

NIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

A meeting of the University Education Committee will be held on **Monday 16 January 2023** at **1.05pm**, by way of **Microsoft Teams**.

Mrs Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar
(e-mail e.tough@abdn.ac.uk)

AGENDA

FOR DISCUSSION

1. **Approval of the minute of the meeting held on 10 October 2022** *(UEC/160123/001)*
2. **Matters Arising** *(UEC/160123/002)*
3. **Health, Safety and Wellbeing** *(Oral Item)*
4. **Industrial Action Update** *(Oral Item)*

Members of the UEC will **hear** an update on the planned Industrial Action.

5. **Risk Register** *(UEC/160123/003)*

The Committee is invited to **discuss** the Risk Register with regards to the specific risks associated with Education.

6. **Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan Update** *(UEC/160123/004)*

Members of the UEC are asked to **discuss** the proposed actions for the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan.

7. **National Student Survey (NSS)**
 - (i) Institutional NSS Action Plan Update *(UEC/160123/005)*
 - (ii) Overview of NSS 2023 *(UEC/160123/006)*

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the updates provided in regards to the NSS.

8. **Dean for Educational Innovation Update** *(Oral Item)*

Members of the UEC are asked to **discuss** the report providing an update on the work of the Dean for Educational Innovation.

9. **Decolonising the Curriculum: Timelines and Approval Processes** *(UEC/160123/008)*

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the paper on Decolonising the Curriculum and to **approve** the proposed principles and timelines.

10. Results of the Race Equality Charter Student Survey (UEC/160123/009)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the paper providing the results of the Race Equality Charter Student Survey.

11. Updates from the Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC)

(i) Degree Awarding and Non-Continuation Gap Action Plan (UEC/160123/010)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the updates from the SSEC in respect of Degree Awarding Gaps and Non-Continuation.

12. Appeals, Complaints and Academic Discipline 2021/22

Members of the Committee are asked to **discuss** the following papers, providing an update on (i) appeal and complaints cases and (ii) academic discipline cases handled in 2021/22:

(i) Academic Appeals and Complaints 2021/22 (UEC/160123/012a)

(ii) Academic Discipline 2021/22 (UEC/160123/012b)

13. Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills (UEC/160123/013)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the update from the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills Task and Finish Group (TFG) ahead of its progression to Senate.

14. Block Teaching Action Plan (UEC/160123/014)

Members of the UEC are invited to **note** the action plan in regard to Block Teaching.

15. Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) Data (UEC/160123/015)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the paper provided on Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) Data.

16. PTES & International Student Barometer (UEC/160123/016)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the paper provided on the reinstatement of external student surveys.

17. Postgraduate Taught Attainment Report 2022 (UEC/160123/017)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the report provided on postgraduate taught attainment.

18. Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee Remit and Composition (UEC/160123/018)

Members of the UEC are invited to **approve** the updated remit and composition for the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC).

19. Dates of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the UEC will take place on Thursday 23 March 2023 at 1.05pm.

20. Items for Information – see below/overleaf

Any member of the Committee wishing an item for routine approval or for information to be brought forward for discussion may ask at the meeting for that to be done. Any such item will be taken after item 1.

Declaration of interests: Any member and individual in attendance (including Officers) who has a clear interest in a matter on the agenda should declare that interest at the relevant meeting, whether or not that interest is already recorded in the Registry of Member's interests.

20. FOR INFORMATION

20.1 Update Reports from the UEC sub-committees:

- (i) Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) *(UEC/160123/019a)*
- (ii) Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC) *(UEC/160123/019b)*

20.2 Promotions Review: Framework for Criteria and Associated Guidance

Members of the Committee will receive, by circulation, the updated Framework for Criteria and the associated Guidance for Applicants in due course. Work is currently ongoing to finalise these.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

Minute of the Meeting held on 10 October 2022

Present: Ruth Taylor (Chair), Akua Agyeman, Euan Bain, Lyn Batchelor, Jason Bohan, Abbe Brown, Colin Christie, Bill Harrison, Ken Jeffrey, Shona Potts, Anne-Michelle Slater, Susan Stokeld, Lindsay Tibbetts, Steve Tucker, with Simon Bains, Julie Bray, Scott Carle, Nick Edwards, Brian Henderson, Tracey Innes, Gillian Mackintosh, Patricia Spence, Louisa Stratton and Emma Tough (Clerk) in attendance

Apologies: John Barrow, Harminder Battu, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Stuart Durkin, Richard Hepworth, Alison Jenkinson, Kirsty Kiezebrink, David McCausland, Graeme Nixon, Rona Patey, Michelle Pinard, Joshua Wright and Fiona Ritchie and Graeme Kirkpatrick

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 AUGUST 2022*(copy filed as UEC/101022/001)*

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to the meeting of the University Education Committee (UEC). Members of the Committee considered the minute of the meeting held on 25 August 2022 and approved it as an accurate representation of discussions held.
- 1.2 Members of the Committee noted that, as a consequence of recent Senate discussions in regard to the UEC and the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), the updated UEC remit and composition would follow to the next meeting of the Committee.

Action: Clerk**MATTERS ARISING***(copy filed as UEC/101022/002)*

- 2.1 Members of the Committee noted the actions arising following the meeting of UEC held on 25 August 2022. Members noted that the majority of actions were complete or included on the agenda of the meeting for further discussion.
- 2.2 Members of the Committee received an update in respect of action point 3.3, noting that the issue had been raised with the Campus Planning Group (CPG). Members of the Committee acknowledged the changes in the external context with respect to Covid-19 and the subsequent adjustments in timetabling and distancing rules since the commencement of the 2022/23 academic year.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- 3.1 Members of the Committee acknowledged the agenda item on Health, Safety and Wellbeing and raised no matters for further discussion.

ABERDEEN 2040 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE*(copy filed as UEC/101022/003)*

- 4.1 Members of the UEC received the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan Update, noting the addition of proposed actions for the 2022/23 academic year. Members noted the intention

of the actions in seeking to ensure a continuation of work which had already commenced in regard to the implementation plan and to ensure the prioritisation of activity across the 2022/23 academic year.

ABERDEEN 2040 EDUCATION STEERING GROUP UPDATE

(copy filed as UEC/101022/004)

- 5.1 Members of the UEC received an update on the meeting of the Aberdeen 2040 Education Steering Group held on 14 September. Members note the minute of the meeting attached as *UEC/101022/004*. Members of the Committee were reminded of the purpose of the Steering Group, in looking at the work of the Task and Finish Groups (TFGs) and other ongoing activity in respect of Aberdeen 2040 and Education.
- 5.2 Members of the Committee were updated on ongoing discussions between Abbe Brown, lead for the Pastoral Support and Monitoring, Absence and Engagement TFGs and Brian Henderson, Director of Digital and Information Services in regard to possible ways forward in regard to the recommendations of each review.

UPDATES FOLLOWING THE MEETING OF THE SENATE HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2022

- 6.1 Members of the UEC discussed the updates following the meeting of the Senate held on 21 September 2022 in respect of:
- (i) **Pastoral Support Review** *(copy filed as UEC/101022/005)*
- 6.2 Members of the Committee received the paper providing an update on the work of the Pastoral Support Review Task and Finish Group (TFG) following the consideration of the TFG's final report and associated recommendations at the meeting of the Senate on 14 September 2022.
- 6.3 Members of the Committee noted that positive comment was received from Senate in regard to aspects of the proposal, particularly regarding the support of PGT students. It was further noted, however, that significant concern had been expressed at the additional workload which would (as indicated in the report), be needed to deliver the recommendations. On this basis, members of the Committee considered the revised proposals put forward by the TFG, for progression under the new Dean for Student Support and Experience (sections 4.2.1-4.2.6 refer).
- 6.5 Overall, the Committee were content to support the revised proposals contained within the paper. Work to progress IT solutions in regard to this work were also noted. The Committee agreed that the TFG should continue their work in this regard, with future updates to follow to the UEC, as appropriate.

Action: Dean, Student Support and Experience

- (ii) **Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Review** *(copy filed as UEC/101022/006)*
- 6.6 Members of the Committee received a paper providing an update on the work of the Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Review Task and Finish Group (TFG) following the consideration of the TFG's report and recommendations at the meeting of the Senate on 14 September 2022.

- 6.7 Members of the Committee noted positive comments received from Senate in regard to aspects of the proposal put forward by the TFG. Significant concern, however, was noted in regard to the additional IT and human resource and workload which would be needed to deliver the new longer-term system put forward. On this basis, the UEC noted revised proposals from the TFG (sections 4.2.1-4.2.4 refer) in regard to interim measures to ensure improvements to each process.
- 6.8 Overall, the Committee were content to support the revised proposals contained within the paper. Work to progress IT solutions in regard to this work were also noted. The Committee agreed that the TFG should continue their work in this regard, with future updates to follow to the UEC, as appropriate.

Action: Dean, Student Support and Experience

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK ACTION PLAN

(to follow, copy filed as UEC/101022/007)

- 7.1 Members of the UEC noted that the updated Assessment and Feedback action plan would follow for comment by way of circulation.

Action: Kirsty Kiezebrink/Clerk

RETURN OF FEEDBACK ON ASSESSMENT

(copy filed as UEC/101022/008)

- 8.1 The Committee received a paper providing an update on the return of feedback on assessment during the second half session of 2021/22. Members of the Committee noted that, in addressing National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes regarding assessment, Schools were asked to continue to monitor the timeliness of return of feedback on assessment during the second half-session. The Committee acknowledged the intention of this monitoring, in enabling the identification of issues at an early stage and allowing any problems to be followed-up and addressed.
- 8.2 The Committee noted that some Schools had yet to return their responses, despite the deadline of 31 August. The Committee noted the deadline for remaining submissions as 31 October.

Action: School Education Leads/Clerk

- 8.3 Members of the Committee noted the importance of the exercise and agreed that it should be continued in 2022/23 and beyond, with School Education Committees being asked to continue to monitor and implement relevant actions where needed. The UEC noted that the next update for their consideration should be compiled and returned by SECs following the conclusion of the first half session.

DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM: TIMELINES AND APPROVAL PROCESSES

(copy filed as UEC/101022/009)

- 9.1 Members of the Committee discussed the paper providing proposals on the implementation of the institutional work on decolonising the curriculum. In particular, members of the Committee were asked to consider the principles and timelines outlined in the paper. Members of the Committee noted that the paper would proceed to the Senate for an academic view, with a further version of the principles and timeline returning to the UEC for approval.

- 9.2 Members of the Committee noted each of the principles detailed in the paper (sections 4.5-4.12 refer). The Committee expressed their support for these, and the timelines associated with them acknowledging the flexibility that the proposed timeline provides for different Schools and disciplines to take forward the work.

Action: Clerk

- 9.3 A member of the Committee asked a question in regard to reading lists and the library purchase of hard copy books. The Committee were reassured that while eBooks should be sought as an option first, where these don't exist or are too expensive hard copy books can be considered for purchase.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24

(copy filed as UEC/101022/010)

- 10.1 Members of the Committee received the paper providing an overview of the proposals for the structure of the Academic Year 2023/24. The committee noted previous consideration of the paper at both UEC and Senate, in providing an academic view of the issues raised in the paper. Members noted the amendment of the proposals to reflect the feedback raised.

- 10.2 The Committee noted that the paper had been considered by the Student Recruitment Committee (SRC) and would be updated to reflect feedback in this regard. The Committee noted that this would include the edit of the paper to add in some further context in respect of admissions.

Action: Anne-Michelle Slater

- 10.3 Members of the Committee welcomed future conversations in regard to January start students, particularly in recognition of the significant challenges faced in September 2022 in relation to international arrivals, and in regard to result deadlines. Members of the Committee approved the paper and its onward progression to the Senate. The Committee noted that a paper in regard to the 2024/25 academic year and beyond would follow to a future meeting of the Committee.

Action: Clerk

POLICY REVIEW UPDATE

(copy filed as UEC/101022/011)

- 11.1 Members of the Committee discussed the paper on policy review and noted the timings of proposed policy work. The Committee acknowledged the intention of the plan, to provide a realistic plan for policy review work, on which members of the Committee would be engaged, as appropriate. The Committee supported the paper, noting that an updated version would follow, to reflect the distinction between QAC and UEC owned policies and the approval routes in regard to each.

Action: Clerk

DATES OF NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 Members of the Committee noted that the next meeting of the UEC would take place on Monday 16 January 2023 at 1.05pm.

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (NON-ACADEMIC)

(copy filed as UEC/101022/012)

- 13.1 Members of the Committee approved, on the recommendation of the Student Misconduct Review Task and Finish Group (TFG) and the Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC) the final draft of the revised Code of Practice on Student Discipline (non-Academic).

UPDATE REPORTS FROM THE UEC SUB-COMMITTEES

- 14.1 Members of the Committee noted updates from the UEC Sub-Committees as follows:
- (i) Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) *(copy filed as UEC/101022/013a)*
 - (ii) Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC) *(copy filed as UEC/101022/013b)*

RISK REGISTER

(copy filed as UEC/101022/014)

- 14.2 The Committee noted the Risk Register with regards to the specific risks associated with Education.

QAA SCOTLAND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS REVIEW (QESR)

(copy filed as UEC/101022/015)

- 14.3 Further to the circulation of a briefing paper on the QAA Scotland Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) and Institutional Liaison Meetings (ILM), members of the Committee noted the attached letter providing confirmation of the University's date of review and QESR panel.

ADVANCEHE PGCERT ACCREDITATION

(copy filed as UEC/101022/016)

- 14.4 The UEC noted the accreditation with AdvanceHE for the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (Learning and Teaching).

COURSE EVALUATION

- 14.5 The Committee noted that the Course Evaluation webpages ([Course Evaluation | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen \(abdn.ac.uk\)](#)) had been updated in line with discussions with School Directors of Education, particularly in relation to opportunities for providing feedback mid-/throughout the term so that students providing the feedback are able to benefit from that same feedback.

INCLUSION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

(copy filed as UEC/101022/017)

- 14.6 Members of the UEC noted the revised Inclusion Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

MONITORING DEADLINES 2022/23

(copy filed as UEC/101022/018)

- 14.7 Members of the UEC noted the attached deadlines for the monitoring of students for academic year 2022/23, approved by way of Chairs action.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ACTION LOG

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2022

Minute Point	Identified Action	Individual(s) Responsible	Action Status/Update
1.2	Updated UEC remit and composition to follow to the next meeting of the Committee (January 2023).	Clerk	<i>Pending</i>
6.5	Work of the Pastoral Support TFG to continue, following UEC support for the revised proposals.	Dean, Student Support and Experience	Ongoing. To be removed from the actions listing pending a further update to a future meeting of the UEC.
6.8	Work of the Monitoring, Absence & Engagement TFG to continue, following UEC support for the revised proposals.	Dean, Student Support and Experience	Ongoing. To be removed from the actions listing pending a further update to a future meeting of the UEC.
7.1	Updated Assessment and Feedback action plan to follow for comment by way of circulation.	Kirsty Kiezebrink/Clerk	Complete. Assessment & Feedback action plan issued to the Committee by circulation, with a deadline for the receipt of comments of 24 October.
8.2	Remaining School feedback on assessment submissions to be submitted by 31 October.	Education Leads	Complete. Remaining School submissions received by 31 October.
9.2	Progression of the work of the Decolonising the Curriculum TFG to the Senate, for an academic view.	Clerk	Complete. Paper on Decolonising the Curriculum considered by the Senate at the meeting held on 2 November.
10.2	Update of the 2023/24 Academic Year paper to reflect feedback from the Student Recruitment Committee (SRC) and the UEC	AMS	Complete. Paper on the 2023/24 Academic Year updated to reflect feedback from the SRC and the UEC in advance of its progression to the Senate.
10.3	Progression of the work of the 2023/24 Academic Year paper to the Senate.	Clerk	Complete. Paper on the 2023/24 Academic Year considered by the Senate at the meeting held on 2 November.
11.1	Updated version of the Policy Review Update, to reflect the distinction between QAC and UEC owned policies and the approval routes in regard to each, to follow to the Committee by circulation.	Clerk	<i>Pending</i>

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN 2040 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

The purpose of this paper is to provide members of the University Education Committee (UEC) with an opportunity to note the actions for the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan for Education, and to identify the need for updates on the Implementation Plan (which will be circulated to the UEC) to be completed by Monday 30 January.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	n/a	
Further consideration/ approval required by	n/a	

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members of the UEC are invited to note the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan for Education, attached as *Annex A*, and to note the timeline for feedback on the actions in the plan.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Following previous updates to the University Education Committee (UEC), members of the Committee are invited to discuss and comment on the updated Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan, attached as *Annex A* as part of a process of updating on progress on actions.
- 4.2 Members of the UEC will be asked for updates on the actions by Monday 30 January by separate circulation. The completed updates will be circulated to the UEC for comment and discussed at UEC's next meeting.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk) and Gillian Mackintosh, Director of Academic Services and Online Education (g.mackintosh@abdn.ac.uk)

11 December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan to 2025 - Contents

Core Strategic Themes	SMT Lead
Education	RT
Research	MC
RE & RR	PE

Inclusive	SMT Lead
Commitment 1	DD
Commitment 2	AS
Commitment 3	MC & PE
Commitment 4	DD
Commitment 5	DD

Interdisciplinary	SMT Lead
Commitment 6	RT & MC
Commitment 7	RT
Commitment 8	MC
Commitment 9	MC & PE
Commitment 10	KL

League Table Commitment	KL
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International	SMT Lead
Commitment 11	AS
Commitment 12	RT
Commitment 13	MC
Commitment 14	RT
Commitment 15	TS

Sustainable	SMT Lead
Commitment 16	KL
Commitment 17	RT & KL
Commitment 18	MC
Commitment 19	KL
Commitment 20	MW

Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan to 2025 - Education

Strategic Area / Commitment	Objectives and Actions				
	SMT Lead	No	2025 High-Level Objectives	No	Actions Proposed for 2022-23
Education	RT	1	Student satisfaction: On an annual rolling basis, use the outcomes from the NSS to identify institutional thematic areas which will aim to support Schools in enhancing student satisfaction. Link into the QAA Scotland Enhancement Theme national workstreams to support enhancements.	1.1	Take forward actions for our 2022-23 institutional theme: Assessment and Feedback. All School Education Committees to take forward, monitor and intervene where necessary in relation to actions for assessment and feedback.
				1.2	All Schools to have in place an NSS action plan (or discipline-level action plans), using ASES to triangulate and enhance their action planning process, with School Education Committees required to monitor progress on actions.
				1.3	Through the Directors of Education, undertake a focused session on sharing of good practice.
		2	Student progression and continuation: Ensure all students are supported to achieve their potential in their learning and wider student experience with the aim of increasing the numbers of students who progress from year 1 to year 2 (UG) and who graduate (all students).	2.1	Put in place an institutional action plan to enhance continuation. All Schools to have in place an action plan to address particular concerns within their Schools.
				3	Employability: See Commitment 12 for an overview of 2025 high-level objectives
		3.2	Identify engagement gaps and understand barriers to participating in careers services to inform targeted development of careers support and opportunities.		
		3.3	Complete the co-curricular programme review – this work is in parallel to the Enhanced Transcript Review and Graduate Attributes work to ensure provision meets future needs of students and complements curricular provision.		
		3.4	Expand regional employer partnerships – includes growth of ABDN Connect Experience Programme and associated ABDN Exclusive internships, placements and part-time jobs for students.		
		4	Degree awarding gap (classifications): Where awarding gaps are identified based on protected characteristics, put in place interventions that aim to reduce the awarding gap	4.1	As part of our process towards application for the Race Equality Charter, analyse the degree awarding gap data. As part of this process targets will be set (2022-23).
		5	Quality assurance of our provision: Ensure that we receive positive outcomes for our Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (2023 or 2024 dependent on the timing of there revised approach to ELIR arising from the SFC Review, with annual reporting); and that we adhere to all internal and external quality assurance requirements, including those for transnational education; and that we complete a whole-systems QA policy review (a 4 year programme of activity)	5.1	Complete the agreed policy review for AY2022/23 (tbc)
				5.2	Put in place a University-level approach to approving and managing UK partnerships (with the Chief Operating Officer)

University of Aberdeen: Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan 2021-2025

Interdisciplinary Theme		Objectives and Actions				
No	Commitment	SMT Lead	No	2025 High-Level Objectives	No	Actions Proposed for 2022/23
6	We will support a learning culture in which all our staff and students can exchange ideas and expertise across intellectual areas and organisational structures [NB please also see commitment 7]	RT	1	Foster a culture of, and put in place mechanisms for, identifying best practice externally – in the HE sector and beyond – for dissemination and adoption by the University.	1.1	Utilise existing networks (e.g. Aurora and the Scottish Enhancement Themes) that identify best practice externally for the development of our Education.
					1.2	Continue to use existing networks (e.g. RKEC, RCDG, Wesley Group etc), our membership of organisations (e.g. UKRIO, ACU etc) and develop new networks that identify best practice for enhancing research excellence and effective knowledge exchange.
			2	Foster a culture of, and put in place mechanisms for, identifying and disseminating best practice within the University, ensuring optimal horizontal connectivity across and between Schools and Directorates.	2.1	Utilise our growing Community of Practice (Enhancement Theme), and our Centre for Academic Development internal networks to identify and disseminate best practice, reporting the relevant committees of the University Education Committee to enhance dissemination.
					3	Ensure our students are at the forefront of the digital revolution for learners by capitalising on the developments of our education with pedagogy at the heart of its use, and providing an environment in which students can connect and engage with an interdisciplinary experience
			3.2	Implement the Principles for the Delivery of Education (agreed for AY2022/23), evaluate their implementation, and further develop the Principles as appropriate.		
			3.3	Through the Centre for Academic Development, implement staff training and development for the implementation of the Principles for the Delivery of Education.		

University of Aberdeen: Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan 2021-2025

Interdisciplinary Theme		Objectives and Actions				
No	Commitment	SMT Lead	No	2025 High-Level Objectives	No	Actions Proposed for 2022/23
7	We will design new courses and programmes which encourage interdisciplinary learning; and ensure that all our students can experience innovative, challenge-led education involving external stakeholders.	RT	1	Building on the breadth curriculum at the University of Aberdeen, and embedded within the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum, increase the opportunities for interdisciplinary learning across all discipline areas with a focus on the interdisciplinary challenges in Aberdeen 2040. Ensure that co-curriculum interdisciplinary opportunities are identified as part of the overall work.	1.1	Deliver the outcomes from the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills TFG seeking relevant approvals during AY2022/23.
					1.2	Undertake a scoping exercise on our breadth curriculum to inform the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum work that will review course choice (breadth) and support interdisciplinary learning.
					1.3	Through the Centre for Academic Development, implement staff training and development for the implementation of the Principles for the Delivery of Education.
			2	Through an Aberdeen 2040 Pedagogy Task and Finish Group, agree a transformational approach to the way we deliver our teaching, learning and assessment, building on our experience of blended learning and sector-wide evidence. Our transformational approach will be innovative, challenge-led and will involve external stakeholders.	2.1	Evaluate the implementation of the AY2022/23 Principles for the Delivery of Education.
			3	Put in place a stakeholder group for the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum that includes staff, students, employers, regional groups so that we are able to address the regional skills challenges as part of the work.	3.1	Include stakeholders on the Graduate Attributes and Skills TFG so as regional skills and issues are embedded within the work of the group.

University of Aberdeen: Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan 2021-2025

International Theme		Objectives and Actions				
No	Commitment	SMT Lead	No	2025 High-Level Objectives	No	Actions Proposed for 2022/23
12	We will equip our graduates for global employment through our curriculum and teaching methods.	RT	1	As part of the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum workstream, employability, enterprise and entrepreneurial learning and skills will be embedded within our curriculum and co-curriculum.	1.1	Deliver the outcomes from the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills TFG seeking relevant approvals during AY2022/23.
					1.2	Note - this is in the Education plan (see 'Education' tab)
			2	Develop a framework, policy and delivery model for enabling all students to have access to placement or equivalent experience thus enabling students to have access to global opportunities whilst in study and then beyond.	2.1	Complete the external consultancy on work placements, and take forward recommendations from that work into the Work Placements TFG.
					2.2	Increase the number of work placements on offer to students from the current provision by the end of the AY2022/23.
			3	Support our students to develop the relevant skills, through their learning, to support their development for global employment.	3.1	Using the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills, put in place a plan to implement them as part of all students' learning experience.

University of Aberdeen: Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan 2021-2025

International Theme		Objectives and Actions				
No	Commitment	SMT Lead	No	2025 High-Level Objectives	No	Actions Proposed for 2022/23
14	We will ensure all our students can have an international experience, by studying abroad or working collaboratively with international partners	RT	1	As part of the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum workstream, incorporate learning opportunities for students where learning takes place with international partners as part of the curriculum (e.g. COIL (Collaborative Online International Education) / virtual mobility).	1.1	Complete the COIL pilot and make recommendations for wider implementation.
			2	Provide 5% of all students with an international placement by 2025. Support this aspiration with a focus on curriculum design that enables flexibility for students who choose to undertake an international placement. Ensure that there are no barriers (e.g. financial) to students' ability to choose to take an international placement opportunity.	2.1	As part of the development of the academic year structure, ensure that the design of the AY allows for student mobility.
					2.2	As part of the International learning and Student mobility TFG, identify a plan to increase the numbers of opportunities for international placements for students.
			3	Put in place increased numbers of volunteering and other 'beyond the curriculum' international learning opportunities. In time this work will be integrated with the wider Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum with the aim of adopting a more flexible approach to the international experience	3.1	As part of the Career registration data, scope the current international volunteering and other opportunities and compile information on the numbers of students that have engaged with these experiences over the past 5 years.

University of Aberdeen: Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan 2021-2025

International Theme		Objectives and Actions				
No	Commitment	SMT Lead	No	2025 High-Level Objectives	No	Actions Proposed for 2022/23
15	We will develop our campuses and processes to create a caring environment that is alert to cultural differences	TS	1	Capturing, understanding and supporting cultural differences. This foundational set of actions will support the collection and identification of friction points in our policies and processes which mean that either or both do not feel welcoming or caring to individuals within our communities. We will aim to draw on existing research across the sector to inform areas of investigation as well as integrating with activities already underway to support our work on race and wider inclusion activities. This will then inform specific actions in relation to processes and for our campuses.	1.1	Continue with the Listening activities (implemented through the Race Equality Strategy Group) using these to both raise awareness across the university, and to support action planning for the Antiracism Strategy.
					1.2	
			2	Demonstrating Commitment through Action Ensure positive decolonisation and diversification of Library resources and Museum and Special collections - supporting and promoting collaborative curation, repatriation and increased inclusivity of resources.	2.1	Review of the collections in Marischal in terms of the scope and type of space that would be required to move out of the building.
					2.2	Deliver a set of resources and guidance to support Schools to take forward their work on Decolonising the Curriculum; and seek approval for an overall approach to the implementation, across the university, of decolonising the curriculum.
			3	Supporting Inclusive Diversity. The Development Trust will fund projects and programmes which support cultural diversity on campus. These include, but are not limited to, financial support for International Women's Day, Sanctuary Scholars, Black History Month, the promotion of our Race Equality Champions, Widening Access initiatives, etc.	3.1	Focus on establishing effective processes that communicate the key university priorities for funding to the Development Trust.
						3.2

University of Aberdeen: Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan 2021-2025

Sustainable Theme		Objectives and Actions				
No	Commitment	SMT Lead	No	2025 High-Level Objectives	No	Actions Proposed for 2022/23
17	We will educate all our students and staff to be leaders in protecting the environment	RT and KL	1	Put in place a set of options or pathways for learning for a defined skillset for students with different ambitions associated with the protection of the environment. Ensure that all students have a minimum (to be defined) knowledge base on sustainability and protecting the environment.	1.1	Deliver the outcomes from the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills TFG seeking relevant approvals during AY2022/23.
					1.2	As part of the initial work on our breadth curriculum, and to inform the Aberdeen 2040 curriculum work, clearly identify curriculum opportunities associated with 'sustainability' and determine whether there are requirements for the development of further curriculum opportunities.
			2	Identify opportunities for students that help them to demonstrate leadership in climate change (e.g. volunteering) that can be explicitly recognised as part of their overall learning experience.	2.1	Undertake a mapping exercise of existing opportunities, that go beyond the formal curriculum, to determine those that enable students to engage in climate change related issues / activities, as a precursor to developing and promoting these opportunities.
			3	Develop a series of resources and engagement opportunities for staff to develop their capacity for understanding of and leadership in environmental sustainability.	Moved to 16.1.3	Section Moved to Commitment 16.1.3 to avoid duplication
					3.1	Action consolidated with Commitment 16.2.2 to avoid duplication Develop a suite of training opportunities that covers generic introductions to sustainability, enhanced content, and role-specific guidance to support staff in embedding sustainability into their daily routines e.g. Carbon Literacy, IEMA, RSGS, EAUC, Sustainable Procurement etc.
					Moved to 16.2.3	Section moved to Commitment 16.2.3 to avoid duplication

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides the University Education Committee (UEC) with an update on the Institutional action plan to address the assessment and feedback focus of the NSS survey.

UEC is invited to note this paper and to comment on the action plan

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	SSEC	5 Dec 2022
Further consideration/ approval required by	N/A	

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 In NSS 2022, the University continued its year-on-year rise in student satisfaction ranking in this key sector survey, which captures students' views on a range of areas relating to their learning experience.

3.2 Assessment and feedback scale is the area we have seen greatest gains with an increase in 32 places in this year's results, reflecting the excellent work that we have been doing in this area. However, there is still room for further improvements to move us up from our current ranking of 57th out of 122.

3.3 Members of the UEC are asked to consider and discuss the updated action plan provided in the attached Annex A. A valuable discussion on Annex A and assessment and feedback in general took place at SSEC when colleagues considered and shared their School plans, institutional action and areas were identified for further focus.

4. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean for Educational Innovation k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk and Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk

21 December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Annex A

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLAN

Written on: 22/09/22

Author: Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean for Educational Innovation

Amended / updated on: 25th November 2022

PRIORITY 1: Assessment and Feedback Scale 03			
ANALYSIS: <i>provide a summary of the area for enhancement based on the Comprehensive Analysis, freetext comments, and any other relevant student feedback</i>			
Assessment and Feedback overall % and (rank): 65.3% (89) 2021; 69.8% (57) 2022; performance (against benchmark) 2022: 69.8% (66.8%)			
The criteria used for marking have been clear in advance overall % and (rank): 67.3% (88) 2021; 70.2%(63) 2022, performance (against benchmark) 2022: 70.2% (68.8%)			
Marking and assessment has been fair overall % and (rank): 71.2% (27) 2021; 76.5% (8) 2022; performance (against benchmark) 2022: 76.5% (68.7%)			
Feedback on my work has been timely overall % and (rank): 56.9% (102) 2021; 61.7% (82) 2022; performance (against benchmark) 2022: 61.7% (63.2%)			
I have received helpful comments on my work overall % and (rank): 65.9% (66) 2021; 70.6% (50) 2022; performance (against benchmark) 2022: 70.6% (66.7%)			
In recent years, the University of Aberdeen ranking for the Assessment & Feedback scale has remained consistently low. However, in the 2022 results there has been a significant rise to 57 th in the sector, a rise of 32 places from 2021. This is the second year in a row that Aberdeen has risen in rank, having jumped 12 places in 2021.			
<u>Themes from the freetext comments</u> (9% of negative and 2% of positive comments related to assessment and feedback)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expectations of assessment and marking criteria not clear - Timeliness of feedback - Scaffolding of learning to enable learning to occur from feedback prior to next assessment - Over assessment / deadlines for assessment close together - Inconsistency of feedback and grading between markers - Feedback does not provide sufficient guidance on how to improve - Feedback and grades not clearly aligning - Constructive alignment between intended learning outcomes/ content/ assessment - Variety of assessment types and applicability to real world settings 			
<u>Overall analytical summary</u>			
The areas that require most attention, based on the data, are:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timeliness of feedback - Quality of feedback - Clarity of expectations of assessments 			
ACTIONS	BY WHO?	BY WHEN?	OUTCOME AND COMMENTS
1.1 Continue to implement measures that ensure that all students have all the relevant information on assessment at the start of each course (including: type of assessment, criteria for marking, submission dates, return of feedback dates, contact person for	Schools	Beginning of each half session	

	support, calculation of degree classifications, etc)			
1.2	Obtain feedback from students at a course level regarding clarity of assessment expectations building the information from this into course reviews	Schools / Course coordinators	End of each half session	
1.3	Monitor that all of 1.1 action is completed, and provide guidance and support where issues arise. Report through School Education Committees	Directors of Education	First half-session: ongoing across half session Second half-session all aspects: ongoing across half session	
1.4	Monitor the timeliness of feedback and ensure that all feedback is provided within the 3 week timelines (or sooner if the assessment is continuous)	Schools	Ongoing with immediate intervention and support where feedback is not provided on time Each School to provide overview of timeliness of feedback across all courses to their School Education Committee	
1.5	Pilot of TESTA within 2 schools	Dean Educational Innovation and TESTA team	Pilot in single programme in each of 2 schools in 1 st half session Extend to all programmes within 2 schools 2 nd half session	
1.6	Promotion of web-based resources (including toolkit resources) to support colleagues to enhance assessment practices including feedback on assessment, and ensure good communication on the resources.	Dean for Educational Innovation; Manager Centre for Academic Development	Ongoing with updates provided at 6 monthly intervals to UEC	
1.7	Develop further training and support for assessment and feedback to support enhancement	Dean for Educational Innovation; Manager Centre for Academic Development	Ongoing with updates provided at 6 monthly intervals to UEC	
1.8	Focus on assessment and feedback for Annual symposium, sharing good practice	QAA enhancement theme lead Dean for Educational Innovation Manager Centre for Academic Development	Summer 2023	

1.8	Development of communications and resources for students and staff to support assessment (e.g., academic integrity, essay mills, using feedback)	Manager Centre for Academic Development; Dean for Educational Innovation	Ongoing with updates provided at 6 monthly intervals to UEC	
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UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UPDATE ON NSS 2023 AND SCHOOL RESPONSES TO NSS 2022

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper updates University Education Committee on ongoing activity towards NSS 2023 and on School responses to the feedback from NSS 2022.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered	NSS Steering Group (issue, not this paper) SSEC (developments since then)	21 November 2022 5 December 2022
Further consideration/ approval required by	n/a	

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The paper is provided for information and discussion.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The NSS Steering Group met in November 2022 to discuss plans for NSS 2023. This noted
- Student Experience plans for communication with students to raise awareness and encourage engagement with the survey, including possible incentives
 - plan for liaison between Planning and Student Experience to ensure awareness of School plans to engage with students to encourage completion, to avoid overload
 - plans to ensure that the appropriate students are on the list to be contacted by NSS
 - proposal for some optional questions to be completed in NSS 2023 as in NSS 2022 to ensure continuity of data, and NSS Steering Group approved this
 - some different plans about how results are to be shared for NSS 2023 (no overall satisfaction results), some changes to the core questions for NSS 2023 (eg no reference to learning community) and a new four item response to replace the Likert scale. There will be communication to the University about these changes and updates made to our internal reporting and metrics as appropriate
 - oral updates on School and institutional action building on NSS 2023
 - NSS Steering Group will meet in March, focussing on student response rates for NSS 2023
- 4.2 Action is ongoing in all Schools in response to NSS 2022. All Schools have completed action plans in a template form. These are in a TEAM channel to enable this good practice to be shared and to provide a base for ongoing discussion. A valuable meeting of School Education Leads to discuss these was held on 18 November 2022 and a constructive discussion took place at SSEC regarding School and institutional actions (see other paper before University Education Committee).
- 4.3 Results of NSS 2022 have been provided to Professional Services Directorates as relevant and processes have been established for steps taken to be shared.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support
jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk.

21 December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

APPENDIX: NSS 2022 and NSS 2023 – Comparison of questions.

NSS 2022		NSS 2023	
TEACHING ON MY COURSE			
Q01	Staff are good at explaining things.	Q01	How good are teaching staff at explaining things?
Q02	Staff have made the subject interesting.	Q02	How often do teaching staff make the subject engaging?
Q03	The course is intellectually stimulating.	Q03	How often is the course intellectually stimulating?
Q04	My course has challenged me to achieve my best work.	Q04	How often does your course challenge you to achieve your best work?
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES			
Q05	My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth.	Q05	To what extent have you had the chance to explore ideas and concepts in depth?
Q06	My course has provided me with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics.	Q07	To what extent have you had the chance to bring together information and ideas from different topics
Q07	My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt.		
		Q06	How well does your course introduce subjects and skills in a way that builds on what you have already learned?
		Q08	To what extent does your course have the right balance of directed and independent study?
		Q09	How well has your course developed your knowledge and skills that you think you will need for your future?
ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK		MARKING AND ASSESSMENT	
Q08	The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.	Q10	How clear were the marking criteria used to assess your work?
Q09	Marking and assessment has been fair.	Q11	How fair has the marking and assessment been on your course?
Q10	Feedback on my work has been timely.	Q13	How often have you received assessment feedback on time?
Q11	I have received helpful comments on my work.		
		Q12	How well have assessments allowed you to demonstrate what you have learned?
		Q14	How often does feedback help you to improve your work?
ACADEMIC SUPPORT			
Q12	I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.	Q15	How easy was it to contact teaching staff when you needed to?

Q13	I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course.		
		Q16	How well have teaching staff supported your learning?
Q14	Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course.		
ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT			
Q15	The course is well organised and running smoothly.	Q17	How well organised is your course?
Q16	The timetable works efficiently for me.		
Q17	Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.	Q18	How well were any changes to teaching on your course communicated?
LEARNING RESOURCES			
Q18	The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well.	Q19	How well have the IT resources and facilities supported your learning?
Q19	The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well.	Q20	How well have the library resources (e.g., books, online services and learning spaces) supported your learning?
Q20	I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to.	Q21	How easy is it to access subject specific resources (e.g., equipment, facilities, software) when you need them?
LEARNING COMMUNITY			
Q21	I feel part of a community of staff and students.		
Q22	I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course.		
STUDENT VOICE			
Q23	I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course.	Q22	To what extent do you get the right opportunities to give feedback on your course?
Q24	Staff value students' views and opinions about the course.	Q23	To what extent are students' opinions about the course valued by staff?
Q25	It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on.	Q24	How clear is it that students' feedback on the course is acted on?
STUDENT UNION			
Q26	The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests.	Q25	How well does the students' union (association or guild) represent students' academic interests?
MENTAL WELLBEING SERVICES			
		Q26	How well communicated was information about your university/college's mental wellbeing support services?

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION (ENGLISH PROVIDERS ONLY)			
		Q27	During your studies, how free did you feel to express your ideas, opinions, and beliefs?
OVERALL SATISFACTION		FINAL QUESTION (SCOTTISH, NORTHERN IRELAND AND WELSH INSTITUTIONS ONLY)	
Q27	Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.	Q28	Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM - TIMELINES AND APPROVAL PROCESSES

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to:

- Provide a set of proposed principles for the approach to the implementation of Decolonising the Curriculum: for **discussion** and **approval**
- Provide a proposal on the timelines for the work that Schools will undertake: for **discussion** and **approval**

Following discussion at UEC on 10 October 2022, and with Senate on 02 November 2022, the principles and timeline have not been further adjusted.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group	24/08/22
	UEC	10/10/22
	Senate (academic view)	02/11/22
Further consideration/ approval required by	UEC (approval) Senate (approval)	16/01/23 08/02/23

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members of the Committee are asked to **approve** the principles and timelines.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 The Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group (DtCSG) has been meeting since May 2021. The Group's work is driven by our University's ambition to be an antiracist University (see the [Antiracism Strategy](#)¹), the need to address the degree awarding gap for our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students, by the decision to apply for the [Race Equality Charter](#) award, and by the sector evidence that articulates the arguments for the development of curricula that enable. The national [Antiracist Curriculum](#) project has been of particular relevance to the Group.

4.2 The DtCSG has taken forward the following work:

¹ We commit to: Embed a bold, progressive and sustained programme of antiracist curricular reform.

- 4.2.1 The development of six workstreams that each brought together members of the wider Group with the purpose of providing focus for the development of resources and guidance,
 - 4.2.2 The development of a 'definition' of Decolonising the Curriculum which aims to guide the overall work of the University (see *Annexe A* for the definition).
 - 4.2.3 The collation of case studies from across the University which will support the development of our resources
 - 4.2.4 The completion of two documents that bring together sector evidence on decolonising the curriculum, and on decolonisation of assessment.
 - 4.2.5 The development of an approach to providing web-based resources and a Toolkit to support Schools.
 - 4.2.6 The Library has been encouraging suggestions for relevant titles and will continue to do so; we have so far added about 100 new books to our collections. Library staff have created a way to report any problematic language in catalogue records as part of a wider assessment of how our collections are described, and have developed a guide to decolonising reading lists, which is expected to launch in October.
- 4.3 The web-based resources and the Toolkit aim to support Schools and to provide guidance where it is needed. These resources can develop further and Schools will have access to other guidance and support across their disciplines that will support their work in this area.
- 4.4 We have, as a University, discussed the ambition to decolonise the curriculum at the University of Aberdeen. Whilst there are different views on the use of terminology and, in some cases, the approaches to taking this work forward, this paper aims to articulate a set of Principles that Schools can work with to facilitate the development of decolonised curricula. It is understood and celebrated that there are areas across the University where this work has taken place or is in development. These Principles are not intended to get in the way of any of this excellent work.

Principles for the Implementation of our ambition to Decolonise the Curriculum at the University of Aberdeen

- 4.5 [*Where this has not already taken place*] All courses and programmes will commence work to decolonise their curriculum (including assessment) in academic year 2022/23, aiming to have completed a School review by the end of academic year 2023/24, and full implementation of all changes in academic year 2025/26.
- 4.6 Where new courses or programmes are proposed, these should include information on how the curriculum will address the principle of decolonisation.
- 4.7 [*Where this has not already taken place*] Schools will ensure that they work with students as active partners².
- 4.8 [*Where this has not already taken place*] All courses will review their Reading Lists as an initial step to providing additional perspectives on the course subject. Where additional texts are considered necessary, course coordinators should contact

² Students as active partners (meaning of this to be further developed) includes aspects such as ensuring students' voices are listened to; their experiences valued and included in developments; views are sought.

bookorders@abdn.ac.uk. It is noted that the University currently has trial access to the Diversity Collection which may assist with diversification of suggested texts³.

- 4.9 School Education Committees will lead the implementation of this work, ensuring that they evaluate its development. Overall governance of the implementation of the work will be situated in the University Education Committee.
- 4.10 Web-based resources and a Toolkit will be available for Schools to inform the development of their work from February 2022 (tbc).⁴
- 4.11 Training will be in place to support Schools to take forward the required work.
- 4.12 Quality assurance processes, for course/programme/assessment change will be in place to support Schools to make changes where these are required.

Timelines

- 4.13 It is proposed that the following timelines are agreed (with Schools able to complete work more quickly where feasible):

During academic year 2022/23	Clarity on quality assurance processes for course/programme/assessment changes
	Clarity on course/programme approval requirements
	Training in place
	All Schools commence work
By end of academic year 2023/24	All Schools complete School review
By end of academic year 2024/25	Course/programme/assessment changes agreed and managed
During academic year 2025/26	Implementation of curriculum changes

University Education Committee (UEC) Feedback from the meeting on 10/10/22

- 4.14 The proposals in this paper were considered by the University Education Committee on 10 October 2022 and were endorsed by members. The Committee particularly identified that the timelines are reasonable and allow for the different stages of activity in this area across the disciplines. It was further noted that where work is already in place or ongoing, there are no constraints in taking forward this work in a shorter timeframe. Finally, it was noted that the Committee is grateful for the support of the Library with respect to the Reading Lists.

Senate Feedback from the meeting on 02/11/22

- 4.15 Senate made a number of points which are noted below. Where a response is required, it is noted in italics.
 - 4.15.1 The process and timelines for our university-wide work were welcomed, and seen as a useful roadmap for the work towards decolonising the curriculum.

³ Note that the Library aims to buy *all* essential reading list titles, so there will be no need to request those separately to adding them to a Leganto list

⁴ The national [Antiracist Curriculum project](#) resources have useful guides on how to stimulate conversations (amongst other resources)

- 4.15.2 Decolonising the curriculum is a constant process.
 - 4.15.3 The School of Social Science has appointed interns to support the process.
 - 4.15.4 The importance of sharing good practice was emphasised.
The DtC resources will share good practice from across the sector, as well as sharing case studies and other resources from across the university.
 - 4.15.5 The importance of the wider actions of the Antiracism Strategy to support the aims of decolonising the curriculum.
 - 4.15.6 A query was raised about the involvement of colleagues from our partnership with AFG College in Qatar.
The DtCSG has membership from an AFG colleague.
- 4.16 Members of the Committee are asked to **approve** the proposals in this paper, namely:
- 4.16.1 The Principles (4.5-4.12)
 - 4.16.2 The timelines (4.13)

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education, ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk

08 December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM DEFINITION

The University of Aberdeen embraces the goal and process of decolonising the curriculum in a constructive and challenging manner. This perspective builds on our understanding that all British universities, all disciplines taught and researched in them have been historically influenced by Eurocentric colonialism and its cultural concept of race. The implication of this is that particular perspectives, values and ideologies are presented as universal, superior, dominant, and complete. This marginalises and renders invisible the historical and current role of racialised people and other geographical and cultural contexts in the production of knowledge.

Decolonisation at the University of Aberdeen is the identification, challenging and changing of colonial frameworks in education and its systems, norms, structures, hierarchies, and relationships, as well as the specific expressions of coloniality in our institution. The University of Aberdeen's approach to decolonising the curriculum will involve a radical rethinking and contesting of what can be seen as necessary or default positions in academia. Through this, we seek to bring enriched, widened, and global approaches to the foundations and production of knowledge in and beyond the classroom.

Our decolonising the curriculum approach for our university aims to promote conversations and action in all Schools and disciplines as well as in the professional services that directly impact our Education. Our approach to decolonising the curriculum can take the form of, but will not be limited to: reviewing and discussing reading lists, teaching materials, class activities, course structure, assessment questions, terminology and examples used in class exercises, evaluation and research strategies, and unconscious bias. Our decolonising the curriculum project will interact in a constructive manner with other decolonising and antiracist initiatives, as well as equality, diversity, and liberation projects already in place in the University.

We understand that decolonising the curriculum is not a linear project with a definite end, but a constant process that has its own challenges and contradictions in being sponsored and supported by the same institution it is attempting to decolonise. To tackle this profound issue, we will ensure that students and staff with lived experience and from backgrounds historically affected by colonialism are at the centre of the process, while ensuring that it is a collective effort that does not place all the labour and responsibility on them.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

RESULTS OF THE RACE EQUALITY CHARTER STUDENT SURVEY

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper highlights the results of the Race Equality Charter (REC) staff and student surveys as part of a planned consultation exercise to engage University groups and committees in wider discussion on the results. The consultation period offers the opportunity to reflect on the results and identify where they may provide a steer or guidance as to priority areas of activity across the University in relation to antiracism work.

The Group has access to the full set of staff and student results. To support a focused discussion, however, and to signpost to the aspects of the results which may be of specific interest to the Group, the paper provides an overview of the 'Course Content' aspect of the *student* survey.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Senior Management Team	20 October 2022
	Race Equality Strategy Group	26 October 2022
Further consideration required by	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	25 January 2023
	University Education Committee	16 January 2023
	Student Support and Experience Committee	7 March 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group is invited to:

- Note the results of the REC student survey (section 9 of the [Report](#))
- Review and discuss the main issues highlighted by the students in relation to their 'Course content' (section 5 below)
- Where appropriate, identify actions at an institutional or Group level arising from the report, noting that an Antiracism Strategy Action Plan is being developed.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The University of Aberdeen is addressing racial inequalities and creating an inclusive culture and environment where individuals can thrive, irrespective of their race or ethnicity. An ambitious [Antiracism Strategy](#) was launched in October 2022 alongside a [video](#) featuring staff and students providing their perspectives on how the Strategy will drive forward race equality in the University.

4.2 The University undertook its first Race Equality Charter (REC) staff and student surveys in February/March 2022 to assess the culture of the University and explore whether racial inequalities exist within our policies and processes. A [Report](#) containing the qualitative and quantitative results of the staff and student surveys was released to staff and students on the 16th of November 2022. The response rate for the student survey was 4% and the response rate for the staff survey was 40%.

4.3 The Race Equality Strategy Group has identified the initial areas where action is required following a review of the results and will take forward the work through an Antiracism Strategy Action Plan 2023-2025. Moreover, issues identified in the surveys are being followed up through additional consultation with staff and students as well as with relevant internal University committees, groups and external networks which will support the Institution to identify solutions and actions. The Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group is therefore receiving this paper as part of this wider consultation process.

- 4.3 It is noted that the surveys form an integral part of the self-assessment process that the Race Equality Strategy Group (RESG) is currently undertaking in preparation for the Race Equality Charter Bronze application which will be submitted in 2024.
- 4.4 The results of the surveys indicate that inequalities exist in our Institution and provide insights as to the specific areas where improvement is required to achieve our ambition of becoming an antiracist University as set out in our Antiracism Strategy. The responses show the importance of fostering a sense of belonging in the working and learning environments. Staff and students have reported that they have experienced racism and are unclear as to the most appropriate route for reporting it. Staff indicated the importance of transparency in recruitment and selection and career development processes, and students indicated that race could be discussed in the learning environment more frequently.
- 4.5 In alignment with the purpose of this Group to “*develop an approach which addresses embedded racial stereotypes and/or limited perspectives in the curriculum and support Schools to develop learning materials which offer students a rich diversity of views and role models*”, this paper focusses on the student survey results (full set of staff and student results can be found in sections 8 and 9 in this [Report](#)) and specifically on the students’ views on their ‘Course content’.
- 4.6 It is noted that to support an assessment of whether racial inequalities exist within the University, respondents to the survey were invited to disclose their ethnic background. This has enabled the survey data to be split by respondents who identified as White (W) or from a Racialised Group (RG) background. This is important as the experiences of staff and students from Racialised Groups impact on the success of our Antiracism Strategy. Further information about ‘Presentation of the results and Terminology’ can be found in section 5 of the [Report](#).

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS OF THE STUDENT SURVEY ON ‘COURSE CONTENT’

This section of the student survey explored whether students considered that the content of their course matches their expectations, their course reflects the opinions of a wide variety of people, whether issues of ethnicity/race are included in academic discussions and whether course tutors/lecturers are confident/competent in facilitating discussions around race and ethnicity.

The results showed that:

- 79% of White and 82% of Racialised Groups respondents agreed that their course matches their expectations; 13% of White and 10% of Racialised Groups *did not* agree that their course matches their expectations.
- 70% of White and 71% of Racialised Groups respondents agreed that their course reflects the opinion of a wide variety of people; 14% of White and 10% of Racialised Groups respondents *did not* agree that their course reflects the opinion of a wide variety of people.
- 65% of White and 51% of Racialised Groups respondents agreed that, when relevant, issues of ethnicity and race are included in academic discussions; 10% of White and 22% of Racialised Groups respondents *disagreed* that this was the case (a disparity is observed between the two cohorts).
- 62% of White and 53% of Racialised Groups agreed that, when relevant, course tutors and lecturers are confident and competent in facilitating discussions around ethnicity and race; 9% of White and 15% of Racialised Groups respondents *disagreed* that this was the case (a disparity is observed between the two cohorts).

The results outlined above indicate that work needs to be done to ensure:

1. The University curriculum includes the perspective of a variety of people
2. Where relevant, issues about race and ethnicity are appropriately discussed
3. Tutors/lecturers have the appropriate knowledge about race and ethnicity issues and feel comfortable to facilitate these discussions in the classroom.

The work that the Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group is undertaking will enable the University to address the issues highlighted in points 1 and 2 above.

In relation to point 3, educating ourselves and increasing our understanding of issues related to race and ethnicity has been our priority. We have been networking across the sector and beyond, and keeping our community up to date with new thinking and approaches through:

- The creation of [race webpages](#)
- The delivery of a series of race literacy training sessions initially to frontline staff and subsequently to all staff and postgraduate researchers to enable participants to increase their understanding of how race

can impact staff and student experiences in the University of Aberdeen, and build participants' knowledge, understanding and confidence in relation to race and discussion about race. Race training has been backed up with [e-training](#) opportunities and all staff are strongly encouraged to complete the *Tackling Racial Bias* online module.

- Supporting knowledge creation on race-related terminology through the work of the [Race Definitions Task and Finish Group](#)

6 WHAT NEXT

An Antiracism Strategy Action Plan is being developed to reflect the Themes of the Antiracism Strategy and address the issues identified in the REC staff and student surveys. The Action Plan is a live document and new actions will be incorporated during the consultation with committees/groups and networks.

7 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group is invited to:

- Note the results of the REC student survey (section 9 of the [Report](#))
- Review and discuss the main issues highlighted by the students in relation to their 'Course content' (section 5 above)
- Where appropriate, identify actions at an institutional or Group level arising from the report, noting that an Antiracism Strategy Action Plan is being developed.

8 FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education, ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk

2 December 2022

Status: **Open**

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UPDATE ON CONTINUATION AND CLASSIFICATION ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper updates University Education Committee on ongoing implementation at institutional and School levels of the Continuation and Classification Action Plan

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered	SSEC	5 Dec 2022
Further consideration/ approval required by		

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The paper and its Annex are provided for information and discussion.
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4. DISCUSSION

4.1 On 10 October 2022, University Education Committee noted the “Activity Plan – Continuation, awarding gaps and classification, and employability and graduate outcomes of widening access, mature and ethnic minority students”. The Activity Plan had been considered at Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC) on 22 September 2022 (SSEC/2209222/005) “the Plan”. The Plan built on data considered by SSEC, University Education Committee and Senate, and the Plan had been considered by the University’s Senior Management Team.

4.2 The main elements were:

- an Institutional action plan with priorities
- School-based action plans on continuation and on classification
- Sharing of practice, monitoring and reporting through a new regular quarterly continuation and classification Community of Practice, which consolidates existing groups.

Progress towards this is now considered.

4.3 The **institutional action plan** drew together wide-ranging work across the University and also identified key priorities:

- for continuation: bridging programme, peer support, and academic provisions
- for classification: academic provisions, Student Learning Service, and Curriculum-related development
- obtain more qualitative information from relevant groups of students regarding their stories, experiences and choices about the barriers which students consider they are facing
- enhance internal data collection regarding Widening Access groups building on the Widening Access Audit carried out by PwC, to enable more targeted provision and engagement as appropriate with Student Recruitment colleagues

4.4 A chart setting out progress across the Continuation and Classification parts of the Plan which was before SSEC is set out in Annex 1 (which has its own Appendices). As noted at SSEC, in general, good progress is being made, within the resource which is available. Progress regarding Outcomes will be led through Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee. The Plan also sits

alongside and is intertwined with the Vision for Widening Access which is being developed for the University. Details of this are included in the Plan and the present draft Vision was noted at Student Support and Experience Committee on 5 December 2022.

- 4.5 As noted at SSEC, a meeting of School Directors of Education was held on 18 November 2022 exploring **School planning towards continuation** (a long-established goal, with strong links with NSS response plans) **and classification work**, which is newer. A valuable discussion took place, in particular regarding requests for data for School/programme more directly, data analysis and implications for apparent gaps, engagement with students, entry tariffs, and initiatives to support all students such as through orientation. A TEAM channel has been set up and colleagues invited to share plans there.
- 4.6 As noted at SSEC, the **Community of Practice** has been established, a TEAM established, written plans shared and its first meeting held. This draws together colleagues from various groups which had differing roles regarding Continuation and it is hoped that this will be a streamlined and effective group.
- 4.7 A valuable discussion took place at SSEC on 5 December 2022 when Schools shared in more detail steps taken, plans for communication and issues being encountered. Directors of Education/other relevant colleagues were invited to attend this meeting. In the short term, the Dean for Student Support will engage directly with Schools to support them in action planning, data consideration (see also see Appendix B, 1 and 8), the most effective steps to student engagement (see in part Appendix B, 2) and to ensure that the membership of the Community of Practice (see 4.6) is as streamlined and effective as possible.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support
jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk.

21 December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

ANNEX 1

CONTINUATION, CLASSIFICATION AND OUTCOMES INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLAN - update

Written on: 3 October 2022

Author: Abbe Brown, Dean for Student Support, consolidating comments from colleagues

Amended / updated on: 24 November 2022

Priority items marked *

Activity/Project		Update	Any Timing points	Other comments?
Number from initial plan	Summary of title			
Appendix A	Ongoing activity			
1	*Bridging programme from Summer 2021 and Summer 2022 as pilots for year long bridging programme from AY 22-3 aimed at UG offer-holders from widening access backgrounds who may not meet published entry	The year round Bridging Programme will start in 22-23 with the addition of Access to Biology (SCQF 7) to the existing Access English (SCQF 6) and Maths (SCQF 7) courses, further Access to Arts and Social Sciences and Access to Physics for Engineering courses, from January 2023. Further new courses are planned from September 2023.	Ongoing Planning for summer 2023 WA bridging programme will begin spring 2023.	
2	*Peer support for ongoing students from specific groups, including widening access, ethnic minority and mature-age students	Year 2 of the characteristic matching for S4S. Of the 344 students who registered for S4S so far this year the following matching requests were noted:	Registration for the 2022 programme will be closed end Nov 2022. Work is ongoing to review PGT and PGR Peer support systems	Note: if any extending of matching bases, new DPIA and EQIA will be needed

		<p>More Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Being in the same school as me 267 ● Being an international student 74 ● Being a local student from Aber... 64 ● Being a student from elsewhere ... 67 ● Being a mature student 70 ● Being a student with parental re... 4 ● First in family to attend University 35 ● Care Experienced* 14 ● Alternative entry route to univer... 10 ● Caring responsibilities*** 8 ● Estranged 3 ● Having studied abroad/ done ex... 57 ● Accessing support and/or supp... 29 ● Being part of the LGBTQ+ com... 33 ● Being from a minority ethnic ba... 36 ● Other (e.g. Elite sports, AUSA in... 30 		
3	Support for students under pledges and statutory obligations such as Stand Alone (estranged from family) and Corporate Parenting - widening access groups	A TEAM site for students with specific experiences was created. Students were invited to join to connect with other students who have similar experiences. The site is used as a means of communication. There was a high level of interest from students. Student generated content has been created and shared with the student body to highlight support and community Blog and Vlog	Ongoing	<p>Discussion ongoing with AUSA about possible leadership opportunity.</p> <p>More formal plan and governance work needed on Corporate Parenting and also more generally. Specific focus on Institutional wide activity meeting statutory and pledge obligations continues to be challenging.</p>
4	Deliver outputs of Student Mental Health Agreement and Student Wellbeing Strategy	<p>The Student Mental Health Agreement was launched in October 2021. Details of the aims and progress to date can be found here</p> <p>Toolkit and increased coms from Schools on extensions, approach to evidence and deadlines being explored in absence policy</p>		.

		reviews and more formal policy review planned for 2023/4 regarding extensions		
5	Focus on transition, orientation and induction particularly support for widening access students and EDI training which links to Union Black to support experiences of ethnic minority students	<p>A comprehensive orientation and transition programme has been developed (emails, online modules and events). This is continually enhanced to provide access to information for all student groups at the right time in response to feedback. Emails include SGC “lived experience” and there is an EDI specific module in orientation.</p> <p>BeWell week takes place 6 weeks into the start of the academic session and provides students with a reminder of the support available to them. In 2022 the “Live Lounge” was created as an intersectional event providing a relaxed environment to meet other people and learn about the support available.</p> <p>We have a specific and timely communication plan to promote the Union Black training course.</p> <p>Aberdeen 365 provides an opportunity, through a series of campaigns, to raise awareness of inclusion and diversity all year round, especially highlighting support for students with specific experiences.</p> <p>See 1. Also annual review and enhancement of transition activities for WA continues.</p>	Ongoing	
			Spring/Summer 2023	

6	Student generated content from mature students and review of images to ensure that these students “see themselves” on campus	Every effort is made to ensure campus imagery represents our diverse community of students. We have actively recruited mature students to apply to the Student Content Creators programme and are working towards developing content with them.		
7	Designated mentoring and guaranteed interviews for some opportunities for widening access students	Review of career mentoring offering but for AY 22-23 will run as is.		
8	Creating processes to analyse GO data for sex, age, disability and ethnicity	The GO Power BI dashboard will be ready very soon (no official confirmation as of now but imminent) and this will allow data to be sliced by characteristics.		
9	Enhancing personal tutor support and opportunity, if possible, for matching with personal tutor with expertise in supporting particular groups, relevant to ethnic minority, mature-age and widening access students	This was recommendation of Pastoral Review TFG. Feedback so far regarding resources means that formal action in the immediate term is unlikely. Steps continue informally with the excellent support of InfoHub to continue ongoing practice by some schools of matching colleagues with experience in supporting students from particular backgrounds but this is a real burden on InfoHub particularly given the IT systems which they have		
10	*Exploring enhancing proactive academic student engagement support systems and having regard to a student’s circumstances (notably caring responsibilities	Wider approaches to provisions (looking beyond disability) was considered by the Monitoring, Absence and Review TFG. The link between provisions and c6c7 is being considered by SSEC. The possibility of a new inclusion policy for provisions, looking beyond disability, is being considered. Inclusion is		

	(widening access) in developing flexible and appropriate academic solutions	<p>one of the key themes for delivery of education 22/3. Discussion is to come regarding the extent to which more flexibility can be delivered while having regard to individual needs, academic integrity, and academic and support staff workload.</p> <p>Dialogue begun with Schools about how best to address classification gaps for different schools with links with outputs of the decolonising the curriculum</p>		
11	Graduate Attributes & Skills and Enhanced Transcript work to aid articulation of skills and recognition of educational and co-curricular activities to support student learner journeys, relevant to widening access, mature-age and ethnic minority students	Working group setup for this workstream that will report into EEC. Group made up of academic and professional services reps.	To run throughout AY 22-23.	
12	*Embedding inclusion and accessibility in principles of teaching and learning of 22/3 and beyond	This is ongoing and particular regard is being had to inclusive assessment and to working with Estates regarding the physical teaching experience. Recommendations were raised in the One year On report on Arriving at Thriving report which was considered by EDIC in October 22		
13	*Decolonising the Curriculum	The DtCSG continues to meet and has made the following progress:	Work is on track	N/A

		<p>- agreed an institutional definition for decolonising the curriculum that aims to guide our work</p> <p>-we have had academic feedback from UEC and Senate on the proposed timeline and processes for our institutional approach to decolonising the curriculum (with final approval being sought in early 2023)</p> <p>-had an away day for the DtCSG which acted as a writing workshop for the development of the resources to support Schools to take the work forward. Our web and Toolkit colleagues attended as they will be working with us to create the materials. The aim is to have these ready for February 2024.</p>		
14	Readmission Support Group to support students who wish to take a break and support them on their return	<p>Additional support material has been added to the withdrawing or taking a break section of the student website</p> <p>New process and flow chart developed, with collaboration from Registry and Schools. This colleague group now part of Continuation and Classification Community of Practice to streamline activity</p>		
15	[*]Graduate Outcomes Contextualised Analysis data analysis pipelines for HESA GO data that stratify	The GO Power BI dashboard will be ready very soon (no official confirmation as of now but imminent) and this will allow data to be sliced by characteristics.		

	outcomes based on other characteristics including mature-age and ethnic minority students			
16	[*]Placements Scoping Exercise with external consultant to enhance provision in placements by providing strategic oversight to enable targeted provision of placements, including for widening access, mature-age and ethnic minority students	External consultation by GradConsult now complete and findings reported to SMT. Will feed into discussions around placement and work-based learning provision within Schools.		Work on career readiness data from e-registration process will also feed into the targeted provision of WBL (including placements) activity.
17	[*]Incorporation of Career Registration Questions within e-Registration provision of services from the Careers and Employability Team for widening access, mature-age and ethnic minority students to enhance support and direct resource as required	For AY 22-23 September starting students had a survey that provided career readiness questions with over 2,000 respondents. These questions will be fully embedded in e-Registration for January starting students and will then be a permanent feature of e-Registration for all.		
18.	Resilient Learning Communities Enhancement Theme Community of Practice	The purpose of the Resilient Learning Communities (RLC) Community of Practice is to promote 2-way communication, discussion, and collaboration around the Enhancement Theme, across the Institution. With representation from across the University, this Group continues to be a useful forum for		

		engaging others with the work of the Theme and has grown this year with the inclusion of Year 3 Learning & Teaching Enhancement Project (LTEP) project team members. The Group meets 4 times per year. The most recent meeting (last week) included discussions around publishing and disseminating pedagogical initiatives and approaches to developing a community amongst postgraduate research students.		
19.	Building resilience through course development	The aim of this project was to create an online, micro-credential short course (zero-credits), designed to promote, support, and enhance student resilience. Given the scope of this project, it was decided to target the pilot course with undergraduate students only, rather than accommodate taught postgraduate students at this initial stage, but this is likely to change as the course develops. The zero-credit course, Student Resilience Moving from Surviving to Thriving, was launched in September 2022.		LTEP project
20	Exploring articulation students' experiences in transition (widening access)	By developing understanding of articulation students' experiences, this project aimed to produce insights in relation to promoting academic resilience within this group of students, guiding academic practice and support as well as future work in this area. Through the use of student interns with specific experience of articulation, a report was prepared following an extensive literature		LTEP Project

		review and a series of focus groups which highlighted current support and provisions in place and potential gaps. It also detailed reflections and recommendations based on the work to improve the support offered to ease the transition of articulating students into the University.		
21	Exploring resilience in the context of employability	Successful completion and currently working up the final output of a resilience toolkit module to be published via the UoA Toolkit webpages.		LTEP project was impacted by intern not being able to complete the final stage but resource is being sought from elsewhere to get this project over the line as it is very close to completion
22	Embedding intersectionality - paths to inclusive education	Not yet begun		LTEP project - to begin next academic year
23	Embedding resilience (walks, resources)	The aims of this project included the production of a series of student-led "Resilience Walks" as a distinct activity designed to enable students to form small groups, take part in a guided activity and form connections with both peers and the city of Aberdeen. Initial campus-based resilience walks were launched during the University's BeWell Week in October 22. Students were taken on a tour of King's College Chapel, the Secret Garden, the Snow Kirk, the Botanic Garden, and the Zoology Museum. Currently, work is being carried out to evaluate these walks and activities, and to package them so		LTEP project

		students and staff can engage with them independently.		
24	Resilience of (widening access) students	This project aimed to enhance the academic resilience of advanced entry students (i.e., students who have completed the equivalent to their first year(s) of study at a further education institution before entering into Year 2 or Year 3). Support was developed and consolidated by exploring existing support across the university through a staff survey, and by developing student-led content to provide peer support for advanced entry students. The creation of these support materials, by students for students would ensure content was appropriate and valuable. This toolkit will then be evaluated as part of the Year 3 project alongside development of resources to support staff in supporting advanced entry students and implementing aspects of the toolkit.		LTEP project
25	Support for students participating in volunteering opportunities (especially estranged and care experienced - widening access)	The Careers and Employability Service is currently offering tailored support and advice to students wishing to undertake either volunteering or paid employment to boost their experience and long term employability. Students are encouraged to book a one-to-one appointment with an adviser who is a specialist in their academic subject to receive support in sourcing opportunities, applying successfully and sourcing funding where that is necessary to support their participation.		

		Plans are to send a personal invitation to care-experienced and estranged s students in December/ January to make an appointment with their own adviser to talk about work experience etc. If this is effective then this direct approach may be rolled out quite specifically to other groups at some point in the future.		
Appendix B	Planned activity			
1	Continuation, Withdrawal and Degree Classification project supporting and leading Schools and institutional action for issues raised in Continuation, Withdrawal and Degree Classification papers which reach beyond the Priority Groups and also building on PwC Widening Access Audit and exploring combination with other actions	Established within SSEC and with strong links with the Widening Access Vision work led out of AAC (see Appendix B, 10)		To be consideration of enhancing internal data collection regarding Widening Access groups building on the Widening Access Audit carried out by PwC, to enable more targeted provision and engagement as appropriate with Student Recruitment colleagues
2	*More engagement with established online peer groups and also Mature Students Society to explore students' views on barriers to continuation, addressing awarding gaps, and employability and graduate	Online groups established coordinated by Student Experience and discussion started with AUSA See also 3 in Appendix A		Deeper dialogue and exploration to be established

	outcomes, with specific focus on widening access and mature-age students.			
3	Explore opportunities to raise funds for the University to offer additional financial support to students which goes beyond the hardship funds permitted through use of SAAS funds and existing Widening Access scholarships, of particular relevance to widening access and mature-age students	Dialogue opened with Development Trust		
4	Employability for all: Career Registration questions and how to capture demographic data	Demographic data feed requested. Work needs to be booked in, and capacity not in place until after career readiness project is complete.		
5	Joint Graduate Attributes & Skills and Enhanced Transcript Working Group reflective portfolio for students to record and assess their own skills, where there may be gaps, and will utilise Personal Tutors to help support and guide students in creating a development plan	Working group setup for this workstream that will report into EEC. Group made up of academic and professional services reps.	Aiming to run throughout AY 22-23.	
6	Consider exploring increased fee waivers for	Not yet begun given resources and other activities	To be considered from Jan 23	Liaison with incoming Dean for Student Support

	courses, especially online opportunities, to widen opportunity to continue in studies (of relevance to widening access and mature-age students			
7.	Details in orientation on employment rights and expectations and how to support students if they should encounter prejudice outside the university, relevant to ethnic minority students	Students are directed to the following webpage for information and employment rights are included in one of the orientation events – “living in Scotland”. Student Experience will liaise with Careers and Student Support to ensure that guidance is provided if students are faced with prejudice.		
8	Explore obtaining more data and using it regarding (i) performance of students who ultimately leave as the individual move from years 2 to 3 to 4, to see if although they remain with the University, their engagement and performance declines – this can provide valuable data to information ongoing continuation and classification interventions; and (ii) intersectionality data to inform any more specific interventions	To be requested in next annual report next annual reports		Incoming and outgoing Dean for Student Support to liaise with planning re next annual report
9.	*Raise awareness of Student Learning Service	The Student Learning Service (SLS), in collaboration with the Student Experience		

	and determine if the SLS has sufficient resource to be able to support all students' requirements in a timely manner/explore additional resources	<p>Team, is making plans to raise awareness of the Service including a schedule of regular communications to promote its services and at a later stage, the development of a new set of. At the end of the last AY, SLS was able to recruit an extra 0.5 FTE Academic Skills Adviser (Academic Writing) and is in the process of recruiting a further Academic Skills Adviser (0.5 FTE) to support maths, specifically statistics. The process of finding a replacement for one of the Academic Skills Advisers (Dyslexia and other SpLDs) who leaves in January has also begun.</p> <p>In the context of increasing widening access and the continuing rise in the number of students with a diagnosis of dyslexia and/or other specific learning differences, it will still not be possible to support <i>all</i> students' requirements in a timely manner. However, these new posts, together with the new triage process developed in conjunction with Student Support Services, provide more capacity for specialist support than ever before.</p>		
10	Widening Access Vision and Implementation Plan (addressing pre-entry (transition, financial support), student (academic and community), future (internships, mentoring, employability)).	Widening Access Vision (see Appendix B, 1) with a focus on pre-entry has proceed through Access and Articulation Committee and Student Recruitment Committee, and will be noted at SSEC on Dec 22. Implementation plans for the Vision now being developed. Support for students in their time here continues through the Continuation and	Jan 2023	

		Classification work at SSEC and regarding outcomes with EEC		
11	Create and implement new Carers Policy - and set it up as a possible base for policies to support other particular student groups, such as mature-age students, estranged student and other widening access groups.	Draft policy being developed. Discussion and benchmarking from other institutions. Discussion ongoing about the place of future policies under University EDI policy or having guidance on these issue under an overarching EDI policy.		
12	Possibility of matching personal tutors with experiences in supporting student groups with those students	Recommendation of TFG, unlikely to proceed formally for now, continuing informally		Provided extra work for InfoHub to do this targeted matching which raises resource questions

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

**ACADEMIC APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING
UPDATE****1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

The purpose of this paper is to provide members of the University Education Committee (UEC) with an update on academic appeal and complaint handling across the University.

This paper contains detailed data on appeal and complaint submissions (*appendices A and B refer*) received prior to and during the 2021/22 academic year, in addition to an analysis of emerging trends.

Members of the Committee are asked to **discuss** the paper and note, that subject to approval by the Senior Management Team (SMT) the complaints data contained in *Appendix B* will be published.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)	14 December 2022
Further consideration/ approval required by	University Education Committee (UEC) Senior Management Team (SMT) Senate Court	16 January 2023 <i>TBC</i> 8 February 2023 <i>TBC</i>

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 3.1 Members of the Committee are asked to **discuss** the paper and note, that subject to approval by the Senior Management Team (SMT) the complaints data contained in *Appendix B* will be published.

4. OVERVIEW

- 4.1 The University has in place a [Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals](#), and a [Complaints Handling Procedure](#) (CHP), providing frameworks for students (or other parties, as appropriate) to formalise any concerns they may have about aspects of their academic or non-academic experience. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the use of these policies in practice.

5. ACADEMIC APPEALS**5.1 INTRODUCTION**

- 5.1.1 In February 2011, the University Senate and University Court approved a revised policy and procedure for dealing with Student Appeals and Complaints. The revised process streamlined the old process and removed unnecessary stages. It was designed to seek appropriate, early resolution and aimed to be accessible, fair, user-focused, confidential, timely, clear, and simple. The policy was later adapted to incorporate appeals against the outcome of disciplinary hearings under the Code of Practice on Student Discipline ([Academic](#) and [non-Academic](#)) and decisions taken by the Students' Progress Committee (SPC) under the policy on [Undergraduate Students Progress](#). In addition,

references to Complaints were removed in 2013/14, following the publication of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman’s (SPSO’s) Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) (*section 6.1 below further refers*). The current version of the Appeals Policy is available on the University’s webpages for [staff](#) and [students](#).

5.2 DATA AND TRENDS

5.2.1 *Appendix A* provides a detailed analysis of appeal cases (and summary level complaint data for the purposes of comparison) since 2015/16. In summary, however, appeal cases received were as follows in *table 1.1* below.

Table 1.1:

Academic Appeals by Academic Year						
2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
464	274	198	266	242	281	252

5.2.3 Overall, the number of appeals received by academic year has been broadly static, in terms of the volume received in comparison to the size of the student population. For example, 274 submissions received in 2020/21 and 464 submissions received in 2021/22 both reflect an approximate figure of 2% of the student population submitting academic appeals.

5.2.4 The following specific trends are also noted:

- A dip in submissions during the 2019/20 academic year. This lower submission rate is likely attributable to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent suspension during the second half-session of student monitoring and assessment at sub-honours level;
- An increase in submissions, specifically submissions in regard to student monitoring (section 5.2.4 below further refers) during the 2021/22 academic year. Work is ongoing across the University, including as part of the Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Task and Finish Group (TFG), in regard to reviewing monitoring procedures (and the appeals process in relation to these) and improving communication with students in this regard. It is hoped that appeal cases will reduce in future years as this work progresses, however, this will be kept under review.

5.2.5 As is noted above, in academic year 2021/22 approximately 2% of the student population appealed to the University. Of the 464 cases processed, 54% (271) related to student monitoring and were submitted in response to a student being issued with a ‘C7’ as a consequence of a lack of engagement with, or attendance at, a course. 80% of appeal cases of this nature were upheld, thereby removing one or more C7s from a student’s record and reinstating them on the course(s) in question. Where cases of this nature aren’t upheld, this can result in varying outcomes for the student which range from termination of studies (where multiple C7s demonstrate a lack of engagement) to the student being required to undertake, in the following teaching period, either (i) the course again (where its completion is prescribed) or (ii) an alternative, additional course to ensure an appropriate number of credits can be achieved.

5.2.6 With regard to the appeals received in 2021/22 which did not relate to student monitoring, these most commonly referred to mitigating circumstances, disputed CGS marks, and perceived poor, inconsistent or inaccurate communication. Mitigating circumstances can be split into two main themes, those being circumstances that have not been reported by the student at the time [of assessment], and circumstances that have been reported but where the student questions whether they have been considered by the School. CGS marks are disputed mainly when they are borderline. Overall, 31% of appeal cases which did not relate to student monitoring were upheld.

6. COMPLAINT HANDLING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 In December 2012, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) first published a Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) for implementation across the Higher Education (HE) sector. The MCHP explicitly detailed how the HE sector should deal with complaints received from students, applicants, or members of the public. The CHP was designed to allow the University to better recognise, and therefore address, the difficulties experienced by its students, applicants or members of the public who engage with it. The CHP has been an integral part of the University's student experience since 2013/14, in both engaging in and improving that experience.

6.1.2 In 2019 the SPSO, in consultation with all public services in Scotland, published a [revised MCHP](#). This new, enhanced, edition included a core text, consistent across all public services, and additional text and examples specific to the HE sector. The text and the Procedure were largely prescribed by the SPSO, tailored only to fit the University's context where permitted. The University was required to adhere to the revised MCHP and to implement an updated CHP by 1 April 2021. The University met this deadline and the revised CHP, prepared in adherence to the SPSO's guidelines, is available on the University's [staff](#) and [student](#) webpages. The CHP remains integral to the University's student experience and specifically to both engaging in and improving that experience.

6.2 UNIVERSITY STAFF ENGAGEMENT

6.2.1 The intention of the CHP is to engage all staff members across the institution in complaint handling. Each school or administrative section has a nominated individual, in most cases an administrative member of staff, to take responsibility for the recording of all [frontline \(or informal\) complaints](#) received within their area. These individuals have been centrally trained and a spreadsheet is available for the central return of the complaints received.

6.3 SECTOR WIDE ENGAGEMENT

6.3.1 A Scotland wide initiative, the introduction of the MCHP has, since first introduced, presented complexities for the HE sector as a whole. In accordance with this, the Scottish Higher Education Complaints Forum, with which the SPSO is invited to engage, was set up in 2013/14. The Forum continues to meet to facilitate networking and the sharing of good practice on complaint handling. The University engages actively with this group, which meets on a quarterly basis.

6.3.2 Anecdotal evidence regarding complaint figures (*section 6.4 below further refers*) suggests the University does not appear to be at odds with other comparable Institutions within the sector. In terms of issues surrounding the recording of submissions at the frontline (*section 6.4.2 below further refers*), anecdotal evidence further suggests other institutions have also reported difficulties in encouraging the engagement of all staff with the requirements of the SPSO.

6.4 DATA AND TRENDS

6.4.1 *Appendix B* provides a detailed analysis of complaint cases (both informal (frontline) and formal (investigated)) since 2015/16. In summary, however, informal (frontline) and formal (investigated) cases were as follows in *tables 1.2 and 1.3 below*.

Table 1.2:

Frontline Complaints by Academic Year						
2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
16	6	8	19	72	80	56

Table 1.3:

Investigated Complaints* by Academic Year						
2021/22	2020/21^	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
32	22	17	39	32	23	19

*The above figures denote those cases regarded as complaints and therefore with little or no elements of academic appeal.

^ In interpreting 2020/21 data, it should be noted that during the initial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the University saw a rise in the number of submissions received which have not been taken forward under the CHP. These submissions sought a refund of fees (tuition or accommodation) as a consequence of the impact of the pandemic. In these cases, an explanation was given as to why the University would not give a refund and why further investigation under the CHP was not appropriate.

6.4.2 Members of the Committee will note very few frontline complaint returns in recent academic years. While such returns could be commended, steps are being taken to ensure all staff across the institution are aware of their responsibilities in this regard and are appropriately recording instances of frontline complaints. Training of Professional Services teams and Schools is underway, to ensure all staff are trained and recording instances of complaint appropriately.

6.4.3 With regard formal or investigated cases, members of the Committee will note that there has been no notable increase in submissions in recent years. Examples of submissions include issues relating to feedback on assessment, tuition fee payment, a lack of communication regarding issues arising with student accommodation and the questioning of academic regulations.

6.5 REPORTING

6.5.1 The University is committed to reporting both internally and externally regarding complaints information. It is a requirement of the SPSO that the University report at least quarterly to the SMT and at least annually to the Senate and the Court on:

- performance statistics, in line with the complaints performance indicators published by SPSO;
- analysis of the trends and outcomes of complaints (this should include highlighting where there are areas where few or no complaints are received, which may indicate either good practice or that there are barriers to complaining in that area).

6.5.2 The data as requested by the SPSO is provided in *appendix B*, listed alongside comparable data for previous academic years. The attention of the SMT is drawn to the outcome of cases. The outcome of a complaint is not always easily defined as 'upheld' or 'not upheld', dependent on the nature of the concern raised. Where a resolution has been sought, the case has been recorded as 'upheld', however, where an issue has resulted in the clarification of policy, or noted without further investigation, the case has been appropriately recorded but 'not upheld'.

6.5.3 Members of the Committee are asked to **note** the publication of *appendix B* on the University's webpages (subject to SMT approval).

7. NEXT STEPS

7.1 Further information is available from Ruth Taylor (Vice-Principal (Education)) (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk) or Emma Tough (Assistant Registrar) (e.tough@abdn.ac.uk).

6 December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS DATA*																
	Academic Year 2021-2022	Student Population (04/11/22)	Academic Year 2020-2021	Student Population (06/05/21)	Academic Year 2019-2020	Student Population (06/05/21)	Academic Year 2018-2019	Student Population (11/12/19)	Academic Year 2017-2018	Student Population (27/08/18)	Academic Year 2016-2017	Student Population (15/09/17)	Academic Year 2015-2016	Student Population (11/01/16)	Academic Year 2014-2015	Student Population (15/12/15)
Total Cases	502	23662	301	14473	218	15045	307	16978	275	16208	281	15479	252	15118	315	15140
APPEALS																
Academic (including C7)	464 (92.4%)		274 (91%)		198 (90.8%)		266 (86.7%)		242 (87.7%)		257 (91.5%)		229 (90.9%)		288 (91.4%)	
C7	271 (54%)		116 (38.5%)		87 (39.9%)		126 (41%)		129 (46.7%)		139 (49.5%)		127 (50.4%)		157 (54.5%)	
Non-Academic	4 (0.8%)		5 (1.7%)		1 (0.5%)		0		1 (0.4%)		0 (0.0%)		0 (0.0%)		0 (0.0%)	
COMPLAINTS†																
Academic	22 (4.4%)		13 (4.3%)		9 (4.1%)		31 (10.1%)		20 (7.3%)		16 (5.7%)		18 (7.1%)		19 (6.3%)	
Non-Academic	10 (2%)		8 (2.7%)		8 (3.7%)		8 (2.6%)		9 (3.3%)		7 (2.5%)		2 (0.1%)		8 (2.5%)	
COMBINED APPEAL/COMPLAINT																
Academic/Non-Academic	2 (0.4%)		1 (0.3%)		2 (0.9%)		2 (0.7%)		3 (1.1%)		1 (0.4%)		3 (1.2%)		0 (0.0%)	
STATUS																
Upheld	286 (57%)		148 (49.2%)		119 (54.6%)		153 (49.8%)		147 (53.3%)		154 (54.8%)		138 (54.8%)		149 (47.3%)	
Partially Upheld	26 (5.2%)		15 (5%)		4 (1.8%)		20 (6.5%)		21 (7.6%)		13 (4.6%)		12 (4.8%)		18 (5.7%)	
Not Upheld	164 (32.7%)		118 (39.2%)		80 (36.7%)		103 (33.4)		93 (33.7%)		93 (33.1%)		86 (34.1%)		118 (37.5%)	
Withdrawn	26 (5.2%)		20 (6.6%)		15 (6.9%)		20 (6.5%)		12 (4.3%)		21 (7.5%)		16 (6.3%)		29 (9.2%)	
In Progress	0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		11 (3.6%)		2 (0.7%)		0 (0.0%)		0 (0.0%)		1 (0.3%)	
RESOLUTION STAGE																
Initial Stage (Head of School)	437 (87.1%)		236 (78.4%)		175 (80.3%)		269 (87.6%)		236 (85.8%)		229 (81.5%)		193 (76.6%)		255 (81.0%)	
Further Stage (Grounds to Proceed)	64 (12.7%)		42 (43%)		30 (13.8%)		25 (8.1%)		22 (8.0%)		26 (9.3%)		25 (9.9%)		22 (7.0%)	
Further Stage (Formal Hearing)	1 (0.2%)		3 (1%)		3 (1.4%)		2 (0.7%)		5 (1.8%)		7 (2.5%)		14 (5.6%)		7 (2.2%)	
SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (SPSO)																
Total Cases	12 (2.4%)		8 (2.7%)		6 (3%)				10 (3.6%)		2 (0.7%)		0 (0%)		7 (2.2%)	
Upheld	0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)				1 (0.4%)		0 (0%)		-		-	
Partially Upheld	0 (0%)		0 (0%)		1 (0.5%)				0 (0%)		1 (0.4%)		-		-	
Not Upheld	12 (2.4%)		8 (2.7%)		5 (2.3%)				9 (3.3%)		0 (0%)		-		7 (2.2%)	
COMPLETED WITHIN TIMESCALE																
Yes	420 (83.7%)		274 (91%)		188 (86.2%)		238 (77.5%)		210 (76.3%)		201 (71.5%)		195 (77.4%)		221 (70.2%)	
No	82 (16.3%)		27 (9%)		30 (13.8%)		64 (20.8%)		63 (22.9%)		71 (25.3%)		47 (18.7%)		64 (20.3%)	
SCHOOL/SERVICE																
Business School (inc. Qatar)	169 (33.7%)		59 (18.6%)		50 (22.9%)		33 (10.7%)		42 (15.3%)		31 (11%)		23 (9.1%)		40 (12.7%)	
Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History	31 (6.2%)		27 (9%)		16 (7.3%)		27 (8.8%)		18 (6.5%)		35 (12.5%)		13 (5.2%)		21 (6.6%)	
Education	16 (3.2%)		8 (2.7%)		4 (1.8%)		20 (6.5%)		3 (1.1%)		4 (1.4%)		2 (0.5%)		6 (1.9%)	
Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture	21 (4.2%)		10 (3.3%)		19 (8.7%)		21 (6.8%)		32 (11.6%)		30 (10.7%)		31 (12.3)		21 (6.6%)	
Law	45 (9%)		11 (3.7%)		6 (2.8%)		13 (4.2%)		15 (5.5%)		11 (3.9%)		20 (7.8%)		19 (6.0%)	
Social Science	32 (6.4%)		11 (3.7%)		23 (10.6%)		27 (8.8%)		41 (14.9%)		40 (12.2%)		33 (13.1%)		43 (13.7%)	
Biological Sciences	10 (2%)		5 (1.2%)		33 (15.1%)		6 (2%)		7 (2.5%)		8 (2.8%)		5 (2%)		12 (3.8%)	
Medical Sciences			37 (12.3%)		29 (13.3%)		47 (15.3%)		21 (7.6%)		25 (8.9%)		22 (8.7%)		10 (3.2%)	

Medicine and Dentistry	51 (10.2%)													20 (6.3%)	
Psychology	3 (0.6%)		8 (2.7%)		2 (0.9%)		4 (1.3%)		4 (1.5%)		1 (1.4%)		2 (0.8%)		4 (1.3%)
Engineering	76 (15.1%)		72 (24%)		38 (17.4%)		62 (20.2%)		52 (18.9%)		36 (11.7%)		41 (16.2%)		58 (18.4%)
Geosciences	4 (0.8%)		8 (2.7%)		4 (1.8%)		5 (1.6%)		11 (4%)		9 (3.2%)		8 (3.2%)		9 (2.9%)
Natural and Computing Sciences	21 (4.2%)		19 (6.3%)		6 (2.8%)		17 (5.5%)		11 (4%)		13 (4.6%)		15 (6%)		24 (7.6%)
Sixth Century Courses	0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		2 (0.7%)		11 (3.9%)		9 (3.6%)		9 (2.9%)
Services	23 (4.6%)		27 (9%)		18 (8.3%)		23 (7.5%)		14 (5.1%)		27 (9.6%)		25 (9.9%)		15 (4.8%)
LEVEL OF STUDY															
Undergraduate	312 (62.2%)		177 (58.8%)		145 (66.5%)		204 (66.4%)		213 (77.5%)		213 (75.8%)		191 (75.8%)		247 (78.4%)
Postgraduate	190 (37.8%)		122 (40.5%)		72 (33%)		101 (32.9%)		60 (21.8%)		66 (23.5%)		61 (24.2)		63 (20.0%)
N/A‡	0 (0%)		2 (0.7%)		1 (0.5%)		2 (0.7%)		2 (0.7%)		2 (0.7%)				5 (1.6%)
NATIONALITY															
UK	239 (47.6%)		156 (51.8%)		125 (57.3%)		176 (57.3%)		171 (62.1%)		159 (56.6%)		159 (63.1%)		195 (61.9%)
EU	36 (7.2%)		34 (11.3%)		29 (13.3%)		34 (11.7%)		39 (14.2%)		48 (17.1%)		30 (11.99%)		38 (12.1%)
International	224 (44.6%)		106 (35.2%)		62 (28.4%)		91 (29.6%)		61 (22.2%)		69 (24.6%)		63 (25%)		77 (24.4%)
N/A‡	3 (0.6%)		5 (1.7%)		2 (0.9%)		6 (2%)		4 (1.5%)		5 (1.8%)				5 (1.6%)
GENDER															
Male	299 (59.6%)		189 (62.8%)		127 (58.3%)		181 (59%)		164 (59.6%)		161 (57.3%)		168 (66.7%)		207 (65.7%)
Female	199 (39.6%)		110 (36.5%)		91 (41.7%)		125 (40.7%)		111 (40.4%)		119 (42.4%)		84 (33.3)		103 (32.7%)
Not Declared	-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-
N/A‡	4 (0.8%)		2 (0.7%)		0 (0%)		1 (0.3%)		-		1 (0.4%)		-		5 (1.6%)
AGE															
Under 18	5 (1%)		2 (0.7%)		11 (5%)		1 (0.3%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		2 (90.8%)		1 (0.3%)
18 - 20	140 (27.9%)		70 (23.3%)		44 (20.2%)		60 (19.5%)		83 (30.1%)		108 (38.4%)		76 (30.1%)		
21 - 25	194 (38.7%)		124 (41.2%)		121 (55.5%)		136 (44.3%)		127 (46.2%)		99 (35.2%)		115 (45.6%)		
26 +	160 (31.9%)		100 (33.2%)		51 (23.4%)		104 (33.9%)		61 (22.2%)		69 (24.6%)		59 (23.4%)		
N/A‡	3 (0.6%)		5 (1.7%)		1 (0.5%)		6 (2%)		4 (1.5%)		5 (1.8%)				
DISABILITY															
Declared	84 (16.7%)		59 (19.6%)		30 (13.8%)		230 (75%)		59 (21.5%)		50 (17.8%)		43 (17.1%)		57 (18.1%)
Not Declared	418 (83.3%)		242 (80.4%)		188 (86.2%)		77 (25%)		216 (78.6%)		231 (82.2%)		209 (82.9%)		258 (81.9%)

* All percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

‡ Where the appellant/complainant is not an enrolled member of the student population, it has not been possible to acquire demographical information.

Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) Data																
	Academic Year 2021/22	Student Population 2021/22	Academic Year 2020/21	Student Population 2020/21	Academic Year 2019/20	Student Population 2019/20	Academic Year 2018/19	Student Population 2018/19	Academic Year 2017/18	Student Population 2017/18	Academic Year 2016/17	Student Population 2016/17	Academic Year 2015/16	Student Population 2015/16	Academic Year 2014/15	Student Population 2014/15
Total Number of Cases	48	23662 (0.2%)	33	14473 (0.2%)	25	15045 (0.2%)	58	16978 (0.3%)	104	16208 (0.6%)	94	15479 (0.6%)	75	15118 (0.5%)	84	15140 (0.6%)
Frontline Cases	16 (33%)		11 (33%)		8 (32%)		19 (33%)		72 (74%)		80 (85%)		56 (75%)		57 (69%)	
Investigated Cases	32 (67%)		22 (67%)		17 (68%)		39 (67%)		32 (33%)		14 (15%)		19 (26%)		27 (31%)	
Frontline Cases Closed Within Timeline (within 5 working days)	9 (19%)		9 (27%)		8 (32%)		9 (16%)		57 (57%)		74 (93%)		51 (91%)		43 (75%)	
Frontline Cases Granted an Extension*	7 (15%)		2 (6%)		0 (0%)		10 (17%)		15 (15%)		6 (7%)		4 (7%)		14 (25%)	
Investigated Cases Closed Within Timeline (within 20 working days)	21 (44%)		20 (61%)		11 (44%)		23 (40%)		20 (19%)		4 (29%)		11 (58%)		16 (59%)	
Investigated Cases Granted an Extension*	11 (23%)		2 (6%)		6 (24%)		16 (28%)		12 (12%)		10 (71%)		8 (42%)		11 (41%)	
Frontline Cases Upheld~	6 (13%)		8 (24%)		7 (28%)		6 (10%)		27 (28%)		36 (41%)		36 (64%)		11 (19%)	
Frontline Cases Partially Upheld~#	5 (10%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		1 (2%)		16 (16%)		1 (1%)		4 (7%)		2 (4%)	
Frontline Cases Not Upheld~	5 (10%)		3 (11%)		1 (4%)		12 (21%)		29 (30%)		43 (49%)		15 (27%)		44 (77%)	
Investigated Cases Upheld	6 (13%)		6 (18%)		2 (8%)		7 (12%)		10 (10%)		5 (36%)		6		7 (26%)	
Investigated Cases Partially Upheld#	4 (8%)		3 (9%)		1 (4%)		10 (17%)		6 (6%)		3 (21%)		2		2 (8%)	
Investigated Cases Not Upheld	18 (38%)		12 (36%)		11 (44%)		20 (34%)		14 (13%)		5 (36%)		9		19 (56%)	
Investigated Cases Not Yet Closed	0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		2 (3%)		2 (2%)		1 (7%)		-		-	
Average Time Taken to Resolve Frontline Cases (in working days)	8 working days		8 working days		1 Working day		9 Working days		7 working days		3 working days		7 working days		6 working days	
Average Time Taken to Resolve Investigated Cases	25 working days		24 Working days		24 Working days		27 Working days		17 working days		20 working days		31 working days		21 working days	

*The MCHP recognises that not all investigations will be able to meet the 5 or 20 day deadlines on the basis of the complex nature of some submissions which will require careful consideration and detailed investigation. Where a delay occurs, the agreement of the complainant is sought.

~The outcome of informal (frontline) cases is not always easily defined as 'upheld' or 'not upheld' dependent on the nature of the concern raised. Where a resolution has been sought, the case has been recorded as 'upheld', however, where an issue has resulted in the clarification of policy, or noted without further investigation, the case has been appropriately recorded but 'not upheld'.

#Where a complaint has covered several issues, where any of these are upheld, the outcome is recorded as 'partially upheld'.

“This figure includes cases withdrawn by the complainant or referred for investigation under a process or policy other than the CHP, such as internal HR procedures.

Complaints* by School/Section														
School/Section	Academic Year 2020/21		Academic Year 2019/20		Academic Year 2018/19		Academic Year 2017/18		Academic Year 2016/17		Academic Year 2015/16		Academic Year 2014/15	
	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated
Business School	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	1		1	1			
School of Divinity, History & Philosophy	0	1	0	2	0	5	1	1			5			
School of Education	0	0	0	1	0	8	2	4		3		1		
School of Language & Literature	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2		2			3	3
School of Law	1	1	0	0	0	1	9	1				1		
School of Social Science	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	2	2	1	1	1
School of Biological Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		2				
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition	0	1	0	3	0	2	0	1	6	4	1	1		
School of Psychology	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1						
School of Engineering	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	3		1	1	3	2	2
School of Geosciences	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3				2		
School of Natural & Computing Sciences	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	0		1				
Academic Affairs	0	2	0	3	0	6	3	3	3	1	9	8	12	12
Accommodation	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	1					1	1
Campus Services (incl. Commercial and Catering Services)	0	0	0	0	3	0	23	1	9		3		1	1
Careers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			1			
Communications and Events	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Estates	0	1	4	0	0	3	0	2	1	1	3		1	1
External Relations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Finance	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Human Resources	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0						
Student Life (including Infohub)	1	1	0	1	3	3	1	3	7	5	10	1	2	2
IT Services	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2						
Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					2	2
Research & Innovation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Student Recruitment and Admissions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Library	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2			4		1	1
Development Trust	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Principal's Office/Secretary/SVP Offices	1	1	0	0	9	0	27	0	48		14		31	31
Arts & Social Sciences (College Office)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Physical Sciences (College Office)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				1		
Life Sciences & Medicine (College Office)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			2			
Totals	6	22	8	17	19	39	72	32	80	23	56	19	57	57

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of the paper is to provide members of UEC with an update on the volume of academic misconduct cases investigated during each academic year over the last 6 years.

Members are asked to discuss the paper and data in *Appendix A*.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	N/A	
Further consideration/ approval required by	N/A	

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members are asked to discuss the paper and data in *Appendix A*. The Committee is asked to consider any issues identified and any possible implications for the maintenance of academic integrity more generally, and to make recommendations for any further work required to support policy in this area.

4. OVERVIEW

4.1 The University has in place a [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\)](#) that defines categories of disciplinary offences and sets out the procedures to be followed in academic misconduct cases.

4.2 Various iterations of the Code have been approved by the University Court. The version used in 2021/22 was approved in summer 2020, with its use starting in 2020/21. The Code is reviewed regularly as any issues with the current Code are identified, such as the need for a new category like contract cheating, or issues on clarity of the wording of the Code. A revised version of the Code will be used for new cases relating to the 2022/23 academic year.

5. DATA

5.1 Appendix A provides an analysis of academic misconduct cases for academic years 2016/17 to 2021/22, with the second tab in Appendix A showing cases by School. Table 1.1 below shows the total cases of academic misconduct and is also shown as a percentage of the student population head count. Table 1.2 provides a summary of the cases: the numbers and category of misconduct.

Table 1.1 Total Cases of Academic Misconduct & as a Percentage of Student Population Head Count

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Total cases	409	210	166	136	77	76
As % of Population headcount	1.82%	1.01%	0.87%	0.77%	0.48%	0.49%

Table 1.2 Cases of Academic Misconduct, By Type of Misconduct

	2021/22	% + or -	2020/21	% + or -	2019/20	% + or -	2018/19	% + or -	2017/18	% + or -	2016/17
Plagiarism	356	90	187	27	147	48	99	80	55	-21	70
Collusion	45	137	19	111	9	-40	15	275	4	400	0
Cheating	2	n/a	0	-100	6	-71	21	17	18	200	6
Contract Cheating	6	200	2	-33	3	100	1	0	n/a	0	n/a
Ethics	0	-100	2	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	0

5.2 Table 1.2 shows:

5.2.1 In any year the majority of cases of academic misconduct relate to plagiarism. Since 2018/19 there has been a rise in cases of plagiarism, with a particularly steep rise in cases in 2021/22 (90%), the majority being first cases of plagiarism (81%);

5.2.2 With regards to contract cheating in 2021/22 there have been six cases, whereas in the previous 3 years, there were six cases in total.

5.3 Table 2 shows the volume of student cases split by their domicile group as a UK, EU or International student. The figure in brackets is the percentage against population headcount for that domicile group.

Table 2 Cases of Academic Misconduct, By UK/EU/International

Domicile Group	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
UK	87 (0.62)	54 (0.41)	27 (0.24)	36 (0.34)	29 (0.29)	29 (0.3)
EU	37 (1.68)	22 (0.79)	15 (0.48)	27 (0.8)	15 (0.45)	20 (0.65)
Int	285 (4.58)	134 (2.81)	124 (2.74)	73 (1.9)	33 (1.11)	27 (1.07)

5.4 Most significantly the table shows that the volume of cases involving international students has almost doubled. As a proportion of the total cases, international students make up 70% of all cases.

5.5 It is not clear why there are increases in the numbers of academic misconduct cases and it is important not to make assumptions about the reasons. It is possible that the impact of the changes to the delivery of education as a result of Covid-19 has played a part, particularly a lack of in person contact with teaching staff and others as part of the overall experience and the move to online assessment methods.

5.6 Areas where the University has enhanced its support of students in 2021/22 include:

5.6.1 Information and training on good assessment practices continues. The University's [Student Learning Service](#) (SLS) has developed and is delivering workshops and offers online resources (in Achieve and Achieve+) with an increased focus on academic integrity in assessments. The SLS/Centre for Academic Development (CAD) have produced:

- An [infographic on Academic Integrity](#) (for students and also for staff to use in course materials)
- An [Academic Integrity: a guide for students](#)

In addition, an Academic Integrity Intern+, based in CAD, has been appointed to:

- Research approaches to academic integrity in Higher Education institutions in Scotland
- Work with student focus groups to identify possible factors that might lead to student engagement with contract cheating, for which ethics approval is underway.

5.6.2 At a local level individual Schools provide information on plagiarism and referencing in their course and programme handbooks. Any changes to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) are conveyed to Schools following approval by the Senate and Court.

5.6.3 Students who are struggling with their academic writing skills can contact the SLS or access the online resources in Achieve and Achieve+ for information and advice. SLS offers workshops on academic writing skills and on avoiding plagiarism. Students can seek general support prior to submission of an assessment but, to avoid compromising academic integrity, SLS will not work directly with them on the writing of the assessment.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

6.1 Further information is available from Gillian Mackintosh (Director of Academic & Online Education) or Yvonne Gordon (Deputy Academic Registrar) (y.gordon@abdn.ac.uk).

09 December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN 2040 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS: AN ACADEMIC VIEW

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper outlines the proposed direction of travel for the creation of an Aberdeen 2040 Skills Recognition Framework and associated Graduate Attributes and Skills.

The current work is in the design phase and UEC is asked to discuss this paper and provide an academic view.

This paper will also be submitted to Senate for an academic view. Following UEC and Senate discussions, feedback and actions will be taken away and discussed within the Skills Recognition Framework workstream to shape subsequent design phases of the framework.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	EEC UEC 2040 UEC	May 2022 May 2022 June 2022
Further consideration/ approval required by	EEC UEC Senate	

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

UEC is invited to discuss and feedback on the proposed Skills Recognition Framework and draft Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills presented in this paper.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The [Aberdeen Graduate Attributes](#) were one output from a wider Curriculum Reform project that was linked to the University Strategic Plan 2007-10. Since their inception in 2010, they have been part of any new programme or course development as staff are required to align teaching to these Aberdeen Graduate Attributes.
- 4.2 The existing Aberdeen Graduate Attributes previously used to reinforce the learning outcomes of some core co-curricular programmes including the [STAR Award](#) and [Leadership Academy](#).
- 4.3 [Aberdeen 2040](#) underpins the University's strategic vision and as part of the process of taking forward Education at the University of Aberdeen, it is timely to review what it means to be a student at the University and what attributes and skills students will acquire throughout their studies. Aberdeen 2040 provides a focus on our Education in the context of preparing "our graduates to thrive in the diverse workplaces of the future" with commitments that need to be embedded in the experience of all our students.
- 4.4 Furthermore, other external factors have influenced educational practice over recent years, such as the QAA's guidance on Education for Sustainable Development ([ESD](#)) and Advance HE's [Student Success Framework Series](#). Many other higher education institutions have taken these frameworks and used them directly, or incorporated parts of them into their own strategy.
- 4.5 More recently, Graduate Outcomes ([GO](#)) data has shown a relatively poor performance for the University in ranking for measures such as those in highly skilled employment or those who

consider their employment activity to be 'on track' with their future plans. The GO data is a direct KPI for Aberdeen 2040 Commitment 12 (equipping students for global employment) and feeds into multiple university ranking tables (e.g., Graduate Prospects metric in the Complete University Guide / Career Prospects metric in the Guardian University Guide).

- 4.6 As part of an agreed approach to taking forward our Education strategy in light of Aberdeen 2040, a workstream has been setup to create a revised set of Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills and create a framework that will support the recognition and reflection of these attributes and skills in a meaningful way for our students. It is felt that by providing opportunities for students to document and reflect on their studies they will be able to articulate the skills they are developing. This in turn would be one way to enhance ranking performance in the GO survey and potentially other surveys (e.g., National Student Survey).
- 4.7 The Graduate Attributes and Skills workstream reports to the University Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) and has the following key objectives that have come from a set of recommendations agreed at UEC 2040 (May 2022) and UEC (June 2022):
- a) The University should design a personalised skills development, recognition and reflection framework
 - b) Create a system that can formally record and recognise student skills in all areas of their curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
 - c) Make any skills that are included in programme and course approvals visible and explicitly stated within the course catalogue and co-curricular programmes.
- 4.8 The schedule for the workstream is shown in Appendix A and we are currently on track to meet the various milestones.

5. CURRENT CONTEXT

- 5.1 The above recommendations form the basis of the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills workstream, reporting to EEC, UEC, Senate (and potentially other committees such as Quality Assurance Committee [QAC], Sustainable Development Committee [SDC], Digital Strategy Committee [DSC]) for discussion and an academic view as well as University-wide agreement on the approach(s) taken.
- 5.2 This workstream aims to create a Skills Recognition Framework (potentially with an external partner who will co-create the system with us) to achieve the aims set out above (see 4.7). The following will need to be considered (in no order of preference) for this system:
- a) **Fit with curricula** – Flexibility to fit with our diverse curricula across 12 different academic Schools and their subject disciplines.
 - b) **Fit with study requirements** – Flexibility to fit with undergraduate prolonged periods of study to shorter postgraduate taught one-year programmes and postgraduate research students
 - c) **Always on** – A system that grows as each student progresses through their studies, allowing them to populate and retrieve their skills as they acquire and reflect on them, and as they need to showcase them respectively.
 - d) **Portability** – The system needs to be able to follow the student once they have left the institution and not cease to exist once they have completed their studies or withdrawn.
 - e) **Automation** – Curriculum and co-curricular activities should be automatically added to populate the framework as and when they are completed by the student.
 - f) **Cross-system integration/interaction** – The skills framework would need to link in with multiple University systems (e.g. MyAberdeen and other VLE's, Student Record System, Career Connect, digital badges).
 - g) **Validation** – Some aspects of the framework will need validation (e.g. course completion or specific assessments) in order for students to record the skills they have gained.
- 5.3 Currently we are in the design phase of the Skills Recognition Framework and a recent paper is due to be tabled at the next DSC (meeting on 10/01/23) for approval of the spend associated with the digital system that will support this work.

5.4 The project has three possible routes that will be explored during the initial project design phases:

- a) **Skills Framework in TargetConnect** – The University currently uses a software package called [TargetConnect](#) that allows the Careers & Employability Service to manage many aspects of their service provision as well as advertise and manage job vacancies for students. This system has an additional component they call the Skills Framework but it does not have any flexibility as the skills are set by TargetConnect and cannot be edited by the University or the students.
- b) **Blackboard Ultra Goals** – MyAberdeen currently has functionality for students to record [Goals](#) in the system. These can be set by staff and aligned to particular pieces of work that students complete within Blackboard Ultra. At present this is not a function that is activated in MyAberdeen and it is relatively basic in terms of its functionality.
- c) **Pebblepad** – we have established an initial relationship with the software platform called [Pebblepad](#). This platform provides a large amount of customisation and flexibility for students and staff. The opportunity to partner with them is available to us and they have expertise in creating and supporting digital platforms that fit this project brief. The system also has one big advantage over the other approaches in that it can be kept and maintained by the student after they graduate.

5.5 Further to the digital aspects of this workstream, the workstream group has now ran several workshops to brainstorm and scope out the vision and design principles of the Skills Recognition Framework. Within this consideration to existing frameworks and the wider context of Aberdeen 2040 have all been taken into account.

5.6 In draft form at present, and aiming to encapsulate Aberdeen 2040 and our educational strategic vision, a set of graduate attributes and skills has been created (see Appendix B).

6. ACTIONS

UEC is asked to discuss and feedback on the approach taken for the Skills Recognition Framework (see 5.2 and 5.4 above) and the draft set of Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills (see Appendix B).

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from John Barrow (j.barrow@abdn.ac.uk), Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship.

6th January 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

Appendix A – Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills Workstream Schedule

Milestone	Details	Forecast Completion Date
Phase 1 & 2 design	<p><i>Phase 1:</i> Vision and design principles and scope and scale of framework (co-design approach involving all key stakeholder groups, held via workshops).</p> <p>Consider existing skills frameworks: UNSDGs, ISE, 7i, SDS meta skills in the context of Aberdeen 2040 (including the five interdisciplinary challenges) to inform development of the framework.</p> <p><i>Phase 2:</i> Framework structure proposal - co-design approach involving all key stakeholder groups, held via workshops.</p> <p>Committee Cycle 2: EEC (6/12/22), UEC (16/01/23), QAC (14/12/23), SSEC (7/12/22) and Senate (8/02/23) view.</p>	Feb 2023
Phase 3 design	<p>Framework content proposal - co-design approach involving all key stakeholder groups, held via workshops.</p> <p>Committee Cycle 3: EEC (28/02/23), UEC (23/03/23) and Senate (19/04/23) view.</p>	April 2023
Framework design approval	Committee Cycle 4 (Approval): EEC (27/04, for information), UEC (16/05/23), QAC (10/05/23), Senate (7/06/23) approval.	June 2023
Implementation	Phased implementation plan for 2023-2024	Throughout AY 2023-24

Appendix B – DRAFT Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and Skills

Aberdeen 2040 states the following:

The University of Aberdeen has a distinctive, flexible curriculum that encourages students to grow as independent learners. True to our roots as an ancient Scottish university, our degree programmes combine breadth and depth, and draw their strength from the quality of our research.

We believe in the interconnectedness of research and teaching, and will create new interdisciplinary pathways for study as we address global challenges. Students and the Students' Association will work together with staff to ensure that our curriculum and our student experience are among the very best in the world.

We will prepare our graduates to thrive in the diverse workplaces of the future by working with external partners and alumni. We will develop more challenge-led teaching, which enables students to learn by tackling real-world problems. We will provide more work-based learning, through placements and volunteering. We will make innovative use of digital technology to enable learning, and equip our graduates with digital skills. We will foster their intellectual development, creative thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship. Our students will grow in confidence and understanding, so that they can be change-makers across the globe.

Our education is open to all. We will provide an environment in which all students can achieve success, whatever their background or personal characteristics. We will support our students through effective teamwork across the university. We will set ambitious targets for widening access, working with our education partners to support aspiration and attainment. We will expand learning on demand and continuing professional development. Our education will be available to people wherever they wish to learn with us, and at any stage in their career journey.

We also have an educational strategic vision that states:

Our Education aims to be among the very best in the world, enabling our students to grow as independent learners, to achieve their full potential and succeed whatever their personal and social background, their mode of delivery and location, and to be equipped for global employment.

Our Curriculum is challenge-led, distinctive, has breadth and flexibility with the interdisciplinary challenges embedded. Our Curriculum is inclusive, international, and enables our students to be leaders in protecting the environment.

Our Environment aims to be diverse, caring, supportive, challenging, innovative, and developmental.

Taking these various statements, various attributes and skills have been drawn out to align with the University strategic vision. Examples have also been provided for each and they have been grouped into themes – see overleaf.

DRAFT Aberdeen 2040 Graduate attributes and Skills:

Attributes/Skills	Text from A2040/Strategic Vision	Attributes/Skills Description	Examples
Independence	"Our curriculum encourages students to grow as independent learners"	The ability to identify and pursue learning goals independently, seeking out resources and support as needed	Seeking out resources to learn a new piece of software on your own
Interdisciplinarity	"We will create new interdisciplinary pathways for study as we address global challenges"	The ability to think and work across different disciplines and understand the interconnectedness of different fields of study	Collaborating with a team of students from different degree programmes to develop and implement a work plan for a piece of coursework
Digital	"We will make innovative use of digital technology to enable learning, and equip our graduates with digital skills"	The capacity to use digital platforms and tools to communicate, collaborate, and access information, and adapt to new technologies as they emerge	Using video conferencing software to facilitate online collaboration with staff and students
Creative Thinking	"We will foster their intellectual development, creative thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship"	The ability to think critically, generate new ideas and approaches to problems, and apply knowledge in new contexts	Researching existing literature to understand the current state of knowledge of a topic, then using this to generate new insights and understanding
Communication	"Students will need to be able to effectively communicate their ideas and research findings to different audiences, both orally and in writing"	The ability to convey information clearly and effectively to different audiences	Presenting research findings in class or writing a report that summarises the results for a broader audience
Teamwork	"We will support our students through	The ability to work effectively with others	Working in a group to complete a presentation on time

	effective teamwork across the university"	to achieve a common goal	and deliver it to your class
Leadership	"Our students will grow in confidence and understanding, so that they can be change-makers across the globe"	The ability to take initiative, lead others, and inspire change	Acting as a Class Rep to liaise between the staff and students on your course, and in the process building relationships with other groups and individuals
Inclusion	"Our education is open to all. We will provide an environment in which all students can achieve success, whatever their background or personal characteristics"	Respect and sensitivity to the needs and experiences of others from different backgrounds	Creating an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for classmates of all backgrounds and experiences
Problem-solving	"We will develop more challenge-led teaching, which enables students to learn by tackling real-world problems"	The capacity to identify and analyse problems, generate and evaluate potential solutions, and implement the most effective one	Participating in a challenge-led course that requires students to develop a solution to a real-world problem, such as improving access to healthcare in underserved communities
Time-management	"With a flexible curriculum and opportunities for work-based learning, students will need to be able to manage their time effectively and stay organized"	The capacity of balancing multiple responsibilities and staying focused and organised to meet deadlines	Balancing coursework, a part-time job, and extracurricular activities while maintaining good grades
Adaptability	"Our Environment aims to be diverse, caring, supportive, challenging, innovative, and developmental"	The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and be open to learning new things	Dealing with unexpected challenges and setbacks during your studies that require changes to plans so that you

			can still achieve your goals
Sustainability	"Our curriculum...enables our students to be leaders in protecting the environment"	The ability to consider the long-term environmental, social, and economic impacts of actions and make decisions that promote the well-being of current and future generations	Participating in a sustainability club that works to reduce waste on campus and educate the community about the importance of environmental conservation
Self-motivation	"all students can achieve success and thrive in the diverse workplaces of the future"	The ability to identify personal goals and take initiative to work towards them, enabling individuals to pursue opportunities that align with their goals and values	Developing a plan to achieve a learning goal by setting aside dedicated study time each week, attending all of their classes, and seeking out additional help when needed, taking initiative to follow through on the plan, even when faced with challenges or distractions
International Awareness	"Our curriculum is inclusive and international"	The ability to understand and appreciate cultural differences and diversity, and to recognize the interconnectedness of global issues and events	Communicating and working effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds and being able to consider global issues from multiple perspectives

Potential thematic groupings:

Theme	Skills
Personal and professional development	Independence, self-motivation, time-management
Collaboration and communication	Communication, teamwork, leadership, inclusion
Adaptability and innovation	Adaptability, creative thinking, digital

Critical thinking and problem-solving	Interdisciplinarity, problem-solving, sustainability, international awareness
---------------------------------------	---

Or...

Theme	Skills
Development	Independence, self-motivation, time-management
Communication	Communication, teamwork, leadership, inclusion
Innovation	Adaptability, creative thinking, digital
Problem-solving	Interdisciplinarity, problem-solving, sustainability, international awareness

SMT sponsor: Ruth Taylor

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

BLOCK TEACHING ACTION PLAN**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

The purpose of this paper is to present an action plan that aims to enable Schools to make changes to their curriculum to remove the use of short block teaching (3 weeks or less) wherever possible.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	N/A	
Further consideration/ approval required by	UEC (for information)	16 January 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The UEC is invited to note the paper, the action plan, and the guidance to support Schools to make changes to the model of delivery.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The purpose of the paper is to provide information on: the current status of block taught teaching, the challenges associated with short block taught courses (3 weeks or less), and an action plan, with guidance, to enable Schools to make changes from short blocks to linear teaching (defined as teaching that takes place across a full term).

Block taught teaching at the University of Aberdeen

- 4.2 Block taught teaching (defined as courses that are delivered over a short intense period of between 2-6 weeks) is offered in eight Schools (see appendix 2 for an overview of the PGT programmes which are fully or partially block taught). Most block taught courses are postgraduate taught however there are a small number of six-week block taught undergraduate courses offered by SBS and MMSN in Honours programmes.
- 4.3 The delivery of short (3 weeks or less) block taught courses is only used in postgraduate taught courses and takes place predominantly in the Business School (51 courses), and in NCS (38 courses) and also in Qatar (62 courses). It is important to note that students from other Schools may access block taught courses from these Schools meaning that these programmes, whilst otherwise linear, require an early late registration deadline to accommodate the block taught component (i.e., students would need to commence teaching early in the first week of term).
- 4.4 There is no University policy or regulation that determines that delivery of teaching should be through block teaching. There is therefore nothing to prevent any School from making changes to the delivery patterns of their courses at any time and in line with timelines for curriculum management processes (see appendix 1). The paper and action plan provides guidance to support Schools in making changes to the model of delivery.

Challenges associated with short block taught courses

- 4.5 We have seen an increase in the number of students arriving late for the start of term, particularly international students. The reasons for late arrivals vary and include: the global situation with respect to Covid-19; travel and visa challenges; and challenges with the University's admissions processes related to resource for the management of applications. These factors are outside the control of students and can have substantial impact on student engagement early in course of their studies. The Recruitment and Admissions team has done extensive work to manage the external and internal issues and have adjusted timelines which aim to enable students to arrive on time.
- 4.6 However, there will always be students who, for whatever reason, are unable to arrive for the start of term, but who should be enabled to commence their learning with us. For the September 2022 and January 2023 intakes, Schools have put in place flexible dates (in line with UKVI requirements) by which students can arrive and have provided, or will provide, support for them to catch up on missed learning.
- 4.7 The most challenging area to manage appropriately is short block teaching. The challenges relate to the late arrival of students, and also to any absence that a student may have during that short period of teaching. For late arrivals, it is sometimes possible to move the block taught course to the end of the programme. However, this extends the academic year for those students. Alternatively, where the learning is a pre-requisite for future courses it is not possible to move the teaching meaning students will need to defer to a subsequent intake. All these scenarios are detrimental to the student experience.
- 4.8 Whilst colleagues have argued that there are pedagogical reasons for delivery of teaching in short blocks, the negative impact on the overall student experience alongside the ability to identify alternative approaches to delivery and to therefore deliver teaching appropriately, suggests that it is better to move away from short block teaching.
- 4.9 Short block teaching can also pose challenges for students who are unwell during a short block or where there is industrial action, as the intensive nature of delivery (often impacting on one or two weeks of a three-week block), if missed, means that a student is not able to achieve the learning outcomes of the course. Additionally, for fully online students, block delivery is not ideal as its intensive nature does not align well with the part-time nature of this cohort who are often juggling busy professional lives alongside their study.
- 4.10 All postgraduate taught delivery in Qatar is block taught to support engagement in country by flying faculty. This issue predominantly impacts the Business School although other PGT delivery (e.g., by the Law School) is also block taught. Moving away from block delivery would require consideration of either: how flying faculty might contribute in linear delivery although it is noted that there is ongoing discussion around AFG colleagues contributing to PGT delivery in the future which might help alleviate this issue; or whether Schools can deliver block taught teaching in one context (e.g., AFG) and linear in another (i.e., Aberdeen) and still be confident that the students are receiving an equivalent learning experience. Similarly, once SCNU Joint Institute delivery is able to move to in-person rather than online, it is intended that course delivery (UG) be block rather than linear delivered so consideration will also be required in this context too.
- 4.11 Additionally, the Business School has highlighted that their block taught courses make use of bought-in teaching (e.g., industry experts). The intensive model of delivery (within the 3 week block the first week is preparation, the second week is intensive delivery and third week is assessment) with staff input focused on the second week makes it easier for these individuals to contribute. A move to linear delivery will require reflection on how these courses might be taught.

Guidance and action plan

- 4.12 As noted already, Schools can make the change to delivery using the process in appendix 1. It is recommended that, where Schools wish to make the change from short block teaching to linear delivery for academic year 2023/24, Schools engage with the process as quickly as possible. A streamlined course amendment form will be provided to Schools before the winter break to simplify the process.
- 4.13 It is recommended that any short block teaching (2-3 week) is replaced with a linear teaching model and this paper acts as guidance to facilitate those changes where Schools decide to do this. Partnership working with TNE partners will be essential as part of the process and where a move away from block delivery cannot be accommodated due to the input of flying faculty, the relevant Schools should agree an approach that ensures an equivalent experience. Consideration will also need to be given to assessment both in terms of equivalence of experience and where assessments in Aberdeen do not align with those in the TNE partner provision of separate assessments. Where it is decided to continue block delivery at a TNE partner but switch to linear delivery in Aberdeen the proposed approach should be passed to the Quality Assurance Committee for consideration.
- 4.14 In order to ensure that any changes from block to linear delivery can properly be accommodated for academic year 2023/24, changes that Schools wish to make will need to be submitted ideally by 13 February 2023 (though changes can be accommodated up to end of March 2023). This timing is necessary to ensure that the curriculum build which underpins MyCurriculum can reflect the new structure and the timetable can be built to accommodate linear delivery. Unlike during Covid, it is intended to revert to the development of the full timetable for academic year 2023/24 between March and June 2023 to avoid the last-minute pressures seen in recent years and delays in the second half-session / summer timetable development until autumn 2023 which impacts course registration. While some very limited late changes might be able to be accommodated, it will not be possible to accommodate significant changes later than this due to the integrated nature of the curriculum / timetabling process and space constraints, as such where changes from block to linear development cannot be made in this timeline, they should be implemented from September 2024.
- 4.15 Appendix 3 provides an action plan which aims to support Schools to make these changes.
- 4.16 School members of UEC are asked to disseminate the paper for implementation where this is appropriate. The School Education Committees will provide the focus for the implementation of the action plan.
- 4.17 Going forward, Programme Management Committee and Curriculum Management System guidance will be adjusted to explicitly reference short block course approaches such that discussion can take place should any proposal identify short block teaching as the preferred mode of delivery.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk) or Gillian Mackintosh, Director of Academic Services and Online Education (g.mackintosh@abdn.ac.uk)

20 December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Appendix 1: Process for moving from Block to Linear Teaching

This document details the process to be followed where you wish to move a course from block taught to linear delivery.

If any of the following apply, you should complete a *shortened* course amendment form¹

- You are changing the course title (QAC approval not needed but a new course code will be required)
- You are changing the format of assessment
- The contact hours are changing by more than 30% (increased or decreased)
- The course start date is changing (QAC approval not needed but a new course code may be required)

If you are changing anything else, over and above these changes, a normal [course change form](#) should be completed for QAC approval.

To ensure that any necessary approvals can be completed and can be incorporated in the timetable, any changes should ideally be submitted by 13 February 2023. Late changes can be accommodated, if necessary, up to the end of March 2023.

Completed forms should be submitted via the School's Curriculum Administrator email account (see below) and copied to roombookings@abdn.ac.uk

If none of the above apply

- No form is required.
- You should liaise directly with the Central Timetabling Team to discuss the changed format of your delivery of the course prior to the annual timetabling exercise (prior to end of March 2023).

School	Curriculum Administrator E-mail
School of Biological Sciences	sbscurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
Business School	buscurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History	dhpcurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
School of Education	edcurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
School of Engineering	engcurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
School of Geosciences	geocurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
School of Law	lawcurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture	llmvccurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition	mmsncurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
School of Natural and Computing Sciences	ncscurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
School of Psychology	psychcurriculum@abdn.ac.uk
School of Social Science	socscicurriculum@abdn.ac.uk

¹ Note a shortened course change form is being prepared for block taught changes. This will be shared with Schools prior to the Winter break.

Appendix 2

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES USING SOME OR ALL BLOCK TAUGHT COURSES

School	Prog Award	Prog Title	Type
Biological Sciences	MRes	Environmental Science	Full BT
Biological Sciences	MRes	Soil Science	Full BT
Biological Sciences	MSc	Applied Marine and Fisheries Ecology	Full BT
Biological Sciences	MSc	Ecology and Conservation	Full BT
Biological Sciences	MSc	Environmental Management	Full BT
Biological Sciences	MSc	Environmental Pollution and Remediation	Full BT
Biological Sciences	MSc	Environmental Science	Full BT
Biological Sciences	MSc	Marine Conservation	Full BT
Biological Sciences	MSc	Soil Science	Full BT
Business	MBA	Business Administration	Full BT
Business	MBA	Business Administration (Qatar)	Full BT
Business	MBA	Business Administration Business Analytics	Full BT
Business	MBA	Business Administration Energy Management	Full BT
Business	MSc	Financial Technology	Partial BT
Business	MSc	Global Business Communication	Partial BT
Business	MSc	International Business Management	Full BT
Business	MSc	International Business Management (Qatar)	Full BT
Business	MSc	International Human Resource Management	Full BT
Business	MSc	International Human Resource Management (Qatar)	Full BT
Business	MSc	International Tourism Management	Full BT
Business	MSc	Marketing Management	Full BT
Engineering	MSc	Oil and Gas Engineering	Partial BT
Engineering	MSc	Petroleum Engineering	Partial BT

Geosciences	MSc	Geophysics	Full BT
Geosciences	MSc	Integrated Petroleum Geology	Full BT
Geosciences	MSc	Oil and Gas Enterprise Management	Full BT
Geosciences	MSc	Petroleum Data Management	Partial BT
Geosciences	MSc	Planetary Science	Full BT
Geosciences	MSc	Sustainability Transitions	Partial BT
Law	LLM	International Commercial Law (Qatar)	Full BT
LLMVC	MSc	Creative and Cultural Communication	Partial BT
NCS	MSc	Artificial Intelligence	Full BT
NCS	MSc	Cybersecurity	Full BT
NCS	MSc	Information Technology	Partial BT
NCS	MSc	Data Science	Full BT
Social Science	MSc	International Relations and Management	Partial BT
Social Science	MSc	Strategic Studies and Management	Partial BT

Appendix 3: Action plan

Action	Responsible	Timeline	Resources to support
Provide information to Schools to guide the process for change	Director of Academic Services and Online Education	Prior to Winter break	See appendix 1
Review, in liaison with all relevant parties (e.g., AFG, affected Schools) all short block taught teaching (3 weeks or less) and make plan for adjustment to linear teaching and / or the delivery of equivalent teaching and assessment	Schools	Review: End January 2023 Seek approval of changes: See timelines below	
Complete CMS changes	Schools	For courses being delivered in 2023/24, these should be submitted ideally by 13 Feb 2023 (and by end of March 23 at latest) to ensure the changes can be accommodated in the 2023/24 teaching timetable and in associated curriculum build in MyCurriculum. For courses being delivered in 2024/25, these should be submitted by November 2023 in line with the usual planning cycle.	A shortened course amendment form will be provided to Schools prior to the Winter break to simplify the process.
Put in place mechanisms that prevent any future short block teaching being approved	Director of Academic Services and Online Education	23 December 2022	Adjustments to QAC / CMS guidance to explicitly advise that short block delivery will not be approved.
Put in place arrangements to support late arrival (maximum latest dates and support for students, and use, if required of delayed start at block 2 with completion of block 1 at end of studies) where changes cannot be made for September 2023	Schools	April 2023	
Put in place mechanisms that enable any future new programme proposal with short block teaching as the mode of delivery to be adequately reviewed in light of the challenges associated with short block teaching	Vice-Principal Global Engagement	End January 2023	

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
LONGITUDINAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES (LEO) 2022

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper outlines the most recent Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data published by the Department for Education.

The University Education Committee is asked to consider and discuss the findings in this paper and agree the next steps for dissemination of the data across the University.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	N/A	
Further consideration/ approval required by	EEC (by circulation)	Jan 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The University Education Committee is invited to discuss the paper and associated report and agree the next steps outlined in this cover paper.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Longitudinal Education Outcomes data is released every year by the Department for Education (DfE) and shows employment outcomes and earnings of leavers from higher education stratified by institution and subject.
- 4.2 The employment data covers those with records submitted through the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system and records submitted through the self-assessment system.
- 4.2.1 The PAYE and self-assessment systems do not collect information on the number of hours worked; therefore, whether an individual is working full-time or part-time cannot be ascertained currently. The DfE are exploring the opportunity to link the LEO data to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), which will allow for a subset of the LEO data to contain information on full-time and part-time work patterns.
- 4.2.2 Self-assessed earnings are not published in isolation, rather they are included as part of a total earnings figure.
- 4.2.3 All figures are based on UK tax, benefit and student records only: activity of those who move abroad to work or study after graduating is not reflected in the employment or further study figures. Instead, these individuals are categorised as 'activity not captured' in the data set.
- 4.3 The report presented here (see Appendix A) is derived from the DfE dataset from June 2021 and considers those who graduated with a first-degree qualification from HEIs in Great Britain (GB) (i.e. does not include data for institutions in Northern Ireland).
- 4.3.1 Data is presented for one, three and five years after graduation and uses data beginning from the full tax year after graduation rather than the tax year in which students graduated

(i.e. students graduating in academic year 2017-18 will have one year employment and earnings outcomes taken from the 2019-20 tax year).

4.3.2 It should also be noted that subjects are only included if they have ten or more leavers used in the earnings figures, so subjects highlighted will vary for different metrics if they do not meet this threshold.

4.4 Data presented in the report is not used in any league table metrics but it is used for statistics that are presented as part of the [Unistats](#) dataset which are in turn used on the [Discover Uni](#) webpages to provide data for prospective students.

5. DATA

5.1 Headline Median Salary Data

5.1.1 The overall headline median salary figures for one three and five years after graduation are as follows with the top performing subjects (Top 10 in GB and/or Top 3 in Scotland) shown within each cohort.

One Year After Graduation:

	Rank (GB)	Rank (Scotland)
<i>Overall Median Salary</i>	24th	3rd
Medicine and Dentistry	2nd	2nd
Education and Teaching	2nd	2nd
Performing Arts		1st

Three Years After Graduation:

	Rank (GB)	Rank (Scotland)
<i>Overall Median Salary</i>	33rd	7th
Education and Teaching	1st	1st
Medical Sciences	4th	2nd
Medicine and Dentistry	5th	1st
Psychology		3rd

Five Years After Graduation:

	Rank (GB)	Rank (Scotland)
<i>Overall Median Salary</i>	40th	5th
Medicine and Dentistry	2nd	2nd
Education and Teaching	3rd	2nd
Business and Management		1st
Law		1st
Philosophy and Religious Studies		1st

5.2 Median Salaries by Subject

5.2.1 When the data is analysed for median salaries by subject at one, three and five years post-graduation, some subjects show significant shifts in salaries. There are potentially several reasons for this, such as for some disciplines they may be working in a job that does not link to their chosen career path because they are also in further study, after which they go into a higher paid role that changes on their salary. Some examples of these shifts are shown in the table below and all subjects can be seen in the attached report (see Charts 4, 6 and 8 in Appendix A).

Subject	One Year (ranking out of 15 subjects)	Three Years (ranking out of 19 subjects)	Five Years (ranking out of 22 subjects)
Medicine and dentistry	1st	1st	1st
Medical sciences	15th	2nd	8th
Biosciences	13th	14th	18th
Politics	9th	12th	12th
Sociology	14th	13th	15th
Law	7th	8th	5th

5.3 Median Salary by Gender

- 5.3.1 When the data is analysed by gender one, three and five years after graduation at all time points there is a gender pay gap. This is a consistent trend over all previous cohorts of the LEO dataset going back to the 2015-16 tax year with the most recent data shown in the below (see Charts 10, 11 and 12 in the attached report for further data).

	One Year	Three Years	Five Years
Female median salary	£24,200	£26,400	£30,700
Male median salary	£24,900	£28,200	£31,800
<i>Difference</i>	<i>£700</i>	<i>£1,800</i>	<i>£1,100</i>

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The attached LEO Report shows further details on the LEO dataset which will be disseminated to Schools via the Employability & Skills Champions (via the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee).
- 6.2 UEC are asked to discuss the findings presented in this cover paper and the attached report and any actions will be taken away for discussion at relevant committees and working groups as appropriate.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from John Barrow, Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship (j.barrow@abdn.ac.uk).

21st December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open



Longitudinal Education Outcomes 2022

Analysis by the Directorate of Planning & Governance

01 December 2022

Background to the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset

The focus of this LEO release is on employment and earnings outcomes of leavers from higher education by subject and institution, using HESA records to link graduates to HMRC and DWP data. For the purposes of this report the focus is on median salary results.

Coverage: This report is derived from the Department for Education publication and underlying dataset (June 2021) and considers those who graduated with a first-degree qualification from higher education providers in Great Britain (GB). This only includes those classified as UK domiciled prior to entry to higher education. Figures are presented for all graduates and have not been split by full-time or part-time mode of study. This internal report on LEO data only considers Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), although other providers are included in the source publication. Subject level data is available where there are ten or more leavers included within the earnings figures.

Years after graduation: The time periods used in this data are one, three and five years after graduation, which refers to the first, third and fifth full tax year after graduation, respectively. For instance, for the 2017/18 graduation cohort, the figures one year after graduation refer to employment and earnings outcomes in the 2019/20 tax year. This time period was selected as graduates are unlikely to have been engaged in economic activity for the whole of the tax year that overlaps with the graduation date.

University of Aberdeen headline/highlight performance

The following median salary performance can be highlighted for the University of Aberdeen for the 2019/20 tax year where subjects are within the Top 10 for GB plus any additional subjects that are Top 3 in Scotland:

ONE YEAR AFTER GRADUATION:

- **OVERALL MEDIAN SALARY - £24,200 (ranked 24th in GB, 3rd in Scotland)**
- **Medicine and dentistry** – Aberdeen placed 2nd out of 34 GB HEIs, and 2nd out of four Scottish HEIs.
- **Education and teaching** – Aberdeen placed 2nd out of 79 GB HEIs (2nd out of nine Scottish HEIs).
- Additionally 1st in Scotland for Performing Arts.

THREE YEARS AFTER GRADUATION:

- **OVERALL MEDIAN SALARY – £27,400 (ranked 33rd in GB, 7th in Scotland)**
- **Education and teaching** – Aberdeen placed 1st out of 81 GB HEIs, and 1st out of nine Scottish HEIs.
- **Medical Sciences** – Aberdeen placed 4th out of 49 GB HEIs, and 2nd out of seven Scottish HEIs.
- **Medicine and dentistry** – Aberdeen placed 5th out of 33 GB HEIs, and 1st of four Scottish HEIs.
- Additionally 3rd in Scotland for Psychology.

FIVE YEARS AFTER GRADUATION:

- **OVERALL MEDIAN SALARY – £31,300 (ranked 40th in GB, 5th in Scotland)**
- **Medicine and dentistry** – Aberdeen placed 2nd out of 34 GB HEIs, and 2nd out of five Scottish HEIs.
- **Education and teaching** – Aberdeen placed 3rd out of 85 GB HEIs (2nd out of nine Scottish HEIs).
- Additionally 1st in Scotland for Business and management, Law and Philosophy and religious studies.

University of Aberdeen – Median Salary performance for 2015/16 to 2019/20 tax years

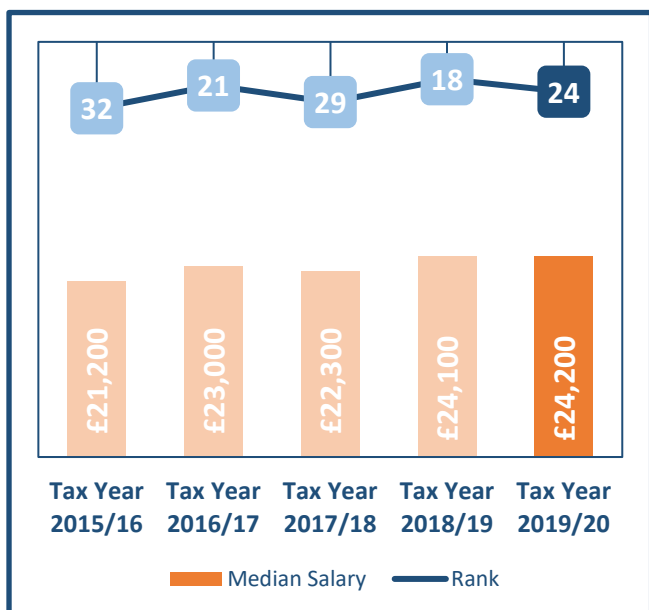


Chart 1: LEO Data - Median Salary ONE Year After Graduation – University of Aberdeen

This chart demonstrates the median salary for University of Aberdeen first degree graduates over all subjects one year after graduation by tax year. As can be seen, the median salary for 2019/20 one year after graduation has risen slightly from £24.1k to £24.2k. However, the GB rank for median salary one year after graduation has fallen six places from 18th to 24th.

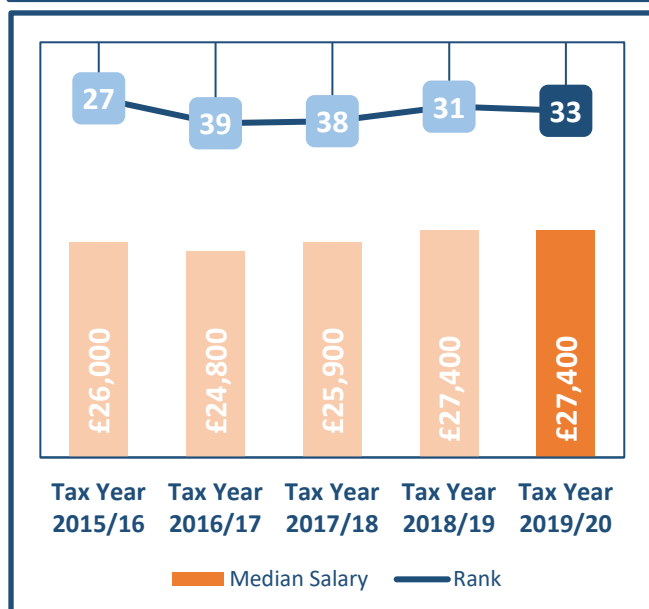


Chart 2: LEO Data - Median Salary THREE Years After Graduation – University of Aberdeen

This chart demonstrates the median salary for University of Aberdeen first degree graduates over all subjects three years after graduation by tax year. As observed, the median salary for 2019/20 three years after graduation remained the same as the previous year at £27.4k. The GB rank for median salary three years after graduation has decreased by two places from 31st to 33rd.

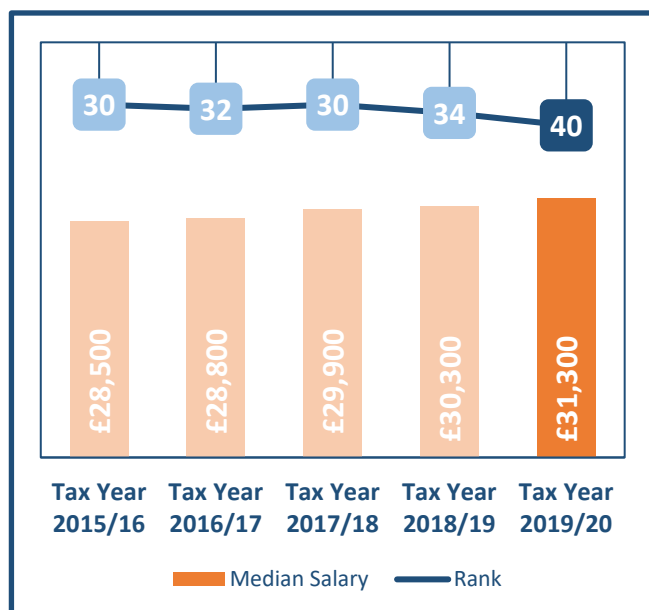
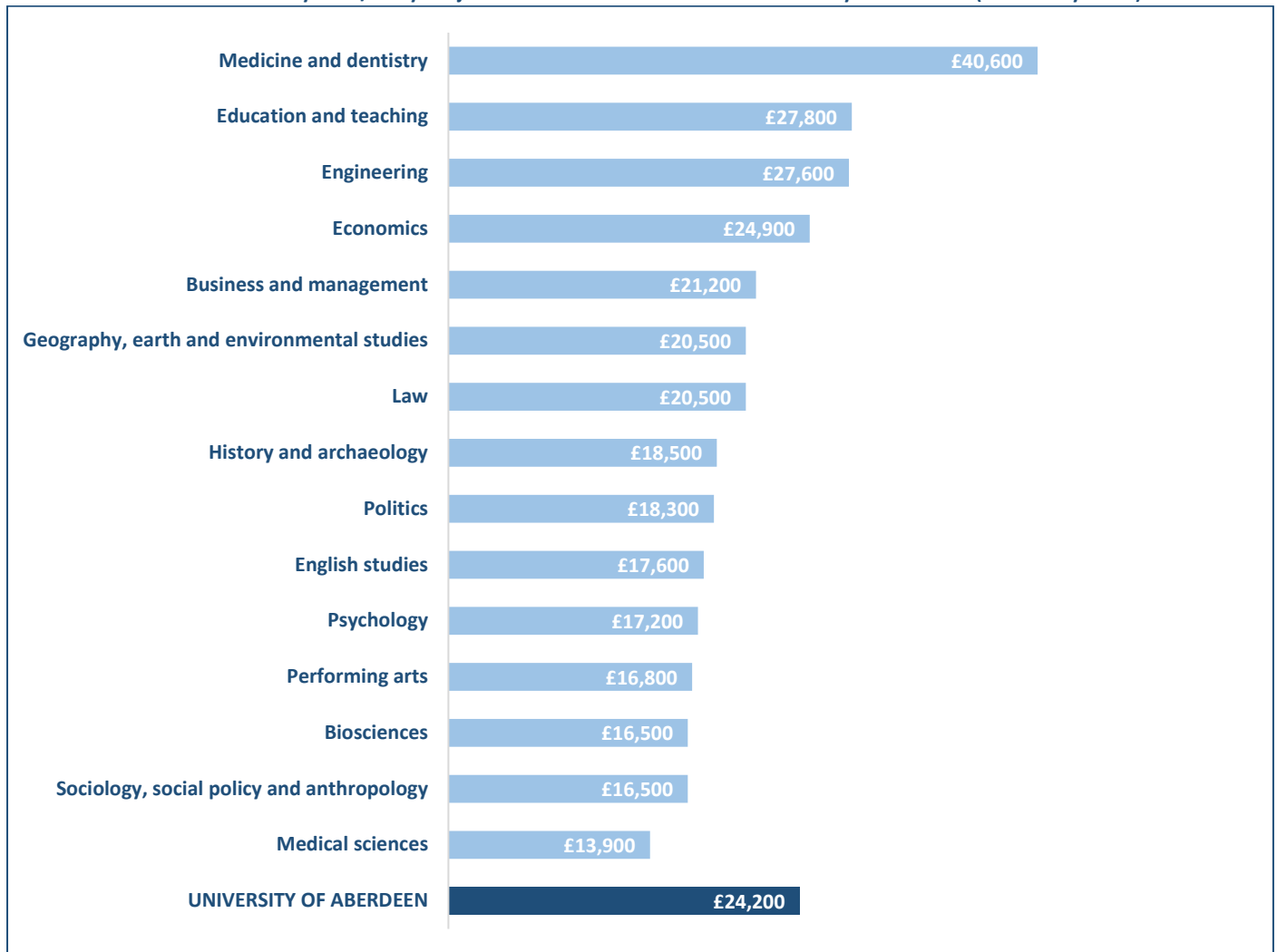


Chart 3: LEO Data - Median Salary FIVE Years After Graduation – University of Aberdeen

This chart demonstrates the median salary for University of Aberdeen first degree graduates over all subjects five years after graduation by tax year. As can be seen, the median salary for 2019/20 five years after graduation has risen slightly from £30.3k to £31.3k. However, the GB rank for median salary one year after graduation has fallen six places from 34th to 40th.

Chart 4: LEO Data - Median Salary 2019/20 by Subject ONE Year After Graduation – University of Aberdeen (ordered by value)

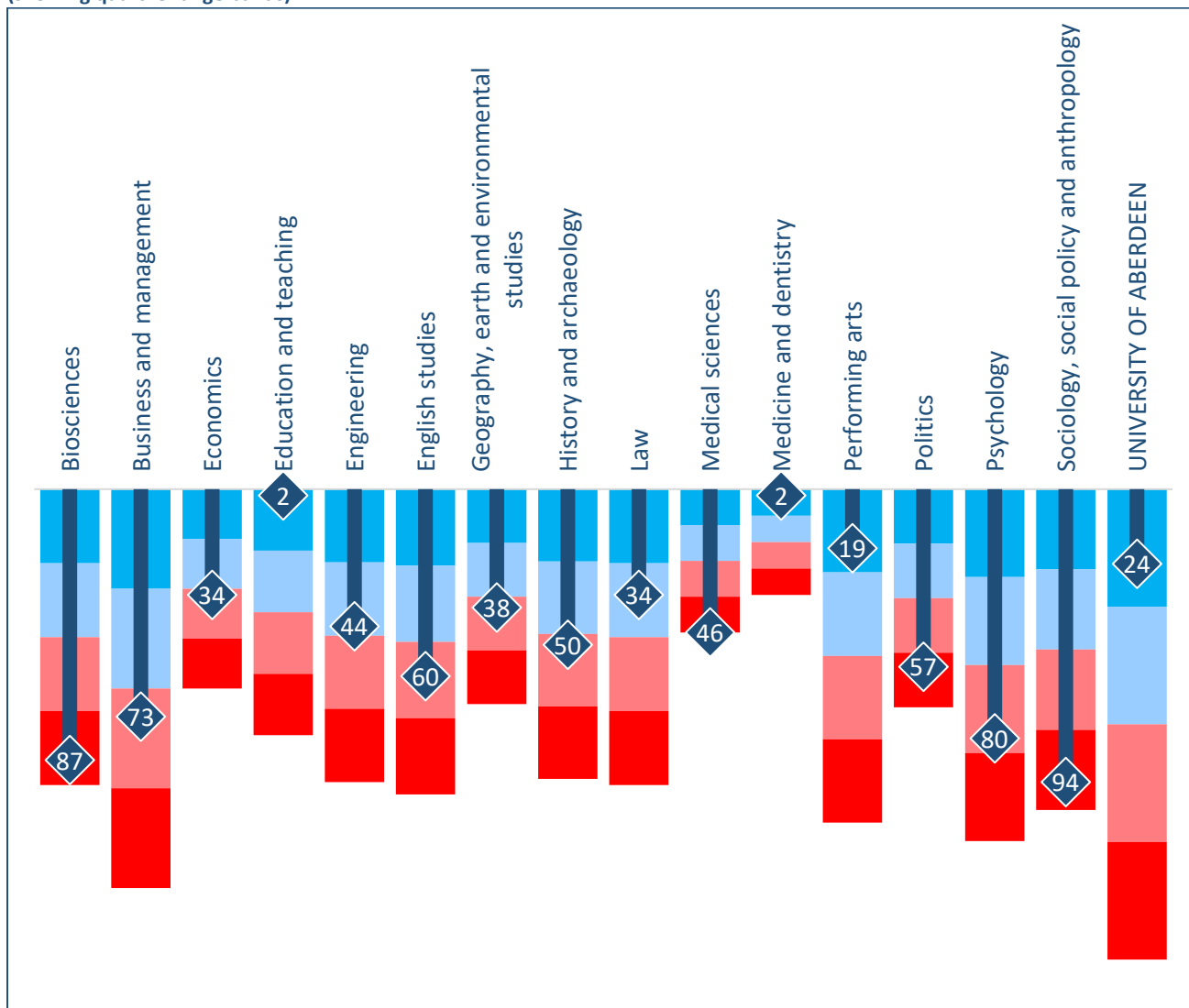


The chart above shows that graduates from Medicine and dentistry enjoy the highest median salaries one year after graduation at the University of Aberdeen, followed by graduates in Education and teaching with the second highest median salary one year after graduation, just ahead of Engineering.

In addition to the above, University of Aberdeen graduates from Business and management, Economics, Geography, earth and environmental studies and Law additionally had median salaries greater than £20,000 one year after graduation in the 2019/20 tax year.

Table 1 in the appendix provides the median salary values for the last four years for each University of Aberdeen subject published in LEO data for one, three and five years after graduation.

Chart 5: LEO Data - Median Salary 2019/20 by Subject ONE Year After Graduation – University of Aberdeen rank within GB (showing quartile range bands)



In Chart 5 above it may be observed that University of Aberdeen graduates have Top 10 median salaries one year after graduation in two subject areas for the 2019/20 tax year: Education and teaching and Medicine and dentistry.

In addition to this we also have Performing arts above the upper quartile mark for median salaries in Great Britain one year after graduation.

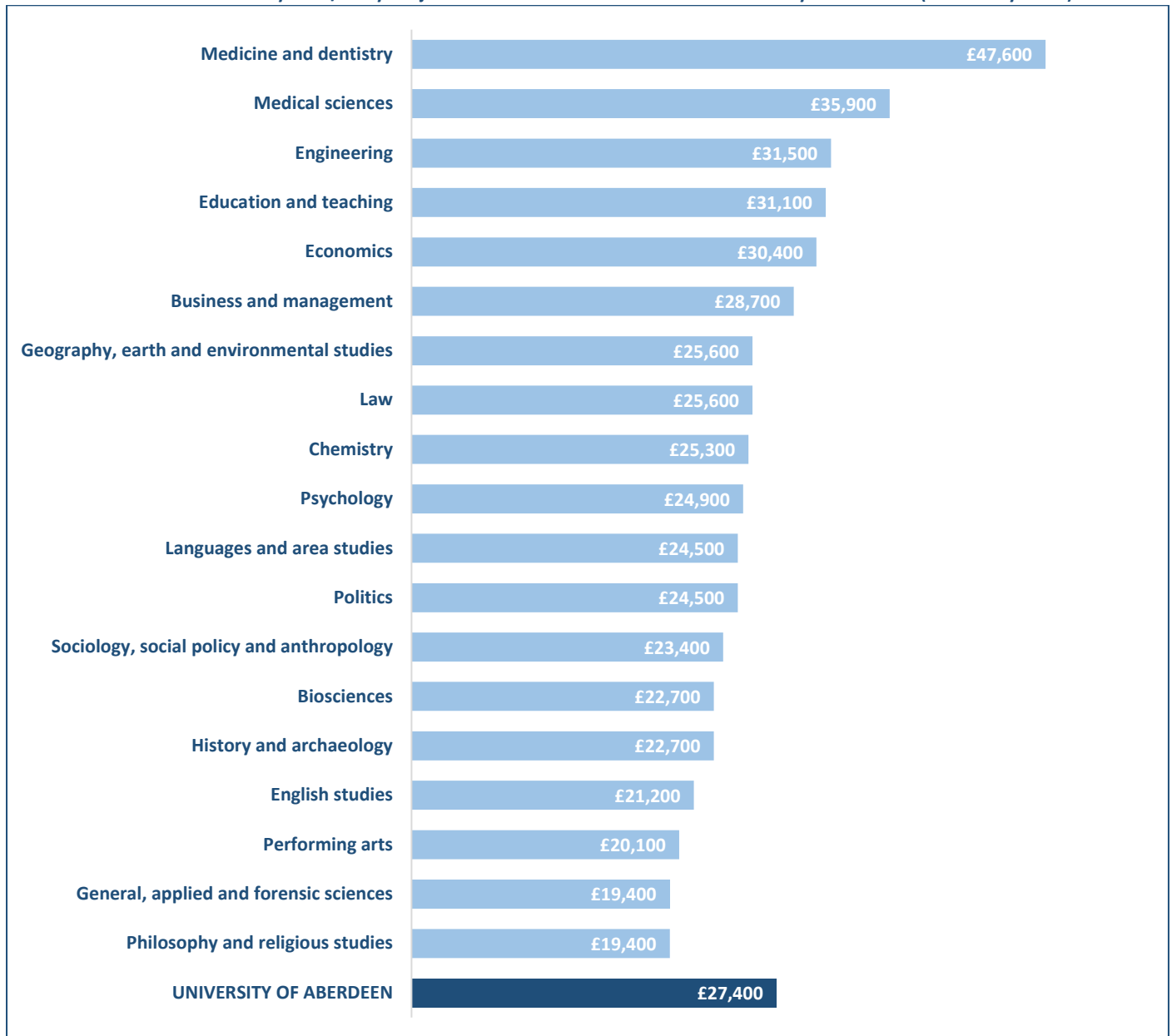
Overall, the University of Aberdeen is also in the top quartile banding for median salaries in Great Britain one year after graduation in the 2019/20 tax year with a ranking of 24th.

Finally, four subject areas: Biosciences, Medical sciences, Politics, and Sociology, social policy and anthropology are all in the lowest quartile banding for median salaries in Great Britain one year after graduation in the 2019/20 tax year.

Table 2 in the appendix provides the GB rank and quartile banding for the median salaries for the last four years for each University of Aberdeen subject published in LEO data for one, three and five years after graduation.

Three years after graduation: Median salaries

Chart 6: LEO Data - Median Salary 2019/20 by Subject THREE Years After Graduation – University of Aberdeen (ordered by value)

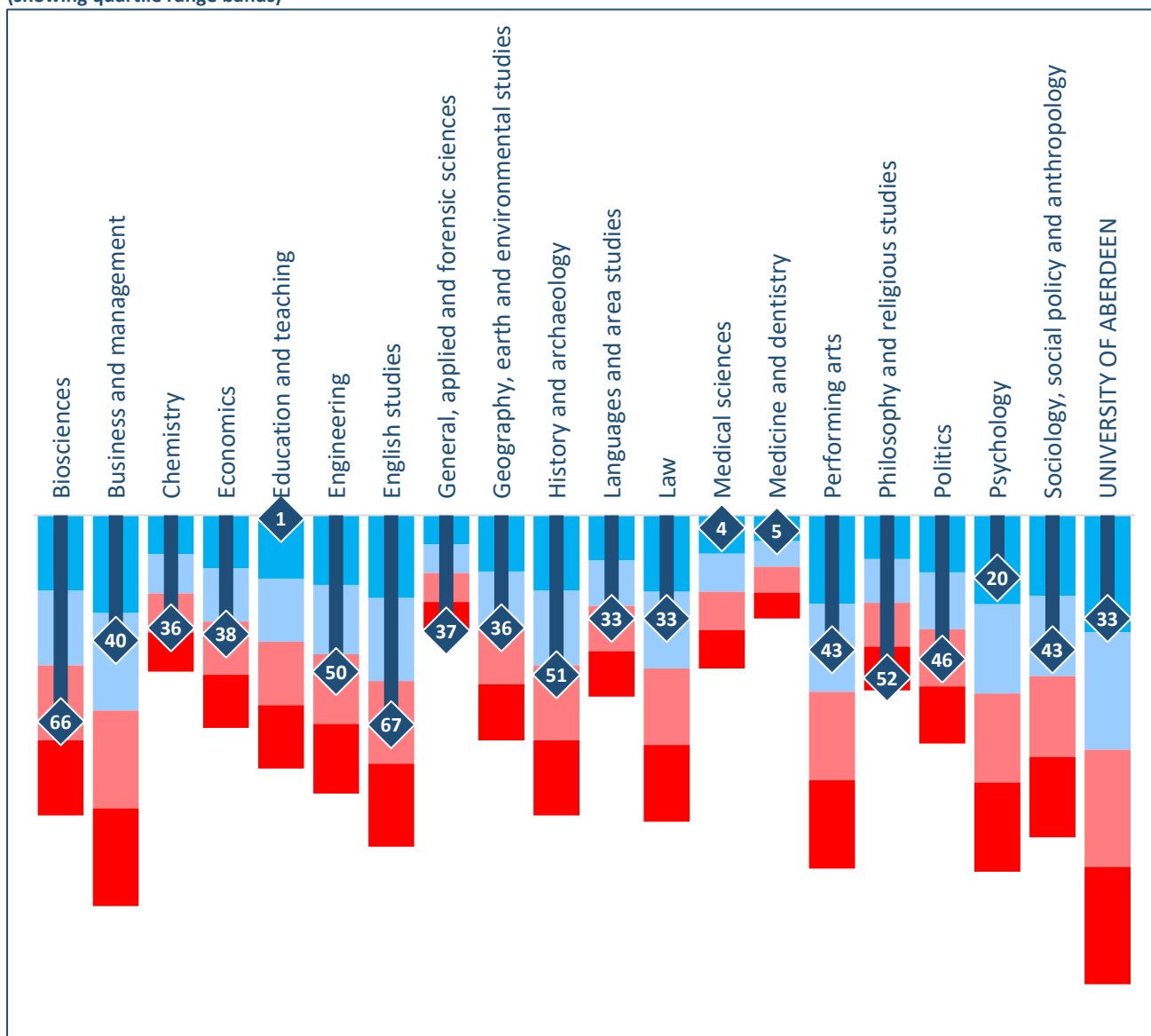


The chart above shows that graduates from Medicine and dentistry enjoy the highest median salaries three years after graduation at the University of Aberdeen, followed by graduates in Medical sciences with the second highest median salary three years after graduation in the 2019/20 tax year.

In addition to the above, University of Aberdeen graduates from Business and management, Chemistry, Economics, Education and teaching, Engineering, Geography, earth and environmental studies, and Law additionally had median salaries greater than £25,000 three years after graduation in the 2019/20 tax year.

Table 1 in the appendix provides the median salary values for the last four years for each University of Aberdeen subject published in LEO data for one, three and five years after graduation.

Chart 7: LEO Data - Median Salary 2019/20 by Subject THREE Years After Graduation – University of Aberdeen rank within GB (showing quartile range bands)



In Chart 7 above it may be observed that University of Aberdeen graduates have Top 10 median salaries three years after graduation in three subject areas for the 2019/20 tax year: Education and teaching, Medical sciences and Medicine and dentistry.

In addition to this we also have Psychology above the upper quartile mark for median salaries in Great Britain three years after graduation.

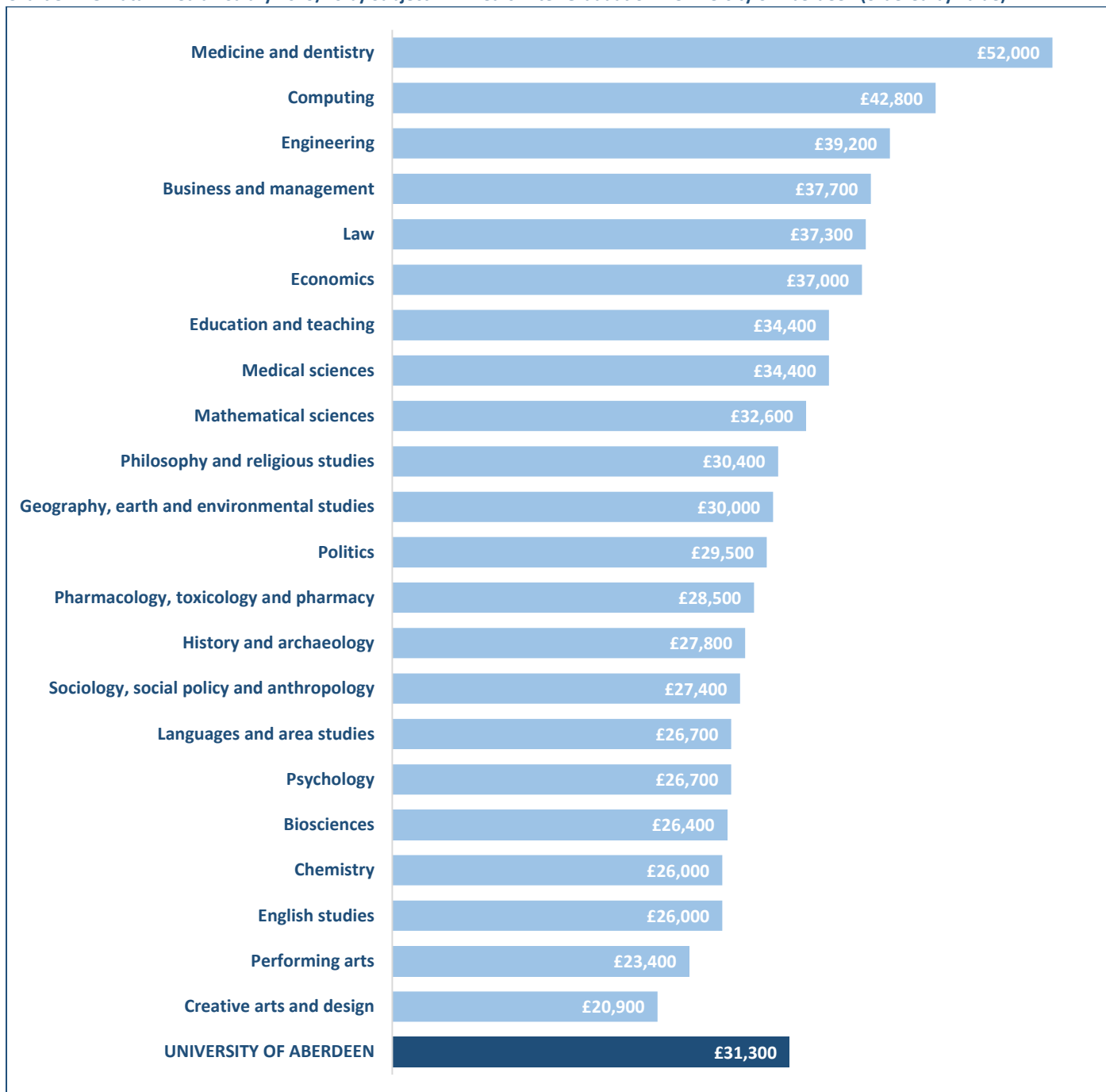
Overall, the University of Aberdeen is also in the top quartile banding for median salaries in Great Britain three years after graduation in the 2019/20 tax year with a ranking of 33rd.

Finally, Chemistry, General, applied and forensic sciences, and Philosophy and religious studies are each in the lowest quartile banding for median salaries by those subjects in Great Britain three years after graduation in the 2019/19 tax year.

Table 2 in the appendix provides the GB rank and quartile banding for the median salaries for the last four years for each University of Aberdeen subject published in LEO data for one, three and five years after graduation.

Five years after graduation: Median salaries

Chart 8: LEO Data - Median Salary 2019/20 by Subject FIVE Years After Graduation – University of Aberdeen (ordered by value)

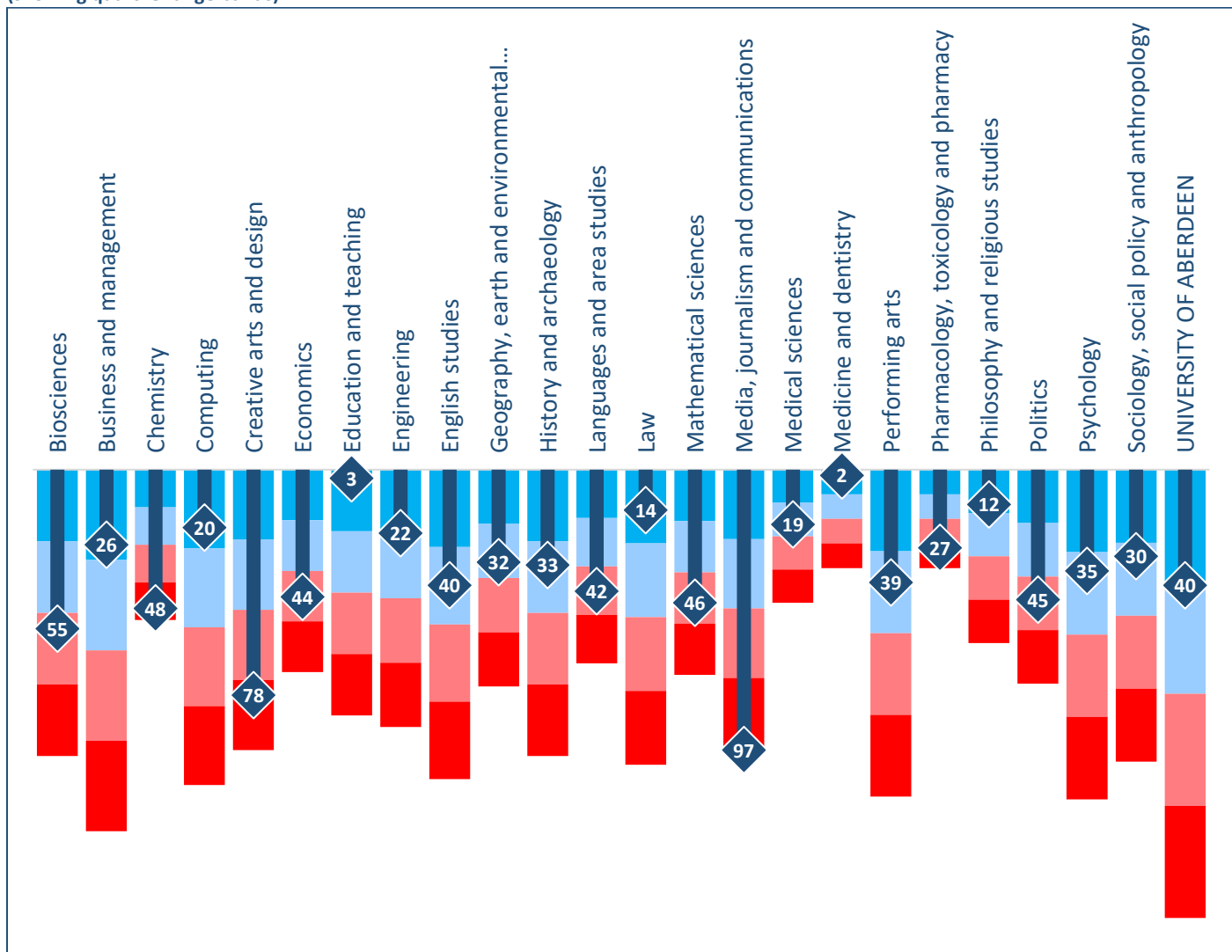


The chart above shows that graduates from Medicine and dentistry enjoy the highest median salaries five years after graduation at the University of Aberdeen, followed by graduates in Computing with the second highest median salary five years after graduation in the 2019/20 tax year.

In addition to the above, University of Aberdeen graduates from Business and management, Economics, Education and teaching, Engineering, Geography, earth and environmental studies, Law, Mathematical Studies, Medical Sciences, and Philosophy and religious studies additionally had median salaries equal to or greater than £30,000 five years after graduation in the 2019/20 tax year.

Table 1 in the appendix provides the median salary values for the last four years for each University of Aberdeen subject published in LEO data for one, three and five years after graduation.

Chart 9: LEO Data - Median Salary 2019/20 by Subject FIVE Years After Graduation – University of Aberdeen rank within GB (showing quartile range bands)



In Chart 9 above it may be observed that University of Aberdeen graduates have Top 10 median salaries five years after graduation in two subject areas for the 2019/20 tax year: Education and teaching and Medicine and dentistry.

In addition to this we also have Business and management, Computing, Engineering, Law and Philosophy and religious studies graduates above the upper quartile mark for median salaries in Great Britain five years after graduation.

Overall, the University of Aberdeen is also in the second quartile banding for median salaries in Great Britain five years after graduation in the 2019/20 tax year with a ranking of 40th.

Finally, two subject areas: Creative arts and design and Media, journalism, and communications in the lowest quartile banding for median salaries in Great Britain five years after graduation in the 2019/20 tax year.

Table 2 in the appendix provides the GB rank and quartile banding for the median salaries for the last four years for each University of Aberdeen subject published in LEO data for one, three and five years after graduation.

Median Salary: Gender Gap

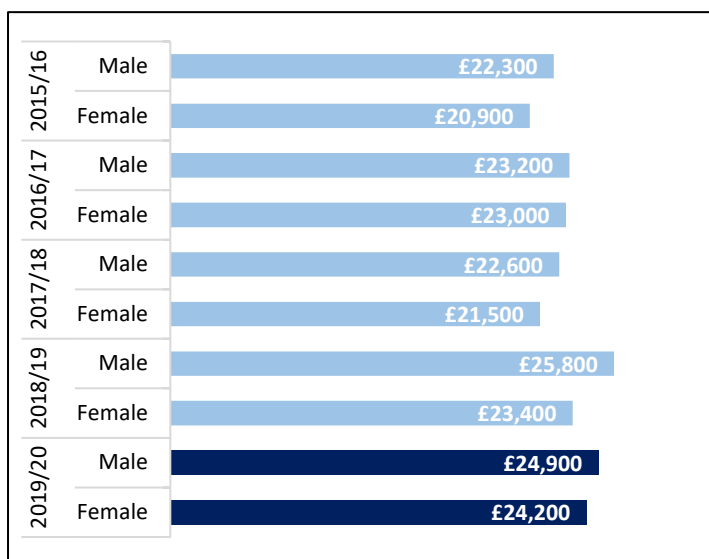


Chart 10: LEO Data - Median Salary by Gender – ONE Year After Graduation – University of Aberdeen

As can be seen the Chart 10, there is consistently a gender salary gap between male and female graduates one year after graduation in favour of male graduates. In the most recently available tax year, 2019/20, this gap amounts to a difference of £0.7k per annum. Over the last four years available, the difference was most pronounced in 2018/19 tax year where the difference was £2.4k per annum in favour of male graduates.

Subject data for 2019/20 is included in the appendix in Table 3

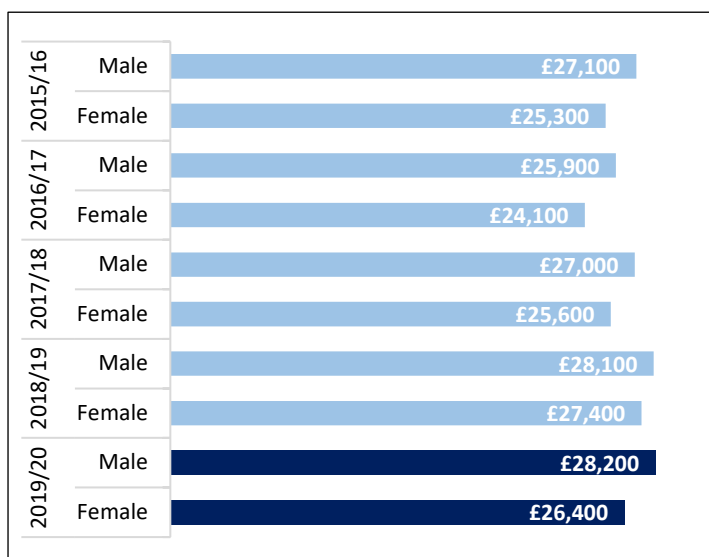


Chart 11: LEO Data - Median Salary by Gender – THREE Years After Graduation – University of Aberdeen

As can be observed in Chart 11, the gender gap for median salary in favour of male graduates is also evident in the data for graduate pay three years after graduation. In the most recently available tax year, 2019/20, this gap is £1.8k. Historically the gap has also been in this region for previous tax years.

Subject data for 2019/20 included in the appendix in Table 3

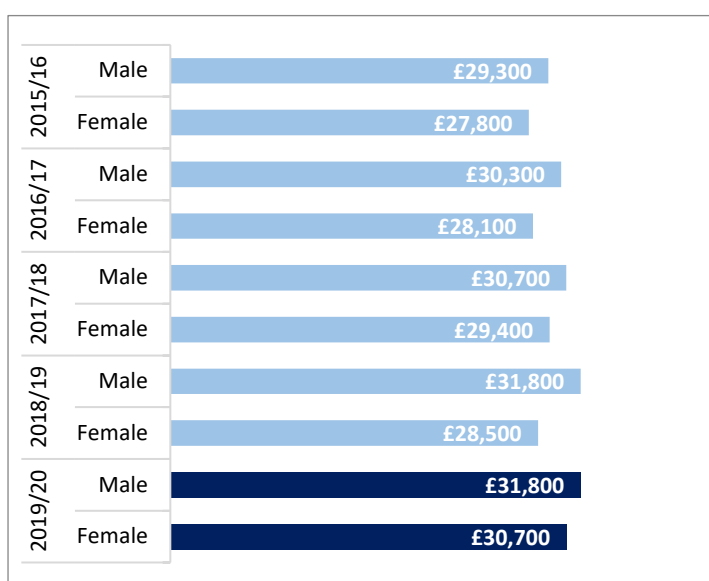


Chart 12: LEO Data - Median Salary by Gender – FIVE Years After Graduation – University of Aberdeen

As indicated in Chart 12, the gender gap for median salary in favour of male graduates is also evident in the data for graduate pay five years after graduation. In the most recently available tax year, 2019/20, this gap is £1.1k per annum. In the last three years, the gap has also been in this region (circa £1k) for previous tax years.

Subject data for 2019/20 is included in the appendix in Table 3.

APPENDIX

Table 1: University of Aberdeen Median Salaries by Tax Year and Subject with approximate mapping to UOA Schools for One, Three and Five Years after Graduation

School Approximation	SUBJECT	LEO Median Salary One Year After Graduation					LEO Median Salary Three Years After Graduation					LEO Median Salary Five Years After Graduation				
		Tax Year 2015/16	Tax Year 2016/17	Tax Year 2017/18	Tax Year 2018/19	Tax Year 2019/20	Tax Year 2015/16	Tax Year 2016/17	Tax Year 2017/18	Tax Year 2018/19	Tax Year 2019/20	Tax Year 2015/16	Tax Year 2016/17	Tax Year 2017/18	Tax Year 2018/19	Tax Year 2019/20
Business	Architecture, building and planning	£ 20,500					£ 27,800	£ 29,200				£ 31,100	£ 36,900	£ 38,500	£ 45,600	
	Business and management	£ 20,900	£ 21,200	£ 21,500	£ 21,900	£ 21,200	£ 26,700	£ 24,800	£ 28,800	£ 27,700	£ 28,700	£ 31,100	£ 30,300	£ 32,100	£ 33,600	£ 37,700
	Economics	£ 20,900	£ 20,400	£ 23,900	£ 22,300	£ 24,900	£ 27,100	£ 29,400	£ 25,600	£ 25,200	£ 30,400	£ 34,000	£ 35,400	£ 37,200	£ 35,800	£ 37,000
DHP	History and archaeology	£ 17,600	£ 19,000	£ 16,100	£ 17,900	£ 18,500	£ 21,600	£ 20,800	£ 22,600	£ 23,400	£ 22,700	£ 23,100	£ 23,700	£ 25,200	£ 25,900	£ 27,800
	Philosophy and religious studies	£ 15,400	£ 17,500	£ 13,500	£ 14,900	£ -	£ 19,600	£ 19,200	£ 23,000	£ 23,400	£ 19,400	£ 23,800	£ 24,100	£ 20,800	£ 25,200	£ 30,400
Education	Education and teaching	£ 23,100	£ 23,000	£ 23,400	£ 23,500	£ 27,800	£ 26,700	£ 26,600	£ 27,000	£ 27,400	£ 31,100	£ 29,600	£ 30,300	£ 30,700	£ 30,700	£ 34,400
Engineering	Engineering	£ 29,300	£ 26,300	£ 25,200	£ 27,000	£ 27,600	£ 42,100	£ 32,500	£ 33,600	£ 33,900	£ 31,500	£ 43,200	£ 45,600	£ 47,100	£ 36,500	£ 39,200
Geosciences	Geography, earth and environmental studies	£ 18,100	£ 18,200	£ 18,600	£ 19,000	£ 20,500	£ 26,000	£ 24,100	£ 24,800	£ 25,600	£ 25,600	£ 27,800	£ 27,400	£ 28,500	£ 28,800	£ 30,000
Law	Law	£ 19,400	£ 18,200	£ 17,000	£ 22,300	£ 20,500	£ 26,700	£ 24,800	£ 25,200	£ 27,000	£ 25,600	£ 32,900	£ 33,900	£ 35,800	£ 35,400	£ 37,300
LLMVC	Creative arts and design						£ 15,400		£ 26,100					£ 17,500		£ 20,900
	English studies	£ 17,600	£ 15,700	£ 16,800	£ 15,700	£ 17,600	£ 22,300	£ 20,800	£ 22,600	£ 22,600	£ 21,200	£ 23,100	£ 20,400	£ 24,100	£ 23,000	£ 26,000
	Languages and area studies	£ 17,600	£ 19,300	£ 19,300	£ 19,700	£ -	£ 23,800	£ 22,600	£ 21,500	£ 23,700	£ 24,500	£ 24,300	£ 25,600	£ 24,100	£ 25,900	£ 26,700
	Performing arts	£ 16,100	£ 14,600	£ 17,500	£ 19,000	£ 16,800	£ 19,400	£ 17,400	£ 20,400	£ 20,800	£ 20,100	£ 23,800	£ 19,700	£ 21,900	£ 25,900	£ 23,400
MMSN	Medical sciences					£ 13,900	£ 17,900	£ 21,900	£ 28,500	£ 39,800	£ 35,900	£ 27,800	£ 26,300	£ 28,500	£ 28,800	£ 34,400
	Medicine and dentistry	£ 37,700	£ 38,700	£ 38,700	£ 39,800	£ 40,600	£ 44,700	£ 44,500	£ 44,900	£ 46,700	£ 47,600	£ 49,400	£ 52,400	£ 50,400	£ 49,300	£ 52,000
	Sport and exercise sciences						£ 23,800	£ 18,100		£ 25,600		£ 23,800	£ 27,900	£ 25,500	£ 25,600	
NCS	Chemistry		£ 19,700	£ 22,600	£ 21,200		£ 29,600			£ 25,900	£ 25,300			£ 28,800	£ 30,300	£ 26,000
	Computing	£ 24,700	£ 29,600				£ 26,400	£ 35,000	£ 28,700			£ 27,400		£ 32,800	£ 41,600	£ 42,800
	Mathematical sciences							£ 24,800	£ 26,600					£ 32,800	£ 32,600	
Psychology	Psychology	£ 17,200	£ 17,500	£ 16,400	£ 16,100	£ 17,200	£ 20,900	£ 21,200	£ 21,200	£ 24,800	£ 24,900	£ 23,100	£ 25,200	£ 25,200	£ 24,800	£ 26,700
SBS	Biosciences	£ 15,000	£ 15,000	£ 15,000	£ 18,600	£ 16,500	£ 20,100	£ 23,000	£ 22,600	£ 25,200	£ 22,700	£ 22,700	£ 21,200	£ 23,400	£ 28,100	£ 26,400
Social Science	General, applied and forensic sciences										£ 19,400					
	Politics	£ 18,400	£ 18,600	£ 17,500	£ 19,700	£ 18,300	£ 24,900	£ 23,000	£ 23,000	£ 25,900	£ 24,500	£ 24,500	£ 27,000	£ 29,600	£ 27,000	£ 29,500
	Sociology, social policy and anthropology	£ 15,400	£ 13,700	£ 15,300		£ 16,500	£ 21,800	£ 20,400	£ 20,800	£ 20,100	£ 23,400	£ 19,400	£ 24,800	£ 24,500	£ 23,700	£ 27,400
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN		£ 21,200	£ 23,000	£ 22,300	£ 24,100	£ 24,200	£ 26,000	£ 24,800	£ 25,900	£ 27,400	£ 27,400	£ 28,500	£ 28,800	£ 29,900	£ 30,300	£ 31,300

Table 2: University of Aberdeen GB Ranking position for Median Salaries by Tax Year and Subject with approximate mapping to UOA Schools for One, Three and Five Years after Graduation

School Approximation	SUBJECT	LEO Median Salary One Year After Graduation					LEO Median Salary Three Years After Graduation					LEO Median Salary Five Years After Graduation				
		GB HEI position 2015/16	GB HEI position 2016/17	GB HEI position 2017/18	GB HEI position 2018/19	GB HEI position 2019/20	GB HEI position 2015/16	GB HEI position 2016/17	GB HEI position 2017/18	GB HEI position 2018/19	GB HEI position 2019/20	GB HEI position 2015/16	GB HEI position 2016/17	GB HEI position 2017/18	GB HEI position 2018/19	GB HEI position 2019/20
Business	Architecture, building and planning						30	24				21	8	9	5	
	Business and management	34	41	46	41	73	36	49	31	43	40	32	40	45	41	26
	Economics	47	56	33	48	34	35	31	57	60	38	27	30	27	39	44
DHP	History and archaeology	27	34	67	43	50	35	47	41	37	51	43	42	39	42	33
	Philosophy and religious studies	43	23	45	51		40	45	27	30	52	32	29	50	30	12
Education	Education and teaching	6	3	2	4	2	2	3	4	3	1	6	3	3	4	3
Engineering	Engineering	9	45	59	40	44	2	19	16	19	50	3	2	1	37	22
Geosciences	Geography, earth and environmental studies	37	42	39	48	38	13	27	33	29	36	20	26	25	26	32
Law	Law	16	39	71	11	34	12	22	33	26	33	11	15	12	15	14
LLMVC	Creative arts and design						82		2					90		78
	English studies	21	61	30	81	60	27	47	30	41	67	43	76	44	64	40
	Languages and area studies	41	23	39	32		29	36	51	37	33	38	34	46	39	42
	Performing arts	8	34	5	4	19	26	50	30	24	43	55	57	38	17	39
MMSN	Medical sciences					46	47	43	25	1	4	30	41	37	35	19
	Medicine and dentistry	1	1	2	2	2	1	3	13	6	5	2	2	7	17	2
	Sport and exercise sciences						9	74		6		28	8	24	29	
NCS	Chemistry		33	12	35		4			23	36			19	17	48
	Computing	32	14				48	12	47			55		49	17	20
	Mathematical sciences							56	44						36	46
Psychology	Psychology	25	41	65	93	80	27	49	48	14	20	44	27	34	47	35
SBS	Biosciences	89	83	88	49	87	52	22	44	21	66	55	71	59	23	55
Social Science	General, applied and forensic sciences										37					
	Politics	34	40	53	41	57	27	40	53	30	46	43	34	27	49	45
	Sociology, social policy and anthropology	71	89	97	105	94	27	52	57	82	43	69	28	40	59	30
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN		31	21	29	18	24	27	39	38	31	33	30	31	30	34	40

Above Upper Quartile
 Between Median and Upper Quartile
 Between Lower Quartile and Median
 Below Lower Quartile

Table 3: LEO Data - median salary by subject and gender for tax year 2019/2020, by year after graduation (only includes subjects where a value for both male and female graduates have been given)

Subject	Gender	1 YAG	2 YAG	3 YAG
Biosciences	Female	£19,000	£22,000	£25,600
	Male	£15,200	£26,000	£26,400
Business and management	Female	£21,000	£28,200	£37,300
	Male	£22,300	£28,900	£39,200
Computing	Female	--	--	--
	Male	--	--	£45,400
Economics	Female	--	--	--
	Male	--	£31,100	£33,300
Education and teaching	Female	£27,800	£31,100	£34,000
	Male	£27,800	£34,400	£37,100
Engineering	Female	£43,600	£32,600	£39,300
	Male	£27,400	£31,500	£39,200
English studies	Female	£18,300	£21,400	£26,000
	Male	--	£21,200	£25,300
General, applied and forensic sciences	Female	--	--	--
	Male	--	--	--
Geography, earth and environmental studies	Female	£19,600	£25,300	£31,700
	Male	£22,700	£25,600	£27,800
History and archaeology	Female	£17,800	£22,700	£24,900
	Male	£19,200	£21,600	£28,500
Languages and area studies	Female	--	£24,900	£26,000
	Male	--	--	--
Law	Female	£20,900	£24,900	£35,300
	Male	--	£27,400	£39,500
Medical sciences	Female	--	£29,300	£34,800
	Male	--	£38,800	£33,300
Medicine and dentistry	Female	£40,600	£46,800	£51,100
	Male	£41,000	£47,900	£54,500
Performing arts	Female	--	£21,000	£24,900
	Male	--	£19,000	--
Pharmacology, toxicology and pharmacy	Female	--	--	£28,900
	Male	--	--	--
Philosophy and religious studies	Female	--	--	£22,000
	Male	--	--	£31,500
Politics	Female	£17,900	£23,800	£28,500
	Male	--	£25,300	£31,100
Psychology	Female	£17,600	£24,300	£27,100
	Male	--	--	£23,800
Sociology, social policy and anthropology	Female	£14,600	£23,100	£28,200
	Male	--	--	£26,700

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

PROPOSED REINSTATEMENT OF EXTERNAL SURVEYS

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper is about the reinstatement of student surveys provided by external organisations.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	SSEC	5 December 2022
Further consideration/ approval required by	UEC	

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The UEC is invited to note the paper, the recommendation of SSEC (see 9.1) and to provide a view on the points raised in 9.2 regarding future possible operational matters.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1.1 Information is at the heart of informing the academic and pastoral support and experience UoA provides to students. Survey fatigue has, however, been considered a challenge for many years. The issue compelled the former Student Survey Working Group (SSWG) to reduce the number of surveys (internal and external) aimed at students, and to identify alternative ways to capture student feedback.

4.1.2 The SSWG agreed that all surveys targeting large groups of students, such as entire years or larger, required approval before proceeding.

4.1.2 This led to a reduction in the number of surveys, with the National Student Survey (NSS) remaining in place, and the creation of the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (ASES).

4.1.3 The NSS captures final year undergraduate student views on predominantly academic related matters. At present, UoA is not part of any large-scale survey regarding postgraduate taught students.

4.1.4 The ASES captures all student views, some of which are academic related, but most are non-academic such as University systems, facilities, professional services, and overall experience related.

4.1.5 The NSS is a valuable source of information about our undergraduate students and a benchmarking tool. Having similar information in respect of PGT students could complement the ASES and further inform our decision making regarding the academic and wider student experience and support which we provide to PGT students. The next part of the paper explores some possibilities.

5. Postgraduate **External Survey Possibilities**

5.1.1 The **Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)** is designed to gather information about the experience of any PGT student on a Masters, Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma course. The PTES is delivered by Advance HE, a member-led, sector-owned charity that works with institutions and higher education across the world to improve higher education for staff, students and society.

PTES aims to help us better understand the PGT students' experience in the key areas of:

- Teaching and learning
- Engagement
- Assessment and feedback
- Organisation and management
- Skills development

PTES also considers students' motivations for taking their programme and – where relevant – their experience of undertaking a dissertation or major project. PTES was developed in consultation with the sector and tested across diverse disciplines, institutions and student.

Data from the PTES would allow us to compare UoA PGT provision against others in the sector at both a discipline and institution level. This information can be used to identify areas of strength, as well as to address areas for development - increasing the appeal of programmes and the information we provide to prospective students.

PTES supports us to:

- gain valuable data to inform enhancements to the experience of PGT students
- benchmark UoA provision against others, while all results remain confidential
- tailor the survey by adding our own questions

PTES also provide support for survey delivery, analysis and use of the survey for enhancement.

5.1.3 The **International Student Barometer (ISB)** aims to gather information on the student experience both in and outside the classroom environment and produces results data that helps to inform future policy and practice at a university and national level.

The default survey covers international students only. It surveys currently enrolled EU & international students, including study abroad and exchange students at all years and levels of study (but not including students studying offshore at overseas campuses or English language preparatory courses, who complete separate surveys). Survey coverage can be upgraded to also capture domestic students.

It is a confidential and comparative feedback process for education providers and governments. i-graduate is the company that manages the survey process from planning to reporting.

The scope of the questionnaire covers the following:

1. Arrival and orientation – e.g. the welcome experience, orientation, accommodation.
2. Learning experience – e.g. lecturers, course content, facilities, employability
3. Living experience – e.g. accommodation, friends, part time work, safety
4. Support services – e.g. health, disability, employment, counselling, accommodation
5. Value for money
6. Decision making – influences, motivations, and importance*
7. Application – route, use of agents, service levels*
8. Visas – type, application, support*
9. Enquiry to acceptance – service and timings
10. Happiness and Wellbeing
11. Employment and careers support expectations and service levels
12. Demographics
13. Course – e.g. main area of study, mode of study, course title level
14. Recommendation
15. Future plans and career intentions*
16. Institutional response to Covid-19*
17. Inclusivity*
18. Derived Importance – identifying those elements that have the strongest link to recommendation.

* These questions are optional and can be included or excluded.

6. Costs

6.1.1 PTES - £2500 (No VAT)

This includes participation in any or all of PTES, Post Graduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) & UK Engagement Survey (UKES).

Jisc Online Survey Package - £1690 + VAT

Total estimated cost £4190 + part VAT

6.1.2 ISB - £7800

£6000 to add domestic students.

£4500 of optional extras available, some of which make the survey more user friendly with preloaded data and others relate to reporting results.

Total estimated cost £18300 + VAT

7. Timelines

7.1.1 **PTES** - The survey windows begin on 1 February and must be run for at least 3 weeks before close in Mid-June.

7.1.2 **ISB** - Clashes with new student ASES and would be close to, or clash with, returning student version.

Registration	By 4th November 2022
First survey launch	22nd September 2022
Last survey launch	24th November 2022
All surveys close	19th December 2022
Initial reporting	3 weeks after survey closes
Full reporting	February 2023 onwards

8. Recommendations

8.1.1 Reinstatement of the PTES. This will allow us to capture valuable PGT specific student data which we have not gathered for several years. There is no budget currently available for this, funds will need to be requested centrally.

8.1.2 Do not reinstate ISB as this overlaps with the ASES. Continue to monitor the feedback captured through the ASES to ensure that we gather data relevant to the overall student experience and that appropriate outcomes are actioned and reported to the University community.

9 Updates

9.1 SSEC recommended that the PTES is reinstated. It was noted that the fee for the survey (see 6.1.1) included the Post Graduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). The PGR Policy Committee met and discussed this and support the use of PRES.

9.2 Discussions have begun regarding internal responsibility for the operation of the PTES if it is put in place, regarding promotion, management and actions in response to the results. These discussions need to be completed, budget found (see 8.1.1) and decisions made on future governance of the PTES.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Duncan Stuart, Head of Student Experience d.stuart@abdn.ac.uk and Jason Bohan, Dean of Student Support jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk

21 December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT ATTAINMENT REPORT 2022

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This report provides an overview of postgraduate taught (PGT) attainment at the University of Aberdeen. For this purpose, a metric has been devised using HESA student collection data to measure the percentage of postgraduate taught (PGT) students who qualify in a timely manner after the commencement of their programme of study.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	SMT	tbc
Further consideration/ approval required by	University Education Committee	16 January 2023
	Student Support Committee	tbc

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The paper is provided for information and discussion on the next steps.

4. OVERVIEW

- 4.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide analysis of postgraduate taught (PGT) attainment at the University of Aberdeen. The metric used to describe Master's attainment is described; an executive summary of the analysis is provided; and next steps are noted.
- 4.2 Analysis of undergraduate student completion data is provided on an annual basis. It is planned now to provide annual reporting on PGT attainment. With the growing PGT student population, and the changing distribution of PGT students across the September and January intakes, it is important that we understand this aspect of the student experience so that actions can be taken to address any areas of concern.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 contains the full 2022 report on Postgraduate Taught Attainment. Data has been analysed at School and institutional levels by: intake period; domicile; gender; ethnicity; disability status; age. In the report's appendix, reasons for ending data are provided.
- 4.4 With respect to the reasons for ending data, the largest category is 'no data or unknown' (likely due to those who have formally extended their programme of study, or those who have left without informing the university). 'Other personal reasons' and 'health reasons' are the two other largest categories. This pattern is consistent across the timeframe of the reporting periods. (Please note that we will not have the reasons for ending for Master's 2021/22 cohorts until we have the 2022/23 HESA data return in November 2023 because the 2021/22 entrants have an end date in the 2022/23 academic year).

5. METRIC

- 5.1 The precise Master's Attainment metric definition used is the percentage of full-time on-campus PGT students who are on a 12-month programme of study where the qualification aim is a taught Master's degree and who then qualify within 18 months of the commencement of their studies.

To calculate this metric the HESA Student Collection population for any given academic year was narrowed down to those PGT students with an in-year commencement date who were indicated as being full-time on-campus on a programme with an indicated length of 12 months and a qualification aim equal to a postgraduate taught Master's degree. The outcome for these students was then taken from the HESA Student Collection in the following academic year (or in the same year should the student have ended their instance early). Those who obtained a Master's degree qualification within 18 months of their commencement date were deemed to have a positive outcome.

- 5.2 Due to the School of Education having no qualifying Master's programmes which meet the criteria for inclusion in this metric an alternative metric (PGDE Attainment) has additionally been devised for reporting on PGT Attainment in the School of Education. In this case the HESA Student Collection population for any given year was narrowed down to those PGT students with an in-year commencement date who were indicated as being full-time on-campus on a programme with an indicated length of 10 months and a qualification aim equal to a Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). Those who obtained a PGDE within 12 months of their commencement date were deemed to have a positive outcome. Due to the typical August commencement of a PGDE programme the outcome for the programme was considered within the same academic year.

6. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- 6.1 There was a sharp decline in Master's Attainment levels for the 2020/21 cohort, and this was reflected across most Schools.
- 6.2 Master's students who commenced their studies in September are more likely to have successfully achieved a Master's qualification after 18 months than their January counterparts. This was not always the case – for 2016/17 and 2017/18 cohorts the attainment gap was reversed. However, from the 2018/19 cohorts onwards the September intake became more likely to attain a Master's degree within the time period than the January intake with a widening attainment gap in subsequent years. This gap has been circa three percentage points for 2019/20 and 2020/21 cohorts.
- 6.3 Master's students from international domiciles are more likely to have successfully achieved a Master's qualification after 18 months than their UK-domiciled counterparts. This is consistent across all recent years and reflected in most Schools.
- 6.4 Master's students who are female are more likely to have successfully achieved a Master's qualification after 18 months than their male counterparts. This has been consistent across all recent years. However, the School picture is more mixed.
- 6.5 Comparing attainment rates for UK-domiciled students on basis of ethnicity provides a mixed picture, although the numbers of UK-domiciled students from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background is relatively small.
- 6.6 Master's students who are not disabled are more likely to have successfully achieved a Master's qualification after 18 months than their disabled counterparts. This has been consistent across all recent years. Due to low numbers at School level the picture is more mixed.
- 6.7 Master's students who are young are more likely to have successfully achieved a Master's qualification after 18 months than their mature counterparts. This is consistent across all recent years and reflected in most Schools.
- 6.8 The patterns summarised above for Master's Attainment are also evident for PGDE Attainment in the School of Education, although there is no January intake for the PGDE students.
- 6.9 Additionally, for PGDE Attainment there it is evident that PGDE students who are white have a higher attainment rate than their BAME counterparts.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 The report will be discussed at the Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC). SSEC will develop an action plan to address concerns. Students will be involved in the development of the action plan. It is likely that the action plan will include:
- 7.1.1 Analysis of students who commence their studies later than the start of Welcome Week. Further investigation is required to determine if it is possible to identify these students.
 - 7.1.2 Review of orientation and induction to determine if additional or different content could support students better, particularly in relation to January intake students.
 - 7.1.3 The ongoing Pastoral Support Review and finalising the approach to supporting PGT students.
 - 7.1.4 School-based action planning given that the picture differs across Schools.
 - 7.1.5 Sharing of good practice, through the SSEC and Directors of Education, in supporting PGT student success.
 - 7.1.6 Discussion of aspects of the existing continuation action plan (for UG students) which could usefully be put in place for PGT students, particularly in relation to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students.
 - 7.1.7 Exploration of support provided for students with disabilities to determine if additional support is required.
- 7.2 UEC is asked to discuss the analysis of PGT attainment and approve the proposed next steps.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk) and Chris Souter, Head of Data and Business Intelligence (chris.souter@abdn.ac.uk).

20 December 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Closed*

Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Attainment 2022 Report

Analysis by the Directorate of Planning

8th December 2022

Background & Summary Methodology

Master's Attainment is a metric devised by the Directorate of Planning & Governance using HESA Student Collection data to measure the percentage of postgraduate taught (PGT) students who qualify in a timely manner after the commencement of their programme of study.

The precise metric definition used is the percentage of full-time on-campus PGT students who are on a 12-month programme of study where the qualification aim is a taught Master's degree who then qualify within 18 months of the commencement of their studies. To calculate this metric the HESA Student Collection population for any given academic year was narrowed down to those PGT students with an in-year commencement date who were indicated as being full-time on-campus on a programme with an indicated length of 12 months and a qualification aim equal to a postgraduate taught Master's degree. The outcome for these students was then taken from the HESA Student Collection in the *following* academic year (or in the same year should the student have ended their instance early). Those who obtained a Master's degree qualification within 18 months of their commencement date were deemed to have a positive outcome.

Due to the School of Education having no qualifying Master's programmes which meet the criteria for inclusion in this metric an alternative metric (**PGDE Attainment**) has additionally been devised for reporting on PGT Attainment in the School of Education. In this case the HESA Student Collection population for any given year was narrowed down to those PGT students with an in-year commencement date who were indicated as being full-time on-campus on a programme with an indicated length of 10 months and a qualification aim equal to a Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). Those who obtained a PGDE within 12 months of their commencement date were deemed to have a positive outcome. Due to the typical August commencement of a PGDE programme the outcome for the programme was considered within the same academic year.

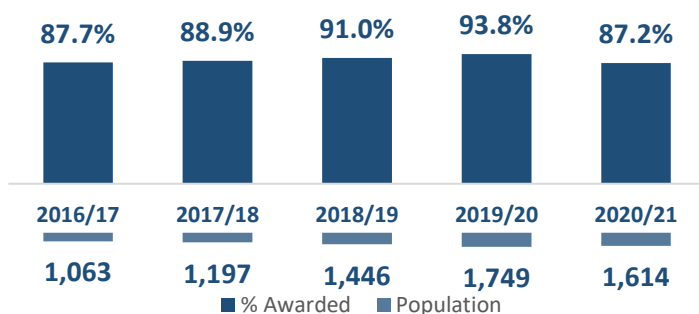
In all cases the academic year referred to represents the year in which the programme of study commenced.

Master's Attainment: overall

Master's Attainment 2020/21 Cohorts

87.2%  (down from 93.8%)

Chart 1: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2020/21



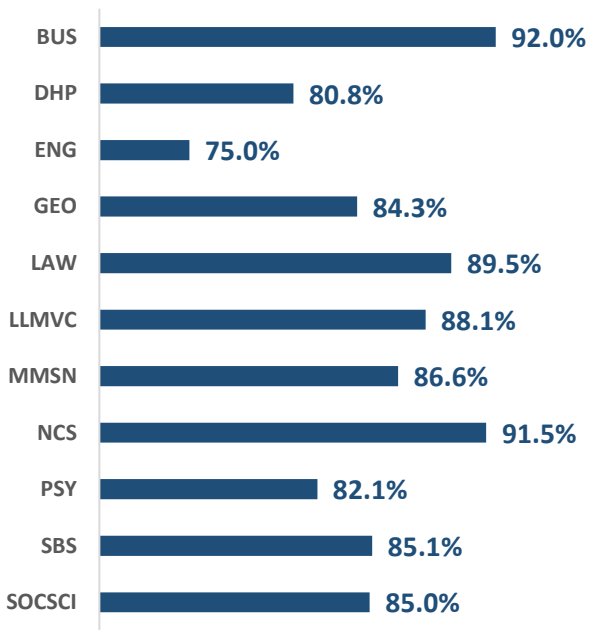
The University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rate had been steadily increasing in recent years, from 87.7% for the 2016/17 cohort to 93.8% for the 2019/20 cohort. However, this has now decreased to 87.2% for the 2020/21 cohort, which the lowest rate of attainment in recent years.

Analysis of the outcomes from the **Master's Attainment** metric reveal several patterns in the data that form a consistent pattern and provide prompts for further investigation and interventions:

1. There was a sharp decline in Master's Attainment levels for the 2020/21 cohort, and this was reflected across most Schools
2. Master's students who commence their studies in September are more likely to have successfully achieved a Master's qualification after 18 months than their January counterparts. This was not always the case – for 2016/17 and 2017/18 cohorts the attainment gap was reversed. However, from the 2018/19 cohorts onwards the September intake became more likely to attain a Master's degree within the time period than the January intake with a widening attainment gap in subsequent years. This gap has been circa three percentage points for 2019/20 and 2020/21 cohorts.
3. Master's students from international domiciles are more likely to have successfully achieved a Master's qualification after 18 months than their UK-domiciled counterparts. This is consistent across all recent years and reflected in most Schools.
4. Master's students who are female are more likely to have successfully achieved a Master's qualification after 18 months than their male counterparts. This has been consistent across all recent years. However, the School picture is more mixed.
5. Comparing attainment rates for UK-domiciled students on basis of ethnicity provides a mixed picture, although the numbers of UK-domiciled students from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background is relatively small.
6. Master's students who are not disabled are more likely to have successfully achieved a Master's qualification after 18 months than their disabled counterparts. This has been consistent across all recent years. Due to low numbers at School level the picture is more mixed.
7. Master's students who are young are more likely to have successfully achieved a Master's qualification after 18 months than their mature counterparts. This is consistent across all recent years and reflected in the majority of Schools.
8. The patterns summarised above for Master's Attainment are also evident for PGDE Attainment in the School of Education, although there is no January intake for the PGDE students.
9. Additionally for PGDE Attainment there it is evident that PGDE students who are white have a higher attainment rate than their BAME counterparts.
10. An alternative metric based around attainment after 13 months was originally considered, but disruption during the Covid-19 pandemic led to delays in attainment. However consideration of this alternative metric does suggest that a higher proportion of January students have to undertake further assessment beyond one year in order to successfully complete their Master's degree programme.

Master's Attainment: by School

Chart 2: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2020/21 by School



At a School level (Chart 2) the highest Master's Attainment rate for 2020/21 is observed to be in the Business School at 92.0%, which is ahead of the School of Natural and Computing Sciences at 91.5%.

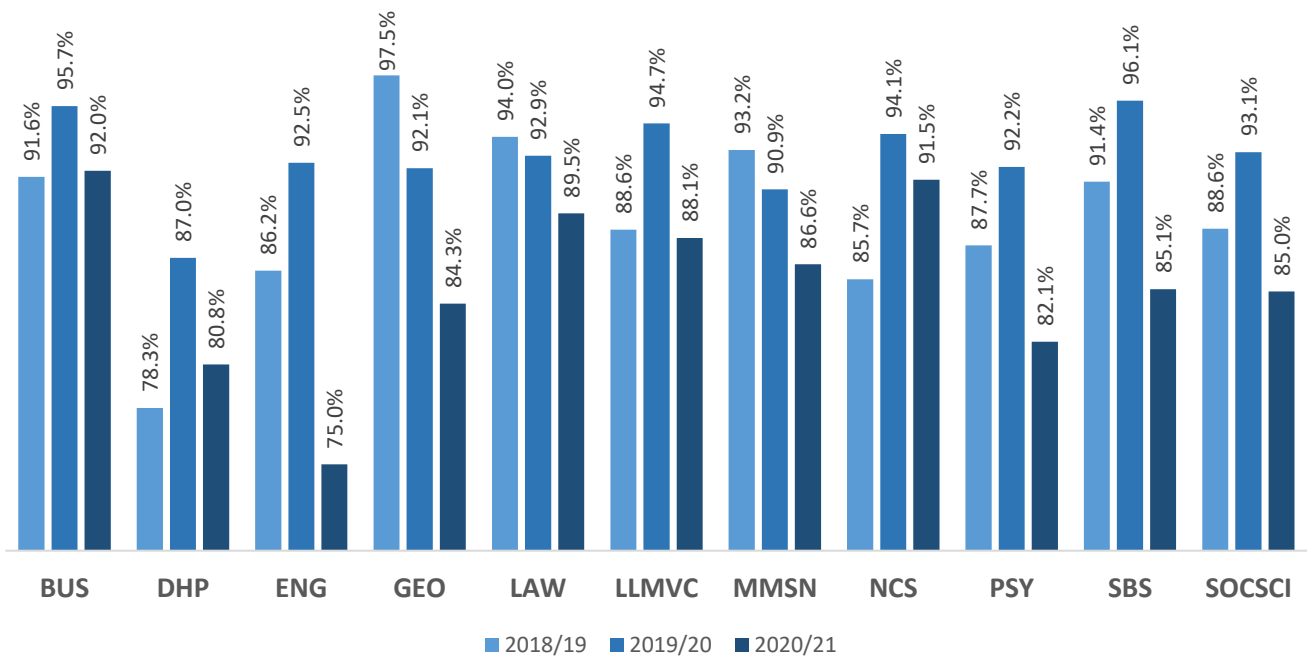
These two schools are the only to have Master's Attainment rates higher than 90% for the 2020/21 cohort, with eight of the remaining nine schools considered having Master's Attainment rates in the 80-90% range. The School of Engineering is an outlier amongst the Schools, with a Master's Attainment rate of 75.0% for the 2020/21 cohort.

Looking back across the three most recent years in Chart 3 suggests variability in the School Master's Attainment rates with most Schools showing the highest Master's Attainment rates for the 2019/20 cohort, which reflects

the overall institutional position.

Notable differences in performance between years include that for the School of Engineering with the 2019/20 cohort having a Master's Attainment rate of 92.5% in contrast to the Master's Attainment rate of 75.0% for the 2020/21 cohort, which is a drop of 17.5 percentage points in Master's Attainment. Other Schools with drops greater than five percentage points in the Master's Attainment rate between 2019/20 and 2020/21 are: DHP (-6.2pp), GEO (-7.8pp), LLMVC (-6.6pp), PSY (-10.1pp), SBS (-10.9pp), and SOCSCI (-8.1pp). The remaining Schools also show a decline in 2020/21, albeit more marginal.

Chart 3: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2018/19 to 2020/21 by School



Master's Attainment: by intake period

Definitions for intake:

- **September:** commencement date August to December inclusive (September in most cases)
- **January:** commencement date January to July inclusive (January in most cases)

Chart 4: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2020/21 by intake period with student population

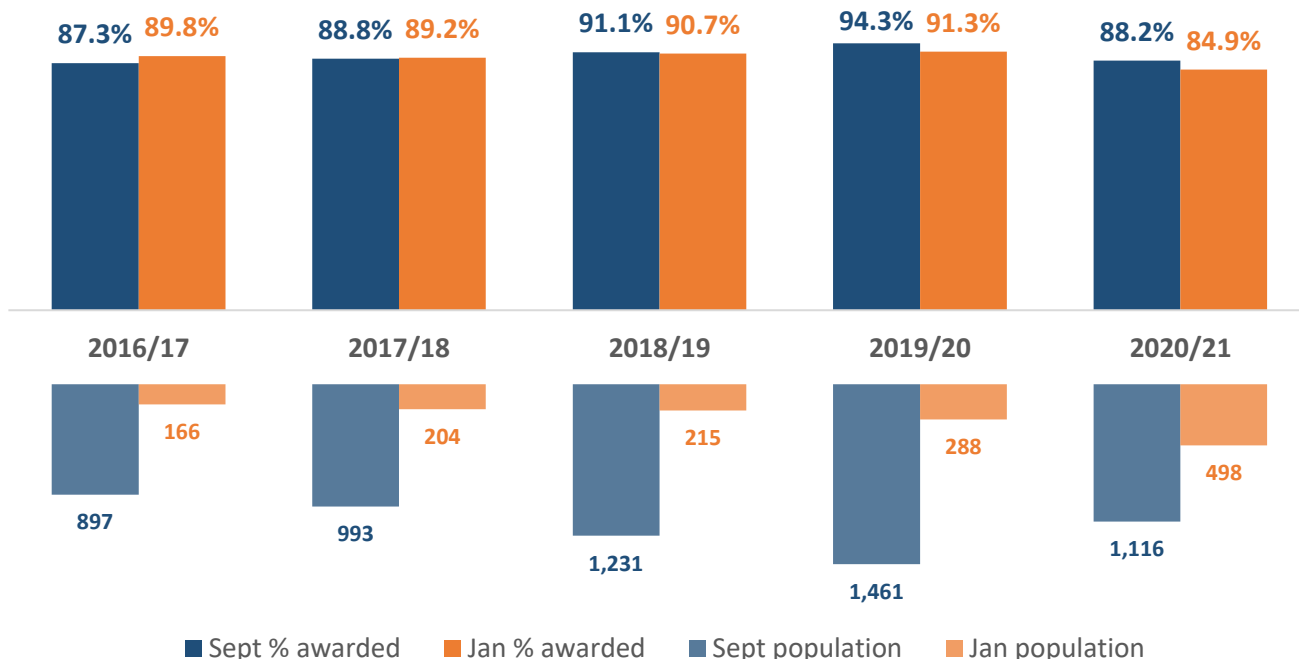


Chart 4 above demonstrates the movement in Master's Attainment rates for September and January intake cohorts across a five year period from the 2016/17 cohort to the 2020/21 cohort.

As can be seen in this chart, the Master's Attainment rate for the January intake was formerly slightly ahead of that for the September intake, but has steadily been moving behind beginning with the 2018/19 cohort, with the attainment gap now 3.4%, which is the highest across the years.

Chart 4 also below shows that the size of the January intake population has been increasing steadily across the five years and may be a factor in the Master's Attainment rate falling behind that of the September intake. The increasing numbers of students and falling Master's Attainment rate mean that the numbers of students failing to attain their Master's degree within 18 months is increasing considerably.

Note: Late starts are included with the main intake population in both cases. There were few students with commencement dates not equal to September or January. It is unclear from the HESA data if there are genuinely very few late starts, or if they typically have their entry date back-dated to what it should have been originally.

Chart 5: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2020/21 by intake period with student population

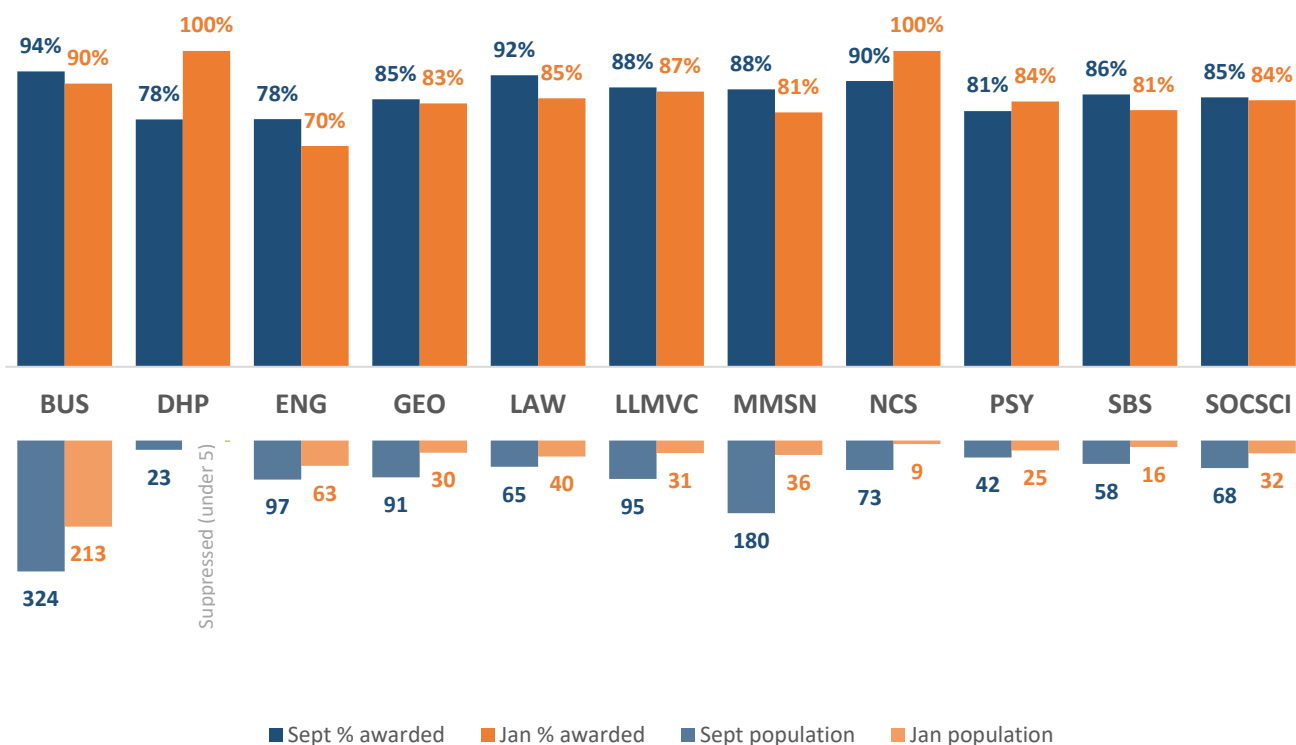


Chart 5, above, breaks down the 2020/21 Master's Attainment rates for intake by School, and it can be seen that almost every School has lower Master's Attainment rates for the January intake in comparison to the September intake. With the three Schools that show a higher Master's Attainment rate for the January intake, two of these have less than ten students in the January intake population, with only the School of Psychology having more than ten students from the January intake.

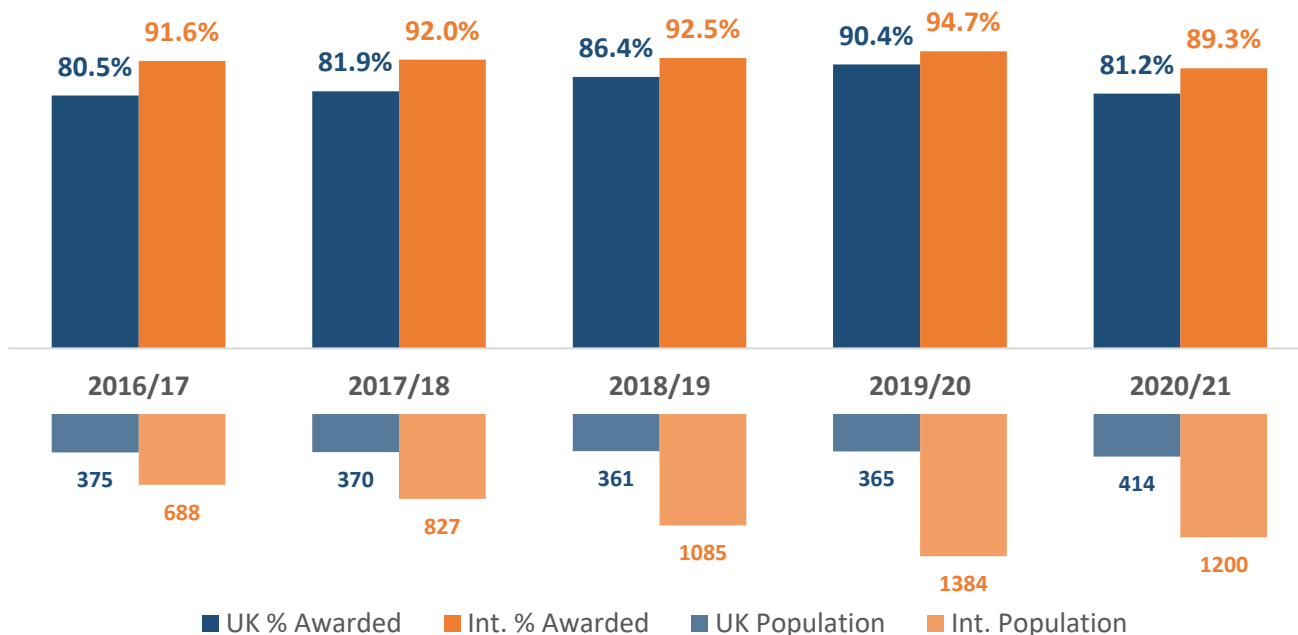
The attainment gap between September and January intakes is particularly evident in the School of Engineering (8 percentage points), the School of Law (7 percentage points) and the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition (7 percentage points).

University of Aberdeen: by domicile

Definitions for domicile:

- **UK:** domicile is Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or Isle of Man
- **International:** domicile is any other country

Chart 6: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2017/18 to 2020/21 by student domicile with student population



As can be seen in Chart 6 above the Master's Attainment rate for International students is consistently higher than for UK-domiciled students. The attainment gap had been narrowing from over 10 percentage points for 2016/17 and 2017/18 cohorts down to just over four percentage points for the 2019/20 cohort. However, this widened again to over eight percentage points for the 2020/21 cohort.

It can also be observed that the population of International students studying for Master's degrees is far higher than that for UK-domiciled students.

Chart 7: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2020/21 by student domicile by School with student population

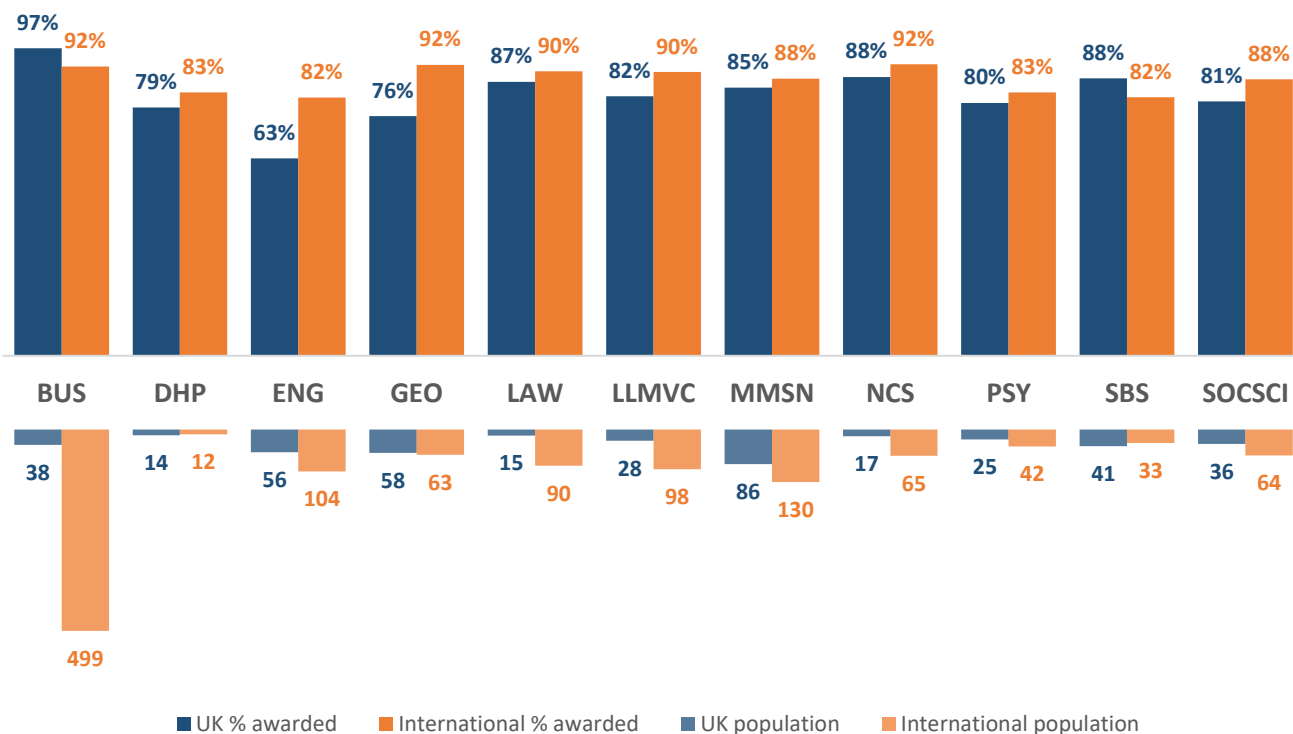


Chart 7 above shows the variation at School level for Master's Attainment between UK and international students. Nine of the eleven Schools show a higher rate of Master's Attainment for international students, with only the Business School and School of Biological Sciences reversing that picture.

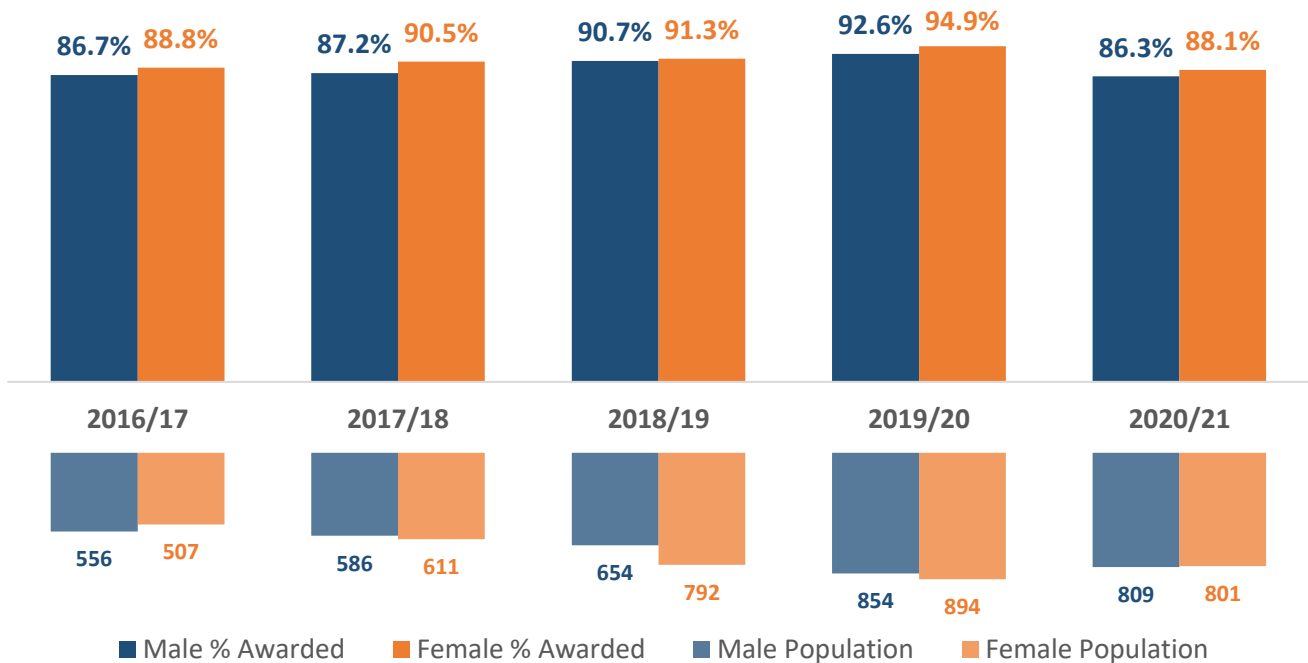
As can be seen in the population data, by far the biggest category of students within this are the international students in the Business School. Although, as previously noted, the Master's Attainment rate for this group at 92% is lower than for UK students in the Business School, it is still higher than the University average of 89.3% for international students.

Master's Attainment: by gender

Definitions for gender:

- **Male:** students that indicate their sex is "male"
- **Female:** students that indicate their sex is "female"
- Students who indicate that their sex is "other" have not been included due to very low numbers

Chart 8: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2020/21 by student gender with student population



As can be seen in Chart 8 above the Master's Attainment rate for female students is consistently higher than for male students across all cohort years considered, with the attainment gap being circa two percentage points in three of the five years considered. The narrowest attainment gap was in the 2018/19 cohort at just 0.6%.

Chart 9: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2020/21 by student gender by School with student population

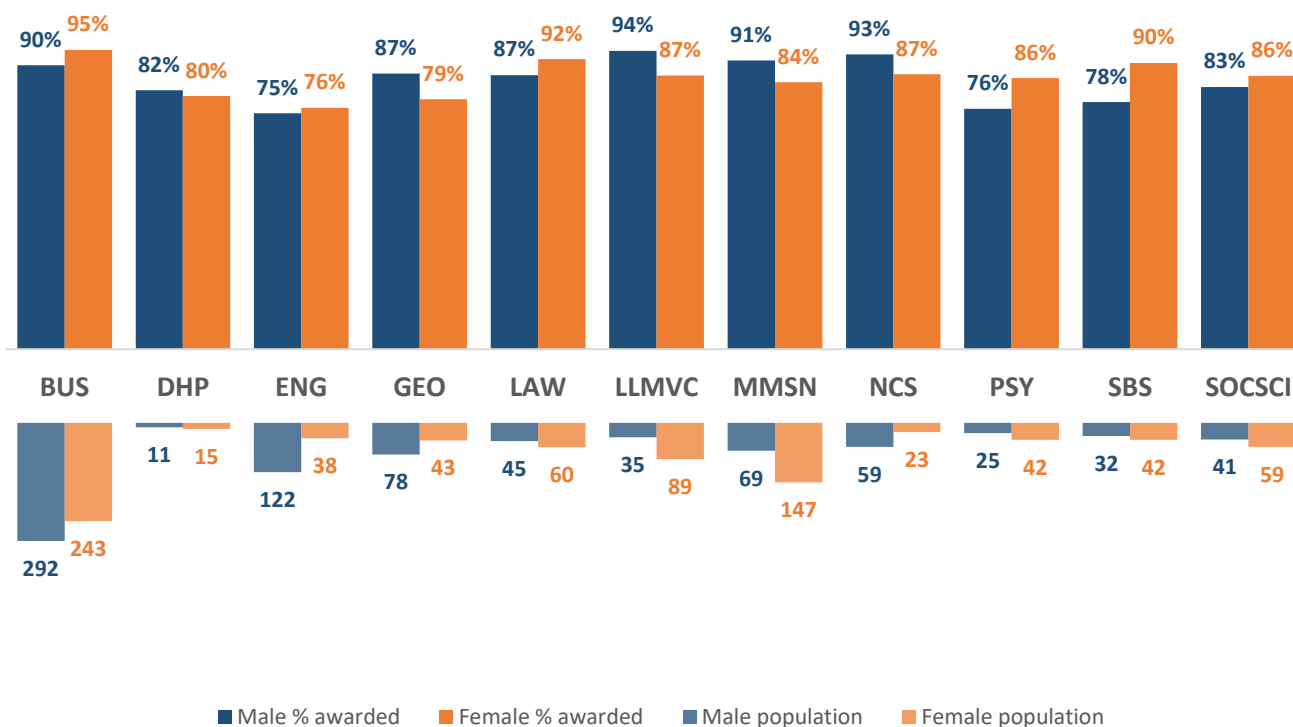


Chart 9 shows how the Master's Attainment rates for male and female students are across the Schools at the University. As can be seen, the picture is relatively mixed with six Schools having a higher Master's Attainment rate for female students, and five Schools having higher rates for male students despite the overall University position having consistently higher Master's Attainment rates for female students.

The Schools with higher Master's Attainment rates for female students are: the Business School, the School of Engineering, the School of Law, the School of Psychology, the School of Biological Sciences, and the School of Social Science.

Conversely, the Schools with higher rates for male students are: the School of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History, the School of Geosciences, the School of Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture, the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition, and the School of Natural & Computing Sciences.

Master's Attainment: by ethnicity (UK-domiciled students only)

Definitions for ethnicity:

- **White:** students that indicate their ethnicity is one of the following - "White", "White – Scottish", "Irish Traveller", "Gypsy or Traveller", or "Other White Background"
- **BAME:** students that indicate their ethnicity is any other known ethnicity
- Students who indicate that their ethnicity is "Unknown" or have refused to provide ethnicity information have not been included.

Please note that ethnicity data for this is restricted to UK-domiciled students and ethnicity data is not returned to HESA for international-domiciled students.

Chart 10: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2020/21 by student ethnicity (UK-domiciled) with student population

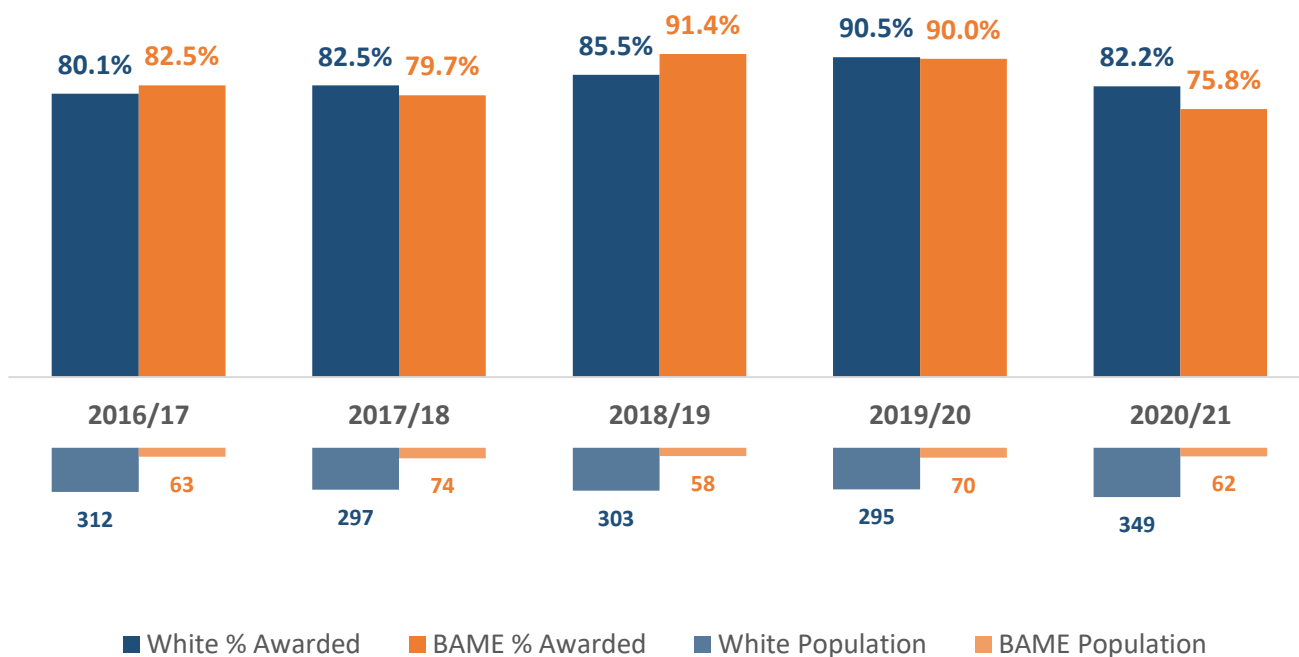


Chart 10 (above) shows that there is variable performance in Master's Attainment by student ethnicity for UK-domiciled students each year with Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students having a higher rate of Master's Attainment for the 2016/17 and 2018/19 cohorts, but less than for White students in the 2017/18, 2019/20 and 2020/21 cohorts.

It can also be observed that for UK-domiciled students, the population of those students reporting a White ethnicity is around five times larger than those reporting a BAME background.

Please note that ethnicity data for this is restricted to UK-domiciled students and ethnicity data is not returned to HESA for International-domiciled students. As a result, the population of students considered for this metric by ethnicity is far less than for other breakdowns.

Chart 11: University of Aberdeen Master’s Attainment rates 2020/21 by student ethnicity (UK-domiciled students) with student population

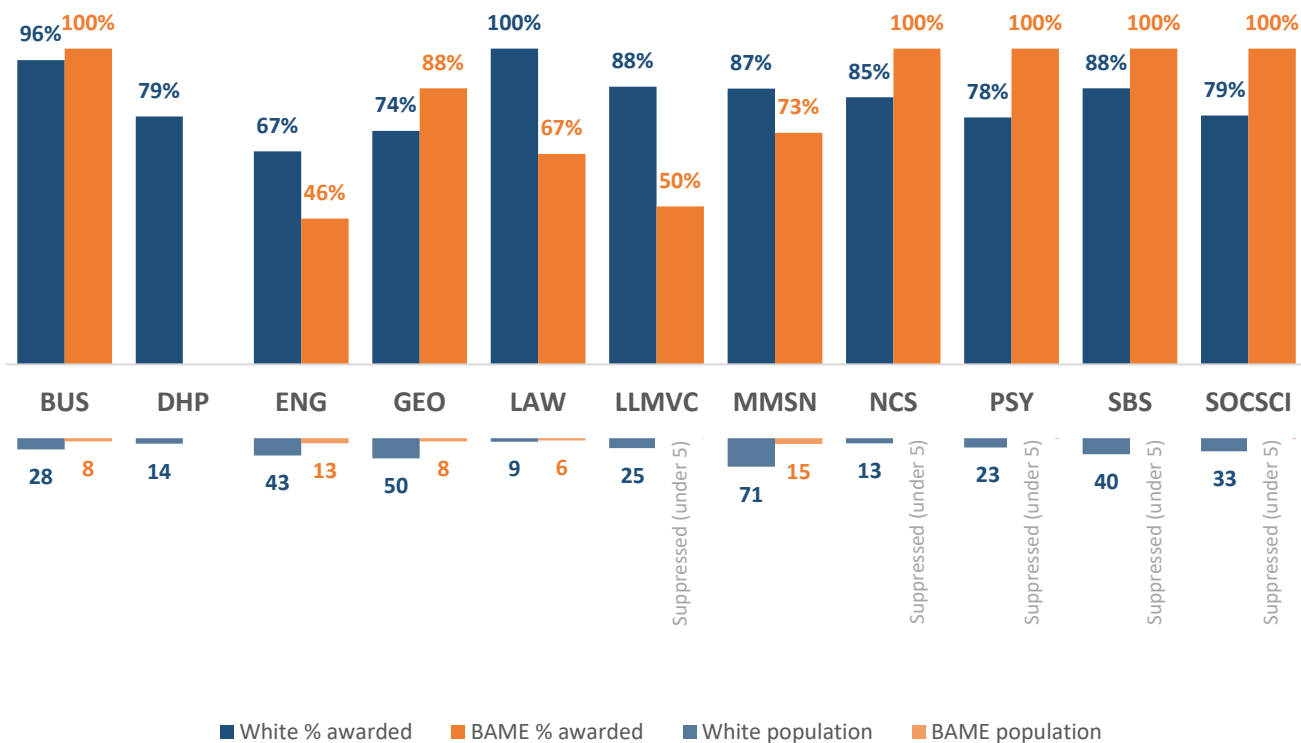


Chart 11 shows that the School rate of Master’s Attainment for UK-domiciled students by ethnicity is highly variable and in most cases for BAME students the population at School level is less than 10 students, and in every case is less than 20 students.

Therefore School-level conclusions for Master’s Attainment by ethnicity should not be drawn.

Master's Attainment: by disability status

Definitions for disability status:

Not disabled: students that indicate they have no known disability

Disabled: students that indicate they have a known disability

Chart 12: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2020/21 by student disability status with student population

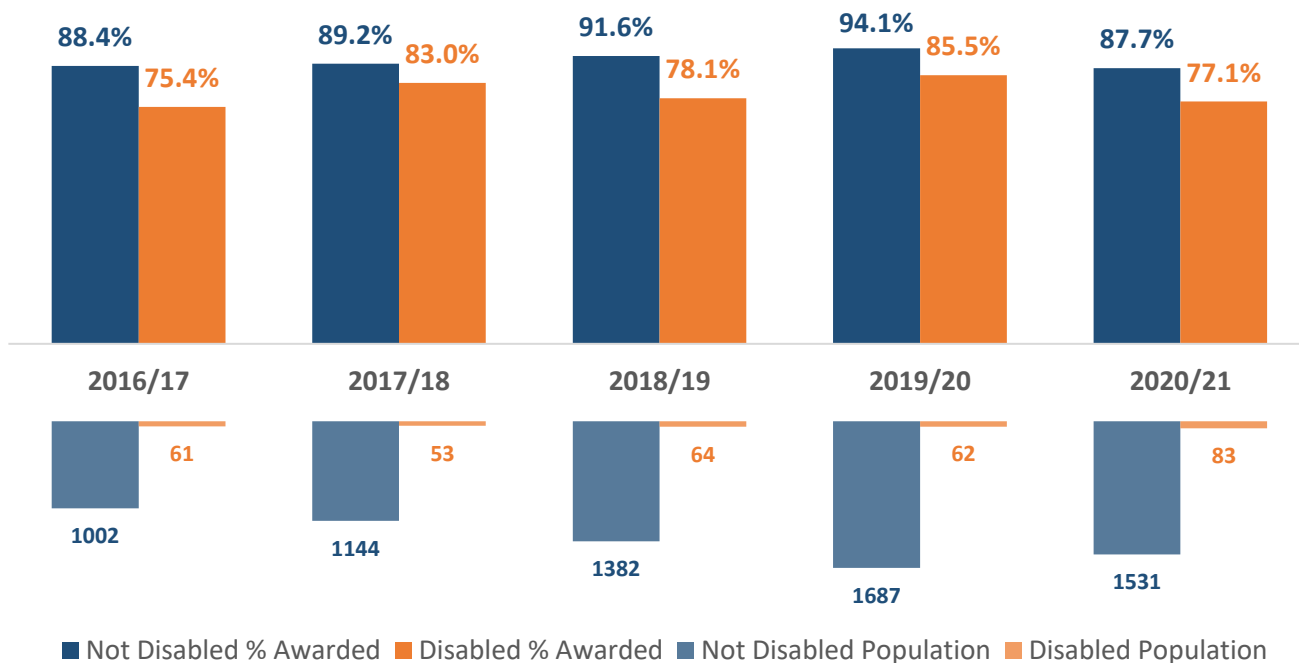


Chart 12 shows that there is a consistently lower rate of Master's Attainment among students who indicate that they have a disability than their counterparts who do not declare any known disability. The attainment gap varies highly on a yearly basis but has an average of around 10 percentage points across the five years presented, with the gap for the 2020/21 cohort at 10.6 percentage points.

Chart 13: University of Aberdeen Master’s Attainment rates 2020/21 by student disability status

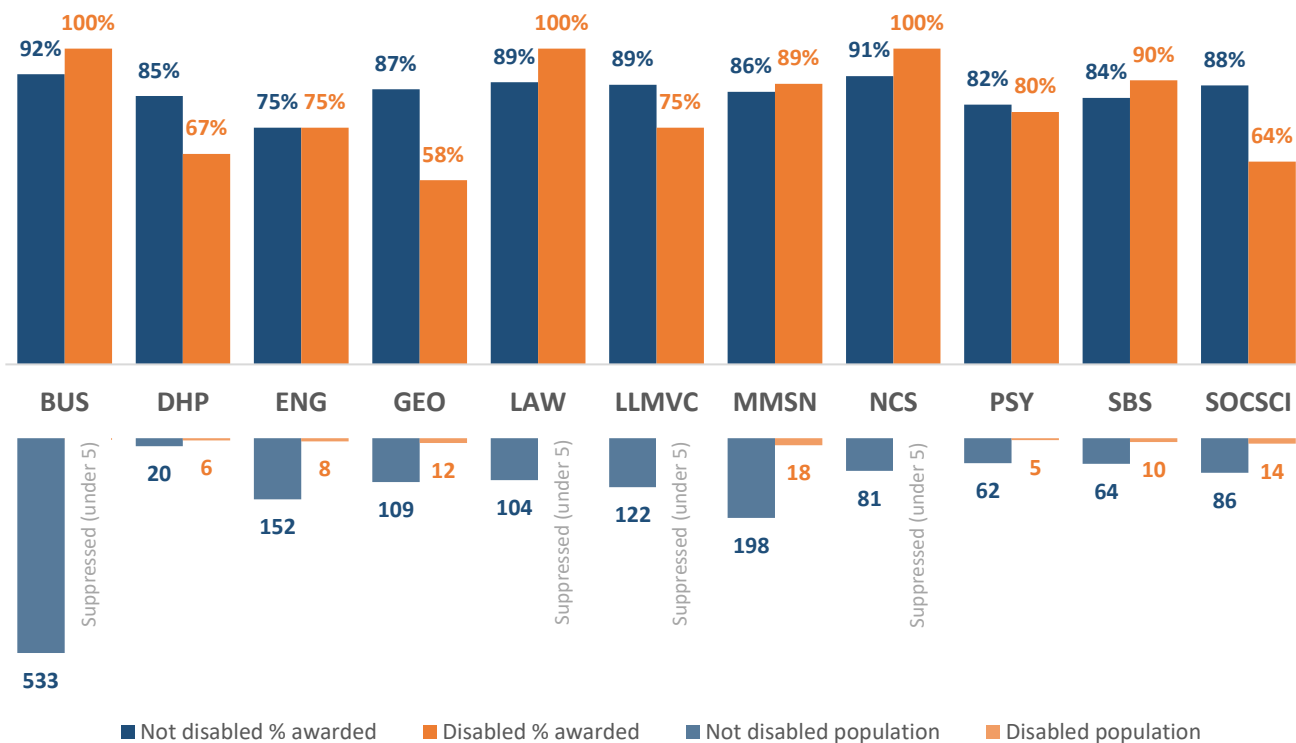


Chart 13 shows that the School rate of Master’s Attainment by disability status is highly variable and in most cases for disabled students the population at School level is less than 10 students, and in every case is less than 20 students.

Therefore School-level conclusions for Master’s Attainment by disability for disabled students should not be drawn, although still noting that the attainment gap for disabled students at overall University level is consistent.

Master's Attainment: by age band

Definitions for age band:

Young: students that are aged under 25 on 31st August of their cohort intake year

Mature: students that are aged 25 or over on 31st August of their cohort intake year

Chart 14: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2020/21 by student age band with student population

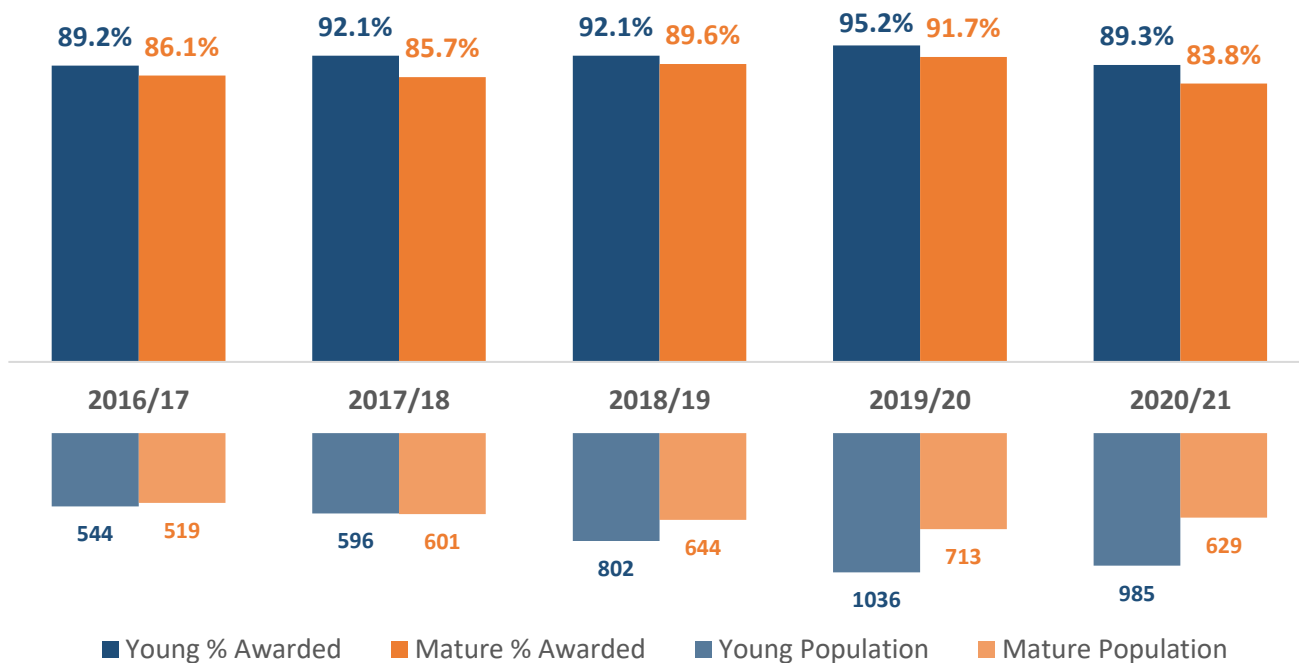


Chart 14 indicates that there is consistently a lower rate of Master's Attainment for mature (aged 25 or over) students in comparison to their young counterparts. This attainment gap has fluctuated between years, but averages over 4% across the years considered, with a gap of 5.6% for the 2020/21 cohort.

Chart 15: University of Aberdeen Master’s Attainment rates 2020/21 by student age band with student population

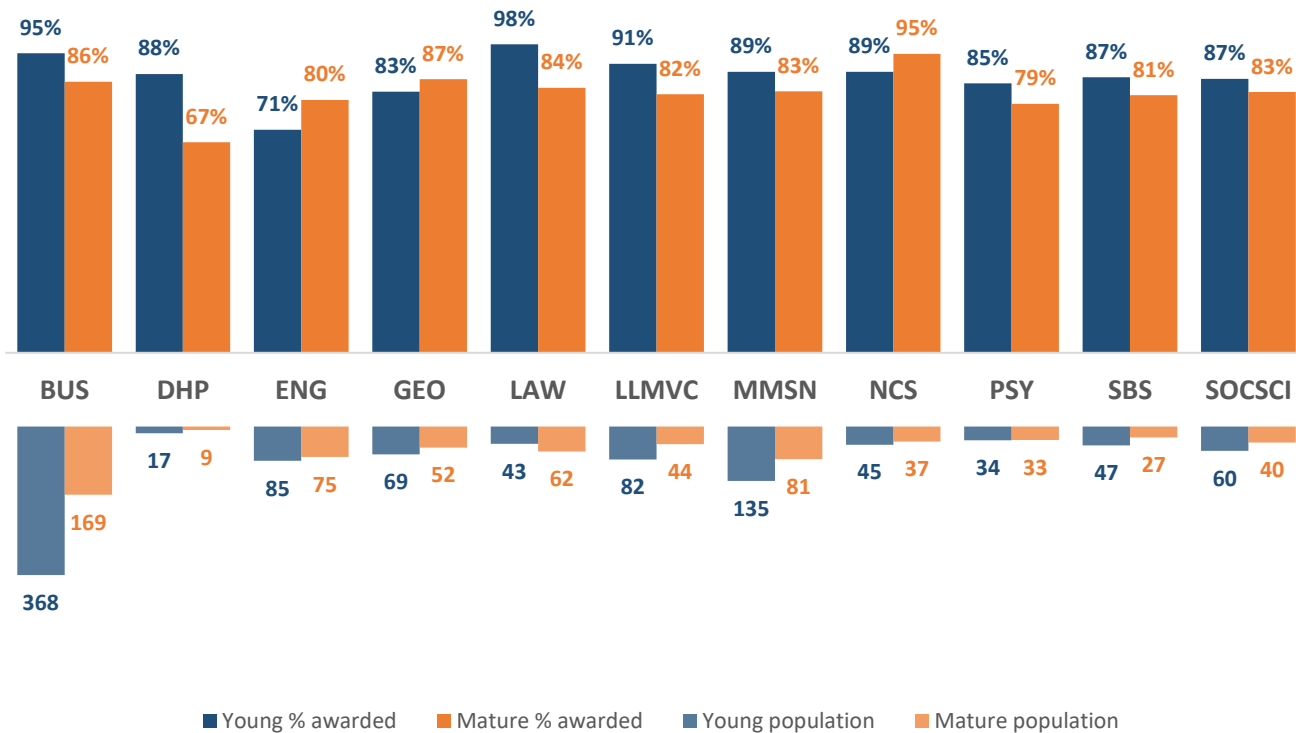
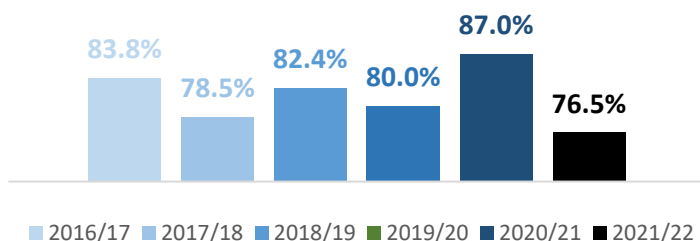


Chart 15 shows that the University picture of lower Master’s Attainment for mature students is reflected in eight Schools. Just three Schools – the School of Engineering, the School of Geosciences, and the School of Natural & Computing Sciences – reverse that by having a higher level of Master’s Attainment for mature students.

PGDE Attainment

The definitions for the various administrative and demographic breakdowns are as per those used for the Master's Attainment metric.

Chart 16: School of Education PGDE Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2021/22



The School of Education PGDE Attainment rate has been variable in recent years with increases and decreases in alternate years. The 2020/21 cohort attainment rate of 87.0% has been the highest in recent years. However, this has now decreased to 76.5% for the 2021/22 cohort, which is the lowest rate of attainment in recent years.

Please note that due to the PGDE being shorter in length with a commencement date at the start of the academic year, the outcome for PGDE programmes can be reported for the 2021/22 cohort, which is not the case when considering the longer timeframe required for Master's Attainment.

Chart 17: School of Education PGDE Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2021/22 by domicile with student population

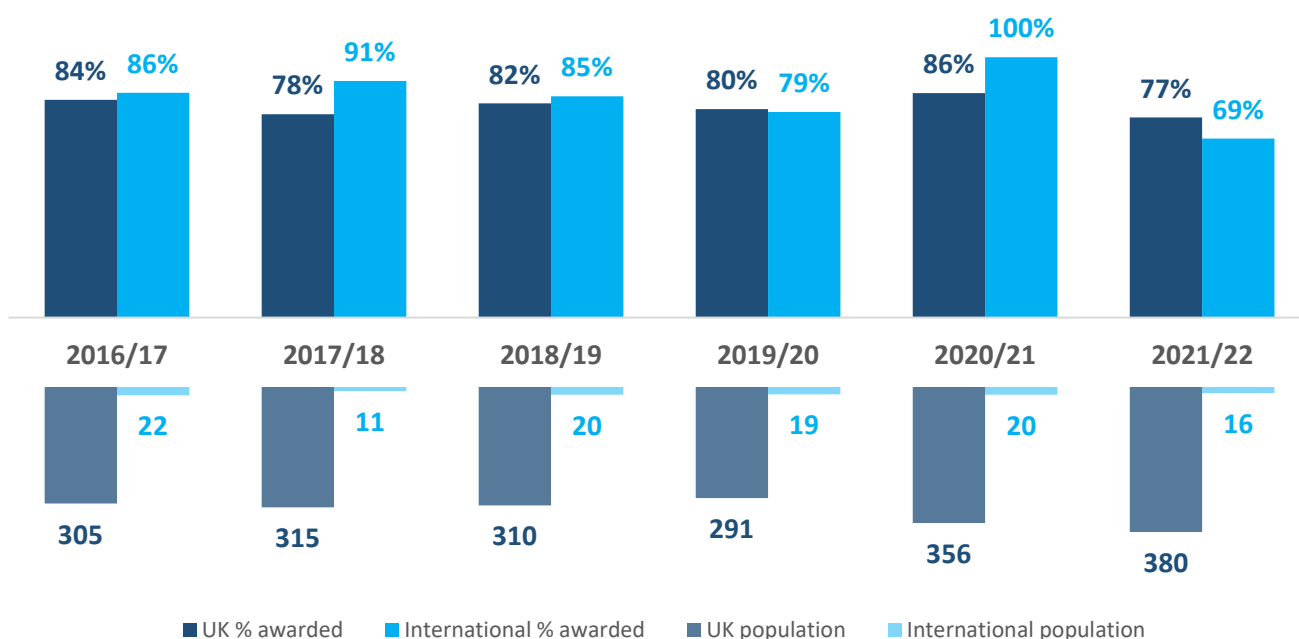


Chart 18 above shows that for most years the PGDE Attainment rate is slightly higher for international students in comparison to those that are UK-domiciled. However, it should be noted that the population of international students on full-time PGDE programmes in the School of Education is typically 20 or less, so some caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions as the overwhelming majority of students on PGDE programmes are from the UK.

Chart 18: School of Education PGDE Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2021/22 by gender with student population

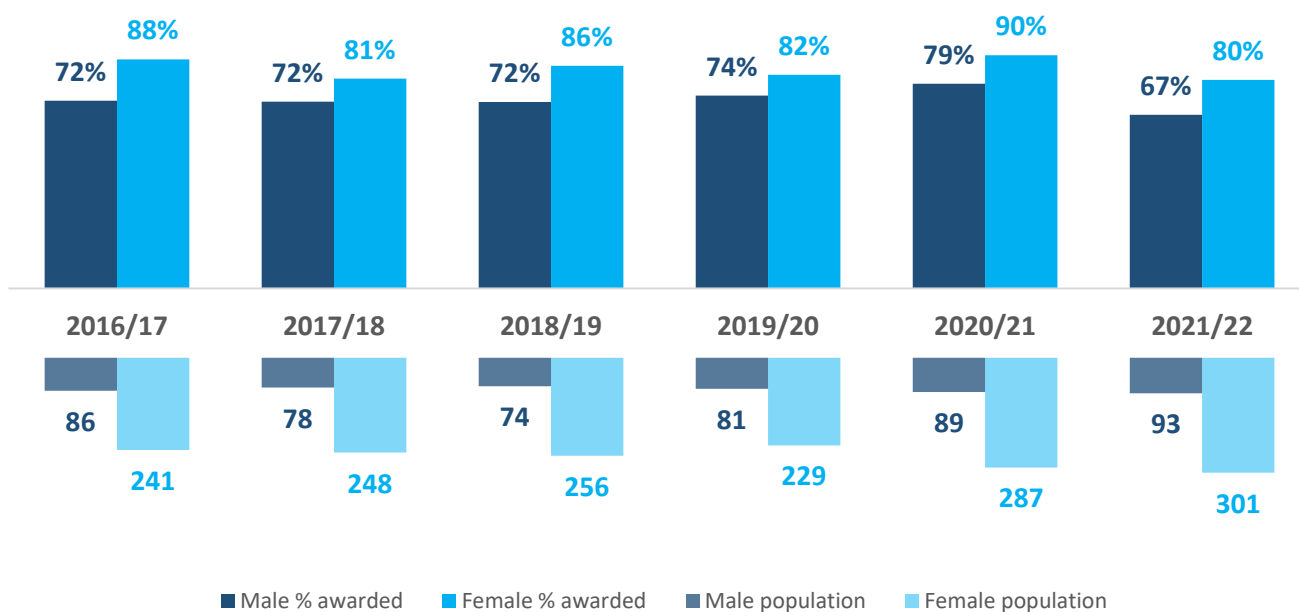


Chart 19 above shows that for every year the PGDE Attainment rate is higher for female students in comparison to those of their male counterparts. This attainment gap is, in most cases, over ten percentage points – which is generally higher than the attainment gap observed for gender in the Master’s Attainment metric. It should also be noted that female students outnumber males at a rate of around three to one on PGDE programmes.

Chart 19: School of Education PGDE Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2021/22 by ethnicity (UK-domiciled only) with student population

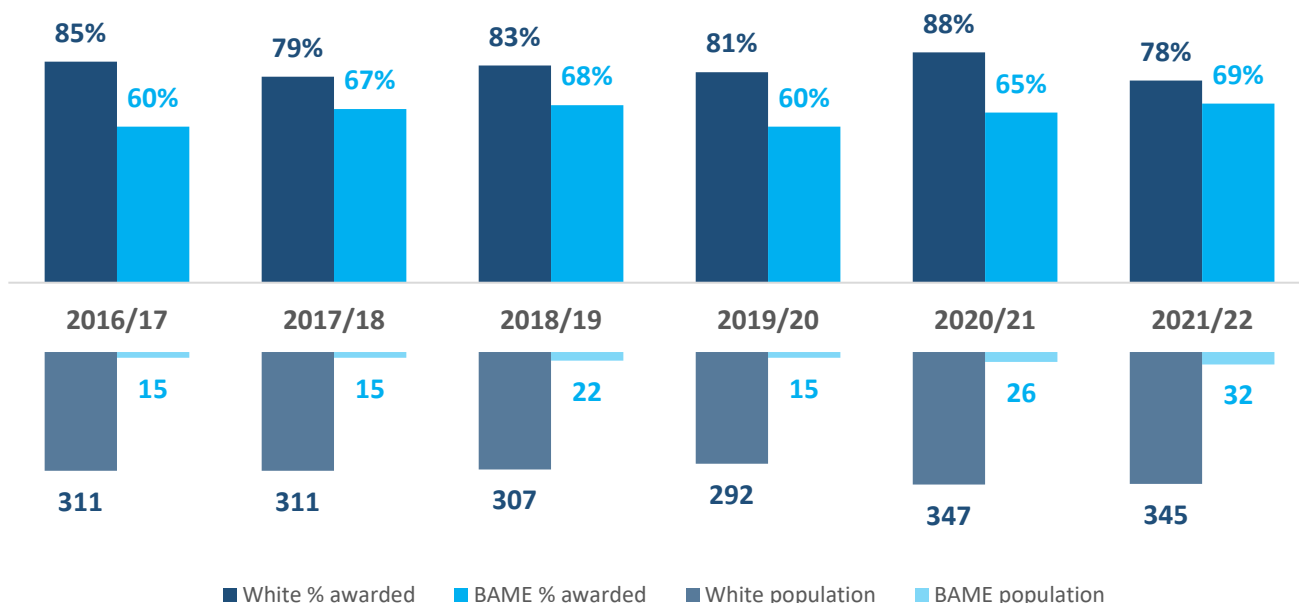


Chart 20 above shows that for every year the PGDE Attainment rate is higher for white students in comparison to those of their BAME counterparts. This attainment gap is, in most cases, over ten percentage points – which is generally higher than the attainment gap observed for gender in the Master’s Attainment metric – with only the most recent cohort (2021/22) being under ten percentage points. It should also be noted that BAME numbers on full-time PGDE programmes are quite low, although the pattern of attainment gap is quite consistent.

Chart 20: School of Education PGDE Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2021/22 by disability status with student population

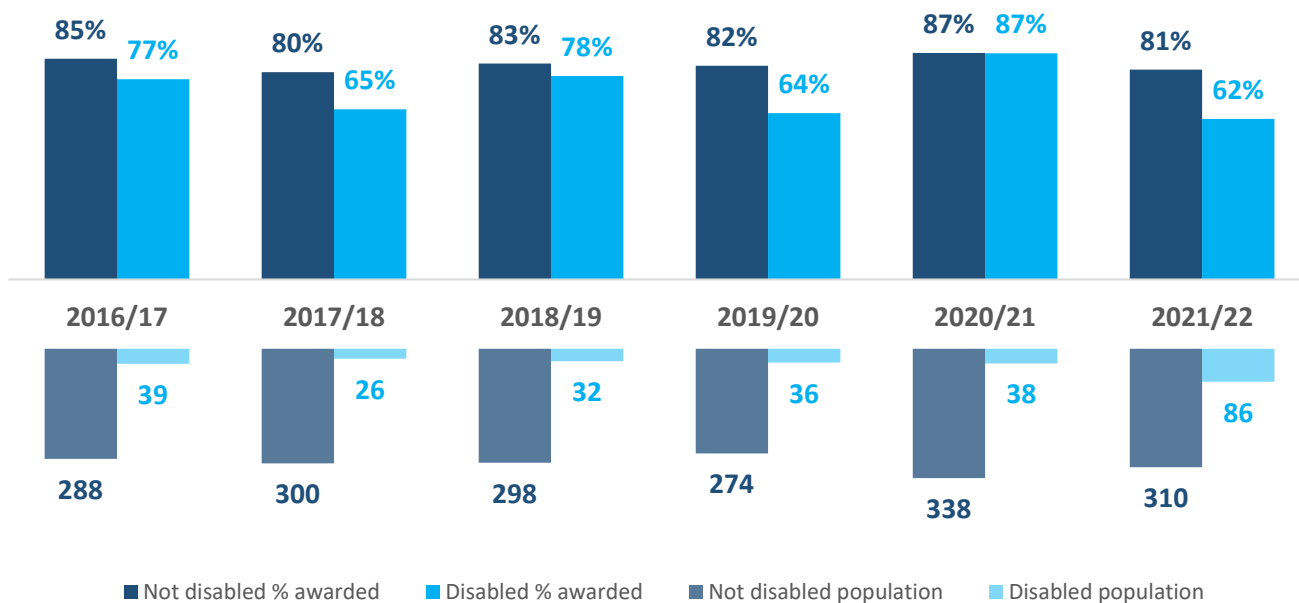


Chart 20 above shows that for every year the PGDE Attainment rate is higher for students who do not declare a known disability in comparison to those that do declare a disability. This attainment gap can be variable: from a high of 19 percentage points in the 2021/22 cohort, to a low of just 0.1 percentage points (masked by the whole number rounding in the chart) in the 2020/21 cohort.

Chart 21: School of Education PGDE Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2021/22 by age band with student population

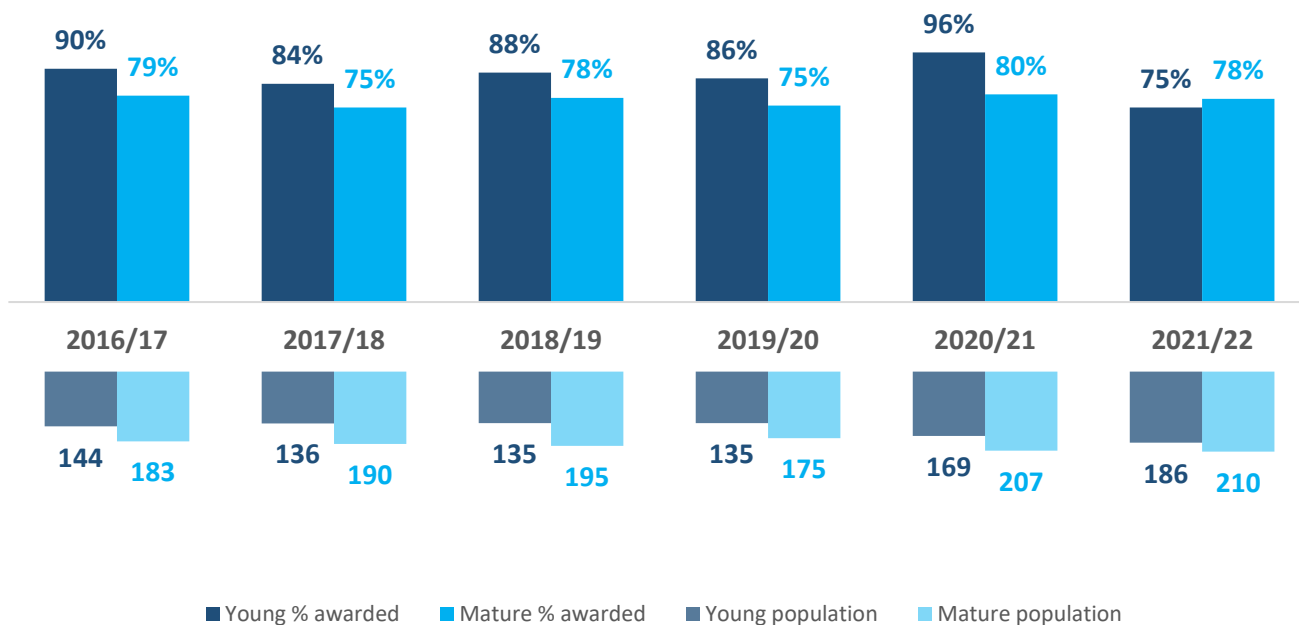
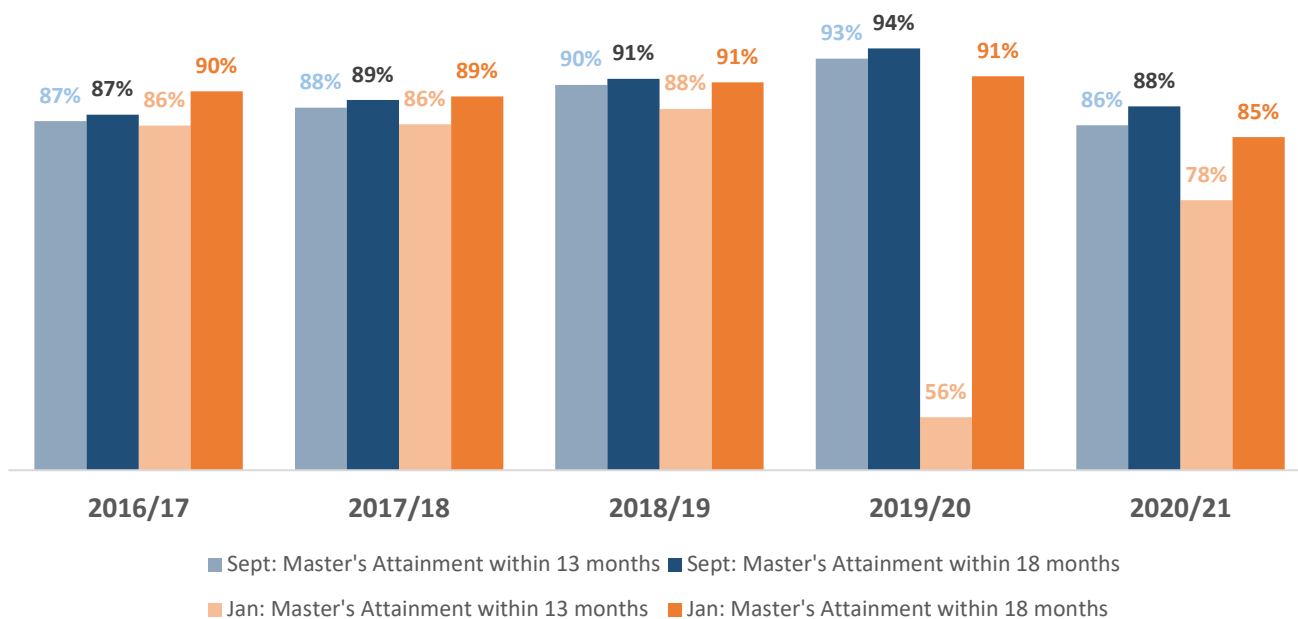


Chart 21 above shows that for almost every year the PGDE Attainment rate is higher for young students in comparison to their mature counterparts. This attainment gap was typically around ten percentage points, although it did reach a high of 16 percentage points in the 2020/21 cohort. The most recent data, however, shows that this attainment gap was reversed in the 2021/22 cohort with mature students being three percentage points more likely to obtain their PGDE by the end of the academic year.

Master's Attainment: note on methodology

It was originally intended to set the Master's Attainment metric around qualification within 13 months of commencement, but early analysis of the data suggested that the 2019/20 January cohort suffered some disruption to timescales during the Covid-19 pandemic which led to a sizable proportion of this cohort being delayed in successfully completing. This disrupted cohort was captured by extending the window of completion to 18 months, which was replicated to other cohorts to provide consistency.

Chart 22: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2020/21 by intake period – comparison of 'within 13 months' and 'within 18 months'



In Chart 23 above the aforementioned issue with the 2019/20 January intake cohort can be easily seen with only 56% achieving their Master's qualification within 13 months of commencement. Whilst that particular cohort was likely disrupted in some way by the Covid-19 pandemic, this comparison between the 13 and 18 months qualification period possibly reveals another issue: it can be seen for the September intakes that the difference in attainment outcome between the 13-month metric and the 18-month metric is only around one percentage point. However for the January intakes that attainment difference is ordinarily slightly higher – around three to four percentage points in for the 2016/17 to 2018/19 January cohorts, and then is around seven percentage points for the 2020/21 January cohort, which suggests that a higher proportion of January students have to undertake further assessment beyond one year in order to successfully complete their Master's degree programme.

Chris Souter
Head of Data and Business Intelligence
Directorate of Planning

Reasons for ending instance where students did not attain a Master's degree or PGDE within the metric timeframe

The HESA field RSNEND (“Reason for Ending Instance”) allows the University to return the reason as to why a student’s instance has ended. In considering the RSNEND entry for students who did not attain a Master’s degree or PGDE within the metric timeframe, patterns between reasons can be checked for. The percentages in the table are the percentage of those students who did not attain their qualification within the metric timeframe.

Table 1: University of Aberdeen reasons for ending instance where students did not attain a Master's degree or PGDE within the metric timeframe

Code Reason for Ending (RSEND) HESA field	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22
	Master's	PGDE	Master's	PGDE	Master's	PGDE	Master's	PGDE	Master's	PGDE	PGDE
1 Successful completion of course	16 12%		19 14%		13 10%		24 22%		28 14%		
2 Academic failure/left in bad standing/not permitted to progress			1 1%		2 2%		1 1%		4 2%		
3 Transferred to another provider	1 1%			1 1%							
4 Health reasons	3 2%	8 15%	5 4%	18 26%	4 3%	15 26%	4 4%	11 18%	4 2%	6 12%	26 28%
5 Death							1 1%				
6 Financial reasons	2 2%	1 2%	2 2%		1 1%		3 3%		1		
7 Other personal reasons & dropped out	18 14%	21 40%	11 8%	22 31%	13 10%	18 31%	11 10%	10 16%	33 16%	5 10%	9 10%
8 Written off after lapse of time	4 3%	1 2%	10 8%	1 1%	4 3%		7 6%		24 12%		
9 Exclusion	2 2%								1		
10 Gone into employment	1 1%		1 1%						1		
11 Other	4 3%		4 3%	11 16%		6 10%		18 29%	4 2%	12 24%	15 16%
No data or unknown	80 61%	22 42%	80 60%	17 24%	93 72%	19 33%	58 53%	23 37%	107 52%	26 53%	43 46%
	131	53	133	70	130	58	109	62	207	49	93

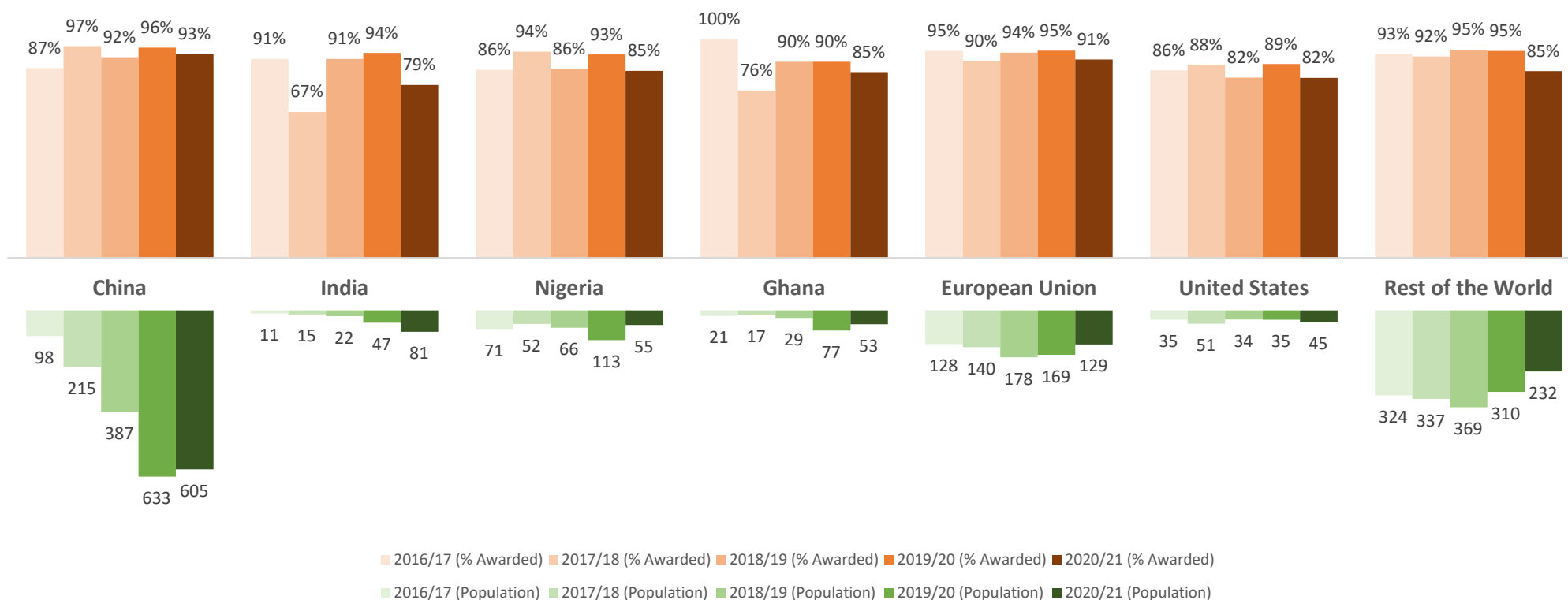
In Table 1 above, those with an unknown reason or a blank entry (combined as “no data or unknown”) are clearly largest group of students who have failed to attain their qualification in the metric timeframe in almost every year. It is likely that these students will be a combination of those who have formally extended their instance through an extension or those who have left the institution without informing the University.

For Master’s students the next largest RSNEND entries are ‘1’ (successful completion of course) and ‘7’ (other personal reasons and dropped out). The former category includes those who either did attain the Master’s degree within the next academic year at a timeframe greater than 18 months, or left the University with a fallback award (such as a PgCert or PgDip) or institutional credit.

With PDGE students the most significant RSNEND entries were ‘4’ (Health reasons) and ‘7’ (other personal reasons and dropped out).

Please note that there is no data for the 2021/22 Master’s cohorts as their end date will be during the 2022/23 academic year.

Chart 23: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2020/21 by Non-UK domicile country or international region with student population



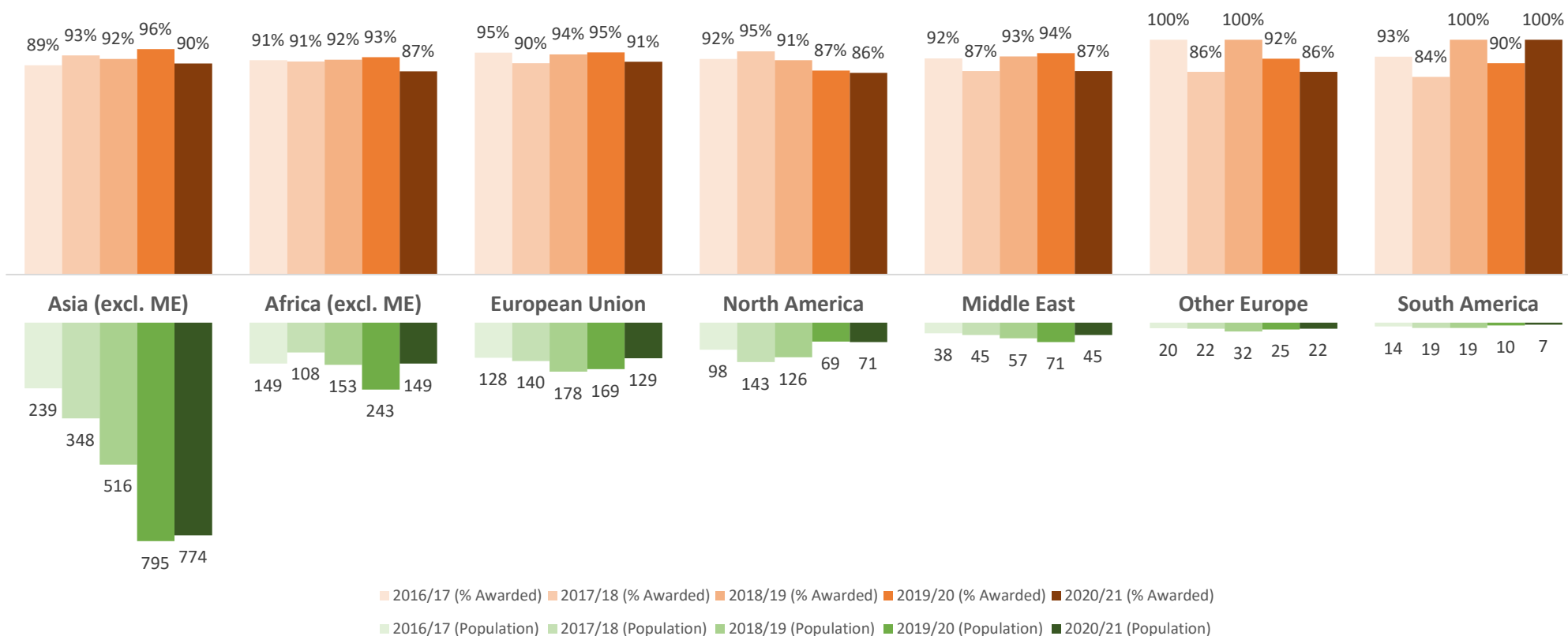
Note: countries selected for individual inclusion in Chart 23 were those countries with >40 Master's leavers in 2020/21. Remaining countries have been aggregated into the "Rest of the World" category. For the purposes of this visualisation, the European Union has been treated as a single country.

Chart 23 shows that the Chinese Master's students have consistently had a Master's Attainment rate in excess of 90% from 2017/18 onwards with the highest rates in comparison to the presented groupings in the two most recent academic years. Also noteworthy has been the substantial growth in Master's student numbers from China across the represented period.

Master's students from the European Union have also consistently had a Master's Attainment rate in excess of 90% across the five most recent academic years. The level of Master's Attainment from India, Nigeria and Ghana has been mixed over the period. Notably, however, students from the United States have had Master's Attainment rates consistently below 90% throughout this period.

It is also noteworthy that all countries and regions presented in Chart 23 show a decline in the Master's Attainment rate for 2020/21 entrants, and this drop varies from 15 percentage points for Indian students to just three percentage points for Chinese students.

Chart 24: University of Aberdeen Master's Attainment rates 2016/17 to 2020/21 by Non-UK HESA-defined international geographic region with student population



Note: International geographic regions presented in Chart 24 are taken from those used by HESA in the Student Collection field XDOMGR01 which generally represents continents outwith the United Kingdom. HESA divide Europe between the European Union and an "Other Europe" category, and also excise the Middle East geopolitical region from Asia and Africa. Due to very low numbers (less than 5 per academic year), Australasia has not been shown.

Chart 24 shows that the largest populations of Master's students are consistently from Asia and that these students have had a Master's Attainment rate in excess of 90% from 2017/18 onwards.

African (excluding the Middle East) and the European Union students have consistently also consistently had Master's Attainment rates over 90%, although in the case of Africa (excluding the Middle East) this has fallen to 87% for the 2020/21 cohort. North American students had Master's Attainment rates over 90% until the 2019/20 cohort and has slipped below 90% thereafter.

With smaller populations of Master's students, the Master's Attainment rate has been more volatile for Middle Eastern, Other European and South American students.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
COMMITTEE (EEC)

REMIT AND COMPOSITION (REVISED)
*(Sub-Committee of the University Education
Committee (UEC))*

1. COMMITTEE TITLE

Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee

2. DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT

25 May 2021

3. CHAIR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AREA

Co-Chairs: Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship
 Head of Careers and Employability Service
Clerk: Directorate of People

4. PURPOSE

The Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee coordinates the monitoring, development and planning of strategic activities to meet institutional targets and Key Performance Indicators linked to the Aberdeen 2040 strategic plan.

Specific Aberdeen 2040 Commitments that interface with this Committee are:

- #7 - Design new courses and programmes which encourage interdisciplinary learning, and ensure that all our students can experience innovative, challenge-led education involving external stakeholders.
- #12 - We will equip our graduates for global employment through our curriculum and teaching methods.
- #14 - Ensure all our students can have an international experience, by studying abroad or working collaboratively with international partners.

5. REMIT: *(To be reviewed annually at first meeting of committee cycle)*

Remit

- Monitor and evaluate employability data insights (e.g., Graduate Outcomes) to inform and enhance careers and employability provision;
- Enhance and develop work-based learning provision for students, for example, through placements and volunteering initiatives;
- Ensure an effective Graduate Attributes and Skills framework is in place to prepare our graduates to thrive in the diverse workplaces of the future including creative thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship, and digital skills;
- Ensure effective communication with the University community and external stakeholders to enhance understanding of, and engagement with, the employability agenda and the achievement of the aims outlined within the Aberdeen 2040 Strategic Plan;
- Scan the external horizon to ensure the University is at the forefront of high quality, innovative and effective careers and skills provision;
- Establish and support workstreams as appropriate to fulfil the institutional commitment to enhancing employability and entrepreneurship, providing oversight, guidance and support as required;
- Receive reports and required actions from the following:
 - a. Careers and employability engagement data
 - b. Graduate Outcomes data
 - c. Institutional and Programme Employer Boards
 - d. Monitor and approve applications for enhanced transcript accreditation and recognition
 - e. Funding opportunities and agreements (e.g., Santander, Enterprise, Wood Foundation) for enhancing employability

Approach

Our approach to enhancing employability, entrepreneurship education and skills development will be one involves multiple-stakeholders (internal and external) and is inclusive of all Schools and Professional Services across the institution.

Each member of the committee will disseminate and gather feedback from their constituencies to drive a whole-institution approach to the above remit. Member's contributions through their proactive engagement will ensure the effectiveness and suitability of the strategic activities across the institution.

6. COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

Co-Chairs:	Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship Head of Careers and Employability Service
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Membership:	School Leads for Employability and Entrepreneurship Representative of the Postgraduate Research Committee School Student President of the Students' Association (or nominee) Vice-President for Education of the Students' Association A further representative of the Students' Association
In attendance:	Director of Academic Services and Online Education (or nominee) Head of the Centre for Academic Development (or nominee)

Quorum: 50%

7. MEMBERSHIP

Chair (Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship):	John Barrow
Chair (Head of Careers and Employability Service):	Tracey Innes
School Leads for Employability and Entrepreneurship:	
School of Biological Sciences	Lenka Mbadugha
Business School	Lindsay Tibbetts
School of Divinity, History and Philosophy & Art History	Helen Pierce
School of Education	Alyson Young
School of Engineering	Amir Siddiq
School of Geosciences	David Green
School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture	Chris Gray
School of Law	Alisdair Macpherson
School of Psychology	Oliver Hamlet
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition	Heather Morgan
School of Natural and Computing Sciences	Rafael Cardoso
School of Social Science	Stuart Durkin
Representative of the Postgraduate Research School:	Lucy Leiper
Vice-President for Education of the Students' Association:	Akua Serwaa Agyeman
A further representative of the Students' Association:	Camilo Torres Barragan
AUSA Staff Representation:	Scott Carle
Director of Academic Services and Online Education (or nominee):	Gillian Mackintosh
Head of the Centre for Academic Development (or nominee):	Joy Perkins
Enterprise Executive from Impact & Knowledge Exchange:	Jenna Stuart
Clerk:	Alisdair McKibben

8. REPORTING LINE/PARENT COMMITTEE AND INTERFACE WITH OTHER COMMITTEES

Formal reporting line:	University Education Committee (UEC)
Interface with other committees:	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), Student Support Committee (SSC) and School Education Committees, Graduate Outcomes Steering

Group, Employer Board

9. FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS

A minimum of five meetings per session, preceding meetings of the UEC.

Meetings between 10am – 4pm in accordance with University Policy.

10. PUBLICATION OF PAPERS

The agenda and meeting papers will be made available on web pages/StaffNet at least one week prior to meetings of the EEC. Where these papers are draft, this will be clearly identified.

11. DATE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVED/RECORDED:

25 May 2021

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
COMMITTEE (EEC)

REMIT AND COMPOSITION (CURRENT)
*(Sub-Committee of the University Education
Committee (UEC))*

1. **COMMITTEE TITLE**
Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee
2. **DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT**
25 May 2021
3. **CHAIR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AREA**
Co-Chairs: Dean for Employability &
Entrepreneurship
Head of Careers and Employability Service
Clerk: Directorate of People
4. **PURPOSE**
To be responsible to the University Education Committee for leading employability and entrepreneurship related aspects of the University's Aberdeen 2040 strategic plan and associated objectives.
5. **REMIT:** *(To be reviewed annually at first meeting of committee cycle)*

The Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee shall:

- i. Develop and drive strategy across the University's employability, enterprise, and entrepreneurship activities to meet institutional targets and Strategic Plan Performance Indicators linked to the Aberdeen 2040 educational strategy.
Aberdeen 2040 Commitments relating to EEC:

2040 Commitment	High-level Action	Associated EEC Activity
#7 - Design new courses and programmes which encourage interdisciplinary learning, and ensure that all our students can experience innovative, challenge-led education involving external stakeholders	1. Building on the breadth curriculum at the University of Aberdeen, and embedded within the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum, increase the opportunities for interdisciplinary learning across all discipline areas with a focus on the interdisciplinary challenges in Aberdeen 2040. Ensure that co-curriculum interdisciplinary opportunities are identified as part of the overall work.	a. Provide input into an agreed set of Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills as a foundation on which commitments 6, 7, 12 and 17 can be delivered in the subsequent Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum work stream.
#12 - We will equip our	2. As part of the Aberdeen	b. Provide input to an agreed set

graduates for global employment through our curriculum and teaching methods.	2040 Curriculum workstream, employability, enterprise and entrepreneurial learning and skills will be embedded within our curriculum and co-curriculum.	of Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills as a foundation on which commitments 6, 7, 12 and 17 can be delivered in the subsequent Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum work stream. These will include employability, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills and may be global (for all), disciplinary, and at individual levels.
		c. Implement Career Registration for students and graduates and disseminate alongside Graduate Outcome data to inform School and Directorate planning.
		d. Provide input to, and bring learning from, the Advance HE employability and entrepreneurship project to inform our Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills, and further work on employability.
	3. Develop a framework, policy and delivery model for enabling all students to have access to placement or equivalent experience.	e. Map the current placement (and equivalent experience) provision identifying good practice across the University.
		f. Provide input to capturing evidence of scaled placement provision from the sector to inform the high-level action.
	4. Support our students to develop the relevant skills, through their learning, to support their development for global employment.	g. Input into the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum work to agree a transformational approach to the way we deliver our teaching, learning and assessment, building our experience of blended learning and sector-wide evidence

ii. Setup and monitor task and finish groups, as appropriate for the work highlighted above.

iii. Receive reports from the following:

- a. Careers and Employability Service
- b. GO Steering Group
- c. Institutional Employer Board
- d. Monitor quality and approve applications for enhanced transcript recognition and co-curricular activities

- iv. Graduate outcomes monitoring, planning and strategy.

Members' Responsibilities:

Each member of the committee will contribute to discussions and feedback on these to their respective areas for comment and further input.

6. COMPOSITION AND QUORUM:

Co-Chairs:	Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship Head of Careers and Employability Service
Membership:	School Leads for Employability and Entrepreneurship Representative of the Postgraduate Research School Student President of the Students' Association (or nominee) Vice-President for Education of the Students' Association A further representative of the Students' Association
In attendance:	Director of Academic Services and Online Education (or nominee) Head of the Centre for Academic Development (or nominee)
Quorum:	50%

ACCOUNT TO BE TAKEN OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP

7. MEMBERSHIP

Chair (Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship):	John Barrow
Chair (Head of Careers and Employability Service):	Tracey Innes
School Leads for Employability and Entrepreneurship:	
School of Biological Sciences	Lenka Mbadughab
Business School	Norman Hutchison
School of Divinity, History and Philosophy	Helen Pierce
School of Education	Alyson Young
School of Engineering	Amir Siddiq
School of Geosciences	David Green
School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture	Chris Gray
School of Law	Justin Borg-Barthet
School of Psychology	Amy Irwin
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition	Heather Morgan
School of Natural and Computing Sciences	Vacancy
School of Social Science	Stuart Durkin
Student President of the Students' Association (or nominee):	Vacancy
Representative of the Postgraduate Research School:	Lucy Leiper
Vice-President for Education of the Students' Association:	Ondrej Kucerak
A further representative of the Students' Association:	Flora Alapy (UG)
Director of Academic Services and Online Education (or nominee):	Gillian Mackintosh
Head of the Centre for Academic Development (or nominee):	Joy Perkins
Clerk:	Alisdair McKibben

8. REPORTING LINE/PARENT COMMITTEE AND INTERFACE WITH OTHER COMMITTEES

Formal reporting line: University Education Committee (UEC)
Interface with other committees: Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), Student Support Committee (SSC) and School Education Committees, Graduate Outcomes Steering Group, Employer Board

9. FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS

A *minimum* of five meetings per session, preceding meetings of the UEC.

Meetings between 10am – 4pm in accordance with University Policy.

10. PUBLICATION OF PAPERS

The agenda and meeting papers will be made available on web pages/StaffNet at least one week prior to meetings of the EEC. Where these papers are draft, this will be clearly identified.

11. DATE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVED/RECORDED:

25 May 2021

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Report from the EMPLOYABILITY & ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMMITTEE

Meeting held on December 16th 2022.

1. Approval of the minutes (November 29th, 2022)

Minutes approved.

2. Matters Arising including review of Action Log

No matters arising. Action log up to date with nothing outstanding.

3. Update of Remit

Updated Remit reviewed by committee and all changes approved.

4. School Employability and Skills Champions

John Barrow updated the committee on the new role of School Employability and Skills Champions. All EEC members who represent their Schools as part of this committee will become their Schools Employability and Skills Champion. January 16th will be the first training/development session which will include Skills Champions and other members of the Careers and Employability team.

5. Work Placement Update

Tracey Inness updated the committee on Gradconsult recommendation paper which has been submitted and discussed at SMT meetings. Recruitment already underway to support with upscaling of Work Based Learning.

6. Data Insights

Tracey and John updated the committee on meetings being carried out with Heads of Schools sharing Career Readiness and Graduate Outcome data.

7. Career Review Updates

Tracey gave update to the committee on progress of Career Review work being carried out by SDS and consultation partners.

8. Skills Recognition Framework

John updated committee on the Skills Recognition Framework group including the recent Scottish Governments evidence paper which seeks stakeholder views on Scotland's skills system.

9. AOB

No other business raised.

For information, no action required.

Further information may be obtained from Tracey Innes (t.innes@abdn.ac.uk), John Barrow (j.barrow@abdn.ac.uk) or Alisdair McKibben (amckibben@abdn.ac.uk).

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT FROM THE STUDENT SUPPORT & EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**05th DECEMBER 2022****1. Approval of Minutes of meeting held on 22 September 2022****1.1:** Minutes approved**1.2:** No outstanding actions**2. Update on SSEC Co-Chair**

2.1: Abbe Brown (AB) introduced Jason Bohan (JB), the new Dean for Student Support and Experience and Co-Chair of the Student Support & Experience Committee, who will formally commence his role in January. JB thanked AB for the invite and said it was great to meet everyone in the committee and looked forward to starting the role.

3. Engagement with External Surveys

3.1: AB introduced the paper submitted by the Head of Student Experience, around the proposed reinstatement of external surveys for Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students. The paper marks out a proposal for discussion, around using the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) but not the International Student Barometer (ISB) due to overlap. The committee was also asked to discuss cost and scope. AB opened the discussion to the committee.

Lucy Leiper (LL) asked about Postgraduate Research (PGR) surveys and crossover with the Postgraduate Taught surveys and Graeme Kirkpatrick (GK) noted from the paper that PGR was included in the proposal and so AB recommended the paper goes to the PGR committee as well for discussion.

Alison Jenkinson (AJ) asked if it would be possible to separate out data on home-based and international students and there was further discussion and agreement among the Committee that extrapolation of data would be very useful if possible. John Cavanagh (JC) enquired of the value for PGR students as well as PGT, with LL adding there was considerable value in identifying trends and support needs despite the more individualised nature of a research degree.

AB confirmed the committee was supportive of the proposal outlined in point 8 of the paper and supportive of the request for further budget and to extend the survey to PGR students.

4. NSS Action Plans

4.1: Further to previous discussions at the SSEC, AB introduced the agenda item, looking at responses to the 2022 NNS Survey as a matter for discussion. NE added that Professional Services have been collating final comments and actions and will look to present these at the next SSEC meeting.

On the Institutional Action Plans, AB asked if there were any points for discussion on the eight action points for implementation and the TESTA pilots running across schools. Martin Mills (MM) felt their pilot generally went okay in the School of Social Sciences but he felt it also dis-embeds assessment and feedback from the wider context so it needs a rethink as it doesn't cover learning outcomes. MM suggested a more integrated approach would be of more use and noted that while feedback was seen to be an issue, comparatively few students look at their own feedback electronically. AB agreed a more integrated approach was best and it was being taken into account in the process.

In discussion, GK said students always ask for more feedback and to receive it quicker but the was particularly an issue for PGT students, who often have to acclimatise quickly to a new institution or after a gap from studies, or for those who arrive late for the start of their course.

JC added that we often don't understand what the students' understanding of timely feedback is, as it may differ from our own institutions and school targets. AB said she would feed that back.

Further to this, Martin Barker (MB) suggested colleagues would like to get better feedback out to students and get more engagement, but perhaps colleagues aren't aware of the support available and expertise on hand which could be better used. Also, there may be resistance from staff due to workload implications or a perceived intrusion into what may be considered good quality feedback already, so it would be good to share best practice across the institution and for colleagues to realise this is an area for improvement. AB said it was very important to share best practice across the institution and to ensure this is embedded in the process, rather than feeling like additional workload.

On assessment and feedback, JB said within the School of Psychology, students often don't know how to access their feedback, so the school created a video instructing the students on how to access this information. Also, JB said that publishing a feedback calendar on each course page was a simple and effective way to keep students informed of when marks are due back, which has helped to manage expectations and provide clarity.

AB suggested it would be useful to have updates on School NSS Action Plans every 3 months. Looking ahead to NSS 2023, AB added it was a balance between encouraging student feedback without students also feeling harassed. A 50% response rate is required if the University is to get any data. The NSS Steering Group next meets in March.

5. Continuation and Classification Activity Update

5.1: Based on long-running work of the SSEC, and data sets discussed at Senate in May, AB introduced the paper. It focusses on the difference in continuation decisions, classifications, and overall outcomes, especially with particular groups such as mature students and widening access students. AB noted there is a big debate about whether any student groups should be treated differently, but said certain groups are having a different experience, according to the data, therefore it warrants further exploration.

There is a plan in place which AB has called the Magnet Plan, as it draws together many departments and groups within the University. School-based action plans on continuation and classification are underway and will continue to be developed, while there is now a continuation and classification group which meets quarterly, which has been greatly aided by

drawing together the vast amount of previous work in these areas. AB noted that continuation work had long been embedded in strategies but there was now an increased focus on classification, where widening access students are not achieving the same degree classifications as other student groups. The item was opened to the Committee for discussion.

Helen Pierce (HP) asked what happens next with the action plan which they have been filling out and AB said it goes up on the SSEC MS Team for schools to share ideas and best practice, plus there are meetings as a community of practice to look at any challenges. HP added it was great to share plans as they don't want to feel like they were reinventing the wheel. AB added that it is related to NSS action plans, so it's important to identify any overlap and ensure there are two pieces of work which are related but complimenting each other rather than replicating work.

After a discussion around a range of widening access issues, AB concluded agenda point 6 by noting the discussion will form part of the report from SSEC which goes to UEC in the New Year.

6. Timelines for Guaranteeing Provisions for Assessments

6.1: AB introduced the agenda item, looking at the procedures for provisions and adjustments to be put in place in time for student assessments. Lesley Muirhead (LM) noted the issues originally came around with regards to in-course assessments, but was equally applicable for exams, especially given the time of year. For in-course assessments, the School of Medicine asked for 4 weeks' notice for provisions to be implemented in time for the assessments.

The group discussed a range of related issues, with GK saying that students required as much flexibility as possible as current cohorts are unlike any previous cohorts and many will not have sat any exams in a long time, if at all. Many students will not know they require provisions and may only realise very close to their assessment or exam, which will cause problems for Student Support, School Disability Coordinators, and teaching colleagues.

JB noted that it was better to focus on the communication lines between Student Support and individual schools, rather than working to a set deadline, as he felt this could be simplified. Jemma Murdoch (JM) added that the Business Improvement Team are looking at the system and Student Records to see where improvements can be made. Lesley Muirhead (LM) added that the Student Support drop-in service had been able to implement provisions for students at short notice during the current term.

Overall, the Committee felt that strict timelines around dates for provisions to be implemented would likely be too restrictive and wouldn't provide the flexibility students need when accessing support. Discussions with several schools and Student Support are ongoing.

7. C6 Processes and Disability Provisions

7.1: The committee was asked to discuss the processes around C6s for those with a disability provision for an allowance for poor attendance during times of ill-health. Specifically, this related to whether this would permit them to miss any more classes than a student without this provision, or if it means they just do not need to provide medical evidence for any absences. AB added that when discussed with School Disability Coordinators, there was no

clear and consistent view on how this particular provision is applied and students were also confused after receiving a C6 when they thought the provision would mean the C6 would not be issued.

LM said that from a Student Support point of view, the provision is as it is described in the Provisions Guide, so is there to ensure a student does not have to continue to provide medical evidence for absences where it relates to an ongoing health condition. It is at the school's discretion as to how much of the learning can be missed.

AB asked for any other views, as if it can be resolved at the meeting that would be ideal, but if it is more complex, then the issue needs to go for wider discussions.

Wendy Lowe cited school-specific issues which may require a different approach, such as clinical placements for School of Medicine students, which are regulated externally by the GMC, so their requirements override any provisions put in by the University.

TB added that consistency across schools which have joint honours is very important as it proves very unhelpful and when provisions and processes are interpreted differently depending on which school is delivering the courses.

JC said the caveat of "where possible" is useful as it means the school would have more scope to decide if the implementation of the provision would hinder the student's ability to meet the learning outcomes, for example, where a clinical placement requires attendance, as opposed to lectures which could feasibly be studied from home if a student has serious mobility problems.

There was agreement in the group that different approaches within different schools was an issue, but there was no clear solution. LM added she felt the key thing to consider is what are the core competences and learning outcomes being assessed and is attendance required to demonstrate these. LM asked if disabled students could demonstrate this via a different method, as a reasonable adjustment?

On flexibility, Charlotta Hillerdal (CH) said flexibility is essential as students with ongoing health issues cannot choose not to be ill, so it would be good to look at instances where students could make up for missed time, for example, a short written assignment in place of a missed seminar.

Overall, AB said CH's point sums up where the discussion is at, with no clear outcome on this issue and a lot to balance. Student Support's document is clear in that all the provision means is no requirement for additional evidence. There are many cases where a student has very valid reasons for missing a class and currently the C6 process is there to try and get them back on track. It is one for further discussion and AB will go back to Emma Tough and to the Task and Finish Group.

8. Reflection on SSEC Task and Finish Groups (TFGs)

8.1: AB updated on the Pastoral Review TFG, of which AB is the outgoing Chair, to be replaced by JB. The group met on 25 October to discuss the paper which went to UEC on 01 October and also the lengthy report when went to Senate for an academic review. This received support, but also concern over workload and resourcing. The next phrase is to continue to enhance resources but to update existing IT capabilities and to try and enhance PGT support.

8.2: On the Monitoring TFG, AB noted positive feedback from Senate to make it a more supportive system, but again with concern about workload and resourcing. AB is meeting with Registry colleagues next week to look at how we can make updates and change terminology around C6/C7 systems and communications. JB will lead this work from January.

8.3: Nick Edwards (NE) updated on the Code of Practice, which was approved by the University Court in late November and will now progress to the Business Committee of the General Council in March 2023, with a view to final approval in April. Communications will be prepared and there will be a final meeting of the TFG before winding it up, with the Code of Practice due to be in place on 01 August 2023.

9. AOCB

9.1: NE concluded the meeting by expressing his thanks on behalf of all those involved in the SSEC for AB's work as Dean for Student Support and Co-Chair over the last three years and for all the great work and significant changes she was able to implement during her time in the post.

10. Further information

10.1: Further information may be obtained from Abbe Brown, outgoing Co-Chair, (abbe.brown@abdn.ac.uk), Nick Edwards, Co-Chair, (n.edwards@abdn.ac.uk), Jason Bohan, incoming Co-Chair (jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk) or Stevie Kearney, Clerk, (steven.kearney@abdn.ac.uk).