

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
**QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

Minute of the Meeting held on 25 September 2024

*Present:* Steve Tucker (**Chair**), Will Barras, Lyn Batchelor (*vice* Nadia DeGama), Isla Callander, Selma Carson, Isa Ehrenschwendtner, Lois Gall, Flora Groening, Faye Hendry, Jacqui Hutchison, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Gareth Norton, Miles Rothoerl, Rachel Smith, Fiona Stoddard, Thanga Thevar, with Scott Carle, Darren Comber, Debbie Dyker, Lucy Leiper, and Liam Dyker (**Clerk**) in attendance.

*Apologies:* Mark Grant, Laura McCann, and Ann Simpson.

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

*(copy filed as QAC/259024/001)*

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and particularly, the new members of the Committee. The Chair thanked Isabel Crane, Qiang Cai, Colin North and Jo Vergunst for their service and work during their tenure on the QAC. The Committee made formal introductions.
- 1.2 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2024.

**MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LOG**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/002)*

- 2.1 Decolonising the Curriculum Qatar Representative (minute 2.1.3 refers): An update was provided noting that a review is ongoing with regard to the Decolonising the Curriculum work, and an update will follow in due course.
- 2.2 Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde Partnership Report Response (minute 8.2 refers): The QAC was content to approve the response provided.

**ENHANCING THE RETURN OF COURSE OVERALL GRADES FROM MYABERDEEN TO STUDENT RECORDS**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/003)*

- 3.1 The Committee heard an overview of the paper, noting that the paper was brought for discussion rather than approval. The Committee was advised that there currently exists a mixed approach to displaying component grades in MyAberdeen, and the intention would be to ensure a consistent approach. The proposed approach would be to display the overall course grade and component grades in MyAberdeen but just as grade points to 2 decimal places. It was clarified that the alphanumeric grade would still appear in the Student Record. Further, it was suggested that terminology could be clarified particularly with respect to marking, marks and grading. It was also suggested that discussions could take place to streamline the process of transferring grades from MyAberdeen to Student Records.
- 3.2 The Committee discussed the proposals in detail, the tenets of which were:
  - The consistency between Schools, particularly for joint degree students, was welcomed;
  - The transparency was welcomed, however, concerns were raised in respect of the return of whole numbers for assessments that are marked by way of rubric, particularly in relation to grade inflation;
  - Where quantitative rubrics are used, it would be helpful to retain the ability to override the final grade, particularly where a criterion is failed, it can disproportionately impact the final grade;
  - The reliance on rubrics to provide a grade offsets academic judgement;

- The grade descriptors for the Common Grading Scale (CGS) provides a framework within which to operate, and discussions take place regarding the 'best fit' for a piece of assessment; the granularity of the alphanumeric grading scale was welcomed;
- The streamlining of the workflow between MyAberdeen and Student Records was welcomed;
- The rationale for an alphanumeric scale, to which a response was provided that externally the alphanumeric grade means more than a grade point; additionally, it was highlighted that the Code of Practice on Assessment states that both alphanumeric and grade points will be provided to students; and
- Clarification regarding the rounding of figures, noting that no figures are rounded up according to the University policy.

3.3 In summarising the discussion, it was suggested that there was support for the consistency elements and that some examples of working with rubrics could be collated. Finally, it was highlighted that this work will be taken forward in partnership with the student body and student engagement will be critical.

### **COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE**

#### **(i) REMIT AND COMPOSITION 2024/25**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/004)*

4.1 The Committee approved the Remit and Composition subject to (i) the amendment of ELIR to Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER); (ii) the amendment of AUSA to Students' Union; and (iii) to replace nominated by the President of the Students' Association, to nominated by the Students' Union.

#### **(ii) APPOINTMENTS TO ACADEMIC POLICY AND REGULATIONS GROUP**

#### **(iii) APPOINTMENTS TO SENATE**

5.1 The Committee was advised that there were 2 vacancies on the Academic Policy and Regulations Group and 3 vacancies on the University Senate for which QAC representation was sought. Committee members were encouraged to contact the Clerk if they were interested.

**Action: All**

### **BUSINESS FROM THE ACADEMIC POLICY AND REGULATIONS GROUP**

#### **(i) REMIT AND COMPOSITION 2024/25**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/005)*

6.1 The Committee approved the Remit and Composition of the Academic Policy and Regulations Group, subject to (i) the removal of the Head of Quality, and (ii) the replacement of AUSA to Students' Union.

#### **(ii) ANNUAL COURSE REVIEW PROFORMA TEMPLATES**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/006)*

7.1 The Committee heard a summary of the proposed changes to the Annual Course Review proforma templates, noting the streamlining of language, updates in relation to MySkills, the update to Course Reflection Forms and in relation to EDI and decolonising the curriculum. It was suggested that courses which have the same title (ie taught on different campuses) could prepare a joint Annual Course Review. Further, it was suggested that withdrawal rates should be amended to completion rates. Additionally, clarity was sought regarding the rationale for not including pass rates on Short Annual Course Review forms. It was suggested this was in light of workload pressures. It was highlighted that pass rates would be useful for inclusion on both forms. Further, it was indicated that due to the structure of the programme, some courses struggle to complete the forms fully. It was highlighted that a note should be included to advise

that Annual Course Reviews should be published to students. Subject to the amends outlined, the Committee was content to approve the revised proforma templates.

### **(iii) RESOLUTION FOR CHANGES TO REGULATIONS FOR VARIOUS DEGREES**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/007)*

- 8.1 The Committee was advised of a minor amend to a Postgraduate Research regulation in relation to monitoring and tracking for PGR students. It was noted that if the Committee was agreeable, rather than forward to Senate now, the regulatory change should be included in the Omnibus Resolution when it goes through Committee, but that a footnote should be added to the regulations now to reflect subject to amendment. The Committee was content to approve the regulatory amendment and the proposed approval process.

### **(iv) TRANSITION TO NEW UK QUALITY CODE**

- 9.1 The Committee heard an overview of the new Quality Code published by QAA. It was noted that the new Code is similar to the previous Code, with 12 sector agreed principles and underlying key practices. The revised sector agreed principles are more operational in nature than previously. The Committee noted that one of the responsibilities of the APRG was to review the Quality Code institutional mapping to policies and procedures; thereby, the proposed approach was to take a couple sections of the new Code at a time and undertake the mapping to transition to the new Code in the interests of workload. Clarity was sought regarding whether there was much changed or added to the principles; to which a response was provided noting there was a new section covering data, however, other sections appeared to be covered elsewhere. The Committee was content with this approach.

### **UPDATE ON TERTIARY QUALITY ENHANCEMENT FRAMEWORK (TQEF) AND TERTIARY QUALITY ENHANCEMENT REVIEW (TQER)**

- 10.1 The Committee received a presentation from the Chair providing an update in respect of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) and Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER). Following the presentation, concern was raised regarding the change to the funding model for the Scottish Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP), which would be really harmful to the sector.

### **EDUCATION POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW SCHEDULE**

- 11.1 The Committee noted that an update in relation to the Education Policy and Regulations Review Schedule would follow by circulation. **Action: Clerk**

### **EXTERNAL EXAMINING IN THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, MEDICAL SCIENCES AND NUTRITION**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/009)*

- 12.1 The Committee received a draft proposal from the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition which outlined the procedures followed by External Examiners in respect of travel to Aberdeen. It was noted that the proposal was for External Examiners to attend remotely where possible, however, invitations would be extended to campus for assessment delivery (where necessary) and for examination boards during the first year, following which this would not be required. It was noted that Examiners' Meetings would continue to be in a hybrid format.
- 12.2 In discussion, the Committee noted the practice in other Schools. In particular, most Schools have hybrid options for External Examiners, and some are invited in person. In some Schools, it was suggested that External Examiners can choose to attend in person. In one School, it was noted that all Examiners' Meetings engagement was online. It was suggested that the visit to campus remains really valuable.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIVE PROVISION APPROVALS**

- 13.1 The Committee heard an oral update in respect of the partnerships and collaborative provision approvals process, noting that proposals are now considered on a fortnightly basis at structured meetings with the Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement as well as other professional services colleagues. The previous means of approval was noted. It was highlighted that the QAC will receive an annual update by way of Collaborative Register and the annual Partnerships Reports will be received by QAC.

### **STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEE REMIT AND COMPOSITIONS 2024/25**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/010 and 011)*

- 14.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the Remit and Compositions for 2024/25 for (i) the Students' Progress Committee and (ii) the Students' Progress Committee (Medicine & Dentistry).

### **FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE REMIT AND COMPOSITIONS 2024/25**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/012 and 013)*

- 15.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the Remit and Compositions for 2024/25 for (i) the Fitness to Practise Committee (Education), subject to amendment of one staff member, and (ii) the Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine & Dentistry).

### **STUDENT MONITORING KEY DATES 2024/25**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/014)*

- 16.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the Student Monitoring Key Dates for 2024/25.

### **WINTER GRADUATIONS 2024**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/025)*

- 17.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the ceremony list for Winter Graduations 2024. Clarity was sought regarding the Business School and whether this was grouped by surname or programme title. It was suggested that it was by programme, but that this would be clarified.

**Action: Clerk**

### **UK QUALITY CODE MAPPING**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/015, 016 and 017)*

- 18.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, UK Quality Code mapping updates in respect of Sections 2 (Assessment), 3 (Concerns, Complaints & Appeals) and 6 (External Expertise).

### **ACADEMIC POLICY AND REGULATIONS GROUP**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/018)*

- 19.1 The Committee noted the update from the Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG).

### **PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES (PSRBs)**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/019, 020 and 021)*

- 20.1 The Committee noted the following matters in respect of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs):
- IEMA (School of Biological Sciences);
  - General Dental Council (School of MMSN); and
  - Health and Care Professions Council (School of MMSN).

**MATTERS APPROVED BY CIRCULATION / CONVENOR'S ACTION**

*(copy filed as QAC/250924/022, 023 and 024)*

21.1 The Committee noted the following matters approved by circulation or by way of Convenor's Action:

- eQAC: Annual and Periodic Review, and Partnerships
- International Recruitment – Impact for September 2024
- Wildlife and Conservation Management Articulation Pathway
- Term Dates for Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)
- MSc in Counselling Psychology Retitle

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

22.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 11 November 2024 at 1:05pm in Committee Room 2, University Office or via Microsoft Teams.