

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

ACADEMIC POLICY AND REGULATIONS GROUP (APRG)

MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2023

Present: Gillian Mackintosh (**Chair**), Isabel Crane, Faye Hendry, Steve Tucker, with Liam Dyker (**Clerk**) in attendance.

Apologies: Akua Serwaa Agyeman

MINUTE OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(copy filed as APRG/080323/001)

1.1 The Group approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

2.1 The Group noted there were no actions arising from the previous meeting.

EXTERNAL EXAMINING ACADEMIC REVIEW: RECOMMENDATIONS

(copy filed as APRG/080323/003)

3.1 The Group heard a summary of the paper and the recommendations, noting that consideration will be given to actions arising from the work completed by the External Examining Academic Review Group.

3.2 The Group discussed the External Examiners role in the setting of summative assessments (*section 5.1 of the paper refers*), in particular the workload associated with this task. Overall, there was consensus that Examiners should be required to review assessments. The Group noted previous iterations of the paper which detailed a threshold under which an External Examiner would review summative assessments. It was suggested that this could be framed as a percentage or proportion of assessment for a course. It was agreed this would be helpful in ensuring cross institution consistency.

3.3 In relation to sharing of good practice, the Group discussed the opportunities to share good practice across Schools in terms of training, induction and communication. It was proposed that examples of good practice might be useful to ensure consistency across the institution. It was agreed that the responses to the questionnaire would be sought to identify current practices within Schools.

3.4 Discussion ensued regarding reporting on inclusive practices within Schools. It was agreed that a section for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues, including a question on Decolonising the Curriculum is added to the External Examiner Report form.

3.5 The Group agreed that the terminology used in the External Examiner guidance should align with practices across the University in relation to curriculum management. It was proposed that 'substantial changes' be substituted with 'major changes' in respect of *Section 5.1, bullet point 3 in the paper*.

3.6 Further, it was agreed to include reference within the paper and associated appendices to publication of External Examiner Reports to students. It was noted that it would be important

to ensure that External Examiners are aware that their reports will be published but to also ensure that this does not inhibit their ability to provide robust feedback.

- 3.7 Subject to these amendments, the Group were content to approve the paper and associated appendices.

QAA QUALITY CODE MAPPING: EXTERNAL EXPERTISE

(copy filed as APRG/080323/002)

- 4.1 The Group noted that APRG had responsibility for ensuring ongoing review of the Quality Code Mapping and that it was planned to bring one section to each meeting for review. The Group discussed the intended working approach in relation to the updates to the Quality Code Mapping. It was agreed that sections of the Code relevant to items of business on the agenda should be considered. However, it was further agreed that other sections which are not in the distinct policy areas within the remit of the Group should also be considered on a routine basis. It was suggested that the schedule of consideration of Sections of the Code should be made available to members of the Group to allow reflection in advance.
- 4.2 In relation to amendments to the Quality Code Mapping for External Expertise, the following changes were recommended:
- In Section 2, the references to UEC will be removed in relation to delegated authority in line with the Committee Structure.
 - In Section 5, updates will be provided regarding the External Examining Academic Review Group which has now concluded its work.
 - In Section 6, updates will be provided regarding the publication of External Examiner reports to students.
- 4.3 Discussion ensued regarding the nomination process for External Examiners, including the requirement to avoid reciprocal arrangements and how this might be achieved. It was agreed that further discussions will take place with the Lead School Administration Manager, however, a suggested approach could be the collation of data by Schools regarding External Examiner appointments of Aberdeen staff to be used when nominating External Examiners.
- 4.4 It was agreed that the relevant changes will be made and brought back to the next meeting of the Group for information.

DEGREE REGULATIONS

(i) RESOLUTION FOR CHANGES TO VARIOUS DEGREES

(copy filed as APRG/080323/004)

- 5.1 The Group heard an overview of the regulatory changes proposed. In discussion, the Group discussed each change in turn:
- (i) General Regulations for First Degrees: Summer School for Access
- 5.2 The Group noted that the Summer School for Access is withdrawn and replaced by the Access Higher Education Programme. The Group was content with the proposed changes.
- (ii) General Regulations for First Degrees: Graduation
- 5.3 The Group noted the rationale for the proposed changes in respect of graduation, noting that recent instances have occurred whereby students who completed their degree several years

ago are applying to graduate now. It was advised that a number of institutions include a time limit for graduation. Further, the proposed change only allows graduation once. Some concern was expressed regarding the time limit associated with graduating in person, to which it was recognised that there could be situations whereby the regulations could be waived.

(iii) Regulations for Degrees Undertaken under the Articulation Agreement with South China Normal University (SCNU) for Non-Quota Programmes

5.4 The Group heard an overview of the proposed changes, highlighting the change in requirements from the Chinese Service Centre for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE) requiring students to undertake two-thirds of their degree at the University. It was noted these Regulations would relate to students on an Articulation Arrangement with South China Normal University who are on specific non-quota programmes. It was noted that the progression regulations would be for the Students' Progress Committee to oversee.

5.5 The Group was content with these regulations, subject to the amendment of removal of reference to CSCSE from the regulations.

(iv) Supplementary Regulations for the Award of all Master of Arts (MA) Degrees

5.6 The Group heard a summary of the regulatory changes in respect of the creation of the Master of Business (MBus) degree. It was further noted that a graduation hood would require approval at Senate and further discussions were ongoing regarding this.

(ii) RESOLUTION FOR REGULATIONS FOR THE AWARD OF UNDERGRADUATE INTEGRATED MASTERS' DEGREES

6.1 The Group noted that the proposed changes regarding the Regulations for the Award of Undergraduate Integrated Masters' Degrees had been removed from the agenda.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY / CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (ACADEMIC)

7.1 The Group was advised that the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) will follow for approval by circulation, for consideration and approval at the meeting of the QAC on 29 March 2023.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1 The Group agreed that the date of the next meeting should precede the May meeting of the QAC, dependent on the business that requires consideration.