **Annual Appraisal Process [QAEC/19/3/2.1]**

The Committee noted a report from Department for Governance and Academic Quality providing an update on revisions to the *Annual Appraisal Process* for 2018-19. These included amendments to the Annual Course Appraisal reports and the *School Academic Board Appraisal Report*, refinements to the annual course appraisal workbooks in *Insight*, as well as the addition of a new School Academic Board workbook.

Emails would shortly be issued to all Heads of School and Course Leaders clarifying the process, and confirming that drop-in sessions would be organised in August and September 2019 for Course Leaders, and in October 2019 for Heads of School.

1.2 **Annual Appraisal Process: Other Actions [QAEC/19/3/2.1.2]**

The Committee noted detailed analysis of the *NSS* categories of *Teaching on my course* and *Academic support*, as previously agreed at the Committee's last meeting.

1.3 **Academic Regulations Sub-Committee QAEC/19/3/3.1.1]**

At its meeting on 12 March 2019, Academic Council approved the following amendments [AC/19/2/5.1.1] endorsed by the Committee: course transfer and temporary suspension of studies; decisions on admission; clarification around terminology and students' status; and simultaneous double counting of credits*.*

2. **ENHANCEMENTS TO THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

2.1 **RGU Digital Estate**

The Director for Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access provided an update on current developments with the RGU *Digital Estate* project. This highlighted:

- in semester 1, the project had focused on engagement with a range of staff to identify ways to develop the University's digital estate, and proposals were submitted to the Executive;

- in semester 2, the project had linked to related work to develop an *RGU Pedagogy Statement* and the current *Student-Facing Services Review: Delivery of Support Services to Off-Campus Students*. A priority had been to identify deliverables for Session 2019-20, in consultation with the Executive and staff, and a workplan was now in place. This included:

    - an upgrade to version 6 of *CampusMoodle*, delivered in partnership with IT Services, together with refresh of the 'look and feel' of the site. *CampusMoodle* would be offline at the end of July 2019 for approximately one day over a weekend;

    - a new *Student Welcome* area, linked to the University's official *Welcome* area, delivered in partnership with Student Life and taking account of learning from students;

    - at-desk 1-2-1 learning technology support for RGU staff;

    - the piloting of access to *LinkedIn Learning* for prioritised groups of students and staff;

- further open house sessions would be held monthly for staff who wished to learn more or contribute to the project.

2.2 Streetsport

The Committee received an engaging presentation from Mr Mark Williams, Chief Operating Officer, Streetsport and the Denis Law Legacy Trust. This demonstrated the impressive opportunities provided for the development of students through volunteering, alongside demonstrable improvement to the life of communities. It was confirmed placement students were involved, and that there was potential for project work for researching new opportunities and demonstrating impact.

Further videos were available at:

Overview: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VCXq9u0Q7M
More detail: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJkODIr5ucE
Employability: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ih6-j_82a9c
Kiloh and Rachael – Their Story: www.youtube.com/watch?v=nK-3Kt9c8ZI

3. LEAGUE TABLES

3.1 Insight

The Committee received a demonstration of the new league table functionality in *Insight*, from Mrs Alison Watson, Business Intelligence Implementation Manager.

3.2 Spend and Student:Staff Ratios

A detailed report from the Director of Planning and Policy and the Planning Analyst was tabled. This provided an update on the significant additional work and modelling that had taken place regarding league table spend measures and student:staff ratio, as well as discussing the potential impact of such work on the university's future performance.

Part of the modelling work included identifying a number of additional departments that might be incorporated into the 'Academic Services', and the 'Staff and Student Facilities', headings in the HESA return and, thereafter, determining what impact these might have on the individual league tables.

Further work had also been undertaken on the potential to re-classify students on placements of 10 weeks or more within the health and social care Schools which had a moderately positive impact on the student:staff ratio. There were, however, issues that needed to be further explored with the Scottish Funding Council to ensure that funding was not affected by this proposal. Notwithstanding this it was, however, unlikely to have a significant impact on league table performance.

Once the research work was complete, the Committee would be advised of the outcomes. The Director of Planning and Policy also **agreed** to confirm the status of students on placements in the health professions, for the HESA Student Return, as soon as was possible.

Dr D Cockburn

The Assistant Chief Academic Officer also **agreed** to liaise with the Director of Planning and Policy and the Business Intelligence Implementation Manager in respect of the coding of the Department for Governance and Academic Quality.

Mrs V Strachan

3.3 **Complete University Guide 2020 Release**

Consideration was given to a report on the University's recent performance in the *Complete University Guide 2020: Analysis of Subject Rankings*, prepared by the Director of Planning and Policy and the Planning Analyst, and which was tabled.

The University had dropped two places in the overall table, from 83rd to 85th, out of the 131 institutions included. The University dropped one place in the ranking of the 14 Scottish institutions included, from 10th to 11th. The reasons behind the most significant drop in ranking over the last two years for the University, from 9th in 2018 to 11th in 2020, could be attributed mainly to the significant increase in *Student:Staff Ratio (SSR)*. The voluntary severance scheme that took place in academic year 2015-16 had a significant impact on the University's SSR score and the University continued to be ranked as the sixth lowest in this measure of all 131 institutions included in the table.

A strong performance in the most recent *Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE)* release saw a significant increase in the University's *Graduate Prospects* score. The rise in score to 81.1% this year, from 77.5% last year, meant the University had gone from having the 5th highest to the 3rd highest score in Scotland in this particular measure. The University's *Degree Completion* score had also shown improvement in both the Scottish and UK rankings.

4. **INTERNAL QUALITY ISSUES**

4.1 **Retention Rates**

This item was deferred.

4.2 **Institution-Led Subject Review: Interim Review:** *Engineering (Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Oil and Gas Engineering)*

The Committee **approved** an *Interim Response* from the School of Engineering, in respect of the review of *Engineering (Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Oil and Gas Engineering)* in April 2016, and thanked the School for the detailed and considered response.

Prof J Steel

The *Interim Review* report was a useful resource for future Institution-Led Subject Reviews. Consequently, although the Committee had approved the response, it was of the view that some sections should be strengthened to provide more detail and also to fully demonstrate the positive activities in which the School was engaged. For instance, it was felt more could be made of the School's involvement with the EngON society, the RGU racing team, and the engineering network for women in the School by clarifying the impact of these activities. It also felt more should be said to explain what the School was doing in respect of liaising with the Marketing Team.

Prof J Steel

4.3 **Institution-Led Subject Review: Interim Review:** *Art and Design*

The Committee **approved** an *Interim Response* from Gray's School of Art, in respect of the review of *Art and Design* in February 2016, and thanked the School for the very detailed and considered response. In particular, the Committee noted that the responses had been reflected upon and expanded, resulting in a very thorough report. This was particularly evident in the sections on marketing, the School's response to challenges with addressing the STEM agenda, and issues affecting the estate.

Ms L Curtis

The Committee welcomed the fact that the School had found the exercise of completing the *Interim Review* a useful and timely exercise, particularly ahead of its next Institution-Led Subject Review.

4.4 **Student Engagement and Partnership: Session 2018-19**

4.4.1 *Student Engagement with Quality*

Consideration was given to a paper summarising activities coordinated by DELTA, and undertaken in partnership with RGU:Union, in relation to student engagement in formal quality assurance and enhancement processes. This included reports on the appointment of student representatives and Student School Officers (SSOs), training provided, activities and discussions with which they had been involved, and recognition through the *Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)* and the *Engagement and Partnership Awards*.

The Committee was of the view the report would benefit from incorporating information relating to other student roles and engagement across the University, such as leaderships roles in clubs and societies, equality champions, student ambassadors and student governors. It would also be useful to reflect on the following strategic aim, contained in the *Strategy Map*:

Ms K Campbell
Mr J Dunphy &
Mr F Antoniazzi

To ensure a high quality student experience

- Adopt a student-centred approach to curriculum design and delivery
- Provide appropriate support to enable students to be resilient, succeed in their studies and grow as individuals
- Embed entrepreneurship within all subject areas
- Promote and facilitate student engagement in co-curricular activities

The Committee urged Student Life and DELTA to work closely together to ensure there was no further drop in engagement with student representative training.

Ms K Campbell
Mr J Dunphy &
Mr F Antoniazzi

4.4.2 *Student Partnership Agreement (SPA)*

The Committee also considered an update on activities in relation to the *Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) 2018-19*, as previously considered by the Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee*.* The two objectives for the current session were:

– to explore and better understand students' experiences of distance and online learning. Activity had been linked to the following related work:

- the Digital Estate project;
- the current Student-Facing Services Review, *Delivery of Support Services to Off-Campus Students*; and
- early discussions to define an RGU Pedagogy Statement;

– to explore and better understand students' involvement in enhancements to campus services. Directors of the support services would be meeting with the Sabbatical Officers to drive the work forward.

It was confirmed that the *Student Partnership Agreement (SPA)* was distinct from the broader *Partnership at RGU* brand, the former being primarily concerned with RGU: Union, Student Life and DELTA, whilst the latter was University-wide. There did, however, seem to be a lack of mention of activities with other Departments and Schools. For instance, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council were both actively encouraging student engagement in planning, outcome agreements and business plans.

The Committee also proposed that all Schools and Departments should have the opportunity to input to the formulation of the annual SPA objectives. It was **agreed** the Director of Student Life would organise a short-life working group to develop and share emerging themes that might inform the SPA objectives. Members of the Committee and RGU: Union would be invited to join the group.

Mr F Antoniazzi

4.5 **Quality Events**

The Committee noted:

– *Review, Validation and Professional Body Event Outcomes*, for onward reporting to Academic Council and the Board of Governors; and

– *Programme of Quality Events: Sessions 2018-19 – 2023-24.*

AC Report
[18.06.19]

4.6 **December 2019-20 Examinations**

The Committee **approved** the following request from the Central Timetabling Team:

> To allow our Estates' teams time to prepare the campus for the December 2019-20 exams, we require your support. As each classroom in the Sir Ian Wood Building, the Ishbel Gordon Building and the Aberdeen Business School building is individually laid out to meet exam specifications, access to classrooms is required by Estates from noon on Friday 6th December 2019. This means that any teaching requests between 12:00-17:00 on this date should be rescheduled to an alternative date and time. Any which cannot be moved will be roomed in Garthdee House Annexe, subject to availability. We thank you in advance for your understanding and flexibility.

Ms J Mifsud

4.7 **Staff Acting as External Examiners Elsewhere 2018-19**

The Committee noted a report from the Department for Governance and Academic Quality, and observed it was a useful resource for identifying existing links with institutions and organisations.

5. **EXTERNAL QUALITY ISSUES**

5.1 **Sector Developments**

The Convener advised the Committee that a number of issues had recently been discussed by the Executive and, as a result, this item had been referred to the June 2019 meeting of Academic Council.

5.2 **Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR)**

An ELIR4 Steering Group would be established in the summer of 2019, to lead preparations for the ELIR events, scheduled for 17 February 2021 and the week commencing 19 or 26 April 2021[1]. If Committee members wished to volunteer to join the Group, they were encouraged to contact the Assistant Chief Academic Officer.

QAEC Members to Mrs V Strachan

5.3 **Quality Enhancement Theme: Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience**

The Director for Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access updated the Committee on progress with the University's involvement in the three year Quality Enhancement Theme project, *Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience*. The End of Year 2 Report would be submitted by 31 May 2019.

Priorities during the year had been continuing a number of Year projects, in addition to new strands:

− *Supporting our Course Leaders [Sector Strand: Optimising Evidence]*: This project had engaged with the activity of the collaborative cluster and sought to:

▪ understand what constituted an effective 'evidence-base' for Course Leaders, in support of both discharging their duties and pursuing enhancement activity;

---

[1] Date will be confirmed once Aberdeen public holiday announced.

- support effective interpretation of this evidence-base to empower appropriate interventions;
- facilitate the sharing of practice across our subject areas.

– *Development of 'Borderless Learning' [Sector Strand: Student Engagement]:* this project identified, analysed and discussed data pertaining to online learning in order to inform course development, assure excellence of provision and to provide a high quality experience for students. It also developed an understanding of 'what works' for current students in order to inform the ambitions for growth.

– *Understanding the Graduate Apprentice student experience [Sector Strand: Student demographics, retention and attainment]*: this project explored the experiences of students, employers and staff to understand areas of positive practice, as well as areas for development.

5.4 **Quality Code**

The Committee noted a report from the Deputy Academic Registrar regarding the publication in 2018 of the revised *Quality Code*. Institutions in Scotland would be reviewed with reference to the revised *Quality Code* from August 2019.

The *Quality Code* 2018 had three elements that, when combined, provide a reference point for effective quality assurance:

– *Expectations* express the outcomes providers should achieve in setting and maintaining the <u>standards</u> of their awards, and for managing the <u>quality</u> of their provision. There were two *Expectations* for standards, and two *Expectations* for quality. These were mandatory for all UK providers.

– *Practices* representing effective ways of working that underpinned the delivery of the *Expectations*, and would deliver positive outcomes for students:

  - *Core practices*, representing effective ways of working that underpinned the delivery of the *Expectations* and resulted in positive outcomes for students, and which were mandatory for all UK providers. There are four *Core Practices* for standards, and nine *Core Practices* for quality;

  - *Common practices* focused on enhancement and were mandatory for all Scottish providers. There was one *Common Practice* for standards, and three *Common Practices* for quality.

– *Advice and Guidance* designed to support providers in meeting the mandatory requirements of the *Quality Code*, by providing approaches to developing and maintaining effective quality assurance practices. The *Advice and Guidance* would not be viewed as compliance indicators by the QAA.

A table mapping the *Expectations* and *Practices* to the 12 *Themes* was also provided.

Work would be undertaken to complete a mapping of the University's policies and practices to the *Expectations* and *Practices*, taking appropriate cognisance of the *Advice and Guidance*, for submission to the Committee's next meeting (8 November 2019).

QAEC Holding File [08.11.19]

5.5 **National Student Survey (NSS)**

The NSS closed on 30 April 2019 and the University had achieved an overall response rate of 80%. Results would be provided in July, with full source data available to inform the *Annual Appraisal Process*.

5.6   **QAA Annual Engagement**

The Committee noted a record of the discussion at the meeting held on 5 March 2019.

6.   **SUB-COMMITTEES**

6.1   **Academic Regulations Sub-Committee**

Consideration was given to a report from the meeting held on 24 April 2019.

6.1.1   *Disclosure of Criminal Convictions*

The University Solicitor had prepared a report for the Sub-Committee relating to the *Disclosure of Criminal Convictions and Appeals Procedures for Applicants*. This highlighted that, in 2018, UCAS had removed the requirement for all applicants to declare if they had any relevant unspent criminal convictions. The reason for this was twofold: to ensure that the UCAS application process did not unfairly discourage certain applicants and to ensure that UCAS only collected necessary and legally compliant information.

Work had progressed on updating the University's internal processes and *Terms and Conditions of Admission and Enrolment* to ensure that they were compliant with the *General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679* ("GDPR"), the *Data Protection Act 2018* and the *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974*. In doing so, the University had been one of a number of universities which had received legal advice about the GDPR, changes to the UCAS requirements and balancing the rights of applicants while safeguarding the University's existing student population.

Once finalised, the revised *Admissions Policy* would be submitted to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee for approval.

It was noted that *Fitness to Practise* procedures might also need review.

Recommended to Academic Council:

AC Report
[18.06.19]

From Session 2019-20, *Regulation A2: Admission and Enrolment*, paragraph 1, be amended as follows [new text underlined]:

1.   **PRINCIPLES OF ADMISSION**

1.1   The principal academic criterion for determining a candidate's suitability for admission to a course within the University is that there is a reasonable expectation that he/she will be able to fulfil the learning outcomes of the course, meet any relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements and achieve the standard required for the award.

1.2   The admissions policy of the University seeks to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants.

1.3   All applicants shall be required to declare on his/her application form whether he/she is currently an enrolled student of the University or has previously been so. Failure to accurately complete the declaration

may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with *Regulation A3, Section 2: Student Misconduct Procedure*, and may result in termination of enrolment.

1.4   Applicants shall declare criminal convictions in accordance with the relevant application process for their chosen course of study. Offers may be withdrawn, or enrolments terminated if, as determined by the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body, or by a University risk assessment, convictions prevent applicants from undertaking their course.

6.1.2   *Appeals Procedure for Applicants*

In the course of reviewing *Regulation A2*, the opportunity was taken to amend *Schedule 2.1 Appeals Procedures for Applicants* to:

−   distinguish between the formal/informal elements of the appeals procedure which would provide further emphasis on the requirement for applicants to seek informal feedback in the first instance; and to

−   replace the Dean of Student Recruitment and Admissions on the University Admission Appeal Panel with the Deputy Academic Registrar. This would add a further robustness to the process.

Recommended to Academic Council:

From Session 2019-20, *Regulation A2: Admission and Enrolment*, *Schedule 2.1*, be amended as follows [new text underlined, deleted text struck-through]:

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   The University is committed to providing a high level of service to all applicants during the application and admission process.

2.   INFORMAL FEEDBACK

~~1.1~~2.1   Any applicant who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an application should in the first instance seek feedback in accordance with the *Applicant Feedback Procedure.* If the applicant remains dissatisfied following receipt of the feedback then the applicant may formally appeal the outcome in accordance with paragraph 3 below. ~~seek a reconsideration of the outcome of the application by submitting an~~ *~~Admission Appeal Form~~*~~.~~

3.2   Stage Two: Continuation of Appeal

3.2.1   If an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage One Appeal then he/she may choose to continue with the Appeal by submitting the *Admissions Appeal Form – Continuation of Appeal* to the *Deputy Academic Registrar* *~~Dean of Student Recruitment and Admissions~~.*

6.1.3   *Transfer of Enrolment to Another Course*

The wording of *Regulation A1, paragraph 13.2*, currently implied that a Course/Programme Management Team for a course that a student wished to transfer *from* had the ability to deny a student's request to leave the course and transfer to another one. The Sub-Committee was of the view this was not appropriate. The revised wording was designed to clarify that the responsibility for approving any transfer would rest with the Course/Programme Management Team for the course to which the student was seeking to transfer. In addition, as transfer was a form of admission, the reference to the appeals process had been revised to more accurately reflect that any appeal should be considered in accordance with the *Appeals Procedure for Applicants*.

The Sub-Committee had clarified that whilst transfer was a form of admission to a course, it was an internal process and so there was no requirement for a transferring student to complete a new application form. However, it was agreed that the text within *Regulation A2 - Schedule 2.1 Appeals Procedure for Applicants* should make reference to the *Appeals Procedure for Applicants* also applying to those students transferring between courses within the University.

There were potential UKVI ramifications in relation to a student transferring between courses and, therefore, it was important that any students seeking a transfer liaised with an International Student Advisor. It was agreed that this should be made clear in the Regulation.

Recommended to Academic Council:

From Session 2019-20, *Regulation A2: Admission and Enrolment[2]* be amended as follows [new text underlined, deleted text struck-through]:

13.   Transfer

13.1   A student may transfer between courses leading to an award at the same level as that for which he/she was initially enrolled.

13.2   Any such transfer shall require the permission of the Course/Programme Management Team for the course to which the student is seeking to transfer responsible for each of the courses. Where such permission is withheld, a student may appeal in accordance with *Regulation A2, Schedule 2.1 Appeals Procedure for Applicants*. the first instance to the Head(s) the School(s) responsible for the courses concerned. A student may subsequently appeal to the *Student Appeals Committee* (see *Regulation A3, Section 1: Academic Appeal (Awards and Progression) Procedure*), operating with the authority of Academic Council, against the withholding of permission by the Head of School responsible for the course from which he/she is seeking transfer or to which transfer is being sought.

13.3   The Course/Programme Management Team responsible for the course to which the student is transferring shall determine the conditions of transfer.

---

[2] Regulation A2: Admission retitled *Regulation A2: Admission and Enrolment* from Session 2019-20 and the Regulation relating to course transfer would be relocated from *Regulation A1: Courses* to *Regulation A2: Admission and Enrolment*.

13.4   Transferring between courses may impact on a student's Tier 4 student visa status. Therefore, prior to seeking a transfer, international students studying on a Tier 4 student visa should consult with an International Student Adviser.

6.1.4   *Regulation A3 – Section 2: Student Misconduct Procedure*

Currently, Misconduct Hearings for non-academic misconducts relating to student accommodation, i.e. behaviours which constituted 'Serious and/or persistent breaches of the University's *Conditions of Lease',* were considered by the Accommodation Manager, or nominee. All other forms of non-academic misconduct were considered by the relevant Head of School. This approach had been in operation for a number of years but there were concerns that the Accommodation Manager would have no knowledge of a student's previous record of misconduct or any professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements relating to the student's course of study, and so was effectively operating in isolation. As a result, there could be missed opportunities to identify issues or patterns of behaviour which might impact on a student continuing on a course. To address this, it was proposed that *all* misconducts were considered by the relevant Head of School.

In the future, Student Accommodation would refer an item to the relevant Head of School for investigation and the Head of School would be responsible for determining whether the case warranted investigation. It would be reasonable for the Accommodation Manager, or nominee, to be included in the Misconduct Hearing. Minor misdemeanours, such as a dirty flat or noise issues, would continue to be addressed in-house by Student Accommodation through their existing procedures.

Recommended to Academic Council:

AC Report
[18.06.19]

From Session 2019-20, *Regulation A3 - Section 2* be amended to reflect that all misconducts would be investigated by the relevant Head of School.

6.1.5   *Self-Certification*

Following the Committee's support, in principle, on 27 February 2019, for a self-certification process for students, the Sub-Committee had established a working group to progress the work.

6.2   **Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee**

6.2.1   *Items for Noting*

The Committee noted a report from the meeting held on 30 April 2019 and, in particular, the following:

‒ *Review of Student-Facing Support Services*: the Sub-Committee received a presentation from Mr Edward Pollock and the Convener on progress with the theme for Session 2018-19: *Delivery of Support Services to Off-Campus Students*. It was noted that a Review Event had been scheduled for 19 June 2019. Members also received an update from Ms Emma Corry, Head of Operations, Student Recruitment and Admissions, on progress with actions arising two years on from the completion of the 2016-17 Review: *The Student Journey: from Enquiry to Enrolment.*

– *Student Partnership Agreement (SPA):* progress against the agreed objectives was discussed.

– *Personal Tutor System:* in line with the University Policy on Personal Tutoring, School Academic Boards had been asked to provide a report confirming the steps taken by the School to "monitor and ensure the effectiveness of arrangements in respect of the Personal Tutorial System." The Sub-Committee undertook a review of the reports submitted. Overall, the Sub-Committee was reassured that the majority of Schools had satisfactory arrangements in place. (See also item 6.2.2 below).

– *Timetabled Activity on Wednesday Afternoons:* the Sub-Committee considered data pertaining to Wednesday afternoon 'teaching or related activities'. There were ongoing concerns that the agreed policy on Wednesday afternoon activity was not being adhered to and the Sub-Committee would seek further information to ensure that the University understood what was actually happening in practice.

The Committee **agreed** that the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee would be asked to oversee further consideration of issues relating to the timetabling of academic activities, and the impact on the student experience and co-curricular activities. It was understood teaching on Wednesday afternoons largely arose due to the availability of resources.

Mr J Dunphy & Ms L Ginsberg

6.2.2   *Personal Tutor System*

The Committee considered a report on the *Personal Tutor System Review* from the Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee. The revised *University Policy on Personal Tutoring* stated that School Academic Boards would: "Provide an annual report to QAEC confirming the steps taken by the School to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of arrangements in respect of the Personal Tutorial System." A proforma was used to assist Heads of School to review the arrangements, share any best practice, as well as provide feedback to the University on the need for any further actions that could be taken by support departments to improve the system. Reports were considered by the School Academic Boards prior to submission.

The Sub-Committee was overall encouraged by the enhancements implemented across a number of Schools:

– A number of Schools had taken the opportunity to review and adapt their approaches in consultation with student representatives, notably the School of Creative and Cultural Business, the Law School, Scott Sutherland School, and School of Computing Science and Digital Media. All of these Schools stated that they would review the new scheme over summer and make changes accordingly.

– The majority of Schools expected all academic staff to act as tutors with an average of 15-25 students per tutor. Only one School indicated that there were no set meetings organised, with responsibility for personal tutoring held by Course Leaders and students expected to be proactive in arranging meetings.

– Some Schools were utilising *CampusMoodle* to support both staff and students especially around guidance on the operation of the scheme within the School.

– The majority of Schools allocated a tutor at Stage 1 who endeavoured to stay with the student throughout their studies.

- A number of Schools were cognisant of professional standards, expectations or guidelines in designing their approach. This seemed to ensure that meetings took place and conversations followed a structure.

- Some Schools set expectations of an initial group meeting with arrangements made for individual meetings within the early part of semester 1. Often these arrangements were supported by administration staff.

- Changes in the approach within the Law School had led to a 60% increase in students knowing who their tutor was and a 34% increase in the number of students taking up the opportunity to meet a tutor.

- Measurement of effectiveness was normally through a combination of analysis of *Student Experience Questionnaires* and *National Student Survey* qualitative comments, discussion with student representatives, as well as anecdotal feedback from staff.

- A number of Schools stated that the *Scottish Mental Health First Aid* training had been helpful, as was the additional sessions provided by DELTA and Student Life specifically designed to support academics acting in the role of personal tutor.

The Sub-Committee had been unable to satisfy itself, due to the brevity of two reports, that appropriate personal tutor processes were operating effectively in two Schools, and the Sub-Committee's Convener would follow this up directly with the Schools concerned.

Mr F Antoniazzi

The Committee **agreed** Schools would benefit from more detailed guidance on the baseline arrangements that the University expected, in order that future reporting could improve. Furthermore, the Committee **agreed** that Schools would, from 2019-20 onwards, be required to provide their reports on the effectiveness of their personal tutoring arrangements through the *Annual Appraisal Process*. This would enable School Academic Boards to reflect appropriately on student feedback, and for actions and enhancements to be monitored through the School Academic Boards' *Action and Enhancement Plans*.

Governance and Academic Quality

6.3 **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee**

The Committee noted a report from the meeting held on 26 April 2019 and, in particular, the following:

- *Ad-Hoc Staff Development:* the Sub-Committee had considered the importance of providing staff development and training opportunities for ad-hoc staff, such as eTutors, permanent staff who work one day a week, hospital staff and research staff. A bank of practical resources was in the process of being collated on *CampusMoodle*, and a short-life working group would review these materials.

- *Events Schedule:* internal sessions were being organised by some Schools in a variety of formats, such as formal learning and teaching events and lunch and learn sessions. As these were already running and staff were keen to engage with other Schools, it was agreed to create a learning and teaching schedule to share with members.

- *10 Minute Spotlights:* the Sub-Committee's meeting had contained two spotlight sessions, which had been introduced to allow colleagues from the wider community to attend and share their effective practice in learning and teaching. Firstly, Mrs Susan Lawrie presented on the learning and teaching methods adopted in the Aberdeen Business School Graduate Apprenticeship courses. Secondly, Ms Jo-Anne Tait and Dr Roger McDermott presented on a newly created Design Symposium.

- *RGU Pedagogy Statement:* an update on the RGU Pedagogy Statement Working Group was provided by Professor David McClean and Mrs Julie Strachan. There had been a positive and authentic level of engagement from the 30+ members of the Group, comprising representation from all Schools within the University. Following a structured process conducted through three workshops to date, work was underway in sub-groups to propose draft frameworks as a basis for defining the final proposal for the *Pedagogy Statement*, at the working group's next meeting at the end of May. (See also item 6.4 below).

6.4   **RGU Signature Pedagogy Working Group**

The Committee considered a report from the working group which provided an update on progress to date. It was anticipated that once an iteration of the document had been shared with the Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience, it would be circulated to Committee members for comment. The intention was for the final statement to be ready for publication and dissemination to staff by September 2019, with a view to phased implementation in the 2019-20 session.

Ms J Strachan & Prof D McClean

The Committee wished to highlight that the following Institution-Led Subject Reviews would be taking place in 2019-20, and staff in the appropriate Schools would benefit from early sight of the finalised documents to assist with preparations:

Ms J Strachan & Prof D McClean

29 - 31 October 2019	Nursing; Midwifery and Paramedic Practice (School of Nursing and Midwifery)
12 - 14 November 2019	Architectural Technology; Architecture; Business and Management; Land, Construction, Real Estate and Surveying (Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment)
19 - 21 November 2019	Psychology; Social Work; Social Sciences (School of Applied Social Studies)

The Committee also **agreed** that explicit reference to the TEF Gold award should be removed and replaced with "To guide development and change at an institutional level with a view to retaining a reputation for excellence".

Ms J Strachan & Prof D McClean

7.   **QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

7.1   **Committee Evaluation – Session 2018-19**

The Committee's *Annual Report – Session 2018-19*, containing an analysis of responses from the *Committee Evaluation Questionnaire* and of members' attendance, was noted together with the *Annual Report on the Evaluation of the Sub-Committees – Session 2018-19*. There were no items it wished to bring to the attention of Academic Council.

AC Report [18.06.19]

7.2   **Compositions and Memberships**

The Committee also considered the *Membership Lists 2018-19* for the Committee, the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee, the Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee, together with an extract from *Organisational Regulation O4* concerning the remit and composition of the Committee and its Sub-Committees.

When the compositions of the Committee and Sub-Committees had last been revised in September 2016, Heads of School had been asked to identify one senior academic, one course leader, and one member of staff actively involved in the enhancement of teaching and learning and/or of the student experience. This pool of staff had then been distributed across the Committee's and Sub-Committees' memberships to ensure an appropriate balance on each. Following internal discussions, however, it had been questioned whether this continued to provide an appropriate mix and level of discussion at meetings. It was **agreed**, therefore, that an amendment to the Committee's composition would be recommended to Academic Council.

Recommended to Academic Council:

AC Report
[18.06.19]

From Session 2019-20, the composition of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee be amended as follows, and *Organisational Regulation* O4 be revised accordingly [new text underlined]:

Ex Officio
Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience (Convener)
Assistant Chief Academic Officer
Director of Academic Administration
Director of Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access
Director of Information Technology
Director of Library Services
Director of Student Life
A RGU Union President

Ordinary Members
One <u>senior</u> academic representative from each School <u>who is an *ex officio* member of the respective School Academic Board</u>

In attendance
Academic Quality Officers

The Committee also **approved** amendments to the following compositions from Session 2019-20:

Academic Regulations Sub-Committee

Ms V Strachan &
Ms L Jack

Ex Officio
Assistant Chief Academic Officer (Convener)
Deputy Academic Registrar
Director of Academic Administration
RGU Union Administrator
University Solicitor

Ordinary Members

~~Up to seven~~ An academic representative ~~s, with no more than one~~ from each academic School

In addition

The Convener(s) of the *Student Appeals Committee* shall attend as appropriate.

Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee

Mr F Antoniazzi &
Mrs A Smart

Ex Officio

Director of Student Life (Convener)
Assistant Chief Academic Officer
Director of Academic Administration
Director of Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access
Director of Estates and Property Services
Director of Information Technology
Director of Library Services
Head of Employability and Professional Enrichment
RGU Union General Manager
A RGU Union President

Ex officio members may appoint nominees

Ordinary Members

Six Student School Officers
~~Six~~ An academic representative ~~s, with no more than one~~ from each academic School

The opportunity would also be taken to review the remits and *Calendars of Business* of the Committee and its Sub-Committees, prior to next session.

Prof E Hancock &
Governance and
Academic Quality

8. **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Committee viewed the *Strategy in Action* video, which had first been presented at the Inaugural University Public Event on 1 May 2019, an event held in accordance with the *Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016*.

9. **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS – SESSION 2019-20**

Friday 8 November 2019, 2.00pm in N204, Sir Ian Wood Building
Wednesday 12 February 2020, 2.00pm in N204, Sir Ian Wood Building
Monday 18 May 2020, 2.00pm in N204, Sir Ian Wood Building

The *Institutional Annual Appraisal* meeting of the *ex officio* members of the Committee, with others in attendance, would be held on Wednesday 25 September 2019, 2.00pm in H230, The Ishbel Gordon Building.

10.   **ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS**

An amendment to the English language qualifications accepted for admission to the University, and approved by Convener's Action, was noted.

11.   **QAA**

11.1   **Focus On: Graduate Skills – 5 June 2019, The Studio, Glasgow**

The one-day event would present good practice and share current approaches to skills development. It would feature a keynote presentation from Professor Simon Barrie (Pro-Vice Chancellor for Learning Futures, Western Sydney University) and presentations sharing the outcomes of two commissioned research projects on student, graduate, and employer views on graduate skills, encompassing three themes:

- readiness for employment: how can we most effectively embed skills inside and outside the curriculum, including digital skills, for graduates from all disciplines?
- equality and diversity: how can we support students from all backgrounds and characteristics to develop skills that will help them to secure and sustain success in the workplace?
- global perspectives: how do we ensure that all Scottish graduates are enabled to live and work in a global society, and that the Scottish sector is informed by global developments?

The Principal was presenting and participating in an 'invite-only' *Focus On: Graduate Skills - shaping strategy* follow up event on Thursday 6 June 2019.

11.2   **HE Data Landscape Resource**

The *HE Data Landscape Resource* comprised 13 individual data guides on key data sources, collections and applications that could support the use of data in key quality activities. Further information was available at www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/en/current-enhancement-theme/defining-and-capturing-evidence/data-landscape-resource.

12.   **BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE**

The University's *British Sign Language (BSL) Plan*, required by the *British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015*, was available at www3.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity/rgu-bsl-action-plan/rgu-bsl-action-plan/. This identified a number of actions being undertaken by Support Departments and Schools to address the requirements of the Act.

13.   **GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**

The University's *Gender Action Plan* was available at www3.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity/equality-reports/equality-reports/.

Professor E Hancock, C