College of Science and Engineering  
College Learning & Teaching Committee  
Minutes of meeting held on 1 October 2013

Present
Prof G Reid                  Convener, Dean of Learning and Teaching
Dr P Bailey                 School of Chemistry
Dr T Bailey                 School of Mathematics
Dr M Gallagher              School of Biological Sciences
Dr W Hossack                School of Physics & Astronomy
Dr M Rovatsos               School of Informatics
Dr D Williams               Head of Academic Affairs
Dr S Warrington             School of Engineering
Prof W Williams             School of GeoSciences

In attendance:
Mrs L Archibald            Minutes Secretary

1.1  Apologies

Apologies had been received from Ms Lynda Henderson (Academic Affairs Officer), Dr Gordon McDougall (Dean of Quality Assurance) and Prof Alan Murray (Dean of Students)

2. Committee Remit and Membership

The updated Committee Remit was agreed (Paper A).

It was noted that a pool of student representatives had been established to participate in College committees. It was expected that at least one such representative would attend future meetings.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

3.1 Matters Arising

- Mapping of Student Lifecycle

Members received a paper giving an update of communications between Recruitment & Admissions and students (Paper B)

A paper had also been forwarded to members regarding the Programme and Course Information Management Project. Problems had been experienced with links on this document and David Williams would re-send to members as soon as possible.

(Minute Note: this appears to have been a temporary glitch and members having problems with these links should contact the College Office.)
- **Single Semester Abroad**

The benefits of a single semester abroad had been discussed at the last meeting of committee.

A task group had been set up to consider study abroad in general which will also investigate the potential for students achieving credit for time spent abroad.

Phil Bailey had attended a meeting of Global Citizens Programme which encouraged students to spend time away from the University with other bodies for credit bearing projects.

Concern had been expressed as to how these periods would fit in with course curriculum and the Group was investigating ways the University could achieve this. A draft paper was being sent to Schools for comment and the matter would be revisited at a future College Learning and Teaching Committee.

There was some confusion regarding the responsibilities of task groups tackling this issue. Clarification would be sought by the Convener and reported back to the next meeting of Committee.

4. **Convener’s Report**

- **New Programmes**

Members were reminded that the next Programme Approval Meeting would be held on 19th November. Any new programmes should be sent to the College as early as possible before this date for inclusion in the Undergraduate Prospectus.

- **Learning & Teaching Priorities**

Two papers had been tabled outlining priorities and items of business for the committee in 2014. These included

i) **Assessment**

This issue would be discussed in more detail later in the agenda.

ii) **LEAF (Leading Enhancements in Assessment and Feedback).**

The first step of this project would be to use TESTA methodology to analyse assessment throughout Biological Sciences programmes. This project was at an early stage and would be monitored with a view to using similar tools for the remaining Schools in the College.

iii) **Widening Participation**

 iv) **Resits.**

A University Task group is currently looking at ways of reducing the need for resits. It is envisaged that any new system would be implemented for the next academic year
v) MOOCs.
It is the intention of Committee to evaluate the use of these Courses and investigate future opportunities.

vi) Curriculum for Excellence
Students from targeted Scottish schools may arrive with a different preparation for University. It was thought that the engagement of school teachers within these areas would be essential to forming important links.

A meeting to include key staff and a small number of appropriate school teachers should be arranged to discuss items of mutual concern and interest. Members who have suggestions for suitable school teachers who may be invited to this meeting should contact Linda Archibald as soon as possible.

- Special Circumstances
David Williams provided members with a verbal update on the amended University policy which had been agreed over the Summer.

The main point of note were:

a) SCC outcomes were binding on the Board of Examiners unless in exceptional circumstances and  
b) No adjustments of marks were permitted.

The Special Circumstances Working Group was still in place and it was hoped that other outstanding issues and queries will be addressed.

The College Office would meet with Teaching Organisation Administrators and Craig Shearer the following Friday to discuss these policies and their implications.

The College Office in conjunction with Academic Services will also provide training for Boards of Examiners at the end of November and new College guidance and forms would be provided to Schools to reflect these changes.

- Widening Participation

The Convener had reported at the previous meeting that The Deans of Science and Engineering in Scotland Education Group had formed a working group to take this issue forward.

It was important that the University is able to find ways of supporting students who may have difficulties in adapting to university and to also ensure that students are fully prepared prior to their second year of studies.

Peer Assisted Learning Schemes are currently being run to assist all students, although students who are in part time employment may find these sessions difficult to attend.

Sue Rigby had attended meetings with Skills Development Scotland who are looking in general at higher apprenticeships in areas such as Engineering in
order to create a more blended transition between Higher Education and Further Education.

The Convener would keep Committee advised of further developments in this area.

- **Distance Education Initiative**

The Convener reported that the Schools of GeoSciences and Chemistry had been successful in their DEI bids. Thanks were extended to Judy Hardy for her assistance in putting these bids together.

- **Marking Guidelines**

The Committee had been asked at the previous meeting to ensure that marking guidelines were up to date to reflect coursework. This issue had now been dealt with within all Schools.

- **Timetabling**

The Committee were aware that some serious problems had been encountered with timetabling at the beginning of semester. This had led to a great deal of stress for Teaching Organisation staff and Personal Tutors.

It was fully accepted that this initial phase had not gone well and there were important lessons to be learned from this experience. A clear plan of immediate priorities was currently being compiled by Dave Laurenson.

Of particular importance was the capability of checking courses for possible clashes and the ability for students to download a clear and comprehensive timetable. Schools should report any items they feel are of particular priority to the Timetabling Working Group.

A clearer view of what is achievable through this system should be available in early November. It was thought that Dave Laurenson should be invited to a College Learning and Teaching Committee after this stage to give an update.

5. **Assessment**

Members had been asked at a previous meeting to give thought to the means and extent of assessment within their School. It was hoped that this review would identify any major issues and address the question of whether the College over-assess its students.

It was noted:

- It was questioned whether examination-type assessment would necessarily measure the skills and attributes required of a student.
- The perception that students were over-assessed was not reflected in data gathered from KIS and EUCLID. Data gathered from TESTA may assist in the
interpretation of information.
- Consideration should be given to the use and types of assessment across subject areas and programmes, rather than individual courses.
- Students themselves are often uninterested in completing work which carries no credit.
- While the use of feedback is helpful for ‘non-credit’ work, an indicative grade is often requested.
- Students should be encouraged to engage by actively recording and reflecting on their assessment. In addition to marks, they will also have a record of their own personal development. The School of Chemistry already encourage their students to undertake a self-assessment process with the use of Pebblepad. This system is currently working well within the School.
- EUSA are keen for the University to increase their diversity of assessment and while it was thought that the College currently provide alternatives to ‘exam-assessment’, there was a need to be aware of opportunities to broaden alternatives.
- The identification of what types of assessment are currently provided is necessary. An overview would provide the advantage of feed-forward for programmes, how essays and assignments relate to one another and allow the College to optimise.
- It was important to provide clarity on what, exactly, we are assessing and what our expectations are. Are we asking students to put together coherent arguments and strategies? How is this relevant to assessments later in a student’s lifecycle.

Committee would receive a presentation/discussion item on assessment from Sue Rigby and Hugh Murdoch at the next meeting where this issue would be considered in more detail.

6. NSS/PTES

Members had received a confidential summary of taught student survey results for the college.

There were limited resources to help interpret student comments from these surveys. If Schools wish to search for specific issues within comments, they should contact Lisa Scattgood, Head of Surveys Unit in Governance & Strategy Planning (GASP).

The Head of College and Dean of Learning and Teaching would meet with Schools later this month to discuss the results.

The School Annual QA reports in December will include a question on these surveys and how their School has responded. Any issues arising from discussions with the Head of College and Dean of Learning and Teaching should be raised with their Director of Quality to be included in the School report.

7. INFORMATION CHANNELS

Members were reminded that for this Committee any relevant items and
issues should be cascaded to the appropriate members of staff for information.

8. ENGINEERING – RESITS FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES

The School of Engineering were currently working on a set of principles and regulations and will report back to Committee with an amended paper at a future meeting.

9. DECLARATION OF OWN WORK

Committee had received a copy of the Declaration of Own Work Form (Paper D).

The Committee had been asked by the College Academic Misconduct Officer to consider the universal use of this type of form in all assessed work. Committee were asked for feedback as to the practicality of either this document or refinement to allow its implementation.

It was noted:
The incorporation of this form in electronic submissions may pose a problem. It is possible that a pop-up ‘submission system’ where students are asked to indicate compliance via a checkbox may be possible. A comment field could be added to this system to ensure students have read the instructions correctly.

It was thought that a form would not be required for ‘low-level’ hand-in work or small assessments.

Although such forms are often overlooked by students, it was felt that these would serve as a reminder regarding the rules of plagiarism.

It was thought that the wording of the document should be altered to clarify the checklist items. It may be that more than one version of the form was required, dependent on the type of assessment.

The Committee agreed the implementation of the form in principle. It was agreed that the document should be passed to the meeting of School Academic Misconduct Officers (SAMOs) in October for their comments on its wording, instructions and details on its application.

The Committee would consider this again at its next meeting.

10. REPORTS FROM SENATE COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

- Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)

The main item considered at the meeting of SQAC on 5th September was a discussion on the role of School Director of Quality. Noted:
- It was felt that some clarity on guidance was needed as to time commitments, description and function.
- Consideration should be given to what duties the Director of Quality will be required to undertake within each School.
- While the percentage of time allotted was currently 20%, this may depend on the size of each School and will be monitored.

- **Senate Learning and Teaching (SLT)**

Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategies – a new template for School Plans was necessary. This should be a straightforward template which is easy for Schools to complete.
Student Support Online Survey – this Survey was now open and Schools should encourage their students to complete this as soon as possible.

- **Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC)**

It had been suggested that the posting of degree results be outlawed. Members were asked how this new procedure could impact on their School.
It was noted:

- Some Schools currently only allow course results through MyEd. Displayed list are also often anonymised or given by examination number
- It was important to provide support for students who are likely to obtain disappointing results. It should be borne in mind that students who pick up results through MyEd may be on their own at the time of receipt.
- An official published date of results would allow students to gather together or arrange for a friend to be present.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

New/Revised Courses in Engineering

A tabled paper of new and revised courses in the School of Engineering was presented. Members were asked to provide comments to the Secretary by 7th October 2013

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

22nd October 2013 @ 2.00 p.m.