CODE OF PRACTICE FOR POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENTS, PROGRAMME COORDINATORS, COURSE COORDINATORS AND HEADS OF SCHOOL

INDEX

APPENDICES

1.   Introduction

The intention of this Code is to provide guidance and practical advice for students studying on a postgraduate taught programme of study and coordinators of postgraduate taught programmes and courses, as well as Heads of School. Suggestions for improvements are most welcome: these should be sent to the Registry.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the postgraduate regulations set out in the University's Calendar (www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar). It should also be read in conjunction with individual programme handbooks issued by Schools at the start of the programme. Programme Handbooks give guidelines that are specific to particular postgraduate taught degree programmes and will inform students of the exact requirements of the programme.

2.   The University of Aberdeen

2.1   Academic Schools

The University of Aberdeen comprises of 12 Schools:

> Business School
> School of Biological Sciences
> School of Divinity, History and Philosophy
> School of Education
> School of Engineering
> School of Geosciences
> School of Language and Literature
> School of Law
> School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition
> School of Natural and Computing Sciences
> School of Psychology
> School of Social Science

2.2   Registry

The Registry is responsible for a range of student and academic administrative functions that include the following in regard to postgraduate students:

- Registration of all postgraduate students
- Maintenance of student registration data in manual form and on the computerised student record
- Monitoring of student progress, including changes to terms of study
- Dealing with many aspects of postgraduate tuition fee collection and invoices
- Publication of all postgraduate assessment results
- Preparation of student transcripts when requested
- Certification of eligibility to graduate with higher degrees or to receive other postgraduate awards
- Interpretation and advice on postgraduate regulatory issues

The Registry operates duty Registry Officer service in the Infohub, situated on the Ground Floor of the Students' Union Building.   The Infohub operates between 9.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. Monday – Thursday during term-time (10.00am to 5.00pm on Fridays), with slightly reduced hours during vacation periods. The Registry can be contacted by telephone between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday – Friday on 01224 273505. For e-mail enquiries please contact postgraduate@abdn.ac.uk

Further information about the Registry can be found at: www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/registry-972

2.3   Senate/Quality Assurance Committee

The Quality Assurance Committee has been delegated responsibility from Senate for the assurance of quality and maintenance of standards across all undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate taught elements of research provision. QAC reports directly to the University Committee on Teaching and Learning. Where regulations and procedures refer to Senate, it is the QAC that is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of these procedures

Specifically, the Quality Assurance Committee shall:

- Review proposals for (a) the introduction of new courses and programmes of study (b) amendments to existing courses and programmes, and (c) the withdrawal of existing courses and programmes, and make appropriate recommendations;

- Recommend to the UCTL changes in the General and Supplementary Regulations;

- Oversee the quality control of taught courses and programmes through scrutiny of reports from the External Examiner Reports, Annual Course Review, Annual Programme Review, Internal Teaching Review Reports and Reports from Professional & Statutory Bodies, as applicable; and refer policy issues to the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, as appropriate;

- Be responsible, on behalf of the UCTL, for co-ordinating a regular programme of Internal Teaching Reviews for monitoring and reviewing courses and programmes of study and consider and recommend to UCTL revisions to the procedures for Internal Teaching Review, as necessary;

- Be responsible, on behalf of the UCTL, for regularly reviewing alignment of University policies with the QAA Quality Code, the wider Academic Infrastructure and external reference points and for recommending revisions to policies, as appropriate.

- Comment on draft collaborative teaching agreements and monitor the quality of provision provided by collaborative partners through the scrutiny of annual reports and recommend to UCTL revisions to the procedures for the approval and oversight of collaborative provision, as necessary;

- Oversee issues relating to student progress, including the establishment of Student Progress Committees and Fitness to Practise Committees, as appropriate, and make recommendations to the Senate for the discontinuation of attendance, as appropriate.

- Undertake such other functions as may be referred to the Committee by the UCTL.

3.   The Application Process

A full list of the postgraduate taught programmes, together with their entry requirements entry requirements, currently available can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/taught-degrees

3.1   The Admission of Postgraduate Taught Students

Admission to the University is in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy which is available at https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/admissions-policy.php
Full details of how to apply, including how the application is processed, can be found at https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/apply.php

3.2   English Language Requirements for International Students

To study successfully in Aberdeen students will need to speak and write English fluently.

Full details of our English Language requirements can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/international/english-requirements

Applicants who do not satisfy the 'direct entry' criteria may be offered entry on the condition that they either (a) achieve the minimum entry requirement by themselves, or (b) successfully complete one of the Language Centre's 6-week or 12-week Summer School Programmes, depending on their IELTS score, at the University of Aberdeen, before the commencement of their degree. Further details including information about Language courses and support available at the University, can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/languagecentre

Students studying on taught programmes will be required to submit written course work and may be required to sit written examinations very early in their programme of study. It is therefore essential that students have a good grasp of written and spoken English.

4.   Registration

At the start of their studies and at the start of each subsequent academic year in which they are studying, students are required to register with the University and to contact their Programme Co-ordinator to agree the courses they will be taking. As part of the eRegistration process students are required to make arrangements to pay their tuition fees. Thereafter they can obtain a student ID card. Full details of how postgraduate taught students can register can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/newstudents/registration

Those students who are studying part-time or those students studying full-time but who begin their programme in January must register not only at the beginning of their studies but also at the start of each subsequent academic year of study (i.e. in September).

4.1   Use of E-mail

Through the eRegistration process students will receive a University e-mail account when they register with the University Computing Centre (see Section 14.3). The University will normally use e-mail to communicate with students during term-time and messages will be sent to their University e-mail account.

It is the student's responsibility to **check e-mail on a regular basis** (at least weekly) and to **keep their mailbox tidy** to avoid going over quota. Failure to check e-mail, or non-receipt of e-mail because the mailbox is over quota or due to non-delivery of a message to a non-University account, cannot be used as grounds for an academic appeal (see Section 13.2).

4.2   Student Portals

A student's University Computer ID and password also gives them access to their Student Portal which can be viewed at www.abdn.ac.uk/students/index/. Through their Portal students can view and, where appropriate, update the information, including home and term-time addresses, held in their student record. The Portal also provides students with a personalised gateway to the on-line learning resources associated with the courses on which they are enrolled. Data in the Student Portal is updated nightly from the live student record system.

Students can also download applications to graduate from their Portal. See Section 12.

Please note that the eRegistration Portal process must be complete before access to the Student Portal is permitted.

5.   Induction

Before classes start, a programme of induction sessions is run, by the School. In addition to welcoming students, the induction programme provides an overview of the University and of the support services available to students. School induction programmes will introduce students to the academic staff who will be teaching them, introduce students to the learning environment and will allow students the opportunity to ask questions about the programme

Details of induction will be sent to students by the School in which they are studying before the start of their studies. Students who are studying off-campus will be inducted to similar information by the most appropriate means available. Also see www.abdn.ac.uk/newstudents

6.   Programme Coordinator

Each programme will have a Programme Coordinator who oversees the programme and reports to the relevant Head of School.

Advice on academic matters is provided by the Programme Coordinator. Students should feel free to contact their Programme Coordinator if they wish to discuss any academic queries or problems. The Programme Coordinator can also help students with any other concerns that they may have, including personal matters, and will be able to suggest where students might obtain specialist advice or information, as appropriate.

7.   Degree Regulations and Changes in Terms of Study

The Regulations for Postgraduate Study are available on the web at the following address: www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar/postgraduate.php

(Please note that Regulations are continually reviewed and may be revised due to changes in policies and procedures. Any changes that are made that apply to students during their period of registration at the University are clearly indicated on the above website).

If any change in the conditions of study notified in a student's letter of admission becomes necessary, e.g. change from full-time to part-time study, the student should submit an application for the approval of their Programme Co-ordinator. Such applications should be made as far as possible in advance of the date when the change is to take effect. Official permission is necessary for all changes in conditions of study including suspension of study, and change from full-time to part-time. Application forms to request any of the above can be printed from www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/changes-to-studies. **Please note that, as many changes to the period of study (suspension, move to part-time etc.) affect the tuition fees charged, it is very important to keep the Registry informed.**

7.1   Attendance monitoring procedures

In order to be eligible to undertake the initial or subsequent end-of-course assessments or to receive credit for a course, students must have a Class Certificate for the course in question. A Class Certificate is confirmation that a candidate has attended and duly performed the work prescribed for a course. There is no actual physical certificate. A student who has been validly registered by their programme coordinator for a course, and who has not withdrawn from the course before the last day of teaching (or been deemed to have withdrawn, in accordance with Regulation 6 of Schedule B General Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards below, or to have had their class certificate refused), is regarded as having obtained a Class Certificate for that course automatically. However, Class Certificates validity is limited to the academic year in respect of which it is awarded and to the academic year immediately following – two academic years, including the one in which the student originally attended the class. If a student wishes to sit an examination for a course after their class certificate for it has expired, they will normally have to re-attend the class and

pay appropriate tuition fees. A case could be made to extend the validity of Class Certificate, but this will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

The University operates a monitoring system for all taught postgraduate students to identify students who may be experiencing difficulties with their studies. If a coordinator for one of a student's courses is concerned about his/her performance or attendance, then a rigorous monitoring system will ensure that students are informed, via email, that there is concern over their attendance. As part of this process, the student will be asked to explain their absence. Failure to meet the attendance requirements for a course may result in the Class Certificate for that course being refused. Full details of the University's monitoring procedures can be found here: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/academic-life/monitoring-and-student-progress.php

Except with the permission of the Senate, candidates shall not be permitted to present themselves for an end-of-course assessment in any course unless they have obtained a Class Certificate. Unless good cause is demonstrated, students absent who have not duly performed the work prescribed for the course (e.g. absent from classes for periods of time that the School has determined) will not be able to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes for the courses concerned. Such students will be refused a Class Certificate. Students not granted a Class Certificate under these circumstances will be barred from appearing for the initial or subsequent end-of-course assessments or receiving credit for the course. It shall be for the Senate to determine what constitutes good cause for absence.

Please see below for procedures regarding absences from classes and the requirements for notifying the School of medical reasons or other Good Cause.

7.2   Student Visa/Tier 4 Visa Monitoring Requirements

As well as adhering to the attendance requirements outlined in Section 7.1, the requirements of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) mean that the University is obliged to carry out visa checks for Student Visa/Tier 4 students three times during an academic year. The first check will be done when the student registers at the start of the academic year, and the remaining checks will be done during the course of the academic year. The checks are only for students who have a Student Visa/Tier 4 visa. Student Visa/Tier 4 students will be emailed with dates and times of the checks that are performed during the academic year, so must ensure that they regularly check their University email account. Failure to report for these checks could mean that students are de-registered from their studies and reported to the UKVI. This could lead to their Student Visa/Tier 4 visa being curtailed or cancelled.

Students on a Student Visa/Tier 4 visa should note that they may be subject to a regulatory framework implemented by UKVI. Where these regulations are more stringent than those stipulated within the University's own regulations, those of the UKVI will take priority.

7.3   Study Off-Campus

Postgraduate taught students who are studying on-campus must normally spend the entire duration of their study studying at the University campus. However, in exceptional circumstances, permission may be given for a postgraduate taught student to undertake any study away from Aberdeen. They must seek approval from their Programme Co-ordinator to do so.

Postgraduate taught students who want to study away from Aberdeen but remain in the UK, must agreed to meet the attendance requirements by reporting back to Aberdeen in person. Failure to meet these requirements could lead to the student being reported as At Risk for non-attendance (see section 7.1). Students holding a Student Visa/Tier 4 visa could ultimately be reported to the UKVI.

7.4   Extension to submission of a dissertation

Regulation 14 for Taught Postgraduate Awards states that "Dissertations must be submitted at a date and time determined by the Head of the relevant School, normally not later than the end of the final calendar month of a candidate's registration. They may be submitted later in individual cases, specifically approved by the Head of the relevant School: but in no case may the date of submission be later than the end of the ninth month following the end of a candidate's registration". **International students studying at the University on a visa should refer to the terms of their visa when requesting an extension to their dissertation.**

Students needing to request an extension to the submission date of their dissertation due to exceptional circumstances should contact their programme coordinator, who will then seek appropriate approval and contact the Registry to inform.

Students who have been granted an extension to submit their dissertation and wish access to University facilities, including MyAberdeen, Computer facilities, and the Library must register as an Associate Student. Applications forms for Associate Student status can be accessed here: www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/changes-to-studies.   The current cost is £120, which is payable for every academic year in which the student registers as writing up their dissertation, regardless of the length of time in which they register during that academic year.

7.5   Withdrawal from study

If students are considering withdrawing from the University, either temporarily or permanently, for whatever reason, they should discuss their intention to withdraw with their Programme Co-ordinator, Student Support staff or Registry staff member. If wishing to withdraw from study the student should complete a Withdrawal form, which can be downloaded from www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/changes-to-studies/**.** Students withdrawing prematurely from study may or may not be entitled to a partial rebate of tuition fees paid, depending on the point in the academic year when they withdraw and also whether they have paid all accommodation, library, phone bills etc. to the University, where applicable. The Registry will assess whether any refund of fees is due. Details of the University's refund policy can be found here: www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/finance/

Students must complete a withdrawal form and submit to the Registry shortly after the decision has been made to withdraw from study**.** The date of withdrawal will normally be the date that the form is received by the Registry and will not normally be applied retrospectively. Tuition fees will be charged up until the point of withdrawal.

The University is obliged to report International Students who are studying on a Student Visa/Tier 4 visa to the UKVI as no longer being in attendance, if they have withdrawn from study. Students should refer to terms of their visa.

7.6   Readmission to Study

If you have formally withdrawn from study and wish to return to study you must complete an Application for Readmission form. Readmission forms can be obtained from the Infohub or downloaded from: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/readmission.php

Students would normally be expected to resume study at the point at which they left off in the programme. Fees will be payable on return. Readmission will normally only be granted for the same programme.

Readmission to study is not automatically granted. Once completed, the form should be forwarded to the relevant Programme Coordinator for approval. If the form is approved by the Programme Coordinator, you will then receive a letter notifying you of the outcome of your application. You will be asked to confirm by a given deadline whether or not you accept the offer.

The readmission form MUST be submitted **before 31 July for September entry and 30 November for January entry** of the year in which readmission is being sought.

8. Assessment and Progression

Guidance on the University's procedures for assessment and progression, including degree classification and resit policies, in a taught Postgraduate Programme can be found here, in the Code of Practice on Assessment: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/assessment-policies-and-guidance-6099.php

9. Proof Reading Guidance

Proof-reading is the final stage of producing a piece of written work. The University believes that proof-reading should be carried out by the student themselves and strongly discourages the use of third party proof-readers or commercial proof-reading services. If a student feels they need assistance with their writing they should first consult the University's guidance on the use of proof readers and the rules stated therein: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/supporting-students-6126.php

10. Guidelines to be followed when dealing with postgraduate taught students making unsatisfactory progress

Schools should ensure that they have followed the procedures for assessment and progression detailed in section 8. This section stipulates that teaching staff are responsible for providing students with, amongst other things, clear information on:

- Methods of assessment, deadlines for submitting assessments, penalties for late submission of assessments and marking criteria;
- Criteria for progression from Stage 1 to Stage 2, or from Stage 2 to Stage 3 of a taught postgraduate programme, where applicable;
- The implications of unsatisfactory progress, or failure to achieve a required standard for progression to the next stage of the programme.

Teaching staff are also responsible for providing appropriate assistance to help students progress in learning by, amongst other things:

- Being accessible to students at reasonable times to provide assistance in dealing with academic difficulties arising in the course;
- Identifying inadequate progress and initiating appropriate remedial advice or action;
- Recommending remedial language tuition (where appropriate).

11 Absence from classes: certification of absence for medical reasons or other good cause

If illness or other personal circumstances have caused a student to miss classes, or may have affected their performance in all or part of an assessment, they must submit written details to allow these circumstances to be taken into consideration.

The method for reporting absences is through the absence reporting facility in MyAberdeen. Details **must be submitted on the day of the exam and certainly no later than three days following the date of which they were expected to appear for the exam concerned.**

Students must report their absence if:

(i) They are absent for any period of more than seven consecutive days;
(ii) They are absent for a period of less than seven consecutive days but during this time they:
      a. fail to attend an examination;
      b. do not submit a piece of in-course assessment by the required deadline;
      c. are unable to attend a compulsory teaching session (e.g. tutorial, laboratory or seminar).

Seven consecutive days includes weekends (for example Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday)

Medical certificates can take the form of a pro-forma or a note on the Medical Practice's headed paper signed by a medical practitioner. Where it is impossible for a doctor to verify subsequently that students had been ill on the date of absence it is inappropriate to request a back-dated medical certificate. It is therefore important that students arrange a consultation with their medical practitioner (in person or by telephone and/or a nurse consultation) as soon as possible following the onset of illness and which the signs of illness are still evident.

Where absence has occurred for good cause of a non-medical nature, students should supply appropriate corroborating evidence in place of a medical certificate, where required. For the purposes of this policy, appropriate corroborating evidence includes as a police report, a letter from the Student Advice and Support Office, a letter from a counsellor, notification of a death or other evidence acknowledged by the University to be of a significant nature.

Where a student believes their medical condition or personal circumstance to be of a particularly sensitive nature, the information should be submitted to the School Office in a sealed envelope marked 'sensitive information'. Such information will be opened by the Head of School.

Where there are good reasons why students were unable to notify the School within three days of the assessment affected or class missed, they must write to the School as soon as practicable and give details of the illness (which must be certified by a medical practitioner) and/or other personal circumstances and the events which prevented them from notifying the Head of School within the defined period.

Details reported after the three day period outlined above will be accepted as grounds of appeal only in exceptional circumstances. Claims that academic performance was adversely affected by ill health and/or other personal circumstances for which there is no contemporaneous, independent, medical or other supporting evidence will not be accepted as competent grounds for an academic appeal. Students should refer to the University's policy and guidance on appeals: www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/appeals-and-complaints-procedures

12. Research Governance: Policies on Research Ethics, Good Research Conduct, and Research Data Management

The University's framework for research ethics and governance is outlined in the Handbook for Research Governance. The Handbook is the central authority and reference point within the institution for matters relating to research governance and should be used and referred to accordingly by research staff and students.

It sets out the standards, principles and expectations for research ethics and governance which underpin the University's approach to research, and provides an overview of the structures in place, institutionally, for ensuring that the University meets the highest standards in its research ethics and governance arrangements.

The Handbook also outlines the University's approach to research ethics and provides information on what research requires ethical approval and how to obtain that ethical approval. It details the University's policy

and guidelines for good research conduct, and its position on unacceptable research conduct, including the processes in place for reporting and investigating allegations of unacceptable research conduct.

The Handbook for Research Governance can be accessed here: www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/policies-proceedures-plans-and-guidlines-399.php

13. Graduation

In-person graduation ceremonies normally take place mid-June and at the end of November. Students are emailed in March regarding graduation details, and graduation application forms can be downloaded from the Student Portal or, if that is not possible, on request by emailing graduation@abdn.ac.uk. Students should check the graduation website to find out the exact deadline for returning their application to graduate. The deadline for summer ceremonies is usually late April and for winter ceremonies is mid-October. A fee is payable by all graduands who decided to appear "*in person*" at the graduation ceremony (currently £45). A late fee is payable by students who apply to graduate after the deadline. Students should not wait until they have been examined to apply to graduate.

It is the **responsibility of each student** to complete an Application to Graduate Form and to decide whether to graduate *in absentia* or wait until the next in-person graduation ceremony. The degree will not be awarded until such time as the student formally graduates, i.e. if a student completes the requirements of their degree programme in October but decides not to graduate until the following June (or if the student is not permitted to graduate due to a financial debt to the University), the degree certificate will state the latter date.

In absentia graduations take place in November, February, May and June and application forms are available from the Student Portal or by request from graduation@abdn.ac.uk. There is a £10 fee for graduating *in absentia*. Certificate and Diploma students can only go through for their award in absentia, but they must still complete an application to graduate.

If a student owes the University money for any reason (fees, rent, library fines for unreturned books, etc) the student will not be permitted to graduate or receive an award, so they should ensure all debts are cleared.

Further details on Graduations, including the schedule of Graduation Ceremonies, in absentia dates, procedures on the day of in-person Graduation Ceremonies, gown hire and Graduation photographs are available at www.abdn.ac.uk/graduation

Students should note that they will not be permitted to graduate if they owe any money to the University or if they have not returned all books to the Library.

Any enquiries regarding graduations should be directed to the Registry:
Telephone: +44 (0)1224 273505; E-mail: graduation@abdn.ac.uk

14. If things go wrong

14.1 Problems and difficulties

The University aims to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for its postgraduate students. However, from time to time students will encounter academic problems and difficulties. In the first instance any problems/difficulties should be raised with the Programme Co-ordinator. If this is not appropriate, students should see their Head of Discipline/School.

14.2 Policy on Appeals and Complaints

The University's *Policy on Appeals* and *Complaints Handling Procedure and Complaints* can be accessed at www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/appeals-and-complaints-procedures:

In regard to appeals, the policy indicates that appeals will only be considered where:

> i) it is believed that the University's procedures were not followed;
> **or**
> ii) it is believed that the person or body making the decision did not have the authority to do so;
> **or**
> iii) it is believed that the person or body making the decision did not act impartially;
> *and*
> iv) a student considers that they have suffered, or could suffer, material disadvantage

Those involved in considering academic appeals will not review the question of academic judgement, which is a matter solely for the person or committee that has made the academic judgement.

In particular, students' attention is drawn to section 3 of the *Policy on Appeals*:

> If a student believes that a medical condition or other personal circumstances have affected their performance in an assessment or prevented them from taking an examination or meeting a deadline for submission of coursework they must notify the Head of the relevant School(s) immediately. This must be done in writing, not more than three days after the date of submission of the assessment or the exam concerned.

Where a student has not given notice of such extenuating or mitigating circumstances within the three day timescale, they cannot be accepted as evidence in support of an appeal or complaint unless a satisfactory explanation for the delay in providing the information can be given. If those circumstances are raised for the first time at the Initial Stage (i.e. with the Head of School or Service) the Head of School or Service (or their nominee) will decide whether it is appropriate to take them into account.

The effect of this paragraph is that appeals which are based on illness (which must be certified by a medical practitioner) and/or other personal circumstances normally will not be considered unless notified to the Head of the relevant School within three days after the date on which a student submitted or appeared for the assessment concerned. This is to ensure that the examiners, including the External Examiner(s), have all information available to them at the time of confirming a course result or recommending an award.

In regard to Complaints, the *Complaints Handling Procedure* states that a complaint is*:*

> An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more individuals about the standard of service, action or lack of action by or on behalf of the University.

> A complaint may relate to:

> • the quality and standard of service
> • failure to provide a service
> • the quality of facilities or learning resources
> • treatment by or attitude of a staff member, student or contractor
> • inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, student or contractor
> • the failure of the University to follow an appropriate administrative process
> • dissatisfaction with the University's policy, although it is recognised that policy is set at the discretion of the University

The first stage of either an Appeal or Complaint is for the student to raise their concern as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff within the related School or Service. The University anticipates that by

ensuring that all matters are considered informally at an early stage, problems can and will be resolved quickly and effectively at a local level. Please see the *Policy on Appeals* and the *Complaints Handling Procedure* for details of the timeframes for raising concerns and subsequent steps if the matter cannot be resolved informally.

14.3   Plagiarism and the Code of Practice on Student Discipline

The University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline is available at
https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/academic-quality-handbook/Code%20of%20Practice%20in%20Student%20Discipline%20(Academic).pdf

This Code outlines such issues as examination offences, including cheating in prescribed degree assessments. ***For the purposes of this Code "cheating" includes plagiarism and colluding with another person in the preparation or submission of work which is to be assessed.***

The Senate approved definition of plagiarism is "the use, without adequate acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of another person in work submitted for assessment. A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where it can be shown that the student has taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as his/her own".

15.   Services and Support for Students

15.1   Student feedback and representation

15.1.1 Student Course Evaluation Forms

University-wide Student Course Evaluation Forms (SCEF) are used in all Schools to seek students' views on each of their course modules. Your comments are collated and reported to the School Staff-Student Liaison Committee. Heads of School are required to submit reports on the outcome of the SCEF each half-session to the Senate. The University takes students' views very seriously and students are urged to complete the evaluation forms when asked to do so.

Further   information   on   the   University's   SCEF   system   can   be   found   at www.abdn.ac.uk/feedback/staff/student-staff/

15.1.2 Class representatives

The University values student's opinions in regard to enhancing the quality of teaching and its delivery; therefore in conjunction with the Students Association the University supports the operation of a Class representative system.

The students within each course, year, or programme elect representatives by the end of the fourth week of teaching within each half-session. Any students registered within a course, year or programme that wishes to represent a given group of students can stand for election as a class representative. Students will be informed when the elections for class representative will take place. Generally one class representative is identified for each course at undergraduate level and one for each programme at postgraduate level.

What will it involve?

It will involve speaking to fellow students about the course/year/programme that the class representative represents. This can include any comments that they may have. The Class Representative will attend a Staff Student Liaison Committee and should represent the views and concerns of the students within this meeting.

The representative will also be able to contribute to the agenda, and then feedbacks to the students after this meeting with any actions that are being taken.

Training

Training for class representatives will be run by the Students Association in conjunction with SPARQS (Student Participation in Quality Scotland). Training will take place in the fourth or fifth week of teaching each semester. For more information about the Class representative system visit www.ausa.org.uk or email the President for Education & Employability: pres.education@abdn.ac.uk.

15.2   Library services

The University Library is one of the largest and best equipped in Scotland and employs the latest technology for both staff and student use. It has well over a million volumes, ranging from ancient papyri to the latest electronic resources on a wide range of subjects. Most of the books and journals can be freely borrowed and there are ample reading areas where you can study.

Information about library services can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/library:

15.3   Computing services

Information Technology Services provides central computing facilities and services. Further information about computing services can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/it

15.4   Students' Association

The Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) exists to promote the interests of all matriculated students and to communicate on their behalf with the University authorities on matters affecting students. The AUSA also provides a wide range of services. Full details can be found at www.ausa.org.uk

15.5   Student Support Services

Student Support Services is the umbrella organisation for various areas: University Counselling Service; University Chaplaincy; Wardenial staff; and the Student Advice and Support Centre. The latter office provides advice and support for international students and students with disabilities, and advice for all students on welfare matters.

Further details about Student Support Services can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/student-support.

15.6   Students with Disabilities

The University of Aberdeen welcomes disabled students and is committed to improving access to courses, facilities, buildings and social life.

If you are a disabled student or have a particular impairment or medical condition, you may have specific queries relating to the accessibility of the University and its courses. You are welcome to contact a Student Support Officer/Disability Adviser for general discussion or with specific queries relating to your personal circumstances.

The University's Student Support Officers/Disability Advisers provide general support to all students and specifically to disabled students. In addition to general issues, they can help answer queries when students are considering applying to the University, discuss specific arrangements with students once they have accepted a place and liaise with academic and non-academic departments to ensure that, where possible, these requirements are met. They can also advise students regarding applications for a Disabled Students' Allowance. They also advise members of University staff on disability-related matters.

Further information can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/disability or by contacting student.disability@abdn.ac.uk or telephone (01224) 273935.

15.7 Student Guidance and Learner Support

Additional general information about student guidance and learner support is available on the web at www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/aqh/section5.pdf

APPENDICES OF CODES OF PRACTICE FOR POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENTS, HEADS OF SCHOOL, PROGRAMME COORDINATORS, AND COURSE COORDINATORS

A. Responsibilities of Senate, Heads of School, Programme and Course Coordinators and Postgraduate Taught Students

A.1 Senate and the Quality Assurance Committee

Senate has ultimate responsibility for degrees and academic standards, but the powers prescribed under the various higher degree regulations are exercised on its behalf by the Quality Assurance Committee. The Committee approves all new courses and programmes of study, and requires to be satisfied about entrance requirements; course and programme aims, objectives and content; teaching and learning arrangements; and modes of assessment. It also receives reports and assessments on courses from evaluation forms completed by students, from Heads of School and from external examiners.

A.2 Heads of School

Heads of School are in charge of all matters pertaining to the running of their Schools, but they may delegate their powers in respect of each course or programme of study to a course or programme co-ordinator.

A.3 Programme Coordinators

Programme Coordinators have responsibility for:

- Ownership of, and Champion for, their respective programmes. This includes leading on programme recruitment, marketing and conversion activity.
- Responsibility for the strategic development of the programme and its constituent courses.
- Responsibility for the sustainability of the programme and its constituent courses.
- Oversight of the delivery of the programme and constituent courses, including teaching and assessment models, and providing appropriate pastoral support for student experience.
- Involvement in School Marketing Committee, or other relevant group, activities and attendance at specific, relevant, meetings.
- Involvement in appropriate School structures.
- Any other relevant duty as determined by the Head of School.

Programme coordinators will also work together within a School to develop a strategic approach to programmes. This is likely to include:

- Implementation of a regular cycle of programme reviews and planning to fit in with the SENAS timetable.
- Development of a Programme Strategy
- Development of Unique Selling Points, including consideration of online programmes, Making the Most of Masters (MMM), Professional Skills, interdisciplinary options.
- Development of a marketing strategy for all programmes.
- Use the PGT Graduate Attributes to confirm Graduate Attributes for programmes and consider whether they should be coordinated.
- Develop a programme of professional development, for example careers related events and information.

A.4 Course Coordinators

Course Coordinators are responsible for:-

(a) *provision of information to students,* and in particular giving clear information on:-

- aims and objectives of the courses
- teaching methods to be used and availability if materials on MyAberdeen
- attendance expected and course work required
- methods of assessment and marking criteria
- tutorial arrangements

- reading matter both required and recommended
- use of course evaluation forms and other methods of seeking student feedback
- avenues for seeking help and advice
- laboratory, field and other practical activities, including the project and dissertation, where applicable
- safety in laboratory, field and other forms of practical work

(b) course, in particular ensuring that the content of the course is:-

- relevant to the stated aims and objectives
- adequately covered
- where appropriate, a reflection of current professional practice
- as interesting and stimulating as possible
- appropriate to the prerequisites and level of study of the course

(c) providing appropriate assistance to help students progress in learning by:-

- being accessible to students at reasonable times to provide assistance in dealing with academic difficulties arising in the course
- identifying inadequate progress and initiating appropriate remedial advice or action
- returning written course work with constructive criticism in reasonable time
- providing appropriate training in safety and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of students in laboratory, field, and other practical activities

(d) ensuring that quality in teaching and assessment is maintained and extended by:-

- taking appropriate opportunities offered for development in teaching skills and educational innovations
- using, where appropriate, available aids to learning
- developing transferable skills
- using the University's Common Grade Scale
- use of policies outline in the Academic Quality Handbook
- using student evaluation and external examiner feedback
- reviewing course/programme design and assessment techniques

(e) additionally staff who are required to supervise projects/dissertations should:-

- advise the student on the choice of research topic in the light of what is appropriate for the degree and the present state of knowledge
- advise on a topic which can be satisfactorily completed within the specified time and within the specified word limit
- give guidance about planning the research programme, about literature and sources, and about requisite skills
- determine what training in research methods and skills and further education in the subject are required by the student, and seek approval from the Head of School for proposals to obtain the necessary training and support
- advise the Head of School of any lack of resources out with the set limits to the funding of projects which may prevent the student from completing his or her study within the period of study
- ensure that the student is acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures, and that s/he receives appropriate training and supervision when following any course of action or using any technique which might be deemed hazardous or dangerous
- advise on ethical issues relating to the conduct of the research (including how to obtain the approval of relevant ethics committees if appropriate)
- request written work on a regular basis, as appropriate
- arrange as appropriate for the student to present papers to graduate seminars, staff seminars and conferences
- consult with the student on the appropriate recognition of the student's contribution to research publications
- try to ensure by advice and encouragement that the dissertation is submitted within the specified time and within the specified word limit

A.5   Postgraduate students on taught courses

While teaching staff have the responsibilities listed above, postgraduate students on taught programmes are ultimately responsible for their own learning and development, and for promoting good conditions for study and learning through their own behaviour and attitudes.

Students should take full advantage of the teaching provided by:-

- attending regularly at lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory, field and other practical or on-line classes as required by Schools
- coming prepared for every class as necessary or required
- participating actively in tutorials, seminars, and group activities
- completing and submitting course work punctually
- trying to attain the highest intellectual standards possible
- ensuring that they are thoroughly acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures, and have received training before following any course of action or using any technique which might be deemed hazardous or dangerous
- contributing to the improvement of courses through co-operation in the completing of student course evaluation forms and other methods of seeking student feedback
- co-operating in the development of a learning environment
- using the opportunities offered to seek advice on difficulties encountered in a course
- maintaining a standard of behaviour during teaching sessions which allows all class members to take full advantage of the teaching
- informing Schools and Course Co-ordinators at the earliest possible opportunity of any disability, illness or extenuating circumstances which may affect academic performance
- communicating suggestions for the improvement of courses, and contributing to staff-student consultative committees.

Additionally, those students who undertake projects/dissertations should:-

- define the area of their research in consultation with their supervisor
- define their training and educational needs and discuss them with their supervisor
- ensure that they are thoroughly acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures, and have received training before following any course of action or using any technique which might be deemed hazardous or dangerous
- agree a schedule of meetings with their supervisor
- agree a research topic with their supervisor as soon as practicable
- agree a timetable for the conduct of the research
- seek approval for their research topic via their supervisor or Head of School
- obtain approval of their research from ethics committees where appropriate
- discuss work and progress with the supervisor
- submit written work as and when required by the supervisor
- maintain progress in accordance with the plan agreed with the supervisor
- agree with the supervisor a plan and timetable for the writing of the dissertation
- take the initiative with their supervisor in defining and raising problems or difficulties
- consult with their supervisor on the appropriate recognition of their contribution to research publications.

B.   Data Protection and Freedom of Information

B.1   Data protection

The University requires a certain amount of personal information for the administration of students' studies and to ensure the proper completion of their chosen courses or degree programme. All personal information provided by students will be treated strictly in terms of the Data Protection Act 1998: their confidentiality will be respected and all appropriate measures will be taken to prevent unauthorised disclosure. The data students provide will be used for stated purposes only and they would be advised about any further uses.

The University does all it can to ensure that all data remains up-to-date and accurate, but there are some areas in which we must emphasise our reliance on students to inform us of changes which occur between updates.   It is therefore extremely important that students keep us informed of any such changes, to avoid situations where (for example) we might send vital mail to the wrong address. Students have access to the personal information held about them on the Student Record system via their Student Portal. **Students must use their Portal to check the information held on them and change anything that is incorrect or is missing.**

Students who require to process personal data as part of their studies must also ensure that they abide by the Data Protection Act.   Further information on the Act can be accessed at www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/data-protection-255

Information regarding Freedom of Information and the University's Publication scheme can be found at: www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/freedom-of-information-254

B.2   HESA student collection notice

We will send some of the information we hold about you to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). This forms your HESA record, which contains details of your ethnic group and any disabilities you have. HESA will pass your record, or parts of it, to any of the following organisations that need it to carry out their statutory functions connected with higher education:

- Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)
- Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)
- Scottish Executive (SE) [Scottish Government (SG)]
- Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DEL(NI))
- Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
- Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC)
- Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)
- Research Council (RCs)
- Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

HESA and the organisations listed above will use the information mainly to produce statistics. This may result in information being published and released to other approved users, including academic researchers and commercial organisations. Your record will not be used in a way that could affect you personally and the organisations will take precautions to reduce the risk of you being identified from the information once it is published and released.

While you are a student, we will need to keep your contact details. These do not form part of your HESA record, so HESA and the organisations listed above cannot use this record to contact you.

Your contact details may be passed to survey contractors to carry out the National Student Survey and surveys of student finances, on behalf of the education organisations listed above. These organisations and their contractors will use your details only for that purpose, and will then delete them.

About six months after you graduate, we will contact you to ask you to fill in the HESA 'Destinations of leavers from HE' survey. We will not give your contact details to HESA. You might be included in a sample of leavers who are surveyed again a few years after they graduate. If so, we will pass your contact details to the organisation that has been contracted to carry out that survey. That organisation will use your details only for that purpose, and will then delete them. (If you do not want to take part in this second survey, please let us know.)

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, you have the right to a copy of the information HESA holds about you. You will have to pay a small fee for this. If you have any concerns about your information being used for these purposes, please contact HESA.

HESA
95 Promenade
Cheltenham
GL50 1HZ

Website: www.hesa.ac.uk

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