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University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 20 November 2020

Overview of College Annual Monitoring Summaries 2019-20 Cover Sheet

Ms Lesley Fielding, Senate Office

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Brief Description of the Paper

In response to the exceptional circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual Monitoring process was abridged to focus on key areas. 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, and the Colleges of Arts and Science & Engineering also included their Postgraduate Annual Monitoring Summaries. The College summaries have been reviewed by the Senate Office in order to identify any common themes.

The main themes are presented in the attached paper along with some indicative examples of the comments made. The themes cover both what worked well and issues that require further consideration.

Action Requested

Following its consideration of the College Annual Monitoring Summaries, ASC is asked to confirm that the themes identified below are an accurate reflection of the issues raised by the Colleges. The Senate Office will then seek updates and responses from the relevant sources to these University-wide matters.

Recommended Person/s responsible for taking the action(s) forward

Senate Office to obtain initial responses or updates from relevant sources, and forward areas of good practice to the Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service.

Resource Implications (where appropriate)

As appropriate.

Timescale for Implementation (where appropriate)

As appropriate.

Equality Implications (where appropriate)

As identified in the report.

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 20 November 2020

Overview of College Annual Monitoring Summaries 2019-20

Ms Lesley Fielding, Senate Office

1.   Introduction

In response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual Monitoring process was streamlined in terms of reporting requirements. The abridged form aimed to capture a focused and concise evaluation, given the extraordinary events arising from the pandemic during academic session 2019-20. Implementation of the revised Annual Monitoring process that was approved by both ASC and EdPSC has been postponed until the disruption of the pandemic has settled. Reporting dates remained unchanged, Colleges submitted the College Annual Monitoring Summary (CAMS) to the Senate Office two weeks in advance of the November meeting of ASC. The Colleges of Arts and Science & Engineering summaries include information that pertains to both undergraduate and postgraduate learning and teaching matters, whereas summaries of postgraduate activity in the Colleges of Social Sciences and MVLS will be submitted in January 2021.

The College Summaries have been reviewed by the Senate Office in order to identify any common themes, including what worked well and issues that require further consideration. These are presented below. Following its consideration of the College Annual Monitoring Summaries, ASC is asked to confirm that the themes identified below are an accurate reflection of the issues raised by the Colleges. The Senate Office will then seek updates and responses from the relevant sources to these University-wide matters.

Areas that worked well have also been identified in the College Summaries. These have been broken down into themes and will be sent to the Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service (LEADS) for wider dissemination.

2.   What worked well

There were a number of common themes reported in the What Worked Well section of the College Summaries. These themes, however, also feature in the themes for attention. These areas included the following:

- Response of staff to the challenges of online delivery
- Online exams processes
- No Detriment Policy
- Staff support - teaching

2.1   Staff response

"All schools reported that their staff (academic and administrative) responded remarkably well to the challenges of delivering online examinations in a very short period, and worked well beyond expectations in order to support students and bring the year to a successful conclusion. This was despite the fact that they themselves endured difficult circumstances, and that the additional workload (both in revising and marking exams, and in setting up the online exam environment in Moodle) was significant, unfamiliar and unexpected. In some schools, the effort was mostly confined to a small very hard-working group of people who supported each other through this harrowing period; in other schools, some tasks were

distributed to members of staff no longer involved in the marking of L1&L2 exams." (College of Science & Engineering)

"Staff must be congratulated for the dramatic change in working practices which saw the remainder of the MBChB curriculum delivered, assessments carried out and preparations made to ensure delivery of the curriculum for the forthcoming session." (MVLS)

"Rapid collaborative response between all year teams and overarching management. This ensured standardisation of approach, common documentation and processes." (Dental School)

"All schools reported that their staff (academic and administrative) responded remarkably well to the challenges of delivering online examinations in a very short period, and worked well beyond expectations in order to support students and bring the year to a successful conclusion. students through the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic." (College of Science & Engineering)

2.2   Online exams

"While some schools indicated that, for their own subjects, open-book 24hr exams were particularly difficult to create (Eng, CS), all schools reported that the overall online exam processes were all conducted very smoothly and successfully, including the management and calculation of grades under the NDP. The commitment and dedication of all staff and the amount of effort expended to ensure these successful outcomes should not be underestimated." (College of Science & Engineering)

"From the student point of view, schools reported that students typically adapted well to the new circumstances (P&A), and gave positive feedback on the online exam process (CS); few significant issues were reported by students (Eng). Some schools held timed exams (M&S, P&A), and reported that they went smoothly, with no significant problems." (Sci & Eng)

"Planned written assessments were moved to online delivery and student performance was largely unaffected by the change in delivery methods." (MVLS)

"The online examinations worked well and student performance was reflective of ability across other course assessments. Students adapted well with the transition to online examinations. External Examiners indicated that online assessments were both robust and rigorous (BN2), and the open book examinations created opportunities for depth of discussion, whilst capturing the range of abilities across the cohort (BN3)." (NHCS)

"Commitment and willingness of staff to support their students and each other." (School of Life Sciences)

2.3   No Detriment Policy

"All four Schools report that the 'No Detriment' policy, while complex to implement, worked very well. There is strong evidence that **student performance** within Arts was not adversely affected by the pandemic. Schools report on the significant amount of work undertaken by staff to adapt both teaching and assessment at short notice. There has been a very positive response from students to 24-hour take home exam as a model. External examiners praised agile solutions to assessment from staff, particularly in relation to assessing presentations and oral examinations." (College of Arts)

"Implementation of examinations delivered online (open-book and 24hr window) for year 3 and final year students and application of "no detriment" policy proved highly effective." (School of Life Sciences)

"Implementation of no detriment and the dedication of all staff- teaching and admin, student results in line with previous sessions." (CEES)

2.4 Staff support – teaching

"In response to the pandemic, the College created two cross-College fora to help better support staff in delivery of teaching:

- Arts COVID-19 Teaching Planning Oversight Group co-chaired by Dean of L&T and Dean of Graduate Studies.
- Delivering Online Learning & Curriculum Enhancement 2020 (Moodle site offering practical support with tools for online learning)." (College of Arts)

3. Themes for University attention

There were a number of common issues reported through the Summaries, a number of which have been recurring themes over previous reports. The issue identified related to the following themes:

- IT/Remote Delivery
- Staffing/workloads
- University Policy
- Suitability and quality of teaching spaces
- University systems
- Staff and student Mental Health
- University Communication
- Ongoing issues from previous sessions

3.1 IT/Remote Delivery

There were a substantial number of comments received pertaining to various aspects of IT provision for staff and students:

(i) Provision of Equipment/support

"The preparation of new online material to deliver the practical classes in academic session 2020-2021 will require significant resources e.g. recording equipment, software and IT technical assistance." (School of Vet Medicine)

"IT infrastructure is boosted sufficiently to only allow seamless online teaching AND any online assessment and functionality on scale, including unlimited availability of Turnitin (including for exam submission), timed online examinations, Moodle quiz functionality, MCQ etc." (School of Life Sciences)

"Additional equipment and consumables and importantly maintenance of equipment, will be essential to meet the demands of simulated practical teaching to replace patient activity during these unprecedented times." (Dental School)

"Continuing support for the increased demands placed on both staff and students by online delivery and assessment, including access to equipment, software, training, IT support and appropriate staffing." (School of Law)

"Reassurance is sought that there will be adequate technology support for remote delivery." (Schools of Maths & Stats, Physics & Astronomy)

"24/7 central IT support would be welcomed -not just for remote delivery (especially international off-campus students), but also for ODL." (School of Engineering)

"Expand investment for additional learning technologists to raise the profile and professional standing of on-line courses. This is a particular concern within Accounting and Finance." (ASBS)

"There was a view that great efforts could be made to utilise online technology to improve inclusion of SiS colleagues in wider College and University initiatives." (School of Interdisciplinary Studies)

"To continue to increase the availability of e-learning materials through the library to help support the online teaching was seen as important." (School of Interdisciplinary Studies)

(ii) Student Support - IT

"The University needs to make sure that laptops/wifi are available for all students to work from home as there are students with a less advantaged background who will struggle. For these students, we cannot simply rely on the provision of University PC clusters as these will probably not be available due to disinfection challenges and also because we cannot force students that live far away to take frequent transport to access these facilities. We need to make sure that these students are supported and that we are inclusive." (School of Life Sciences)

"The University should be attentive to the need to provide equal access to all students to computing and on-line services to enable successful participation in blended learning." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

"There is also a need to ensure that digital provision is not associated with greater inequalities among students. According to research from 2017, disadvantaged students consistently perform worse through online learning than they do in face-to-face classrooms, which increases the likelihood of dropping out." (ASBS)

"The pandemic has exposed digital inequalities among students, which need to be addressed by the university." (College of Arts)

"The University should be attentive to the need to provide equal access to all students to computing and on-line services to enable successful participation in blended learning." (School of Education and School of Law)

3.2   Staffing/Staff workloads

All college summaries referenced the significant additional workload that the pandemic situation had created for staff. As was evident from the comments in the "What worked well" section, there was an amazing effort by staff, however, there were concerns that this was at the cost of staff wellbeing. Staffing and workload issues are matters for College resourcing, however, the following comments were extracted from the 'For University attention' section. In addition, the impact of understaffing on staff wellbeing was highlighted.

(i) Staffing and Workload

"One school commented that increased university requirements for conducting, monitoring, managing and reporting on teaching activities significantly increases workload for course

heads/ programme directors/ year heads etc., with a request that their necessity be reassessed." (School of Chemistry)

"We need some staff positions! Some key strategic and operational positions (including academic positions) to be unfrozen to ensure continued and robust delivery in the short and medium terms and to allow future re-activation of courses that have currently been cancelled due to insufficient staffing and the hiring freeze (e.g. L1 Environmental Biology)." (School of Life Sciences)

"Ensure adequate School staffing to allow delivery of courses requiring high levels of staff input." (School of Vet Medicine)

"The continuing understaffing and "churn" within the SVM Undergraduate School has a significant impact on the ability of the School to meet the expectations of accrediting bodies, external examiners and student body in relation to delivery and assessment of the course (BVMS3, BVMS4)." (School of Vet Medicine)

"In discussion with the Directors of Learning and Teaching in the seven schools, it was clear that additional targeted administrative and academic staff resources will be needed if the Schools' currently excellent provision is to be sustained and improved." (School of Science and Engineering).

"Challenges in ensuring consistency and quality of life science teaching owing to lack of staff. Life science content is a unique selling point of the programme and year-on-year NSS feedback endorses the value of the science content and its contribution to student satisfaction. An inability to deliver the courses outlined in the programme and course descriptors could potentially impact on student satisfaction and ultimately league table rankings. This situation is being addressed, however requires close monitoring." (NHCS)

"Physically-distanced teaching of practical skills to BVMS1-BVMS4, will impact on staff availability for BVMS5 teaching (and vice versa)." (School of Vet Medicine)

"Adoption of blended learning model across the curriculum, requiring staff to upskill in specific TEL areas, whilst meeting ongoing operational demands and increased workload due to the COVID-19 pandemic." (NHCS)

"There was significant increased workload on colleagues at College, School, and Subject level and the work associated with examining was not concluded until the first week of July which placed substantial additional pressure on those colleagues tasked with preparation for teaching in 2020-21." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

"There is a strong concern expressed about staff well-being under such pressure (expressed by two schools, but widely shared by all others)." (Schools of Chemistry and GES)

(ii)   Staff welfare

"Return to Campus: One subject (TRS) has raised questions regarding the safety of on-campus teaching. TRS also note that once we are back teaching in classrooms, changing rooms for every class might be a real problem and that classes need at the very least to be in the same place every week." (Theology & Religious Studies)

"The requirement for face-to-face teaching during practical classes and rotations carry a significant risk to staff and due to the low numbers of staff, if one member of staff becomes COVID-19 positive, teaching becomes untenable." (School of Vet Medicine)

"Issues such as rooms which are overcrowded, poorly maintained, and poorly cleaned will be of particular concern as we move towards a return to campus within social distancing rules. We need to ensure health and safety of staff and students in campus re-opening plans and continue to take a flexible and compassionate approach to those who may be at risk or worried about health risks." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

3.3   University Policy

(i)   No Detriment Policy

"Application of No Detriment Policy and Processing of Results: This resulted in overly complicated spreadsheets and means of assuring the quality of student grades. Exam boards were delayed as scrutiny groups and administrative teams struggled to apply the guidelines and confirm results in the time available." (ASBS)

"Student expectations relating to No Detriment Policy were not managed with sufficient care at University level." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

"**Communication / support:** Colleagues welcomed the policy but would have appreciated some further work on filtering of information and instruction to ensure that school/subject guidance is clear and simple for both staff and students. Staff were grateful for, but nonetheless anxious about, the complexity of the final spreadsheets and formulae for result calculation, which also changed regularly. Some have asked about the possibility of simplification, or that they at least be more clearly explained, for the next round of exams." (College of Arts)

"**Degree classification:** A number of externals in one School (SMLC) stressed the need for a comparative statistical analysis to analyse what impact the No Detriment policy has had on degree classifications, and in the longer term what impact the disruption has had on subsequent cohorts." (SMLC)

"**(PGT):** Two Schools highlighted the difficulties in applying the No Detriment policy to PGT students in general. They also noted the difficulties caused due to a delay in the production of a shared spreadsheet that was suitable to allow the processing of marks for PGT students." (College of Arts)

"Staff have felt supported by the University, although at times firm guidance was understandably a little slow." (School of Vet Medicine)

(ii)   Code of Assessment

"Code of assessment has had its day – and its weakness was revealed by the COVID-19 crisis: the Herculean effort needed to cope, points to the problem. The Code is:

- Too complex, and consequences thereof: not clearly explained in the guide, difficult to interpret, difficult to implement.
- Sometimes demands manual manipulation of data for individual students thus not efficient.
- Practicalities of implementation are not part of the design of the code or supported by any University systems: often requires storage of data that MyCampus cannot store and thus necessitates use of spreadsheets, requires comparison of numbers stored in different places/spreadsheets etc. Calculations can be very cumbersome, slow, and error prone.
- Point of weakness and potential failure in a core Institutional function and responsibility." (Life Sciences)

"We need a new central assessment IT system linked to a streamlined code and we need these things urgently. Progress towards these goals seems to have stalled (in spite of widespread enthusiasm for the idea). Need an institutional commitment and some sense of urgency. COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of student education and the reliability and validity of their assessment outcomes to the University's reputation and its finances: time to invest in those neglected, unflashy, but key functions; or we play reputational Russian roulette." (School of Life Sciences)

"Policy on deadlines and extensions: These may need to be revised during 2020-21 in response to the present circumstances". (College of Arts)

(iii)   Online Assessment

"An urgent pre-COVID-19 requirement remains the creation of an examination question bank to allow efficient and effective assessment management. SVM does not have appropriate software and despite previously raising this requirement at College level there has been no progress (BVMS3, BVMS4)." (School of Vet Medicine)

"Caution is required with the move to remote/blended learning, to maintain standards and academic integrity. A key concern is to ensure that exam misconduct is minimised in an open-book exam setting. Reducing the 24h time window would alleviate the above-mentioned issues. Timed exams are also suggested as a possible solution." (ASBS)

"To put this another way, colleagues request that care be taken by the University and teaching support services when assessing, outlining, recommending changes to the provision of learning, teaching and assessment: that we separate Covid-19 circumstances from the practice more generally or rather the 'best practice' of remote/online learning and teaching." (School of Humanities)

"Exams (online): Schools thanked their own administrative teams for all their work on making this model of examination a success but highlighted that the administrative burden to organise 24-hour exams fell to Schools. There are also concerns about the potential for plagiarism on this type of exams. It was also felt that there was a need for better communication around what was expected of candidates in such exams (e.g. length of time to spend on the paper). One School (Humanities) particularly welcomed receiving typed exam scripts and would like to see the introduction of digital exams, but not sat at home, and performed in a timed setting." (College of Arts)

Exams (students with caring responsibilities): There is some concern that resits/deferred exams in August won't help the students with caring responsibilities if the current situation continues. History requests that the University consider ways in which different student circumstances might be addressed with remote and open book resits/deferred exams. (College of Arts)

"Development of policy on delivery of online examinations." (Medical School)

"That online delivery of examinations be part of the assessment mix from now on and *ad infinitum*, and freely supported and available via Registry, and with flexibility: timed vs untimed, closed vs open book vs open-net, remote invigilation as an option, Moodle quiz as an option, use of Turnitin as routine etc." (School of Life Sciences)

(iv) *Good Cause*

"Subject areas report the difficulty of assessing student participation and in particular student presentations in the face of seemingly growing reluctance, and recourse to Good Cause, to avoid these parts of courses. Further guidance on how to manage this type of 'Good Cause' claim is necessary." (College of Arts)

3.4 University Systems

(i)   EvaSys

"The emphasis placed on the established course evaluation survey is considered to be counterproductive and far too rigid. Student engagement with the process is highly variable, generating some very poor response rates and unreliable data. There is a feeling among colleagues that we are polling students far too often and that they suffer from "feedback fatigue". In some instances, only the dissatisfied few complete the evaluation, resulting in low participation scores and imbalanced feedback. The feedback itself is often personalised, inappropriately targeting members of teaching staff rather than course delivery. Colleagues would like to see a move away from bureaucratic box ticking to more innovative, responsive and reliable instruments and a more considered approach. A willingness to apply some innovative thinking and devise a more flexible approach would be welcome: possibly with a random selection of one or two courses evaluated for each member of staff per year; or with an annual survey of core classes on a programme and irregular feedback on electives; or spot check evaluations of a certain proportion of the provision per programme. Changes along these lines, or with other options, would be attractive, responsive and generate more useful information for development and planning." (ASBS)

"Better support needed for off-campus remote access to EvaSys by staff. One subject suggest that questions asked also need to invite more reflective feedback from students." (TRS)

(ii)   Moodle

"SMLC notes that the Moodle marking interface is inadequate for intricate marking of scripts. The system is also prone to function slowly and be unresponsive, which increases the scope for error on the part of markers. This will need attention before we return to teaching given the heavy increase in online marking next session." (School of Modern Languages & Cultures)

"With a massive push as regards online teaching the infrastructure underpinning Moodle needs to be sufficiently robust to support full usage e.g. Moodle Quiz." (School of Vet Medicine)

"Moodle is clumsy for online assessment; an improved online assessment tool would make the marking process more efficient for staff." (Eng)

"If future iterations of the summative Degree Examination are to be online; then access to and support for using Moodle Quizzes and/or tailored online assessment software with provision for invigilation would be advantageous." (School of Vet Medicine)

"Moodle needs to be sufficiently robust to support full usage – Moodle quiz." (Vet School)

"Moodle marking interface is inadequate for intricate marking of scripts." (College of Arts)

(iii)   Sharepoint

"One School reported significant problems with SharePoint for handling data (and handling of spreadsheets more generally). They frequently encountered the wrong/old version of a spreadsheet being presented/circulated. It's not completely clear where the problem lay, but

certainly this needs to be addressed for next year's exams period and further training may be required in this area." (School of Cultural & Creative Arts)

(iv) Mahara

"The absence of access for graduates to their Professional Phase Portfolio post-graduation remains unresolved." (Vet Medicine)

This issue was also highlighted to EdPSC given the increasing number of subject areas expressing interest in the use of Mahara and the growing importance of preparing students for employment after graduation. In view of the resource implications, the Convener of EdPSC undertook to discuss this with Mr Dave Anderson in Information Services. In addition, the Convenor will flag this with Learning & Teaching Committee given the planned commitment within the forthcoming L&T Strategy to students' skills and professional development and the need for students to demonstrate their achievements after graduation.

3.5   Suitability and quality of teaching

(i)   Location and quality of teaching spaces

"Consideration of room bookings so that students are not in a different place for the same course each day*, and don't have to traverse long distances between classes* (P&A).

"The issues of students having to move significant distances across campus between classes was also raised. In particular, Film & Television noted the lack of suitable teaching space for teaching practical courses." (College of Arts)

"Quality of teaching spaces* (P&A), in particular: Gregory Building* (GES), East Quad (GES), functional lapel microphones* (C). Need for out-of-hours lab access and flexible spaces (GES).

"Rooms which are overcrowded, poorly maintained, and poorly cleaned." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

(ii)   Rooms/Room bookings/Timetabling

"We continue to have concerns over rooms and room bookings. These include a lack of consistency in provision; chopping and changing across the weeks of a course." (School of Political & Social Sciences)

"All four Schools again reported issues with the suitability of some of the rooms (including equipment in TEAL rooms) on campus and, as before, highlighted difficulties with the timetabling process, including only timetabling classes at short notice (e.g. 24-hours before the class) or not finding a room for a class." (College of Arts)

"Request that the large L&TH lecture theatre be used to prevent duplication of lectures." (School of Psychology)

"The consequences of timetable clashes being overridden due to remote learning will need to be considered when returning to on-campus delivery." (School of Geography & Earth Sciences - GES)

"Electronic timetables do not reflect course information submitted or staff workloads and are difficult to correct." (School of Education)

"Some improvements have been made with CMIS electronic timetabling, however the Dental School continues to be frustrated by the lack of facilitation for our 4th /summer term."

3.6 Student Support/Mental Health

"The University's student mental health provision is still considered inadequate especially in these changed circumstances." (Schools of GES, Psychology and Computing Science)

"Having a named mental health practitioner associated with each School is suggested." (School of Chemistry)

"We have previously raised concerns about the increasing number of students who have high levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. This is resulting in an increased number of 'good cause' clams and is putting a considerable emotional strain on academic and administrative staff who are often the first port of call for these students. These issues are likely to be exacerbated due to a summer of lockdown and ongoing public health restrictions. We would therefore like to see greater support for the Counselling and Psychological Services to both help these students and relieve some of the pressure on staff." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

3.7 University Communication

A number of School commented on the need for improved communication from the university on issues relating to central communications.

"Acknowledging opportunities for local decision making (e.g exam format and processes (C, GES)), and clarity on Disability provisions. Clarity over what information is sent to whom (and when) (P&A). In particular, information on what we can and can't offer students on-campus is essential for recruitment activities." (Schools of GES, Computing Science)

"Improved communication to PGT students regarding admissions matters (deferrals, deposits etc.), so that they are not sent directly to academic staff." (Schools of Psychology and Computing Science)

"Improved (timely, consistent, unambiguous) communication of regulations and future plans." (Schools of GES, Maths& Stats, Psychology, Engineering, Computing Science)

" **PGT Marketing:** It is important to note that conversion activities (e.g. recording promotional videos, tending to applicants' requests) usually take place at pressure points in the academic year, so more notice is needed for such requests (e.g. more than 10 working days)." (College of Arts)

3.8 Other Issues

"The blocks in BVMS final year have been organised such that there is flexibility to accommodate students who are unable to attend originally scheduled rotations, if there was a substantial number of students who fell into this situation this could result in a delay to the completion of teaching for the whole cohort and this could impact on the date of graduation." (School of Vet Medicine)

"Dentistry is unlike any other course within the University. There is a huge reliance on clinical access and patient treatment. It is essential that the University recognises Dentistry as an exceptional case. The Dental School will require unprecedented support to mitigate as far as possible the particular difficulties our course faces within this pandemic. The University should also be aware that we may be unable to graduate students in 2021 with the knock-on effect this will have on all other years." (Dental School)

"There has been a potential for loss of clinical provision by some external providers, the school has been in active discussions with Scottish SPCA etc. and is formulating a strategy to mitigate against such a loss. This has financial implications." (School of Vet Medicine)

3.9   Ongoing issues from previous sessions:

"Please can MyC automatically send an email notification when a student enrols/unenrols for a class after start of semester." (School of Chemistry)

"Please can MyC be adapted so that multiple windows are supported, allowing multi-tasking." (School of Chemistry)

"Field trips costs are passed directly to students; this puts UofG at a disadvantage with regard to competitors." (GES)

"The University travel insurance is unsuitable for field trips" (GES)

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University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 22 January 2021

Overview of College of Social Sciences - Annual Monitoring Summary 2019-20

Cover Sheet

Mrs Lesley Fielding, Senate Office

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Brief Description of the Paper

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The main themes are presented in the attached paper along with some indicative examples of the comments made. The themes cover both what worked well and issues that require further consideration.

Action Requested

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Recommended Person/s responsible for taking the action(s) forward

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Resource Implications (where appropriate)

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Equality Implications (where appropriate)

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University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 22 January 2021

Overview of College of Social Sciences - Annual Monitoring Summary 2019-20

Mrs Lesley Fielding, Senate Office

1.   Introduction

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The College of Social Sciences Summary has been reviewed by the Senate Office in order to identify any common themes, including what worked well and issues that require further consideration. These are presented below. Following its consideration of the College Annual Monitoring Summary, ASC is asked to confirm that the themes identified below are an accurate reflection of the issues raised by the College. The Senate Office will then seek updates and responses from the relevant sources to these University-wide matters.

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2.   What worked well

There were a number of common themes reported in the What Worked Well section of the College Summary. These themes, however, also feature in the themes for attention. These areas included the following:

- Response of staff to the challenges of online delivery
- Online exams processes
- No Detriment Policy
- Staff support – teaching
- External Examiner responses

2.1   Staff response:

"Continued willingness by staff to respond to student concerns and attempts to improve courses and their delivery." (School of Law)

"Staff collegiality in response to the pandemic (across academic and administrative levels) proved to be high and staff responded quickly and beyond expectations to support each other and students." (School of Social & Political Science)

"Teaching quality and efforts of academics and administrative staff to adjust to online." (Adam Smith Business School)

2.2   Online exams

Online Development – "The transfer of course materials and to teaching online has been successful. Some courses have benefitted from having the assistance of a Learning Technologist. Others found having a blended approach already in place made the transition to fully online easier." (School of Education)

"New and innovative content was created online to replace field-oriented content affected by industrial action and limited by the lockdown. The development of innovative online learning and enhanced Moodle resources and associated learning activities was evident." (School of Interdisciplinary Studies)

"The switch to online teaching went quite well despite challenging times for staff and students, including changes to working practices. Students particularly appreciated drop-in sessions organised by programme convenors." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

2.3   No Detriment Policy

"Successful implementation of the April/May Exam diet and the NDP with few students taking the opportunity of a resit." (Adam Smith Business School)

"The flexibility offered by the 'No Detriment Policy' was welcomed and seen as a reason for the successful completion of assessment in difficult circumstances." (School of Interdisciplinary Studies)

2.4   Staff support – teaching

"Academic Support – Students are well supported by staff to improve the quality of their academic work. Some courses noted this particularly for dissertations e.g. when students had to move to desk-based studies due to the pandemic. Staff have been flexible and dedicated to meeting the needs of individuals." (School of Education)

"Students appreciate small group teaching environment and its close interactions with staff, they also value the interdisciplinary opportunities programmes provide, the combination and distribution of theoretical and practical content, applied and field-based teaching and external guest lecturers."

"Students enjoy being taught by practitioners. Feedback on tutors and tutorials is extremely positive across the board." (School of Law)

"Despite the challenges posed by strikes and the pandemic, evidence from course evaluations and staff-student liaison showed that most students during the last session were satisfied with teaching provision." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

2.5   External Examiners

"External Examiner feedback on programmes, courses, and assessment procedures". (Adam Smith Business School)

"External Examiner Comments – comments from External Examiners have been very positive." (School of Education)

"External Examiners were satisfied with delivery, forms of assessment and the robustness of marking processes across all programmes." (School of Interdisciplinary Studies)

"External Examiners also expressed satisfaction with the performance of different programmes." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

3.   Themes for University attention

There were a number of common issues reported through the Summaries, a number of which have been recurring themes over previous reports. The issue identified related to the following themes:

- IT/Remote Delivery
- Staffing/workloads
- University Policy
- Suitability and quality of teaching spaces
- Staff and student Mental Health
- University Communication
- Ongoing issues from previous sessions

3.1 IT/Remote Delivery

There were a substantial number of comments received pertaining to various aspects of IT provision for staff and students:

(iii)   Provision of Equipment/support

"ICT Support Systems – adequate ICT support for staff required e.g. more and improved computers for staff and more learning technologists." (School of Education)

"Consistent Guidance - having many technological options makes staff spend a lot of time trying different things and gives students a more disparate experience." (School of Education)

"It would be important to invest in video editing software to allow updating of content without having to re-record. "(School of Interdisciplinary Studies)

"The University should provide more support for the move to online provision, including significant upgrading of hardware and software capabilities as well as staffing resource including learning technologists and specific practical training/upskilling support on a regular basis." (School of Social & Political Studies)

(iv)   Student Support - IT

"As was thrown starkly into light this academic session, many students have problems at University residences with connectivity and access: the efficiency of these systems should be at the same level as the library." (Adam Smith Business School)

"A mechanism for students to be able to access free software (e.g. InVEST, QGIS) remotely would be useful so that they do not have to download these on to their own computers." (School of Interdisciplinary Studies)

"University to provide students with 1) the necessary resources to effectively take part in online learning (hardware, Wi-Fi etc) and 2) upskilling so that they can make effective use of the resources and software at their disposal. Equitable access to ensure a common experience and remove digital inequalities is important." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

"The University should be aware that Chinese students faced racism in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. More generally, awareness of racism and other forms of discrimination should be high up on the University's agenda." (Social & Political Sciences)

3.2 Staffing/Staff workloads

All college summaries referenced the significant additional workload that the pandemic situation had created for staff. As was evident from the comments in the "What worked well" section, there was an amazing effort by staff, however, there were concerns that this was at the cost of staff wellbeing. Staffing and workload issues are matters for College resourcing, however, the following comments were extracted from the 'For University attention' section, In addition, the impact of understaffing on staff wellbeing was highlighted.

(v)   Staffing and Workload

"Workload Allocation – needs increased to accommodate extra workload resulting in transition to online provision." (School of Education)

"Staffing – more subject specific support required." (School of Education)

"The University should also address issues related to high workloads which stem from hiring freezes and other staffing issues." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

(vi)   Staff welfare

"Return to Campus: Staff require clear guidance on the plan for returning to campus. There is a need for open discussion." (Adam Smith Business School)

"Staff Wellbeing – concern about increased workload for staff and issues arising from working from home." (School of Education)

"Staff welfare remains a clear issue that extends across School, College and University levels. This relates not only to supporting staff with a balance workload and work life integration, but also to ensuring that timetabling and the return to campus is properly planned and supported with staff unable to return treated in a compassionate manner." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

"The PGCAP/MEd ran particularly well during the pandemic. One issue to highlight however is that this came at a very difficult time for our students as staff, who were managing their own pivot to online and having to combine an exceptional workload with undertaking study. We would like to commend our students (as staff) for their significant efforts to participate in exceptionally difficult circumstances and hope this is recognised at all levels across the university." (School of Education)

3.3   University Policy

"(PGT): School level discussion of post-COVID strategy on the future nature of PGT programmes should also be undertaken at a University level – as a forum for discussion of the lessons learned and what the future will look like for learning and teaching." (School of Interdisciplinary Studies)

"Exams (online): Although we understand the extreme pressure, not allowing timed exams is a serious problem given the nature of the subject. Looking forward we would like this rectified." (Adam Smith Business School)

"Plagiarism and collusion: There is a big concern that we do not have adequate control over plagiarism and collusion. This is augmented by some recent decisions by Senate not to punish students at all in some very strong cases reported by ASBS. Such decisions have an extreme demotivational effect on staff members involved in identifying plagiarism. At the very least reports fully explaining the rational for the negative decisions must be provided." (Adam Smith Business School)

3.4   Suitability and quality of teaching spaces

"Inadequate timetabling of large classes continues to be a problem on campus, with apparent low priority for timetabling of premium programmes during working hours. This is untenable if we are to continue attracting high quality students." (Adam Smith Business School)

"Administrative Issues – at the start of the academic session the registration process, room bookings and online timetabling systems need to be improved." (School of Education)

"For LLM classes, which continue to grow, suitable accommodation for teaching remains problematic when face to face teaching resumes post-Covid." (School of Law)

"For PgDip the quality of accommodation in Alexander Stone building is below standard in terms of size of teaching rooms and student networking spaces." (School of Law)

"For PgDip: One student required significant adjustments to transition to online learning and request for additional support from the Disability Service and the wider University." (School of Law)

3.5 Student Support/Mental Health

"The University should do more to address issues surrounding mental health of the student body by providing more resources." (School of Social & Political Studies)

3.6 University Communication

Two Schools commented on the need for improved communication from the university on issues relating to central communications.

"Communication – communication from the centre needs to be timelier and more consistent." (School of Education)

"Students as well as staff have expressed that University communication around issues from Good Cause and no-Detriment and to the requirement for students to be on campus was confusing and caused more anxiety than was necessary." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

3.7 Other Issues

"Library Resources – investment needed for online materials to be provided for students and managing copyright regulations." (School of Education)

"With the pivot to online delivery and increased use of online resources (e-books etc) should be prioritised by the Library." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

3.8 Ongoing issues from previous sessions:

"Concerns continue around the English language ability of students. We get complaints from the non-Chinese students about groupwork and difficulties in communication." (Adam Smith Business School)

"As with ASBS, the present over reliance on students on some programmes stemming from China is financially dangerous, but it also lessens their student experience in learning and engaging in English. Even a 20-30% international or UK-based means that they cannot speak only to their peers." (School of Social & Political Sciences)

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 19 March 2021

Overview of College of MVLS Graduate School - Annual Monitoring Summary 2019-20

Cover Sheet

Ms Lesley Fielding, Senate Office

Brief Description of the Paper

The report outlines the themes identified in the College of MVLS Graduate School Annual Monitoring Summary which was not available at the January 2021 meeting of ASC.

In addition to the main themes identified, some indicative examples of the comments made are included. The themes cover both what worked well and issues that require further consideration.

Action Requested

Following its consideration of the College Annual Monitoring Summary, ASC is asked to confirm that the themes identified below are an accurate reflection of the issues raised by the College. The Senate Office will then seek updates and responses from the relevant sources to these University-wide matters.

Recommended Person/s responsible for taking the action(s) forward

Senate Office to obtain initial responses or updates from relevant sources, and forward areas of good practice to the Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service.

Resource Implications (where appropriate)

As appropriate.

Timescale for Implementation (where appropriate)

As appropriate.

Equality Implications (where appropriate)

As identified in the report.

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 19 March 2021

Overview of College of MVLS Graduate School - Annual Monitoring Summary 2019-20

Ms Lesley Fielding, Senate Office

1. Introduction

The College of MVLS PGT annual monitoring summary has been reviewed by the Senate Office in order to identify any common themes, including what worked well and issues that require further consideration. These are presented below. Following its consideration of the College Annual Monitoring Summary, ASC is asked to confirm that the themes identified below are an accurate reflection of the issues raised by the College. The Senate Office will then seek updates and responses from the relevant sources to these University-wide matters.

Areas that worked well have also been identified in the College Summary. These have been broken down into themes and will be sent to the Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service (LEADS) for wider dissemination.

2. What Worked Well

There were a number of common themes reported in the What Worked Well section of the College Summary. These themes, however, also feature in the themes for attention. These areas included the following:

- Response of staff to the challenges of online delivery
- Online exams processes
- No Detriment Policy
- Staff support
- Zoom

2.1 Staff Response

"Staff involved in the delivery of PGT teaching within the college of MVLS were able to adapt quickly professionally to the changes enforced in March 2020, to provide high-quality learning at short notice."

2.2 Online Exams

Online Development – "This adaptability was perhaps most pronounced in the conversion of over 900 PGT projects to remote supervision, adapting laboratory training, fieldwork and clinical training in a short space of time."

"Excellent Moodle resources offering bioinformatics support to staff and students, as well as advice on the design and assembly of systematic reviews were commended by many."

"Pivot to online delivery went well and has opened opportunities to consider modes of provision in the longer term."

"Overall, student cohorts achieved very similar grades this year compared to previous years, and the percentage of students graduating with distinction or merit did not appear to be greatly altered." (Biomedical Sciences Cluster)

"Some modification had to be made to assessments for professionally accredited qualifications, where maintaining assessments as close as possible to the usual which meant keeping a timed exam. These changes were received favourably by students and external examiners." (Medical and Clinical Sciences Cluster)

2.3 No Detriment Policy

"The implementation of the no detriment policy by Senate to ensure no student was dis-advantaged, was welcomed by staff and praised by external examiners, with several commenting it was clear that everything had to done to ensure that students were not disadvantaged by the pandemic situation. The flexibility to modify 'high risk' assessments without going through the full approval process was also welcomed. Students also valued the introduction of the ND policy."

2.4 Staff Support

"All areas: academics, external examiners and students, praised the work of the administrative team this year in their quick adaptation and implementation of new guidance and personalised touch for dealing with student enquiries. In addition, the Digital Education team was commended for the introduction of training and Q&A sessions that aided many who had previously been unfamiliar with remote teaching."

"The MVLS graduate school admin staff provided exceptional support throughout the challenges and created a highly personalised touch for dealing with student enquiries, both for current students and students applying for 2020-2021(Animal and Plant Sciences Cluster)

"External examiners for all programmes commented on the high level of personal and academic support that the students perceived throughout the year" (Animal and Plant Sciences Cluster)

2.5 Student Support

"Introduction of the new Clinical and Research Laboratory Skills course was enjoyed by the students and they stated it helped to brush up basic lab skills" (Medical and Clinical Sciences Cluster)

"There has been a high level of student engagement and satisfaction. Several programmes reported excellent student staff relations and opportunity for discussion about teaching, feedback and progress. Students praised curriculums of several programs and the collaborative and interactive nature of the teaching. In addition, some programmes also commented on the high calibre of students coming on to the programme. There have been comments from students about the varied and innovative assessments." (Medical Professions Cluster)

2.6 University Systems

(i)   Zoom

"Zoom works much better than Echo360 for recordings, both for pre-recorded and live sessions. Attendance at Zoom lectures was good. Students appear to be more willing to ask questions using online chat during lectures& group work, particularly students who are otherwise very quiet."

3. Themes for University Attention

The issues identified within the main MVLS summary had had common issues identified in other College summaries but were not necessarily reported in the issues for University attention. The general issues identified related to the following themes:

- IT/Remote Delivery
- Staffing/Increase in student numbers and impact on staff workloads
- University Policy
- Staff and student Mental Health
- University Communication
- Recurring Issues
- Other Matters

3.1 IT/Remote Delivery

There were a substantial number of comments received pertaining to various aspects of IT provision for staff and students:

(v) Provision of Equipment/support

"Could better transcription software be resourced -Zoom transcripts are incomprehensible and re-doing these is a massive amount of work."

"Resources will be needed to facilitate remote and blended learning that can be flexibly (e.g. some students in the room, some online)"

3.2 Staffing/Staff Workloads

All college summaries referenced the significant additional workload that the pandemic situation had created for staff. As was evident from the comments in the "What worked well" section, there was an amazing effort by staff, however, there were concerns that this was at the cost of staff wellbeing. While Staffing and workload issues are matters for College resourcing the following comment was extracted from the 'For University attention' section, In addition, the impact of understaffing on staff wellbeing was highlighted.

(vii) Staffing and Workload

"Adapt PDR expectations for all staff, at all levels, engaged in the teaching process."

3.3 University Policy

"The shift to online of course was difficult but central timetabling rolled over schedules from the previous year instead of considering schedules that had been revised, could this be reconsidered for changes in 2021?**"**

3.4 Student Support/Mental Health

"Mental health remains the largest issue for students; although there is a lot of information provided by the University, could the time taken for students to register with the disability office and/or obtain mental health support be improved."

3.5 University Communication

"Students felt there could have been clearer communication centrally about the no detriment policy (particularly in relation to MRes students)"

3.6   Recurring Issues

The following comment refers to previous requests for the introduction of 180 credits of taught and no project for online programmes.

"Consider a proposal for a fully-taught PGT Masters programme, particularly in online distance learning degrees." (Health & Wellbeing, Medical Professions and Medical and Clinical Science)

3.7   Other Matters

"Some staff were unable to benefit from the additional holidays in 2020 as PGT courses were still running and exams were taking place. Could this be taken into next year?"[1]

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[1] University policy on carrying forward annual leave was adapted in light of the additional holidays granted in 2020.