

## UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

## Academic Structures Implementation Group

Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 28 February 2007 at 9 am in Boyd Orr Committee Room  
321**Present:**

Professor D Watt Convener, Dr J Aitken, Mr D Bennion, Mr I Black, Mr T Guthrie, Professor R Hill, Miss A Macrae (*vice* Ms S Chiodetto), Ms H MacPherson, Mrs M Millard (*vice* Mrs C Mallon), Dr D Moore, Ms S Morrison, Dr T Munck (until 10am), Professor A Nash, Ms H Reid, Mrs J Shearer, Dr A Whittaker, Ms M Wilson.

**In attendance:**

Mrs E Waugh, Mrs T Wilson.

**Welcome**

Professor Watt welcomed all members to this first meeting of the Implementation Group.

**1. Remit and Membership**

The remit and membership as circulated was agreed.

It was confirmed that each faculty representative on the Group was expected to keep the faculty and its constituent departments informed of the Group's decisions, and conversely to keep the Group informed of progress on implementation of the reforms in the faculty and departments, at both undergraduate and taught postgraduate level.

**2. Implementation Plan**

Referring to the circulated Summary of Tasks, Professor Watt sought the views of members on the identification of actions and the proposed timescales for the achievement of actions originating from the recommendations of the Working Group's report.

Ms MacPherson noted there were additional tasks to be undertaken by MIS to ensure that current student records systems would be able to support the changes required with restructuring. She would provide a list to be added to the Implementation Plan with proposed timescales for completion.

**Action: Ms MacPherson**

*2.1 Print key dates in 2008 UG Prospectus*

Professor Nash understood that the paragraph provided by Professor Watt on session dates in 2008-09 had been added by Lynn Bell, Publications Manager, to the 2008 UG Prospectus.

*2.2 Print key dates in 2008 PG Prospectus*

Professor Nash reported that discussions, in which he was involved, were still taking place on the 2008 PG Prospectus.

*2.3 Publish academic year key dates on the University website*

Provisional dates for session 2008 – 09 were available on the website.

### *3.1 Ensure CCIMS can smoothly accommodate course duration changes.*

Course duration, in terms of weeks, is not a field in the existing course database so this change alone would not require a CCIMS proposal.

However, the field 'when taught' referring to semester 1, uses the description - 'September – January' and for semester 2, 'January – June'. This could be easily amended for all courses by MIS.

Similarly, reference to exam diets as January and June could be changed by MIS, assuming that courses currently examining in January were intending to exam in December and course organisers would not make the decision to hold all exams in June.

Ms MacPherson proposed to notify departments of the changes that MIS intended to make to specific fields on a global basis and it would be for departments to identify any further individual changes required to their data.

**Action: Ms MacPherson**

There is no field in CCIMS that defines exam duration but this information may be included in a text field under Summative Assessment.

Where Summative Assessment tables included week numbers for submission of coursework, with an 11-week teaching period, submission dates might vary.

It could not be assumed that existing 3-hour January exams would be reduced to 2 hours in the December diet. Some might be split into two 90-minute exams or might be delayed until the May diet.

None of the above could be changed by MIS as a bulk-update exercise. Departments would have to identify the specific course changes required. It was left open who would be responsible for making such changes.

**Action: Faculty Representatives**

Exam duration information, required for exam timetabling, is notified by departments to Registry. Mr Bennion proposed sending a list of all exam durations in the winter and spring diets to departments for updating for session 2008-09. This information would be required by December 2007 to allow the database to be updated from January 2008. This was essential to allow mock exam timetables to be produced in advance to test the new exam timetabling software.

**Action: Mr Bennion, Faculty Representatives**

It was anticipated that the new course database, which would replace CCIMS from 2008, would hold details on all aspects of courses with links to student records, exam timetabling and room bookings.

### *4.1 Align annual leave year with academic year*

Mr Black reported that this was under discussion with campus trade unions. He anticipated fewer difficulties in coming to agreement on the leave year, provided that satisfactory arrangements were made for the transition.

### *4.2 Negotiate September Fri/Mon working with unions*

Mr Black reported that there was resistance among some support unions to the change of the September holiday, particularly from technicians. It was felt that a minimum staffing approach and good leave management would reduce opposition and aid in a smooth transition. However, some detailed discussions would be required. It would therefore be helpful if he could gauge the level of technical staff required on the Monday to support laboratory classes. While these would be mainly in

Science, Engineering, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, there might also be a requirement for computing technicians in all Faculties. It was noted that a level of janitorial support would be essential.

Faculty representatives were asked to pass to Mr Black, names of the individual(s) in their Faculties who would be in a position to assess the requirement for technical staff.

**Action: Faculty Representatives**

*7.1 – 7.4 Agree new academic year for MBChB, BDS, BN, BVMS*

Representing Medicine, Mrs Millard asked how closely aligned courses in Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing were expected to be to the new structure? Dentistry would be able to conform to the common start date and the earlier graduation date but reducing the current 43 weeks of teaching was not feasible. This also applied to Veterinary Medicine. Mrs Millard was unable to confirm the position for MBChB or BN students.

Professor Watt reminded Mrs Millard of recommendation 7 in the Implementation Plan, approved by Senate –

The University should accept that some programmes, mainly but not exclusively in the Faculties of Education, Medicine, and Veterinary Medicine, cannot at present fit exactly into the standard academic year. In the short term, these faculties in consultation with the Senate Office (and in consultation with FBLS in the case of Medicine) should adopt academic years aligned as closely as possible with the standard academic year. In the longer term, these faculties should take full account of the standard academic year at the next major revisions of the programmes concerned. Any exception to the standard academic year should be approved only if no student will be disadvantaged relative to other students in the same class.

In effect all Faculties were expected to conform to the common start date for new students, undergraduate and PGT, and to the new graduation dates.

It was thought unlikely that the required health checks for all new students in the Faculties of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine could be completed, with results available prior to registration, within the orientation week, even if registration were left until the Friday of that week. It was likely that some students would have to be available for health checks the previous week. Residential Services would need information on the numbers requiring accommodation in advance of the induction week and University Health Service would need to know the requirements to be placed on their service.

**Action: Dental, Medical, Nursing and Veterinary Schools**

*8.1 Revise existing definitions of programme and course*

Completed.

*10.1 Develop and approve generic UG regulation*

As Convener of the Academic Regulations Working Group, Mr Guthrie hoped to have proposals ready for circulation by the end of March. Depending on the time agreed for consultation and the extent of changes required, he thought a more realistic date for completion would be the end of session.

*12.1 Remind faculties and departments of Recommendation 63 (In line with existing policy, every honours, professional and taught masters programme should include at least one compulsory course that is clearly identifiable as independent work.....)*

It was understood that Faculties had already been discussing this. Currently, there was no mechanism for checking curricula, to ensure that all students were undertaking a piece of independent work. Ms MacPherson suggested that MIS would be able to provide this in websurf if sufficient notice were given. Professor Watt recommended that this might be made available at a later date but in the meantime, advisers should check that a project or dissertation appeared in the curriculum of all 4H students, and honours exam boards should ensure that every student has completed a project or dissertation.

Ms Reid queried the timescale by which credit-rated projects should be in place. In IBLS, honours projects were not currently credit-rated. In 12.3 it was proposed that this should be addressed by 2008 while recommendation 11 referred to 2010 as the session by which all revisions to 4H courses should be completed. Professor Watt clarified that, since IBLS already complied with the spirit of Recommendation 63, it need only reform its level 4H course by 2010.

In Mathematics, the final year honours project was worth 15 credits. Dr Moore understood that this was acceptable, using the 'normally' of the clause on credit rating. Professor Watt agreed that deviations from the required credit rating were possible but required Faculty/Board of Studies approval. Professor Nash pointed out that Mathematics could meet the requirement by increasing its project to 30 credits.

*16.1 Add a clause on exam duration to the generic UG regulation*

Mr Guthrie felt that any statement on exam duration should be included in the Code of Assessment. This would avoid repeating the same information throughout Faculty regulations with the potential for the information to be overlooked (or adapted on a local basis?).

It was agreed that this should be referred to the Code of Assessment Working Group.

**Action: Mrs Waugh**

*17.1 Review supply of exam halls in the light of the new academic year*

*17.2 If necessary, identify additional exam halls*

Professor Watt confirmed that these actions were the responsibility of the Clerk of Senate, Registry and Estates and Buildings, not Senate Office as originally noted. Recent meetings had taken place with staff from Registry and Estates and Buildings to assess the exam accommodation likely to be required and ways of meeting the demand. Further meetings were planned.

*21.2 Align transcripts with programme structure*

With all 120-credit honours years being divided into smaller credit-rated courses, there was no longer a need to have a separate screen in websurf for honours options. This raised some difficulties for advising/registration and admission to individual courses. It was not considered desirable in all cases for students to select and enter in their curriculum, their choice of honours courses. Admission was often controlled by departments who had to restrict access to certain courses and wished to reserve the right to select the students to be admitted. Advisers were not in a position to know which courses students would take and final decisions on this were often delayed until some weeks after the start of the semester. To allow registration to be completed, advisers needed a course to approve and the 120-credit course title – such as Mathematics 3H – currently provided this facility.

One possibility was to retain the overall 3H or 4H course titles with no attached credit value. In final year, a 4H entry would also provide a means of recording a student's final classification of award alongside the results of individual courses. MIS needed to know how departments wished to record honours courses as there would be considerable work required to the database to accommodate changes before 2008.

It was agreed that a smaller group, convened by Ms MacPherson should consider this and report back to the Implementation Group. Members would be Mr Guthrie, Professor Hill, Dr Moore, Dr Munck, Ms Reid, Dr Whittaker.

**Action: Ms MacPherson, Mr Guthrie, Professor Hill, Dr Moore, Dr Munck, Ms Reid, Dr Whittaker**

### 3. Communication Plan

It was intended that progress towards implementation of the new structure would be communicated mainly through the website. Minutes of meetings, reports etc would be posted there and as new papers became available, an email would be circulated to alert members of the Implementation Group and other staff included in the circulation list. It was intended that all university services and departments would be included unless their Divisional Head had requested otherwise.

Ms Wilson asked that the student Guardian be added to this list as it would be a useful way of keeping students informed of developments. This was agreed.

**Action: Mrs Waugh**

It was noted that the entry Vice-Principal (Research) should be amended to Office of the Vice-Principal (Research).

Ms Reid suggested that departments in the Faculty of Medicine offering BSc degree programmes were not always aware of changes affecting their teaching and course organisation and it would therefore be helpful to include them in the circulation list. This was agreed.

**Action: Mrs Waugh**

The Communication Plan was approved.

### 4. Any Other Business

No other matters were raised.

### 5. Date of next meeting

Monday 16 April, 12 noon in Boyd Orr Committee Room (Room 321).