

ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

**TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

Minute of the meeting held on 16 January 2020.

**Present:** Ms F Roberts (Convener), Ms M Buchan, Ms K Cross, Dr M Goua, Dr S Henderson, Mr B Jackson, Dr R McGregor, Mr I Morrison, Ms J Nicol, Ms B Paver, Ms Alesia Du Plessis, Dr J Scott, Ms J Tait, Ms S Thiesen and Dr F Work.

**Apologies:** Mr E Akerele, Ms G Bugeag, Mr J Dunphy, Mr G Forbes, Ms L Gavine, Ms L Gibbons-Wood, Ms S Lawrie, Mr M Lumsden, Ms A Smart, Ms J Strachan, Ms C Tyndall and Dr M Zarb.

**In Attendance:** Ms L Binnie (for item 3d), Ms L Ginsberg (Secretary), Mr T Lauterbach, Dr K Martzoukou, Professor D McClean (for item 4) and Ms D Wynne.

**1. SHARING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE**

The Teaching Excellence Fellows (TEFs) facilitated an informal session that allowed members to share examples of their effective practice. The session began with a presentation followed by a world café setting where members categorised their examples by:

- Assessment
- Feedback
- Technology
- Workshops/Face-to-Face Teaching

The Convener thanked the TEFs for the helpful activity to identify collaboration opportunities. It was agreed members' examples would be circulated with the Minute.

**Action**

**Secretary**

**2. MINUTE AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Convener welcomed Mr Billy Jackson, School of Nursing and Midwifery, and Ms Alesia Du Plessis, North East Scotland College of Learning (NESCol), to their first meeting of the Sub-Committee.

The Minute of the meeting held on 9 October 2019 [reference TLASC/20/1] was approved.

The following matters arising were considered on review of the Minute and the Matters Arising Report.

**2.1 IT Developments [TLASC/20/1/4.1]**

The review of the student voice forum to improve the sharing of IT development information with students was noted as outstanding. It was agreed an update would be sought from Mr Emmanuel Akerele.

**Secretary**

**2.2 Digital Estate Developments [TLASC/20/1/4.2.4]**

It was agreed the demonstration of the LinkedIn Learning platform would be deferred to the April Sub-Committee meeting.

**Ms J Strachan**

**2.3 Number of Answers in Examinations**

It was noted guidance on this topic previously endorsed by the Sub-Committee had been emailed to Heads of School and School Admin Managers. It was agreed to ensure all School staff were aware of the guidance.

**Members**

## 2.4 **Quality Enhancement Theme**

Progress on year 3 activity to date was noted, including alerting members to priority 3; the upcoming review of the Online Learning Baseline.

## 2.5 **Use of Reading Week**

It was noted that the use of the Reading Week published in the Academic Calendar had been referred to Academic Council for consideration and the recommendation to standardise Reading Weeks had been approved at its November meeting. Members welcomed this update and recognised the need for consistency.

## 3. **DIGITAL ESTATE**

### 3.1 **Recent Digital Estate Work**

A Phase 1 impact report from Ms Jacqui Nicol was considered, which comprised the following four strands.

#### 3.1.1 *CampusMoodle Upgrade*

The project was a large-scale upgrade to CampusMoodle in summer 2019, which impacted all students and staff in the University. Complexity was increased by the priorities identified through the Digital Estate consultation, not least, the decision to modernise the visual layout to match the increasing expectations of learners. Modernising the layout of CampusMoodle required:

- A major technical redesign.
- Rigorous testing of all components and content from each School.
- An extensive programme of communications to help students and staff transition to the new environment.

Initial feedback from students was positive with learners noting a better experience of the digital estate due to the sleeker design.

#### 3.1.2 *CampusMoodle Institutional Welcome Space*

The project designed a modern, simplified and dynamic access portal that provided quick and easy access to student welcome and support information. The new welcome space within CampusMoodle provided an institutional induction for all students, both on-campus and for those studying fully online.

#### 3.1.3 *CampusMoodle 'At Desk' Advisory Service*

The project offered a bookable CampusMoodle 'at desk' advisory service for half hour appointments to provide support for academic colleagues over the first few weeks of Semester 1. Topics covered included:

- Moodle
- Blackboard Collaborate
- Panopto
- Online assignments
- Online learning activities
- Learning content
- Implementing the RGU Online Learning Baseline

The new mode of support had been well received from those that had utilised the service, although it was noted staff uptake was low and the timing of the service was discussed as a potential barrier.

### 3.1.4 *LinkedIn Learning*

The project had developed a pilot rollout with 999 licences to measure the effectiveness of LinkedIn Learning in developing the digital skills of trial users across the University. It commenced in August 2019 to consider effective pedagogic use of the service in a supported way for:

- Online Learning Developers and a number of academic staff.
- Students on identified courses which placed high value on digital professional skills.
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation Accelerator programme team members.

600 students from the School of Creative and Cultural Business, Gray's School of Art and Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment were part of the pilot following their learning resources being evaluated by their Schools. Initial feedback from members was positive with notable student engagement.

The pilot was due to be reviewed in spring 2020 and it was agreed a close out report would be considered at the October Sub-Committee meeting.

The availability of spare licenses was raised and whilst the majority had been assigned, members were encouraged to speak to Ms Nicol if they were interested in joining the pilot.

The Convener thanked Ms Nicol for the successful work produced on the Digital Estate Project in collaboration with Schools and support departments.

**Holding File**

**Members**

### 3.2 **Building Understanding of the Digital Student Experience**

The paper on 'Building Understanding of the Digital Student Experience' was considered. The project analysed existing evidence, and gathered new evidence, about how students experienced the digital environment, digital tools and digital resources to support their learning.

Current students focussed on the module-related content and components on CampusMoodle, which highlighted opportunities to enhance communication and collaboration through effectively designed learning content and activities. Future learners indicated they identified themselves to be equipped and willing to study with digital technologies, and that they found technology easy to use in a variety of formats.

### 3.3 **Recommendations from the Student-Facing Support Services Review**

The recommendations from the Student-Facing Support Services Review: *Delivery of Support Services to Off-Campus Students* were considered. The focus was on software requirements for online learning through a dedicated vision and implementation plan. It was noted the Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access (DELTA) and IT Services were in discussion to jointly work on coordinated funding proposals.

### 3.4 **Future Vision of Online Learning**

The Convener welcomed Ms Laura Binnie to the meeting. In line with the Student-Facing Support Services Review: *Delivery of Support Services to Off-Campus Students* recommendation, Ms Binnie provided an update on the project to produce a future vision of online learning:

- The project had commenced in April 2019 by forming a group of Academic Strategic Leads/Programme Leaders/Online Learning Developers interested in the digital estate identified by Heads of School, and DELTA colleagues.
- The focus was on both fully online learning students and full-time students that included online learning as part of their course.

- Three future-focussed themes had been identified; digital culture across the University, the Schools and within collaborative opportunities.
- Following a number of consultation meetings with Schools, online development meetings were held in December and January.

Members raised key points for consideration when developing an online learner implementation plan:

- How students were meant to learn in regards to an agreed model or approach to online learning.
- The generational factors involved in online learning, for example, school leavers versus returning students, who had different motivations and needs.
- How students were supposed to access online platforms and the need to avoid assuming all students can afford technology.
- The level of IT literacy or digital skills expected of students and the potential impact on wellbeing if it were assumed all students could cope with the technology.

Overall, members agreed it was important to have a vision and welcomed the development work. For further information or involvement in the project, members were encouraged to contact Ms Binnie directly.

Members

#### 4. **RGU LEARNING AND TEACHING FRAMEWORK**

The new Learning and Teaching Framework was noted. The Convener welcomed Professor David McClean to the meeting. Professor McClean provided members with an update on the Framework's recent development and future rollout:

- The working group tasked with defining a framework had involved two academic staff from each School.
- The purpose of the Framework was to create cohesion within core aspects of learning and teaching that was applicable across a wide breadth of subjects and courses with a focus on whole person education.
- The finalised Framework was deliberately short to provide an accessible and visual document.
- In addition to a managed communications launch, Heads of School and Course Leaders had received the Framework electronically and it was uploaded to the DELTA CampusMoodle page and the University website.
- A series of upcoming showcase workshops had been organised for Course Leaders.
- The next phase involved Schools writing contextualised plans for how the Framework would be implemented at School level.
- Student engagement opportunities was discussed and it was noted Student School Officers (SSOs) would be involved once the initial School plans had been drafted.

A number of members were part of the Framework Working Group and it was noted that the exercise worked well, with thanks to all involved, including Professor McClean and Ms Julie Strachan who had led on the project.

#### 5. **REFERRED BUSINESS**

Three items referred from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) were considered along with proposed actions, which would be reported back to QAEC.

Secretary

##### 5.1 **Satisfaction in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Students**

The discrepancies of satisfaction levels amongst BAME students required the outcomes from the student focus group in order to assist and direct the Sub-

Committee's investigation. It was agreed Ms Kirsty Campbell, Learning Analytics and Partnership Lead, would liaise with Ms Ursula Ojiji for an update on the work.

Ms K  
Campbell

## 5.2 Outcome Classification Descriptions

The *Outcome Classification Descriptions for FHEQ Level 7 and FQHEIS Level 10 Degrees* were considered as additional guidance to adopt for staff. It was noted the Descriptions offered more in-depth information and would be helpful, for example, in the construction of marking grids. The rollout was discussed and it would be distributed in a number of areas, for example, within DELTA academic development training opportunities. It was agreed to draft a list of potential resource locations to inform an implementation plan.

Dr R  
McGregor/  
Secretary

## 5.3 Guidance on Recording of Lectures

The revised *Guidance on Recording of Lectures* was to become a policy with a review of related policies that could usefully be included such as the *Lecture Capture Policy* and the *CampusMoodle VLE Site Policy*. It was agreed there may be other documentation to consider and these should be collated and reviewed as part of a scoping project.

Ms J  
Nicol/Dr K  
Martzoukou

## 6. QUALITY CODE MAPPING

The upcoming mapping activity to the new *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* as a reference point for effective quality assurance was noted.

Two Themes were considered in more detail; Assessment; and Learning and Teaching, as they directly linked to work of the Sub-Committee. Mapping groups would be established for reviewing the draft mappings to each Theme with the following agreed members.

Secretary

Assessment:

- Ms Laura Ginsberg (Lead), Ms Donna Wynne, Ms Julie Strachan, Ms Alison Smart and Ms Fiona McLean Whyte.

Learning and Teaching:

- Ms Laura Ginsberg (Lead), Ms Julie Strachan, TEFs (Mr Thorsten Lauterbach, Ms Susan Lawrie, Dr Konstantina Martzoukou, Ms Fiona Roberts, Dr Fiona Work, Ms Donna Wynne) and Dr Jonathan Scott.

In addition, the Assessment Policy and associated suite of Assessment Guidance would form part of the evidence base for a number of the Guiding Principles in the Assessment Theme. The documentation was due for review and it was agreed to establish a working group of the Sub-Committee to undertake this work with the following agreed members.

Secretary

- Ms Laura Ginsberg, Ms Julie Strachan, Dr Rachel McGregor, Ms Alison Smart, Ms Donna Wynne, Dr Marie Goua, Ms Emma Gray, Dr Sarah Henderson, Ms Annette Murray and Dr Fiona Work.

## 7. A+ GRADING

There was substantive discussion on the possibility of introducing an A+ grade into the University Grading Scheme raised to the Sub-Committee by one School. The key points discussed were summarised as follows.

- External Examiners in the School had suggested they might wish to consider an A+ grade in regards to differentiating between high performing students.
- The University Grading Scheme as set out in Schedule 4.1 of Academic Regulation A4: *Assessment and Recommendations of Assessment Boards*

- defined each A-F grade and did not attribute percentages to these letter grades.
- There was built-in flexibility within Module Performance Descriptors to account for pedagogical needs. For example, using percentages was dependent on the nature of the assessment or professional body requirements. In these cases, overall module grades were then converted to conform to the University Grading Scheme.
- Earlier stages in the marking process could be reviewed as an alternative to amending any grading scheme, including the ongoing enhancement of assessment criteria/rubrics in use or quality of feedback to students.

Overall, members were not persuaded to seek the addition of an A+ in the University Grading Scheme. However, it highlighted an opportunity to share current practice across Schools in this area. It was agreed an exploratory paper, to include examples collated from members, would be considered at the April Sub-Committee meeting.

Secretary/  
Members

## 8. STUDENT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The following update on the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) was noted.

The next iteration of the SPA would launch in Semester 2. This change to timing facilitated a further evolution of the evidence-based approach to defining objectives, and to promoting partnership working between students and staff. In line with the University Strategy Map, the draft 2020 partnership objective will support students and staff to better understand our expectations relating to equality, tolerance and respect, as well as develop activities which contribute to RGU's inclusive community.

## 9. EVENTS

The following events were noted.

- 9.1 The RGU Learning and Teaching Conference "RGU Professionals 4.0" on 28 April 2020. Further information was available [here](#).
- 9.2 The Advance HE Learning and Teaching Conference 2020 "Teaching in the spotlight: Creative thinking to enhance the student experience: From curriculum design to student success" on 7-9 July 2020. Further information was available [here](#).

## 10. FELLOWSHIP OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY

There had not been a Panel meeting since the last Sub-Committee meeting so there were no new successful recognitions to note.

## 11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date and time for the next meeting was noted as follows:

- Wednesday 15 April 2020 at 10.00am in N204, Sir Ian Wood Building.

Ms F Roberts, C  
6 February 2020