

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

A meeting of the University Education Committee will be held on **Thursday 25 August** at **11.35am**, 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 23 June 2022** *(UEC/250822/001)*
2. **Matters Arising** *(UEC/250822/002)*
3. **Health, Safety and Wellbeing** *(Oral Item)*
4. **Risk Register** *(UEC/250822/003)*

The Committee is invited to **discuss** the Risk Register, ahead of the beginning of the 2022/23 academic year, with regards to the specific risks associated with Education.

5. **Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan Update** *(UEC/250822/004)*

Members of the UEC are asked to **discuss** the progress being made on the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan and make comment on the additional implementation plan.

6. **National Student Survey (NSS) Results**
 - (i) **Overview of Results and Next Steps** *(UEC/250822/005)*
 - (ii) **Update from the SSEC** *(Oral Update)*

Members of the Committee are asked to **discuss** the paper, providing updates following results of the National Student Survey (NSS). In addition, an update on the NSS and next steps will be provided by the Chair of the SSEC.

7. **Pastoral Support Review Update** *(UEC/250822/006)*

The Committee is invited to **discuss** the paper providing an update on the report and associated recommendations of the Pastoral Review Task and Finish Group (TFG).

8. **Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Review Update** *(UEC/250822/007)*

The Committee is invited to **discuss** the paper providing an update on the report and associated recommendations of the Monitoring, Absence and Engagement TFG.

9. **Deadlines for the Return of Results 2022/23** *(UEC/250822/008)*

Members of the Committee are asked to approve the final deadlines for the return of results for 2022/23.

10. Dates of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the UEC will take place on Monday 10 October 2022 at 1.05pm.

11. Items for Routine Approval – *see below*

12. Items for Information – *see below*

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.

11. FOR ROUTINE APPROVAL

11.1 Internal Teaching Review (ITR) Guidance *(UEC/250822/009)*

Members of the Committee are asked to **approve** the attached updated Internal Teaching Review (ITR) guidance notes, amended to reflect a return to on-campus ITRs, where possible, from the commencement of the 2022/23 academic year.

11.2 Regulations Governing the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology *(UEC/250822/010)*

On the recommendation of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) members of the Committee are asked to approve the attached document, detailing changes to the regulations governing the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology. These changes are being proposed to ensure employment as a trainee dental technician is clearly stated as a requirement of the Diploma. Although currently listed as an entry requirement, this change to the regulations will further emphasize this requirement.

11.3 Winter Graduations 2022 Schedule *(UEC/250822/011)*

Members of the Committee are asked to **approve** the attached schedule for the Winter Graduations 2022.

12. FOR INFORMATION

12.1 Education Committee Schedule 2022/23 *(UEC/250822/012)*

The Committee is invited to **note** the attached document containing the dates of the Education Committees in 2022/23 and the proposed timings of associated agenda items.

12.2 Deans Appointments *(Oral Item)*

The Committee is invited to **note** the attached document containing an update on the Education Deans.

12.3 Institutional Liaison Meeting with QAA Scotland

(UEC/250822/013)

The Committee is invited to **note** the attached minute of the Institutional Liaison Meeting with QAA Scotland.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

Minute of the Meeting held on 23 June 2022

Present: Ruth Taylor (Chair), John Barrow, Lyn Batchelor, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Jason Bohan, Abbe Brown, Stuart Durkin, Bill Harrison, Richard Hepworth, Gerry Hough, Alison Jenkinson, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Ondrej Kucerak, David McCausland, Graeme Nixon, Rona Patey, Michelle Pinard, Shona Potts, Steve Tucker, with Julie Bray, Scott Carle, Nick Edwards, Tracey Innes, Gillian Mackintosh, Fiona Ritchie, Patricia Spence, Louisa Stratton, Emma Tough (Clerk) and Liam Dyker (Minute Secretary) in attendance.

Apologies: Harminder Battu, David Mercieca, Russell Williams, Joshua Wright, Simon Bains, Rachael Bernard, Brian Henderson, Graeme Kirkpatrick, Susan Stokeld, and Anne-Michelle Slater

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 APRIL 2022*(copy filed as UEC/230622/001)*

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to the final meeting of the University Education Committee (UEC) in 2021/22. Members of the Committee considered the minute of the meeting held on 13 April 2022 and approved it as an accurate representation of discussions held.

MATTERS ARISING*(copy filed as UEC/130422/002)*

- 2.1 Members of the Committee noted the actions arising following the meeting of UEC held on 13 April 2022. The actions were recorded as complete or in progress. The Committee noted the following:
- With regard to *minute point 2.1* of the meeting held on 13 April, regarding the paper on the 2023/24 Academic Year, members of the Committee noted this was on the agenda for consideration.
 - With regard to *minute point 8.2* of the meeting held on 13 April, regarding the available resource for captioning, the Committee was advised that Schools have not used all allocated budget for this, and a plea was made to utilise this funding. In relation to Panopto, it was noted that CAD were reviewing other software which may be helpful, ensuring adherence to the legal requirements.
 - The Committee received an update on late registration and managing the arrival of new students to campus. Members were advised that the proposal is for a hard late registration deadline, after which students will not be able to study in that cohort. In relation to appeals, it was suggested that this period be considered as to whether students might be able to submit academic appeals.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- 3.1 Members of the Committee noted the Campus Planning Group (CPG) papers and minutes of meetings, available [here](#). Members of the Committee noted that CPG was no longer meeting as frequently, only as required.

UPDATE ON THE UEC AND THE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (QAC)

- 4.1 Members of the Committee noted that discussions were ongoing regarding the chairing of UEC and QAC, following recent discussions at Senate. It was advised that a proposal would be submitted to the Senate in the new academic year and that a holding position was currently in place for the first meeting of the year.

ABERDEEN 2040: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR EDUCATION

(copy filed as UEC/230622/003a and UEC/230622/003b)

- 5.1 Members of the Committee heard a summary of the paper, noting a Steering Group was proposed to be established to provide an overarching approach to achieving the strategic goals listed. After discussion regarding the reporting of this Steering Group, it was confirmed that the Group, once established, would report to the UEC. The Committee were content with this approach.
- 5.2 In terms of the Implementation Plan, it was advised that the leads in key areas had been contacted, to ensure the update of the plan for Senior Management Team (SMT) consideration.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24

(copy filed as UEC/230622/004)

- 6.1 Members of the Committee heard an overview of the proposals for the structure of the Academic Year 2023/24. The proposals included further interim arrangements while ongoing discussions continued regarding the structure of the academic year in the future. The importance of (i) student recruitment and (ii) aligning with requirements of the University's overseas ventures were highlighted.
- 6.2 Overall, the Committee expressed support for another interim arrangement while discussions were ongoing regarding a future structure. There was general support for the start date in September. However, mixed views were expressed regarding the lone teaching week after spring break. Concerns/points were noted as follows:
- Some members noted that a lone teaching week does not work, but nine-week teaching blocks would not work either;
 - In some courses, ten-week teaching blocks are required for block teaching;
 - The lone teaching week disrupts the teaching and learning experience, and often students will not return for one week. There is wide recognition that students will not return from Spring break in the mindset to learn new material;
 - A practical, roving reading week could be adopted in cases where the lone teaching week will not be practical;
 - The Spring break could be reduced to two-weeks, to allow for two-weeks teaching afterwards.
- 6.3 Some members expressed concern with regard to the deadline for the return of marks, particularly concerning the tight timescales to be able to achieve the required monitoring, analysis and review of results. Similarly, concerns were expressed that exam periods were too compressed, and consideration should be given to extending these so as not to undermine the student experience.
- 6.4 In summarising the discussion, it was noted that the paper proposed an interim position with scope to make minor changes. It was agreed that widescale overhaul would not be possible

at this time. In relation to the lone teaching week, it was suggested that there be a 'floating' week which Schools could utilise as appropriate.

- 6.5 In advising of next steps, it was noted that discussions regarding the future academic year structure would be taking place in the coming months. In the meantime, the feedback received at Committee would be considered and further proposals returned to the Committee in the new academic year, before final approval at Senate.

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS: DISSEMINATION AND NEXT STEPS

(copy filed as UEC/230622/005)

- 7.1 Members of the Committee noted the paper on the National Student Survey (NSS) Results for 2022. It was noted that analytical report templates had been received from the Planning team. It was further advised that the NSS Steering Group and Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC) would progress discussions in regard to action points and next steps. It was suggested that Assessment & Feedback will be a rolling theme going forward.

Action: SSEC

FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATE NON-CONTINUATION DATA

(copy filed as UEC/230622/006a and UEC/230622/006b)

- 8.1 The Committee heard a summary of the paper, noting ongoing work with regard to the PowerBI dashboard which would be made available to Schools to review their data. It was highlighted that non-continuation refers to students for whom the University knows what happened once they had left. The intersection with other work, including widening access, was noted.
- 8.2 Some members urged caution in the interpretation of the statistics, noting that proportions may skew these numbers. Further, it was suggested that a qualitative analysis of this data, particularly concerning the reasons for non-continuation, as well as separation between the on-campus and online students' data would be important.
- 8.3 The Committee highlighted reviewing other institutions' best practice in this area. In response, it was advised that this work is currently underway. Caution was urged that initiatives that work in other institutions cannot be expected to work instantly at the University.
- 8.4 In concluding the discussion, the Committee were asked to feedback any further comments or suggestions to the Dean for Student Support.

Action: Committee

DELIVERY OF EDUCATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP (TFG) FINAL REPORT

(copy filed as UEC/230622/007)

- 9.1 Members of the Committee heard a brief summary of the report and reflections on the Delivery of Education work. It was noted that the TFG has been formally concluded and that this work will be subsumed into the new Education Strategic Steering Group.
- 9.2 Some members queried the cultural shift towards authentic assessment, noting that this is accepted differently in different areas. It was suggested that authenticity be incorporated into examinations, in order for students to be able to demonstrate key knowledge and skills in future employment. It was highlighted that authentic assessment does not exclude exams; it only enhances exams. The employability of students was discussed, particularly in relation to high-stakes, invigilated exams which was further required in some professions.

9.3 The Committee were asked to feedback any comments by the end of August.

Action: Committee

**UPDATE FROM THE GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS TFG AND ENHANCED TRANSCRIPT
WORKING GROUP**

(copy filed as UEC/230622/008)

- 10.1 The Committee heard an overview of the Task and Finish Groups' (TFGs) work. It was noted that the two TFGs had initially operated separately but would be brought together in the next phase of development.
- 10.2 Members of the Committee were supportive of the proposed approach and the revised list of Graduate Attributes. Some queries were raised specifically regarding:
- The use of Blackboard Ultra; this could be considered as an option;
 - The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and their role in these attributes; it was noted that the SDGs will feed into the work in a later phase;
 - The input from employers; it was advised that there was input from some and alumni, however, there would be greater engagement in the next phase;
- 10.3 It was suggested that this piece of work is important in articulating the skills and attributes the students have gained across their time at University, which would be particularly important from an employer's perspective. Further, the Committee were asked to share with colleagues and gather feedback for the further phases of development.

ENHANCEMENT THEME ANNUAL REPORT

(copy filed as UEC/230622/009)

- 11.1 Members of the Committee heard a summary of the report, noting the Enhancement Theme is currently about to embark on its third year. It was highlighted that a call for projects for the next year would be released soon. Staff and students were thanked for their efforts, noting the collaborative approach to the themes and the projects.

CONTRACT CHEATING

(copy filed as UEC/230622/010)

- 12.1 Members of the Committee heard an overview of the paper and of the proposed approach to take forward the work for contract cheating, noting a Task and Finish Group would be established to tackle this issue. It was further noted that there was concern for academic standards, but also for the student wellbeing.
- 12.2 Some members highlighted the support and wellbeing of the students as critical. The links with 'traditional' plagiarism were also highlighted. It was suggested that the process for dealing with plagiarism be streamlined to allow colleagues to spend more time analysing students' work for more complex cases. On a similar note, the type and volume of evidence required for contract cheating cases was queried.
- 12.3 The diverse range of backgrounds of students was discussed, noting many students arriving from overseas have different academic standards and a different culture. It was suggested that an approach which seeks to understand how this happens at the University and what support students would require and when was sought.

- 12.4 The Committee was informed that the definition for the penalty has changed in line with the second offences for plagiarism. It was also noted that Investigating Officers in any discipline case will look at all available evidence and make a reasoned judgement on the appropriate penalty.
- 12.5 Members of the Committee were advised that the next steps would include prioritisation and reviewing the other factors in the discipline processes, such as appeals.

ABERDEEN 2040 COMMITMENTS IN THE CATALOGUE OF COURSES

(copy filed as UEC/230622/011)

- 13.1 Members of the Committee heard a summary of the paper, noting this will be progressed across the Summer months. Members were supportive of the proposals. However, some members raised queries specifically regarding:
- Whether there was capability to ascertain further information and what the 'badge' meant if hovered over, for example.
 - Whether there was scope to include the Sustainable Development Goals in this piece of work; it was proposed that this be considered but will feed into the larger piece of work on the curriculum which is due to be underway in the future.

DEADLINES FOR THE RETURN OF RESULTS 2022/23

(copy filed as UEC/230622/012)

- 14.1 Members of the Committee heard an overview of the paper and the proposed deadlines for the return of results. Discussion ensued regarding the timeliness of the deadlines, the tenets of which were:
- The January deadline is tight, particularly when compiling course grades; the Committee was advised that there was a strong view that students should know their course results before going into term, as agreed at a previous meeting of this Committee; it was also highlighted that this deadline is really challenging to move;
 - The June deadline is a week shorter than in previous years; it was suggested that the three-week turnaround for feedback was not designed for final results; it was further noted that the results feed into graduations, which cannot be turned around in anything less than 2 weeks.
- 14.2 Members of the Committee queried the associated processes with the return of results and sought clarity on whether there may be possibility to shorten the time for marking, moderation and student records, for example. It was highlighted that the type and load of assessment for students plays a role in this. It was suggested that the feedback framework could be reviewed.
- 14.3 It was highlighted that students ought to have the right to decide as to whether they seek continuation of their studies before they commence the second half-session. It was agreed that this feedback would be taken away and the paper recirculated following these discussions.

Action: Clerk

JERUSALEM DECLARATION ON ANTISEMITISM

(copy filed as UEC/230622/013)

- 15.1 Members of the Committee heard an overview of the proposal to adopt the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, noting the extensive consultation that had been undertaken.

Some members queried the extent to which this covered all University campuses. In response, it was highlighted that the University is anti-racist, and this would apply to all students and staff on all campuses.

FINAL AND CLOSING REMARKS

- 16.1 The Committee expressed its heartfelt thanks to the outgoing Vice-President for Education from AUSA for all of his hard work and contribution to the Education agenda across his tenure in post.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 17.1 Members of the UEC will take place in 2022/23 as follows:

Monday 10 October 2022 at 1.05pm

Monday 16 January 2023 at 1.05pm

Thursday 23 March 2023 at 1.05pm

Tuesday 16 May 2023 at 1.05pm

Thursday 15 June 2023 at 1.05pm

UPDATE REPORTS FROM THE UEC SUB-COMMITTEES

- 18.1 Members of the Committee noted update reports from the UEC sub-committees as follows:

(i) Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) *(copy filed as UEC/130422/014a)*

(ii) Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) *(copy filed as UEC/130422/014b)*

(iii) Student Support Committee (SSC) *(copy filed as UEC/130422/014c)*

EDUCATION COMMITTEES IN 2022/23

(copy filed as UEC/130422/015a and UEC/230622/015b)

- 19.1 Members of the Committee noted, for its part, the paper containing the dates of the Education Committees in 2022/23 and the proposed timings of associated agenda items.

RISK REGISTER

(copy filed as UEC/230622/016)

- 20.1 Members of the Committee noted, for its part, the updated Risk Register, with regards to the specific risks associated with Education.

LEARNING AND TEACHING EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(copy filed as UEC/130422/017)

- 19.1 Members of the Committee noted, for its part, the updated Learning and Teaching Equality Impact Assessment.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ACTION LOG

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JUNE 2022

Minute Point	Identified Action	Individual(s) Responsible	Action Status/Update
7.1	In regard to the National Student Survey (NSS) results, the SSEC to take a lead in reviewing and identifying action points/next steps.	SSEC	Ongoing. This work remains ongoing, however, an update will be provided orally at the meeting of the UEC taking place on 25 August.
8.4	In regard to non-continuation data, members of the were asked to feed back any further comments or suggestions to the Dean for Student Support.	Committee	Complete. Feedback should now have been returned to the Dean as requested.
9.3	In regard to the final report of the Delivery of Education TFG, members of the committee were asked to return any further feedback by the end of August.	Committee	Ongoing. Feedback should be as requested, by the end of August.
14.3	In regard to the Deadlines for the Return of Results in 2022/23, feedback to be taken away and a final position communicated to the Committee.	Clerk	Complete. An update will be provided on agenda of the UEC taking place on 25 August.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN 2040: PLAN FOR EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to provide members of the University Education Committee (UEC) with an update on the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan.

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 consider the updated Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan, attached as Annex A.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Following initial communications to the UEC in October 2021 and June 2022, a further update on the development of key areas of activity as part of our overall approach to our Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum, is attached as *Annex A*.
- 4.2 Members of the UEC are asked to consider and discuss the updates.

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)

5 August 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS) 2022 RESULTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to provide members of the University Education Committee (UEC) with an analysis of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2022 Results.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Student Support and Experience Committee	23 August 2022
Further consideration/ approval required by	-	-

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members of the UEC are invited to consider and discuss the analysis, undertaken by the Directorate of Planning, attached as Annex A.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Members of the UEC are asked to consider and discuss the update provided in the attached Annex A.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

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

5 August 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open



National Student Survey 2022 Results (initial report)

Analysis by the Directorate of Planning

8th July 2022

Background & Outline Methodology

The National Student Survey (NSS) is undertaken annually by students across the higher education sector. As such, it is published every year and is a rich and influential source of information about higher education. The survey is a key component of the quality assurance and wider regulatory landscape in UK higher education, and the results are also utilised by the three domestic league tables for ranking universities (Times & Sunday Times Good University Guide, Complete University Guide, and the Guardian University Guide). The survey is completed by final-year students at:

- All publicly funded higher education universities and colleges in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland
- Further education colleges in England and Northern Ireland
- Further education institutions (FEIs) in Wales (with directly funded higher education students)

For the purposes of ranking the University of Aberdeen in the UK higher education sector, the institutional-level rankings have considered 124 higher education institutions that are large enough to be ordinarily included in UK university league table rankings. Please note that although this list includes the University of Cambridge and University of Oxford, these two institutions do not currently participate in the National Student Survey, effectively making the ranking out of 122 institutions (see Appendix for a full list).

This report contains the following sections:

- NSS 2022: University of Aberdeen overall performance
- NSS 2022: University of Aberdeen performance by Scale – Score and Rank
- NSS 2022: Institutional Score / Rank / Quartile by NSS Scale and Question
- NSS 2022: Institutional Score by NSS Scale and Question against Benchmark
- NSS 2022: Overall Satisfaction by Subject (CAH Level 3) against Sector - Scores
- NSS 2022: Overall Satisfaction by Subject (CAH Level 3) against Sector – Rank
- NSS 2022: Overall Satisfaction by University of Aberdeen School (CAH Level 3)
- NSS 2022 Response Rates

National Student Survey 2022 Overall Satisfaction

percentage agree **85.6%**  (up 1.1%)

rank **4th**  (up 1 place)

Year	Overall Satisfaction (% agree)	Overall Satisfaction (UK Rank)	Overall Satisfaction (Scottish Rank)
2022	85.6%	4th	2nd
2021	84.5%	5th	3rd
difference	1.1%	1	1
movement	↑	↑	↑

Table 1: University of Aberdeen performance in the National Student Survey 2022 for overall satisfaction compared with 2021.

The University of Aberdeen’s % Agree score for overall satisfaction has risen by 1.1 percentage points from the 2021 position. The University has risen from a UK rank of 5th

to a rank of 4th in 2022. In Scotland terms, the University moved from a rank of 3rd to a rank of 2nd for overall satisfaction.

Chart 1: University of Aberdeen performance for NSS overall satisfaction 2018 to 2022

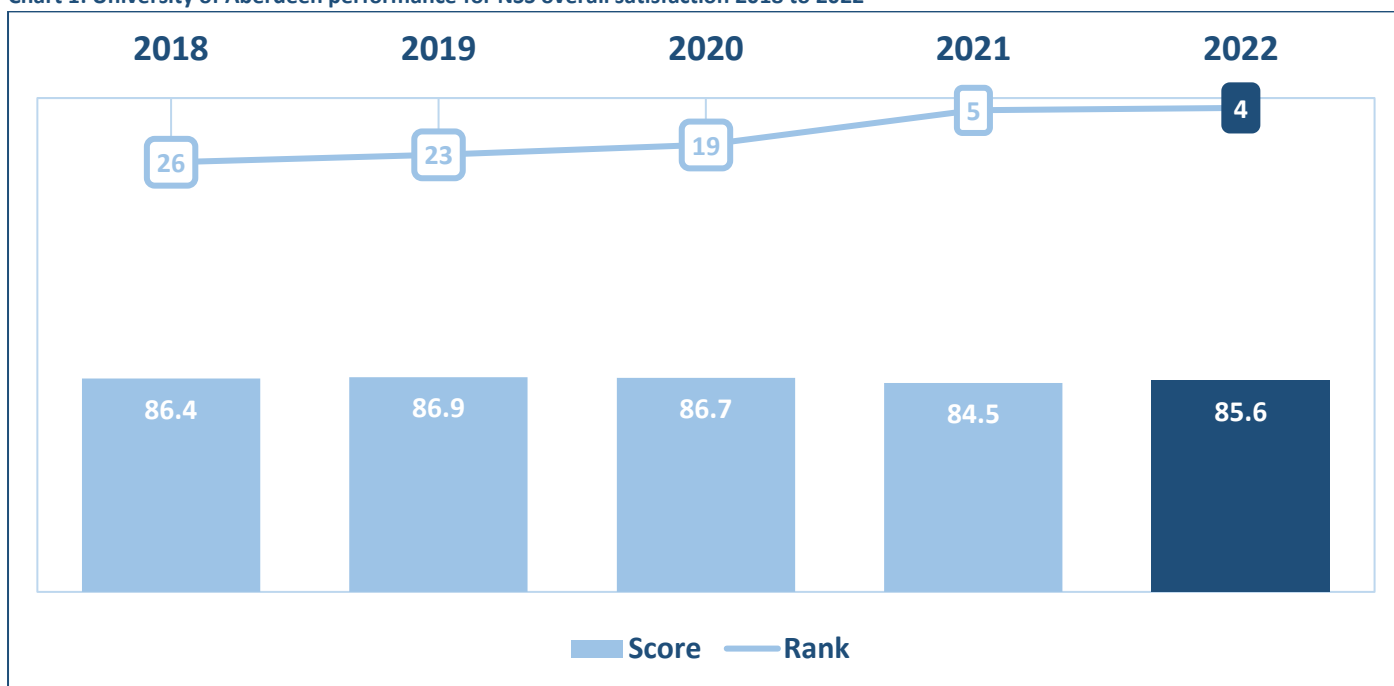


Chart 1 shows that the University of Aberdeen had fairly level performance in overall satisfaction in the NSS between 2018 and 2021, with the score for % Agree being consistently between 86% and 87% before falling by 2.2 percentage points in NSS 2021 to 84.5%. However, there was a rise of 1.1 percentage points from 84.5% to 85.6% in the 2022 survey which results in a sector rank increase from 5th to 4th.

Table 2: University of Aberdeen performance across NSS Scales 01 to 08 in 2022 compared to 2021.

Year	Scale 01: Teaching on my course	Scale 02: Learning Opportunities	Scale 03: Assessment and Feedback	Scale 04: Academic Support	Scale 05: Organisation & management	Scale 06: Learning resources	Scale 07: Learning community	Scale 08: Student Voice
2022 % agree	85.8	81.7	69.8	80.4	80.2	86.4	72.5	74.5
2021 % agree	84.7	81.5	65.3	78.3	76.8	79.8	71.8	70.5
difference	1.1	0.2	4.5	2.1	3.4	6.6	0.7	4.0
movement	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
2022 rank	4	19	57	9	5	9	31	10
2021 rank	12	23	89	14	10	13	21	27
difference	8	4	32	5	5	4	-10	17
movement	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑

The University of Aberdeen has seen a rise in the % Agree across all eight NSS scales. The sharpest % rise was for Scale 06 (Learning Resources) with an increase of 6.6 percentage points.

With regards to rank, the University rose for seven of the eight NSS scales. Scale 07 (Learning Community) dropped from 21st place to 31st place. The largest rise in rank was in Scale 03 (Assessment and Feedback) which rose from 89th to 57th, a rise of 32 places.

Scale 01: Teaching on my course

based on student responses to questions 1 to 4:

1. Staff are good at explaining things. 2. Staff have made the subject interesting. 3. The course is intellectually stimulating. 4. My course has challenged me to achieve my best work.



Chart 2: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 01: TEACHING ON MY COURSE in NSS from 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen rank for the Teaching on My Course scale within NSS has been variable over the last five year period. It should be noted that Aberdeen’s rank of 4th for this scale in the 2022 NSS is the highest rank for the University throughout this period.

The % Agree score for this scale has remained fairly level through this period, however, including the 2022 score of 85.8%. The improvement in rank demonstrates that the University has held up well against the sector.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 2nd for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Scale 02: Learning Opportunities

based on student responses to questions 5 to 7:

5. My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth. 6. My course has provided me with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics. 7. My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt.



Chart 3: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 02: LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES in NSS from 2018 to 2022

The institutional rank for the Learning Opportunities scale had been in general decline for a number of years with the University falling to 105th in the sector in 2020. However, the University has shown strong recovery for this scale since the 2021 NSS, and has continued to improve its rank position, rising 4 places to 19th in 2022.

Throughout the period, the University’s % Agree score has been consistently in the low 80s, with a slight rise from 81.5% in 2021 to 81.7% in 2022. With a generous rise in the rankings, this demonstrates that Aberdeen’s score has held up well against the sector. The University of Aberdeen ranked 4th for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Scale 03: Assessment and Feedback

based on student responses to questions 8 to 11:

8. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance. 9. Marking and assessment has been fair. 10. Feedback on my work has been timely. 11. I have received helpful comments on my work.



Chart 4: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 03: ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK in NSS from 2018 to 2022

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 57th 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.

The % Agree scores over the five-year period have also remained low, although it is worth noting the rise of 4.5 percentage points for the latest year. With a generous rise in the rankings, this demonstrates that Aberdeen’s score has held up well against the sector. The university of Aberdeen ranked 7th for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Scale 04: Academic Support

based on student responses to questions 12 to 14:

12. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to. 13. I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course. 14. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course.



Chart 5: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 04: ACADEMIC SUPPORT in NSS from 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen’s ranking for the Academic Support scale in the NSS has been generally rising over the last five years, despite a temporary dip in 2020. The University is now 9th in the sector in the NSS 2022 results, with the % Agree score increasing by 2.1 percentage points to 80.4%, and a rise in ranking of five places, compared with 2021.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 4th for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Scale 05: Organisation and management

based on student responses to questions 15 to 17:

15. The course is well organised and running smoothly. 16. The timetable works efficiently for me. 17. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.



Chart 6: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 05: ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT in NSS from 2018 to 2022

The institution's rank for the Organisation & Management scale in the NSS survey has been consistently high across the five-year period and remains in the Top 10 for the third consecutive year. With a rank of 5th, this is the highest position the University has achieved within the five-year period.

Aberdeen's score has also risen, increasing by 3.4 percentage points on the previous year. This is the second highest score for this timeline.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 2nd for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Scale 06: Learning resources

based on student responses to questions 18 to 20:

18. The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well. 19. The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well. 20. I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to.



Chart 7: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 06: LEARNING RESOURCES in NSS from 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has performed exceptionally well in ranking for the Learning Resources scale within the NSS in recent years. In 2019 the University made the sharp rise from 52nd to 12th in the sector. The University achieved its highest position of 9th place for the latest NSS results.

In terms of scoring, the University has remained fairly consistent, although there was a drop in score by almost ten percentage points for % Agree in 2021, albeit rank improved somewhat. An increase of 6.6 percentage points for our latest year has helped drive our rank to its highest position in the five-year period. The University of Aberdeen ranked 1st for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Scale 07: Learning community

based on student responses to questions 21 & 22:

21. I feel part of a community of staff and students. 22. I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course.

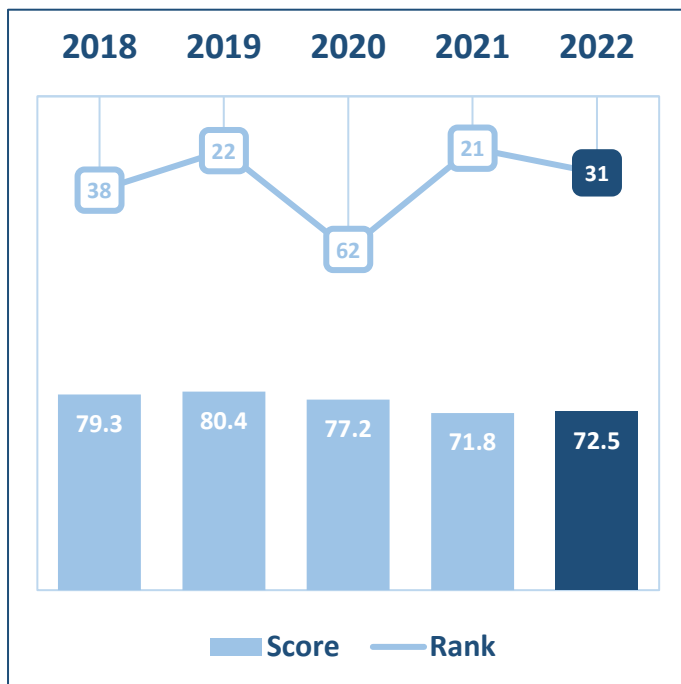


Chart 8: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 07: LEARNING COMMUNITY in NSS from 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has had mixed results for the Learning Community scale in the NSS survey in recent years. Last year the University achieved a rank of 21st in the UK but has fallen ten places this year to a position of 31st, although the % Agree score has improved by 0.7 percentage points.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 3rd for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Scale 08: Student Voice

based on student responses to questions 23 to 25:

23. I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course. 24. Staff value students' views and opinions about the course. 25. It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on.

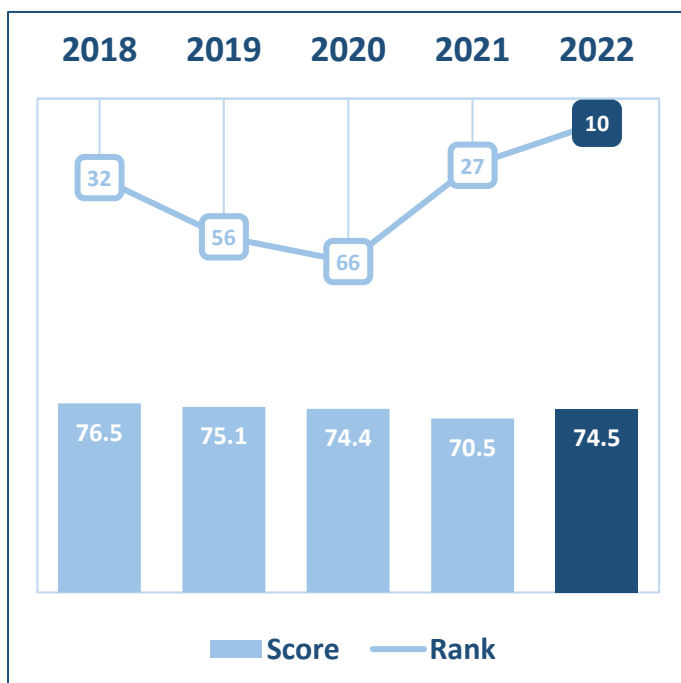


Chart 9: University of Aberdeen performance in SCALE 08: STUDENT VOICE in NSS from 2018 to 2022

The University has improved in rank for the Student Voice scale for the second year running. Having risen 39 places from 2020 – 2021, the latest year has seen Aberdeen rise a further 17 places, ranking 10th in the UK. This rise in ranking is in conjunction with a four percentage point increase in the % Agree score.

Although this is only the third highest score across the five years, the University has achieved its highest rank within this timeframe. This again reflects that the University of Aberdeen is performing well in comparison to the sector.

The University of Aberdeen ranked 2nd for this scale in the Scottish sector.

Students' Union

based on student responses to question 26:

26. The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests.



Chart 10: University of Aberdeen performance in STUDENTS' UNION in NSS from 2018 to 2022

The University has seen both its rank and score for the Students' Union question drop for the latest year (down 46 places/seven percentage points respectively).

Excluding the sharp rise in rank in 2021, the latest year's results are relatively consistent with the years prior.

Aberdeen ranked 10th for this question in the Scottish sector.

Table 3: University of Aberdeen performance across NSS Scales and Questions by Score and Rank/Quartile

Question	2022 Rank (122 HEI's)	2021 Rank (122 HEI's)	UK Rank Change	% Agree	Quartile (122 HEI's)
Q1: Staff are good at explaining things	4	9	5 ↑	90.3	Q1
Q2: Staff have made the subject interesting	12	8	-4 ↓	83.7	Q1
Q3: The course is intellectually stimulating	7	14	7 ↑	88.1	Q1
Q4: My course has challenged me to achieve my best work	13	26	13 ↑	81.0	Q1
Scale 1: The teaching on my course	4	12	8 ↑	85.8	Q1
Q5: My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth	14	22	8 ↑	83.6	Q1
Q6: My course has provided me with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different sources	23	8	-15 ↓	83.9	Q1
Q7: My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt	60	71	11 ↑	77.6	Q2
Scale 2: Learning opportunities	19	23	4 ↑	81.7	Q1
Q8: The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance	63	88	25 ↑	70.2	Q3
Q9: Marking and assessment has been fair	8	27	19 ↑	76.5	Q1
Q10: Feedback on my work has been timely	82	102	20 ↑	61.7	Q3
Q11: I have received helpful comments on my work	50	86	36 ↑	70.6	Q2
Scale 3: Assessment and feedback	57	89	32 ↑	69.8	Q2
Q12: I have been able to contact staff when I needed to	3	7	4 ↑	90.0	Q1
Q13: I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course	10	16	6 ↑	79.2	Q1
Q14: Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course	36	50	14 ↑	71.7	Q2
Scale 4: Academic support	9	14	5 ↑	80.4	Q1
Q15: The course is well organised and running smoothly	10	15	5 ↑	75.2	Q1
Q16: The timetable works efficiently for me	3	10	7 ↑	84.3	Q1
Q17: Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively	4	12	8 ↑	81.3	Q1
Scale 5: Organisation and management	5	10	5 ↑	80.2	Q1
Q18: The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well	16	14	-2 ↓	82.8	Q1
Q19: The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning	8	27	19 ↑	88.0	Q1
Q20: I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections)	7	13	6 ↑	88.4	Q1
Scale 6: Learning resources	9	13	4 ↑	86.4	Q1
Q21: I feel part of a community of staff and students	23	20	-3 ↓	67.2	Q1
Q22: I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course	53	28	-25 ↓	78.0	Q2
Scale 7: Learning community	31	21	-10 ↓	72.5	Q2
Q23: I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course	1	2	1 ↑	90.8	Q1
Q24: Staff value students' views and opinions about the course	12	53	41 ↑	76.4	Q1
Q25: It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on	39	64	25 ↑	56.1	Q2
Scale 8: Student voice	10	27	17 ↑	74.5	Q1
Q26: The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests	95	49	-46 ↓	49.1	Q4
Q27: Overall satisfaction	4	5	1 ↑	85.6	Q1

Across the 27 questions and associated scales in the NSS, the change from NSS 2021 to NSS 2022 has been positive for the University of Aberdeen, with 21 out of the 27 questions and seven out of the eight NSS scales moving upwards in UK rank.

The positive responses place the University in the first quartile for 19 of the 27 questions. 24 out of 27 questions rank in the upper (first and second) quartiles compared to 22 in 2021. At a scale level, six of the eight scales are in the first quartile and the remaining two are in the second quartile.

The following questions and scales should be considered as **areas for improvement** as they are in the third or fourth quartile:

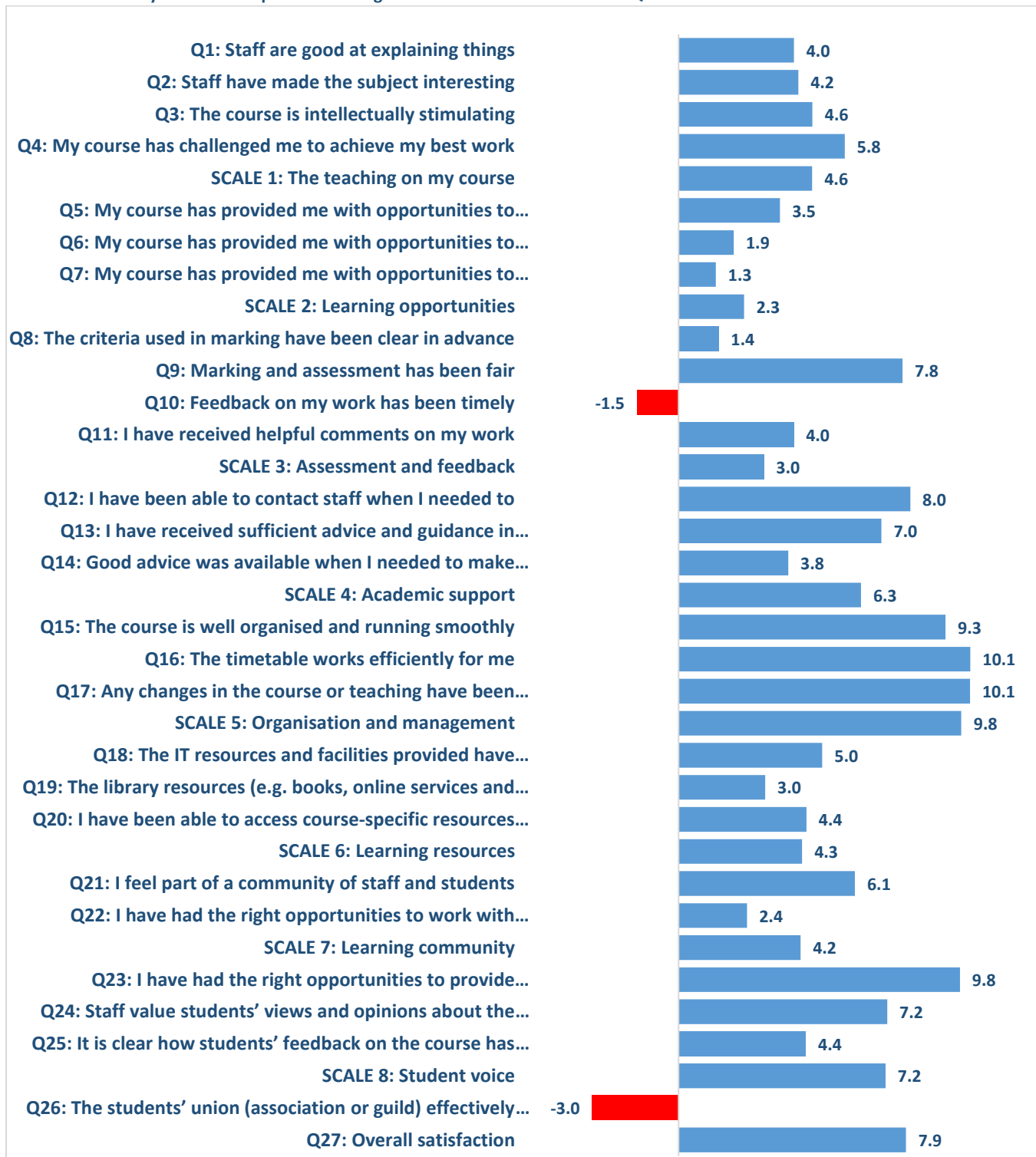
Questions:

- Q8. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance
- Q10. Feedback on my work has been timely
- Q26. The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests

- Quartile 3 – Rank 63rd**
- Quartile 3 – Rank 82nd**
- Quartile 4 – Rank 95th**

Chart 11 shows the difference in % Agree Overall Satisfaction between the University of Aberdeen’s score against the benchmark score.

Chart 11: University of Aberdeen performance against Benchmark across the NSS Questions and Scales 2022

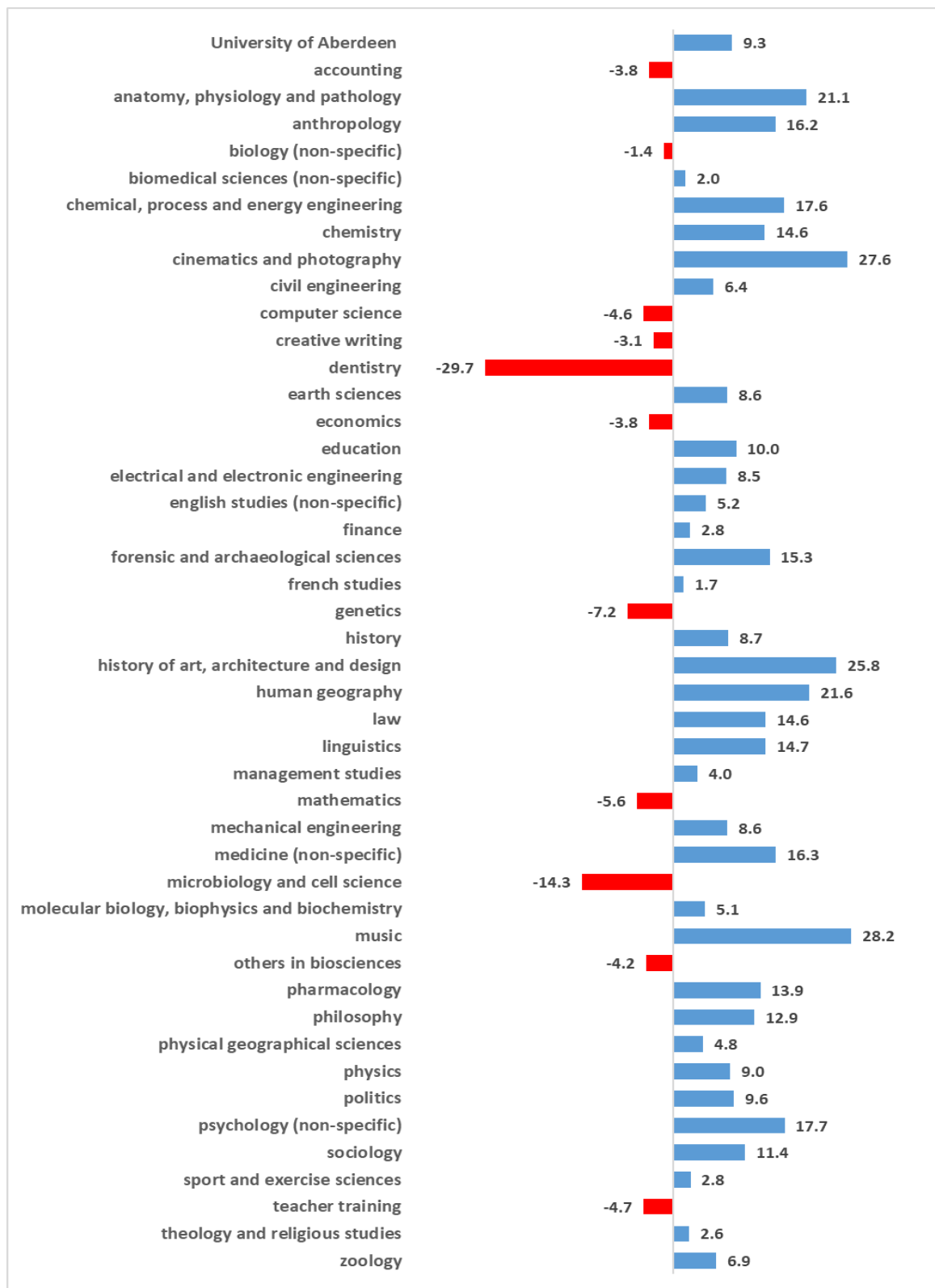


The University of Aberdeen generally performs well against the NSS benchmarks across the questions and scales, with the University score exceeding the benchmark score for 25 of the 27 questions, and in all of the eight scales. The areas where the University has performed less well than the benchmark include Q10 (Feedback on my work has been timely, a difference of -1.5%) and Q26 (The students’ union (association or guild) effectively represents students’ academic interests, a difference of -3%).

NSS 2022: Overall Satisfaction by Subject (CAH Level 3) against Sector - Scores

This section provides a more detailed analysis of individual subject performance in the NSS. Subjects are measured at different levels, known as the Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH). This data is provided by HESA and determines how degree programmes are categorised into distinct subject groupings. Based on these groupings it is possible to disaggregate the University's score for each metric down to subject level. For the purposes of this report, subjects have been analysed at the more detailed CAH level 3. Chart 12 shows the difference in % Agree score for Overall Satisfaction at CAH level 3 subject level between the University of Aberdeen and the sector.

Chart 12: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector across the NSS CAH Level 3 Subjects 2022



The University of Aberdeen generally performed favourably compared to the sector for most CAH Level 3 subjects, with the University outperforming the sector for 34 of the 45 CAH Level 3 subjects to which it has been assigned an overall satisfaction score.

Five subjects enjoy a positive score of larger than 20% against the sector - anatomy, physiology and pathology (21.1% positive gap), cinematics and photography (27.6% positive gap), history of art, architecture and design (25.8% positive gap), human geography (21.6% positive gap), and music (28.2% positive gap). A further twelve subjects enjoyed a positive score of larger than 10% against the sector.

Eleven subjects performed less well for the University against the sector, with the largest gaps observed coming from dentistry (-29.7% negative gap) and microbiology and cell science (-14.3% negative gap).

Charts 13 to 57 below provide an overview of University of Aberdeen performance for Overall Satisfaction at CAH level 3 subject level, between 2018 and 2022, compared to the sector benchmark.

Further analysis of CAH Level 3 subjects is available within the NSS Results dashboard.

Accounting

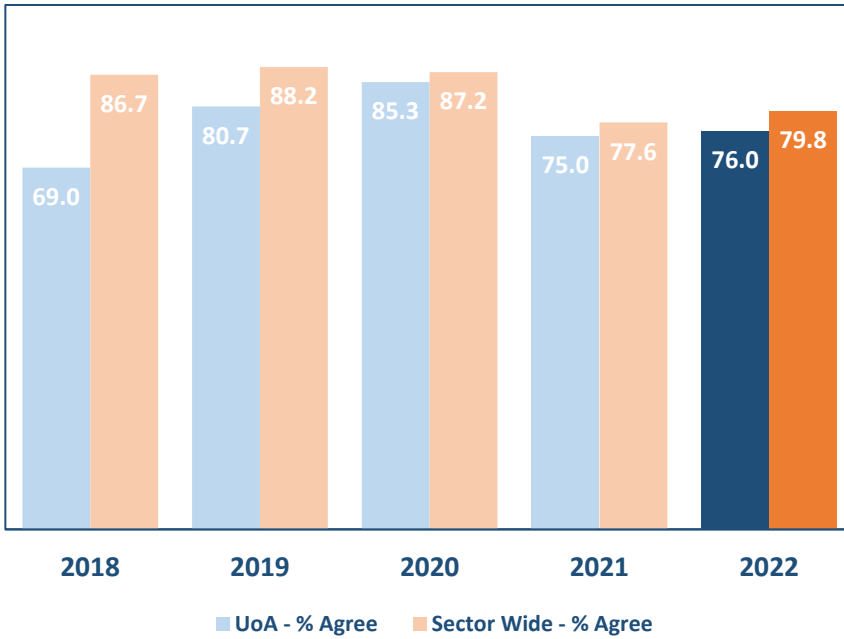


Chart 13: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Accounting, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has consistently scored below the sector benchmark in Accounting since 2018, and in 2022 has scored 3.8 percentage points below the sector benchmark.

Anthropology

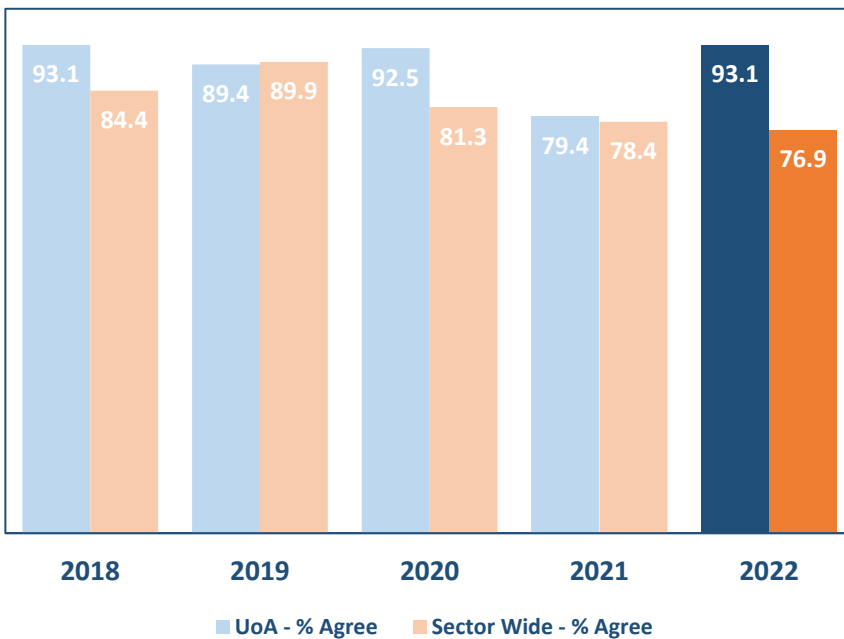


Chart 14: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Anthropology, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector for Anthropology for the previous five years with the exception of 2019 when it fell 0.5 percentage points below benchmark. For 2022, the positive gap is 16.2 percentage points.

Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology

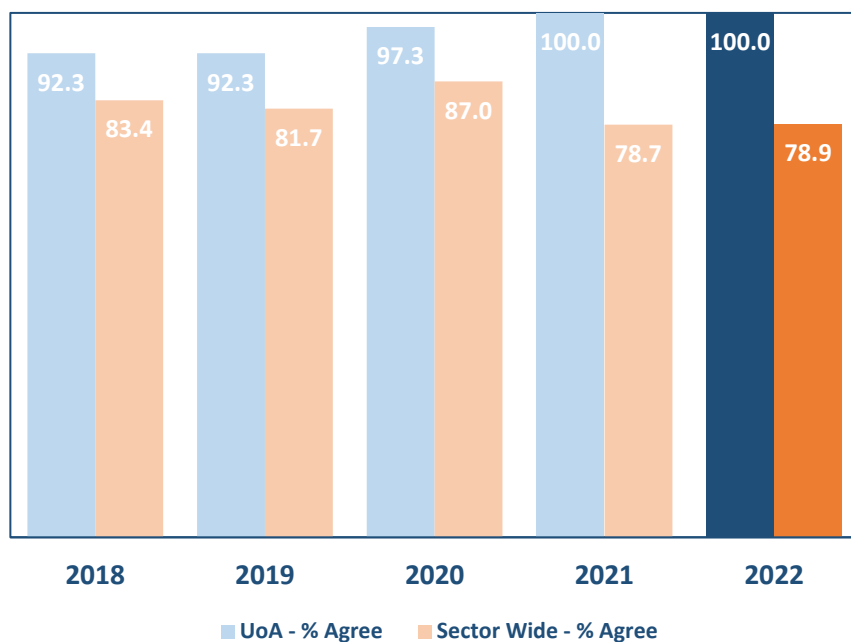


Chart 15: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has significantly outperformed the sector benchmark for Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology for the previous five years. In 2022 the subject achieved 100% overall satisfaction, and a positive gap of 21.1 percentage points compared to the sector benchmark.

Biomedical Sciences (non-specific)

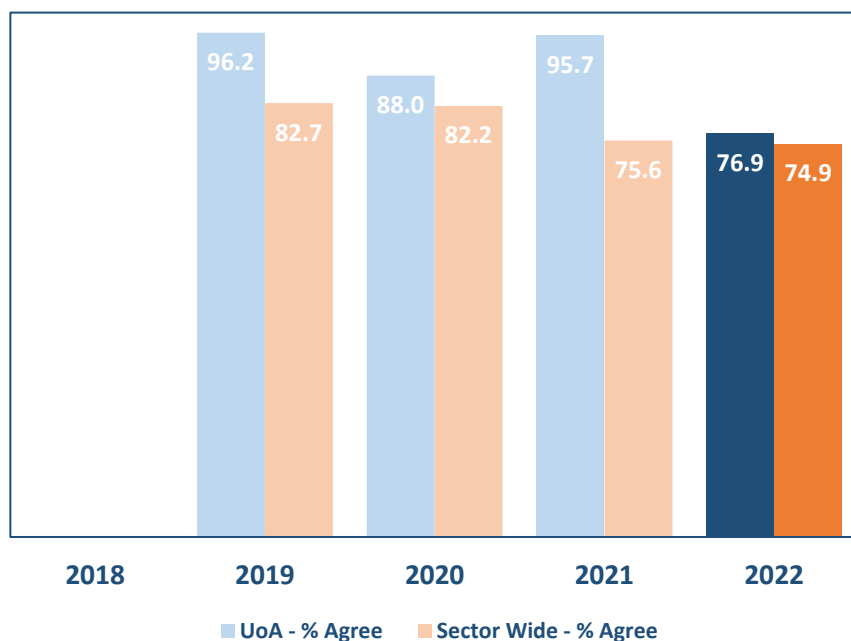


Chart 16: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Biomedical Sciences, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen outperformed the sector benchmark for Biomedical Sciences every year between 2019 and 2022. There was a positive gap of 20.1 percentage points in 2021 which has been reduced to 2 points this year.

Biology (non-specific)

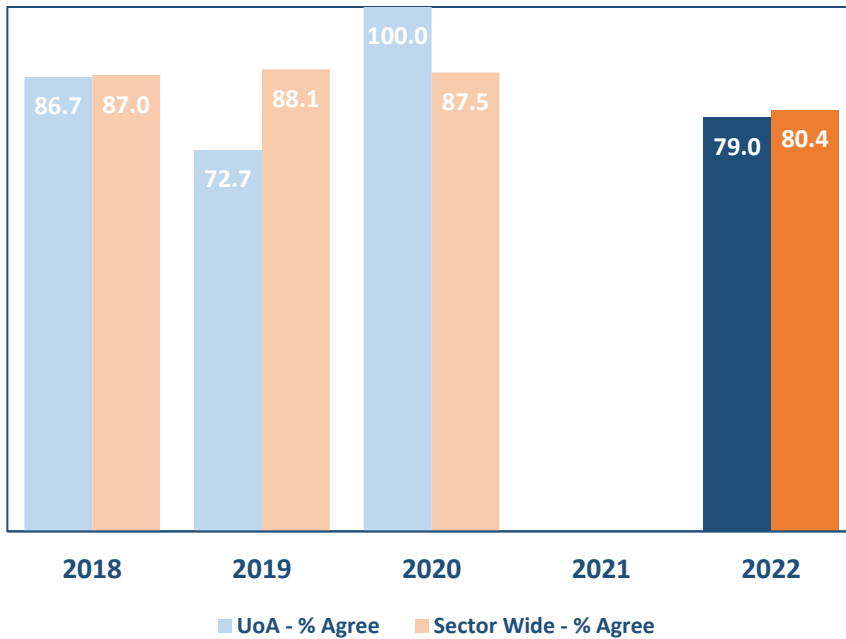


Chart 17: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Biology (non-specific), 2018 to 2022

For Biology (non-specific) the University of Aberdeen’s performance has been inconsistent over the timescale (note that this subject area did not report in NSS 2021). In 2022, the University fell below the sector benchmark.

Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering

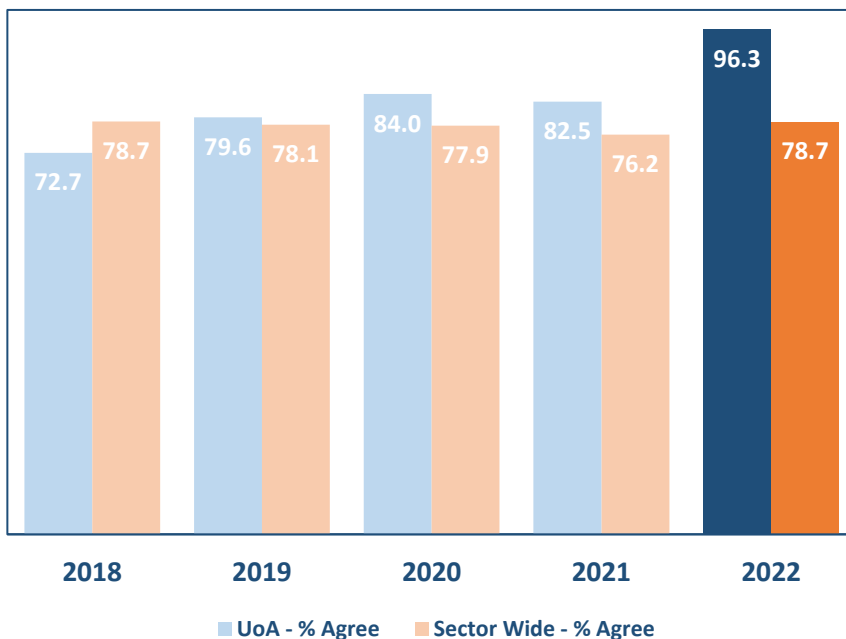


Chart 18: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector for Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering throughout the five-year period, and has significantly outperformed the sector benchmark in 2022 with a large positive gap of 17.6 percentage points.

Chemistry

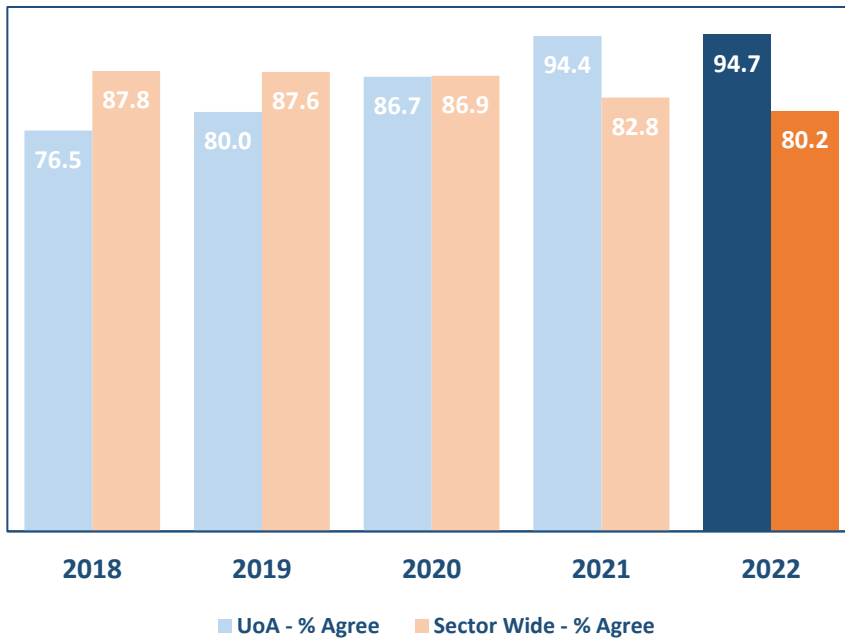


Chart 19: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Chemistry, 2018 to 2022

Satisfaction scores have increased year on year in Chemistry since 2018 and, for the second year in a row, the University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector for overall satisfaction in this subject in 2022, with a positive gap of 14.5 percentage points.

Cinematics and Photography

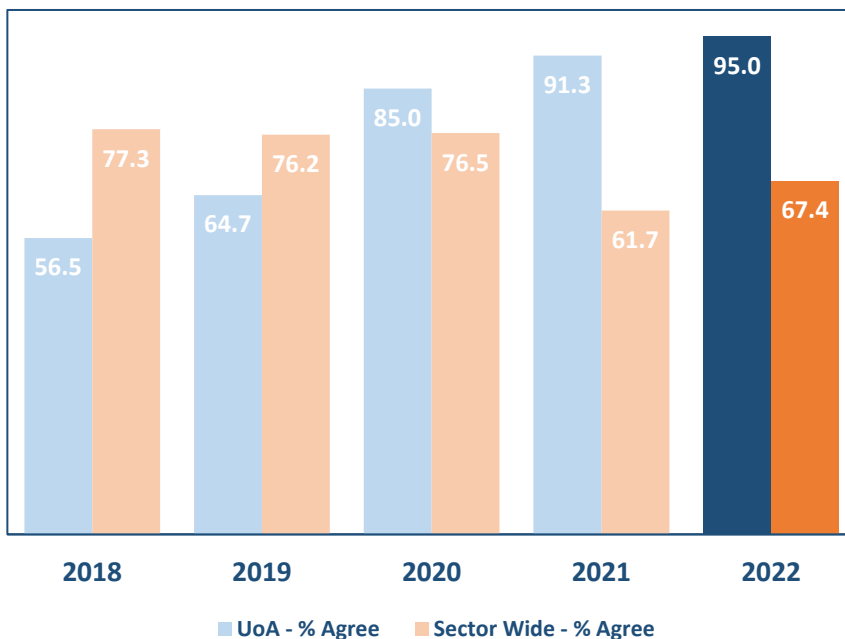


Chart 20: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Cinematics and Photography, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has seen a year-on-year increase in satisfaction scores for Cinematics and Photography over the past five years. In the last three years it has outperformed the sector, with a large positive gap of 27.6 percentage points in 2022.

Civil Engineering

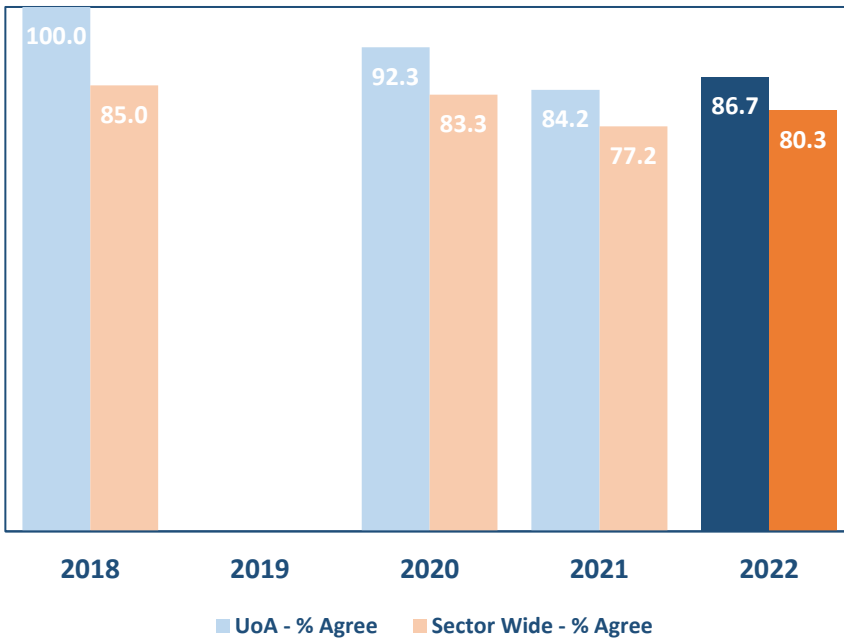


Chart 21: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Civil Engineering, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector in Civil Engineering since 2018 (no result in 2019), and has achieved a positive gap of 6.4 percentage points in 2022.

Computer Science

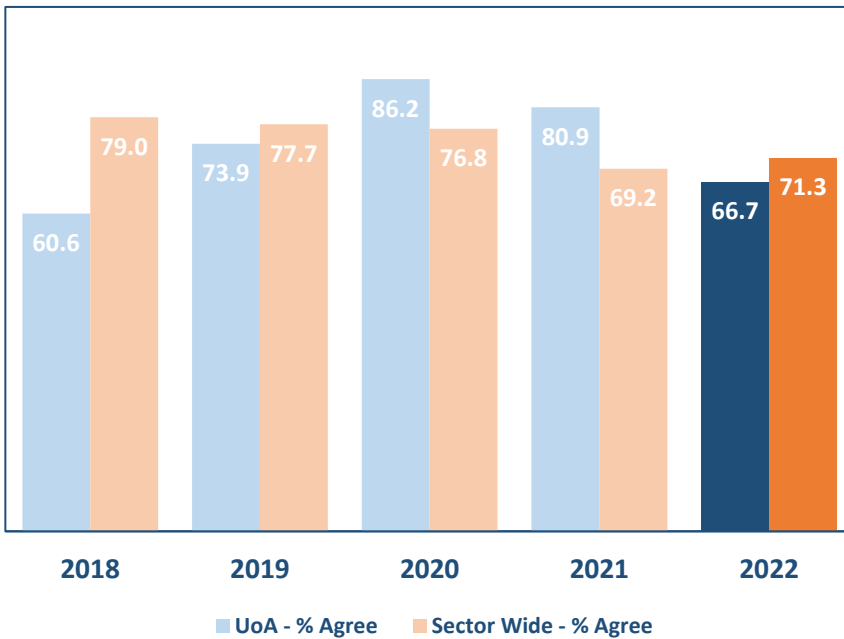


Chart 22: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Computer Science, 2018 to 2022

Performance for Computer Science at the University of Aberdeen has been inconsistent across the timescale. In 2020 and 2021 Computer Science outperformed the sector but in 2022 this subject area has fallen below the sector benchmark with a score of 66.7%, the second lowest since 2018.

Creative Writing

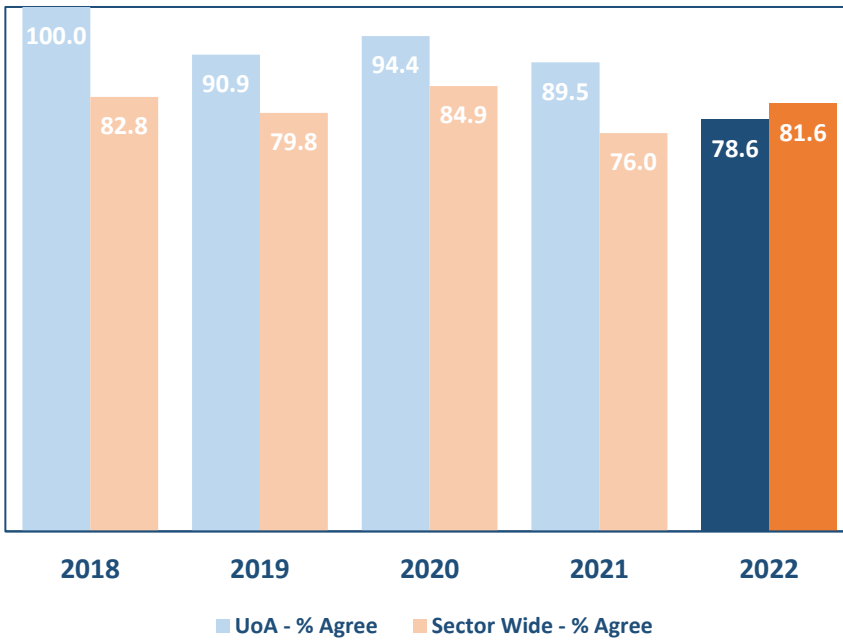


Chart 23: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Creative Writing, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen consistently outperformed the sector for Creative Writing between 2018 and 2021. However, in 2022 the overall satisfaction score has fallen below the sector benchmark to 78.6%.

Dentistry

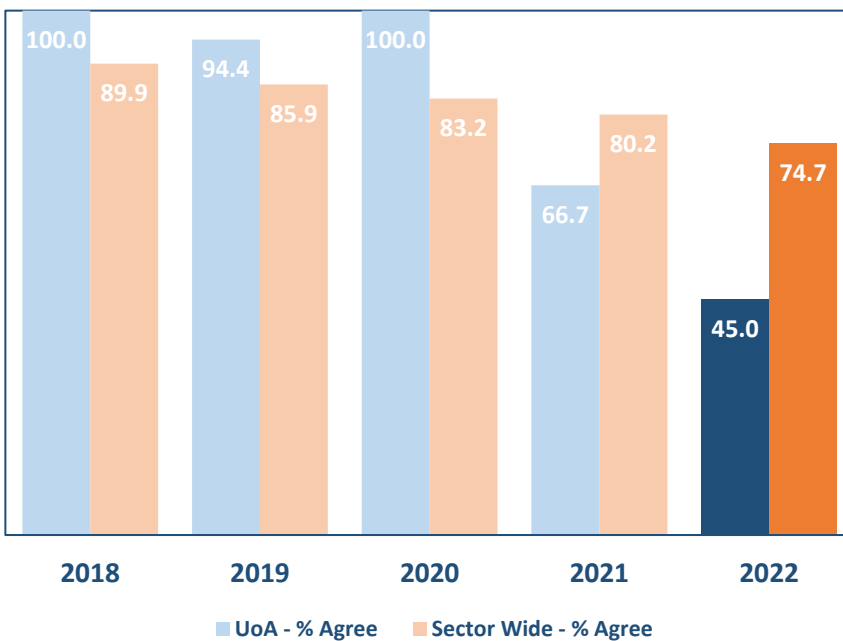


Chart 24: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Dentistry, 2018 to 2022

After a period of consistently high scores between 2018 and 2020, the University of Aberdeen has scored significantly below the sector benchmark for Dentistry in the past two years, with a negative gap of 29.7 percentage points in 2022.

Earth Sciences

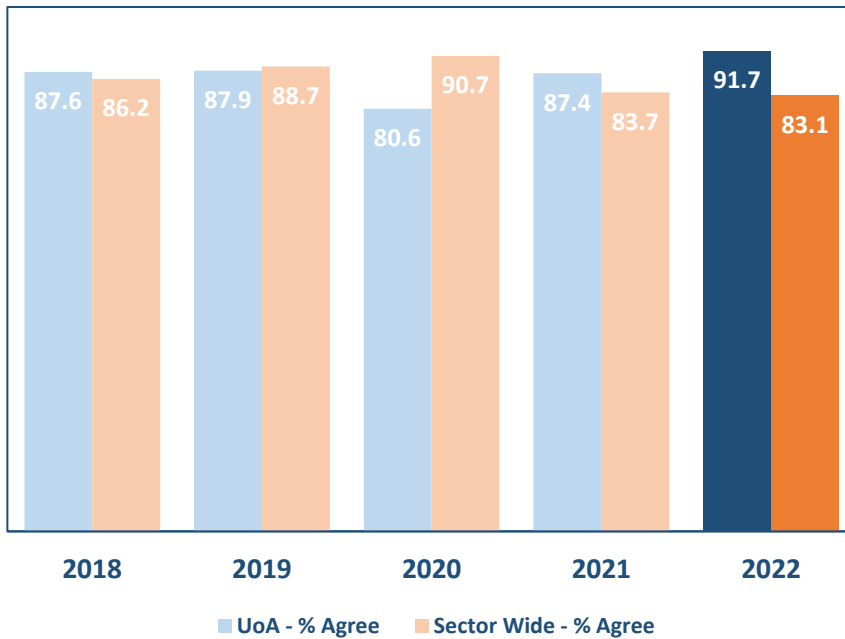


Chart 25: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Earth Sciences, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen performance in Earth Sciences has been variable over the five year period but in the past two years it has outperformed the sector benchmark, and has achieved a positive gap of 8.6 percentage points in 2022.

Economics

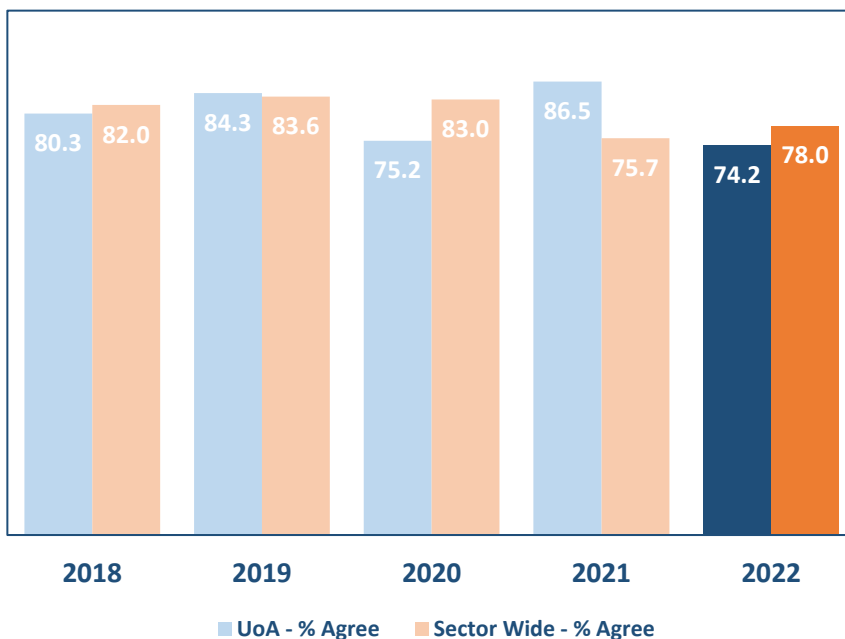


Chart 26: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Economics, 2018 to 2022

Economics has performed inconsistently over the timeline at the University of Aberdeen. In 2022, the University is 3.8 percentage points below the sector benchmark in this subject.

Education

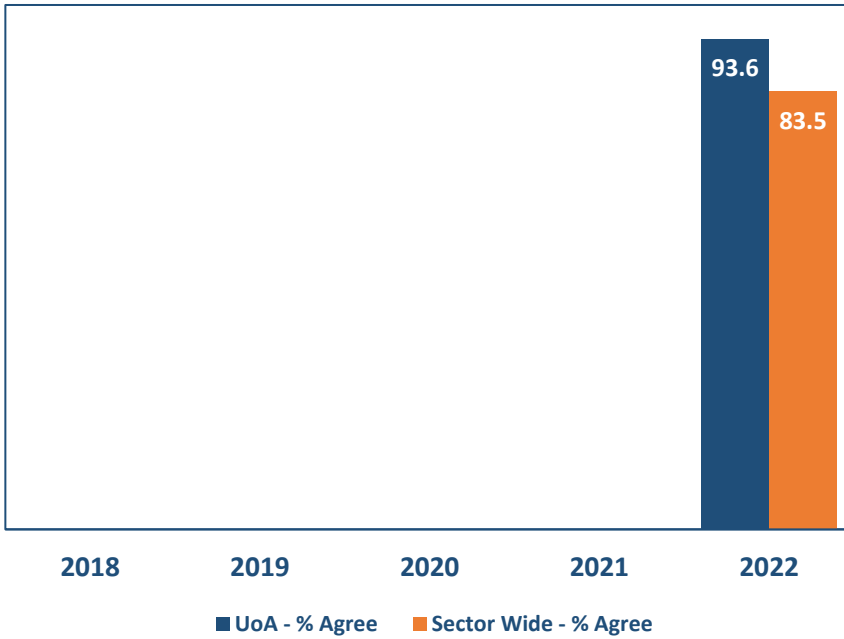


Chart 27: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Education, 2018 to 2022

In 2022, the University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark for Education by 10.1 percentage points. To note: this is the first time that Education has featured in the NSS (outwith Teacher Training).

Electrical and Electronic Engineering

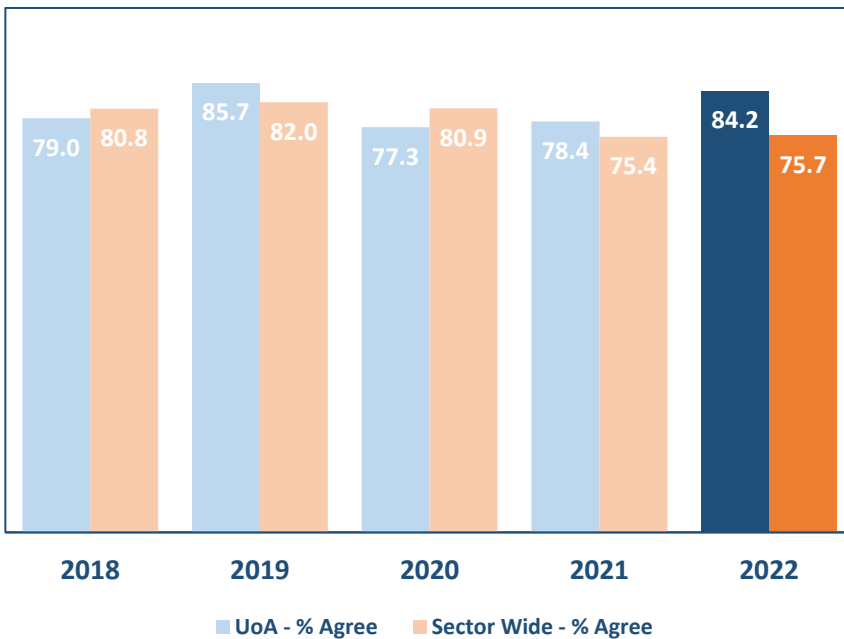


Chart 28: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Electrical and Electronic Engineering, 2018 to 2022

Electrical and Electronic Engineering has performed inconsistently against sector benchmarks over the past five years. However, in 2022, the University has achieved its second highest score in this subject area since 2018 and outperformed the sector benchmark by 8.5 percentage points.

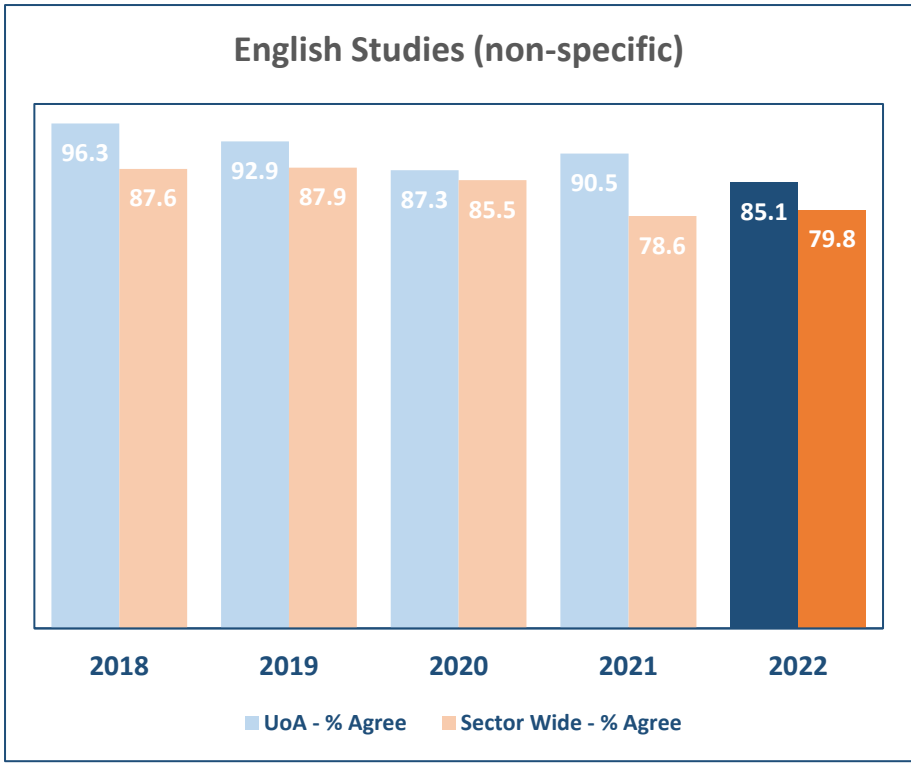


Chart 29: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for English Studies (non-specific), 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector benchmark for English Studies (non-specific), with a 5.3 percentage point lead on the sector in 2022.

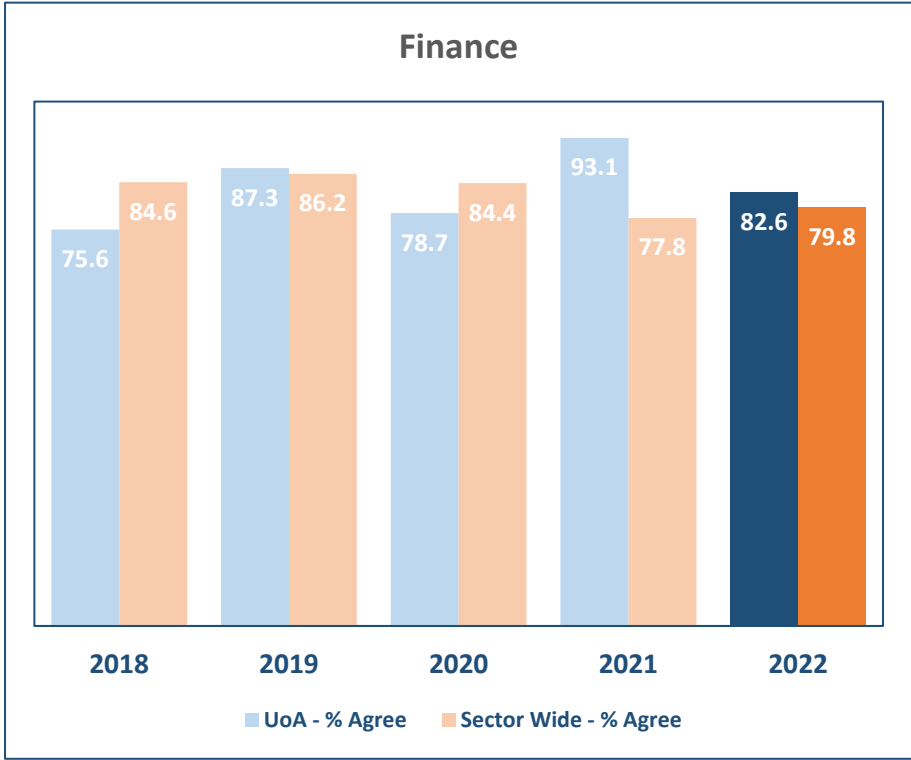


Chart 30: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Finance, 2018 to 2022

Overall satisfaction has varied in Finance with performance above benchmark in three of the five years. In 2021 Finance achieved a satisfaction score of 93.1% which was significantly above benchmark. While Overall Satisfaction has fallen in 2022 to 82.6%, it is measuring 2.8 percentage points above sector benchmark.

Forensic and Archaeological Sciences

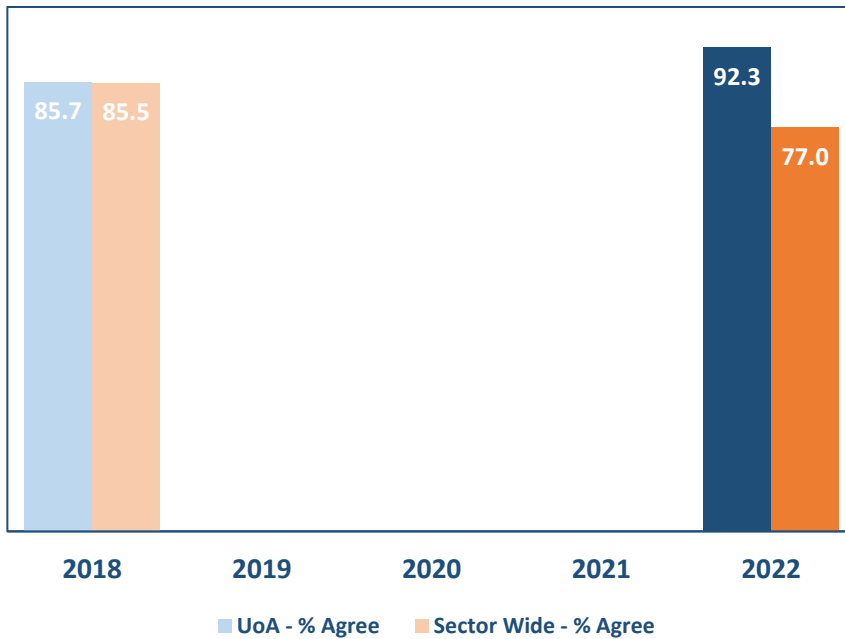


Chart 31: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Forensic and Archaeological Sciences, 2018 to 2022

This subject area did not feature in the University’s NSS results between 2019 and 2021. In 2022, the University of Aberdeen significantly outperformed the sector benchmark by 15.3% for Forensic and Archaeological Sciences.

French Studies

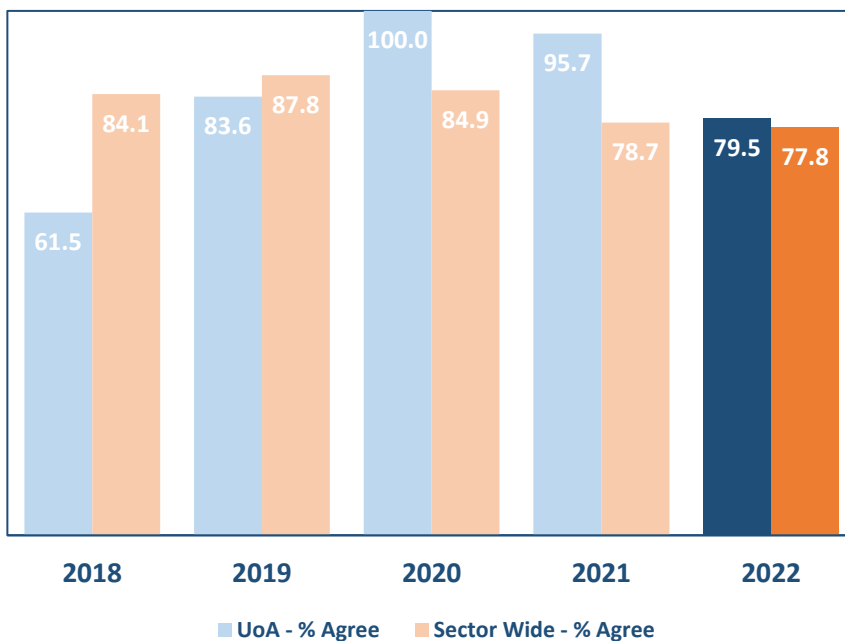


Chart 32: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for French Studies, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark in French Studies for the previous three years although the positive gap has dropped to 1.7 percentage points as satisfaction rates have fallen from 95.7% in 2021 to 79.5% in 2022.

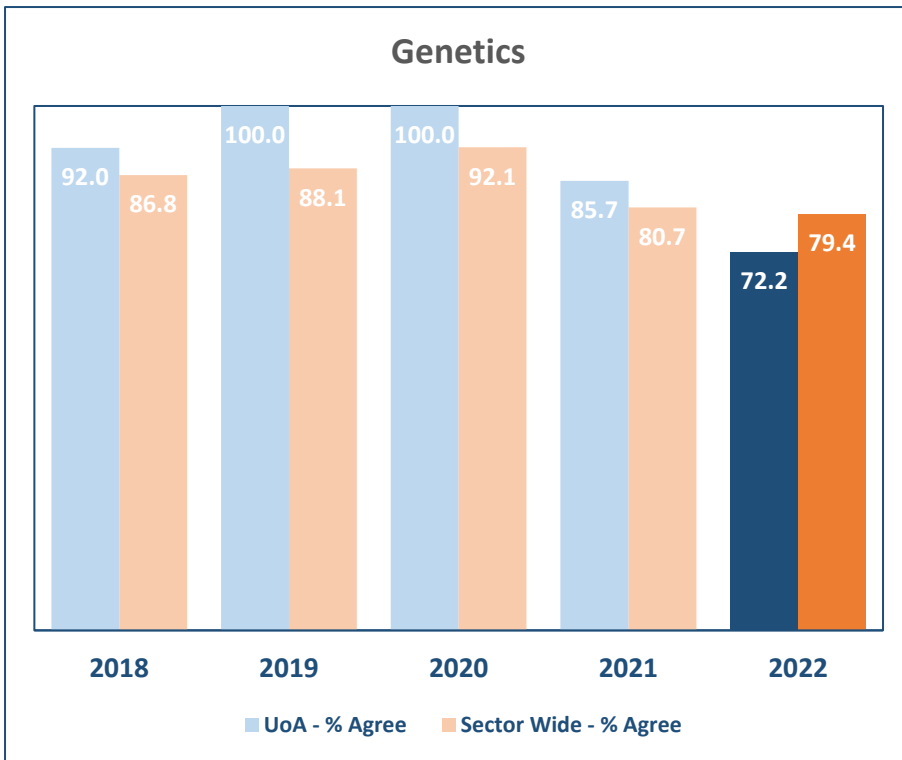


Chart 33: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Genetics, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector for Genetics in four of the last five years. However, satisfaction scores have been decreasing in the past two years and in 2022 the University has scored below the sector benchmark.

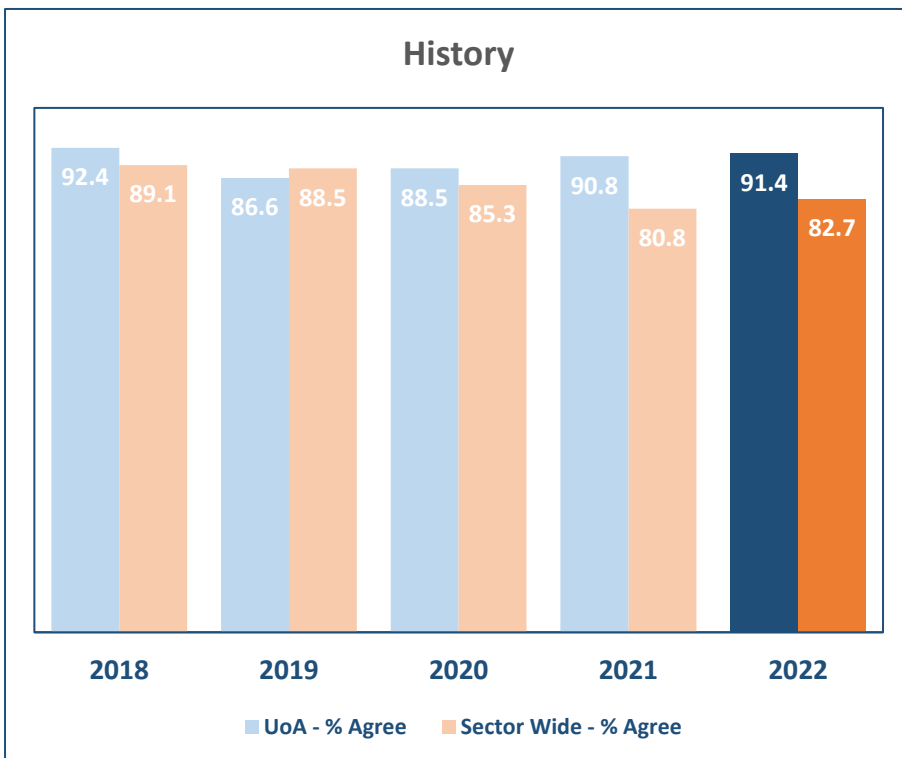


Chart 34: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for History, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark in History every year over the five-year period with the exception of 2019. In 2022, there is a positive gap of 8.7 percentage points.

History of art, Architecture and Design

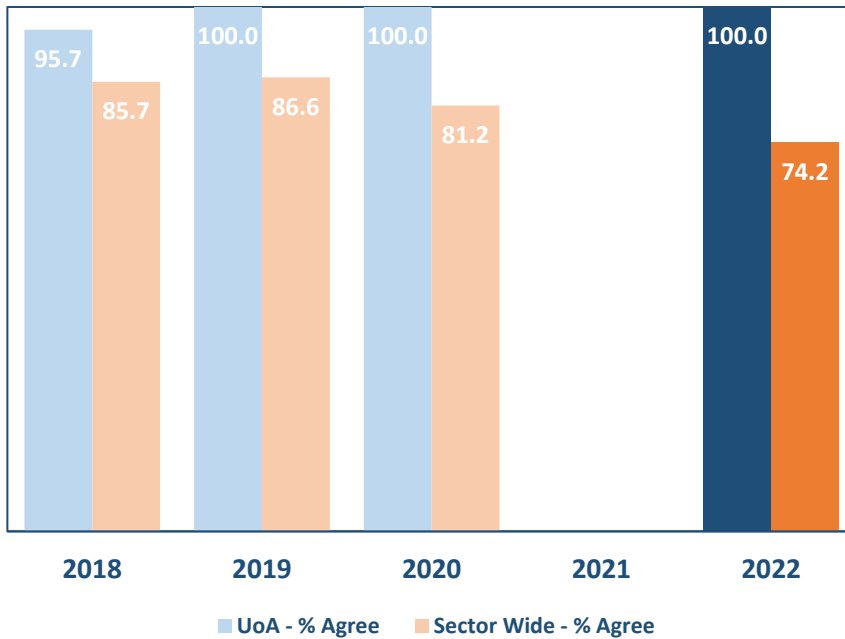


Chart 35: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for History of Art, Architecture and Design, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector in History of art, Architecture and Design (no data is available for 2021). In 2022 the positive gap against the sector benchmark is 25.8 percentage points, with the subject area achieving 100% overall satisfaction.

Human Geography

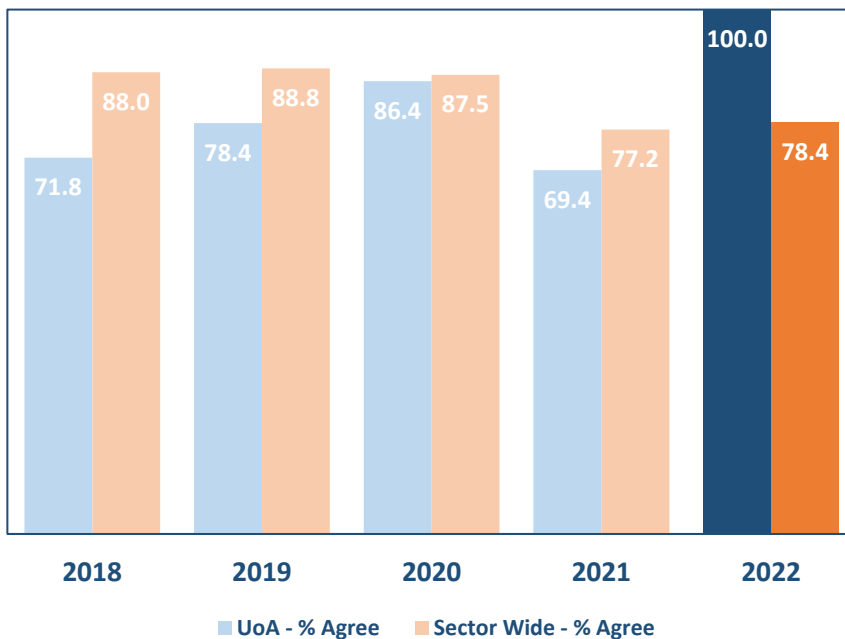


Chart 36: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Human Geography, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen scored below sector benchmark for Human Geography every year between 2018 and 2021. However, in 2022 the subject has outperformed the sector benchmark in Human Geography in 2022, achieving a 100% overall satisfaction score.

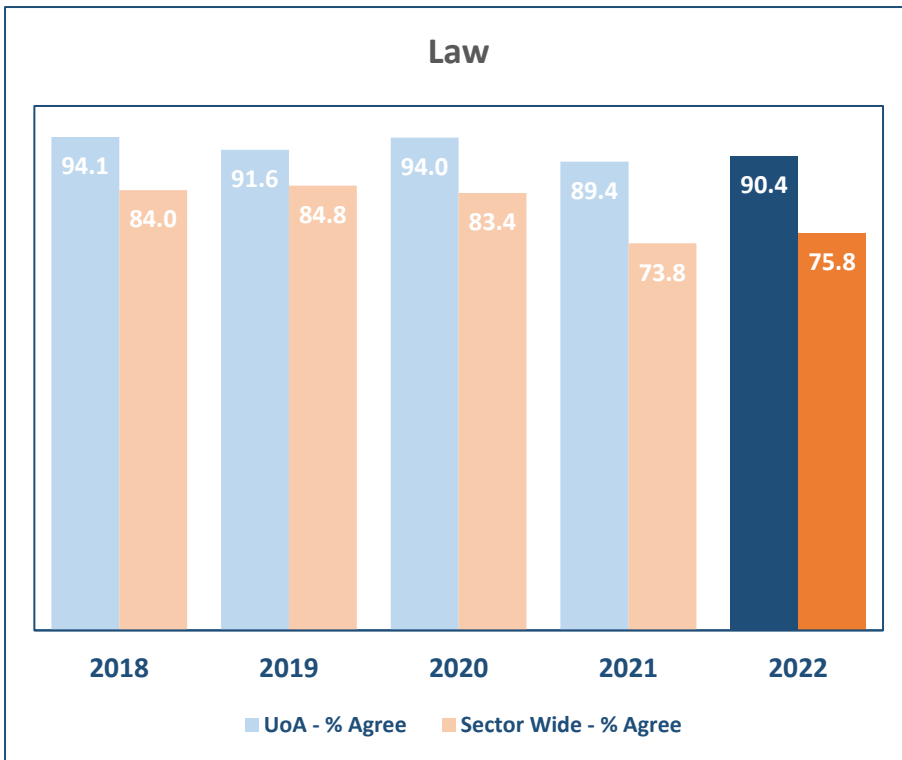


Chart 37: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Law, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector in Law over the five-year period. In 2022 the subject achieved a score of 90.4%, 14.6 percentage points above the sector.

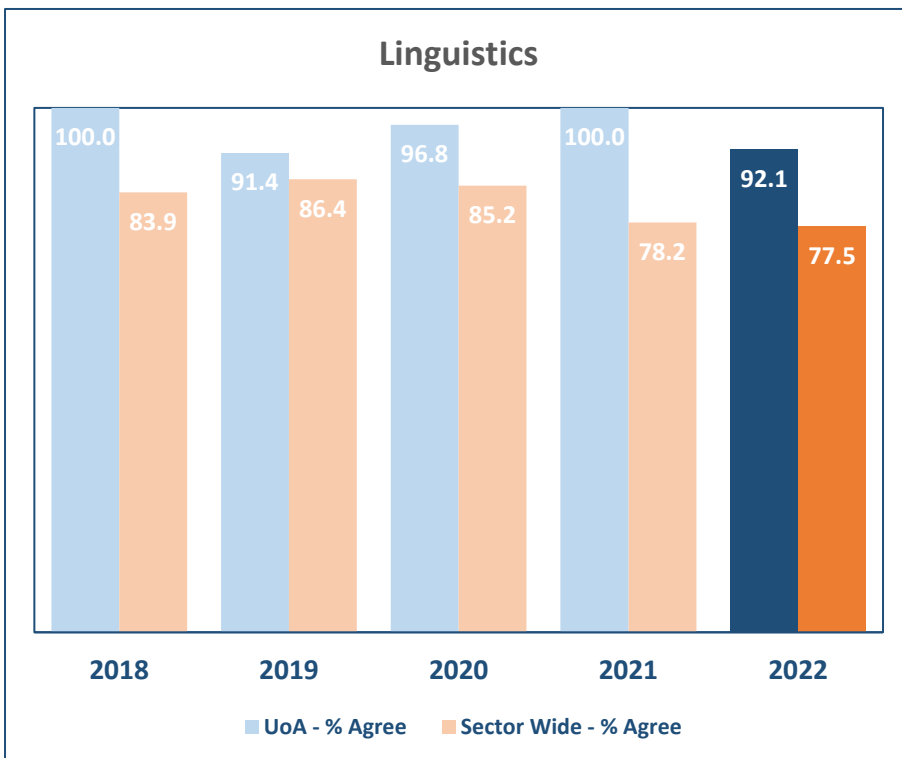


Chart 38: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Linguistics, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector in Linguistics over the five year period with a score between 90-100%. In 2022, Linguistics achieved a score of 92.1% compared to a sector benchmark of 77.5%.

Management Studies

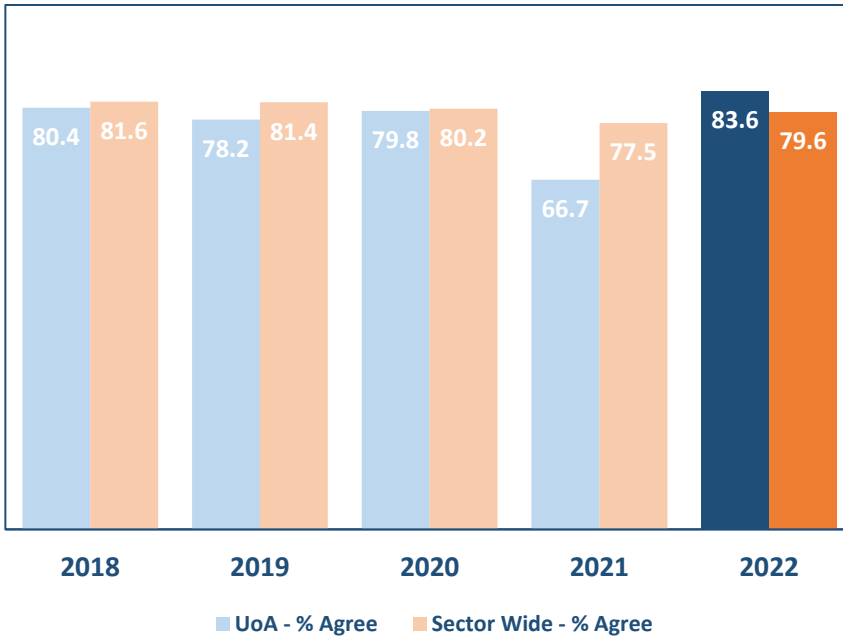


Chart 39: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Management Studies, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark by 4 percentage points in Management Studies in 2022, reversing the previous trend of being below the sector benchmark in the four years previous.

Mathematics

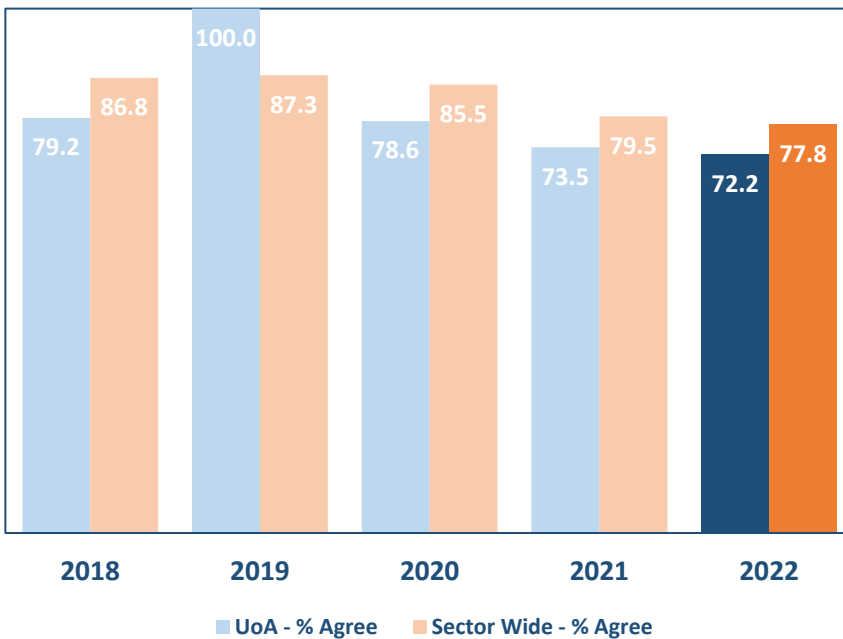


Chart 40: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Mathematics, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has scored below sector benchmark in Mathematics in the last three years and in 2022 has achieved its lowest satisfaction score over this period.

Mechanical Engineering

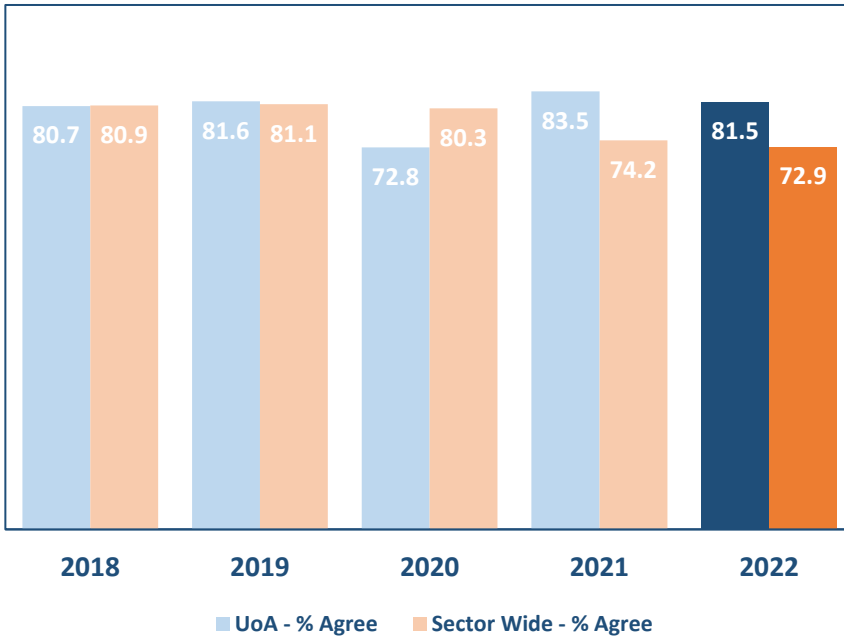


Chart 41: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Mechanical Engineering, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark in Mechanical Engineering in the last two years, achieving overall satisfaction scores of over 80%. In 2022, Aberdeen has achieved a score of 81.5%, which is 8.6% above benchmark.

Medicine (non-specific)

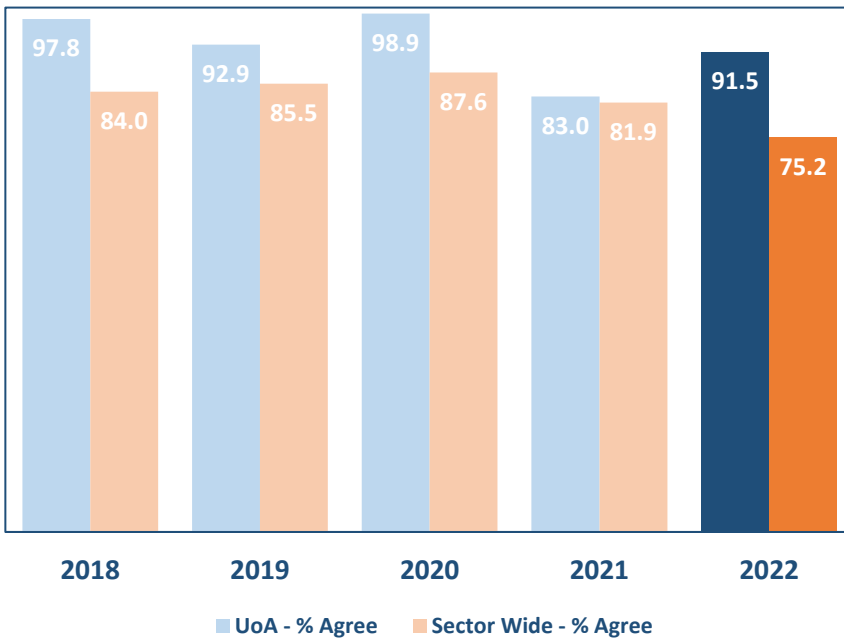


Chart 42: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Medicine (non-specific) 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has consistently outperformed the sector in Medicine (non-specific) over the five-year period, scoring 91.5% in 2022 against a benchmark of 75.2%.

Microbiology and Cell Science

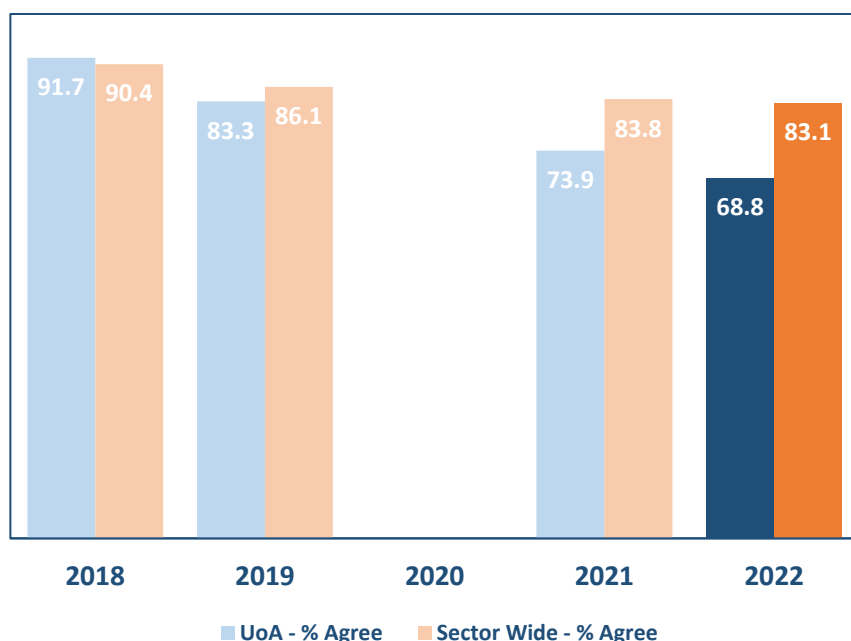


Chart 43: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Microbiology and Cell Science, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has scored below the sector benchmark since 2019 (excluding 2020 when this subject was not included). The latest results show the subject performing 14.3 percentage points below the sector benchmark with a score of 68.8%.

Molecular Biology, Biophysics and Biochemistry

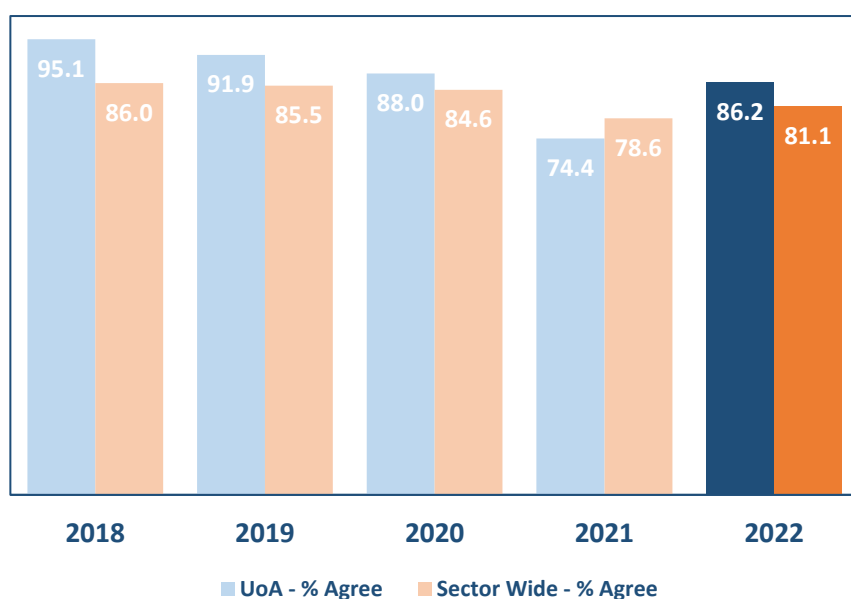


Chart 44: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Molecular Biology, Biophysics and Biochemistry, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark for Molecular Biology, Biophysics and Biochemistry every year since 2018, with the exception of 2021 when it fell 4.2 percentage points below benchmark. In 2022, the University has achieved a score of 86.2% which is 5.1 percentage points above benchmark.

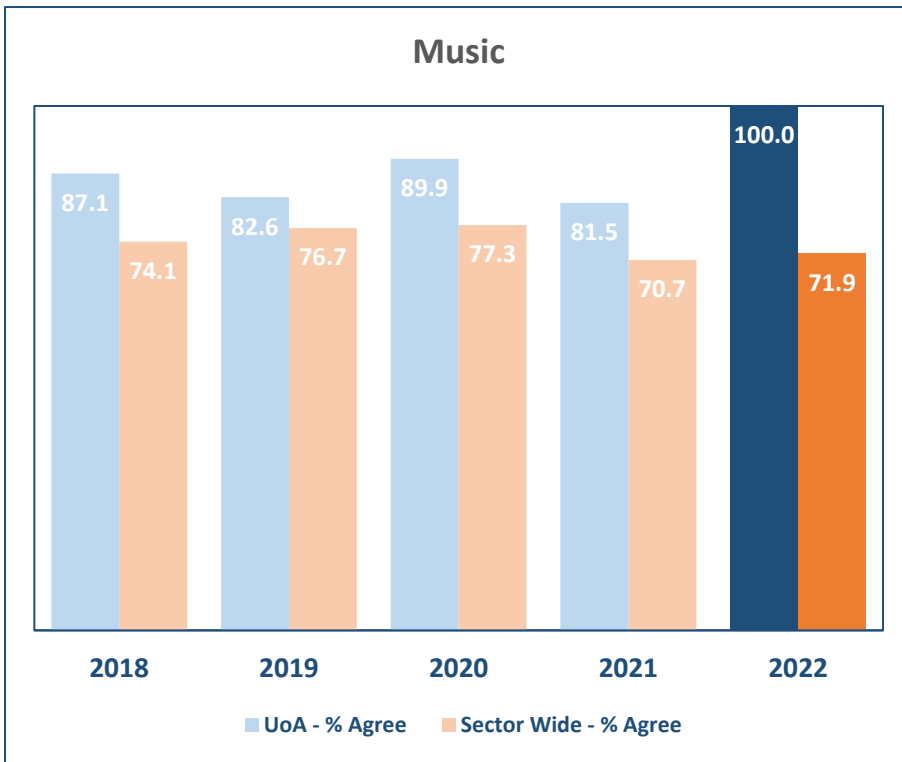


Chart 45: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Music, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark for all five years for Music. The latest year shows a score of 100%, and the subject area now sits 28.1 percentage points above the sector benchmark.

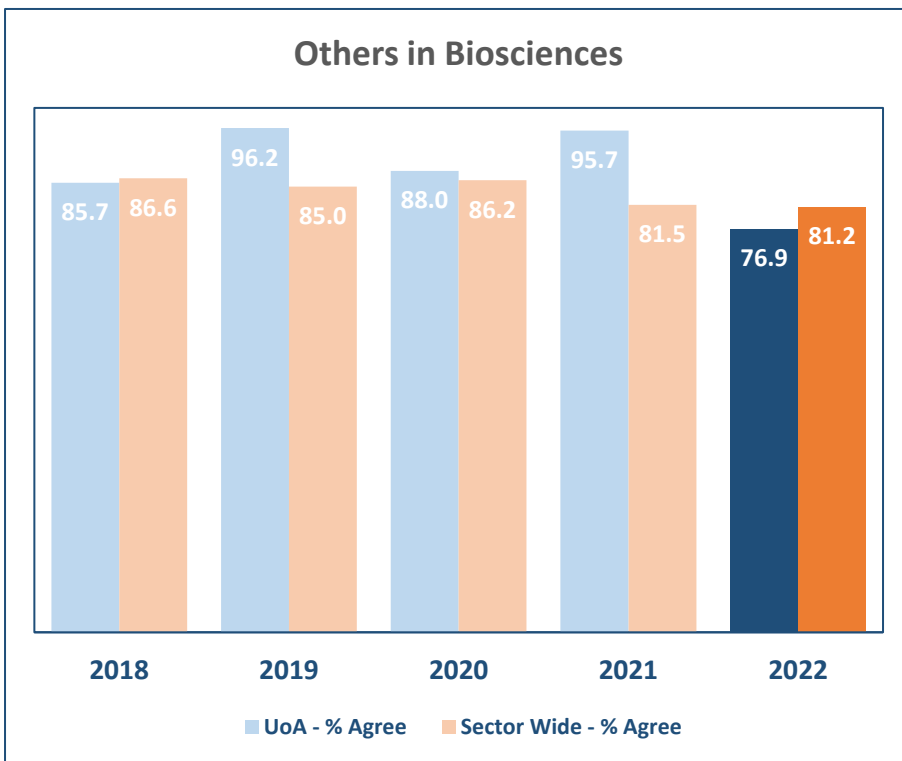


Chart 46: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Others in Biosciences, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen is below the sector benchmark for Others in Biosciences in 2022, having outperformed the sector for the previous three years.

Pharmacology

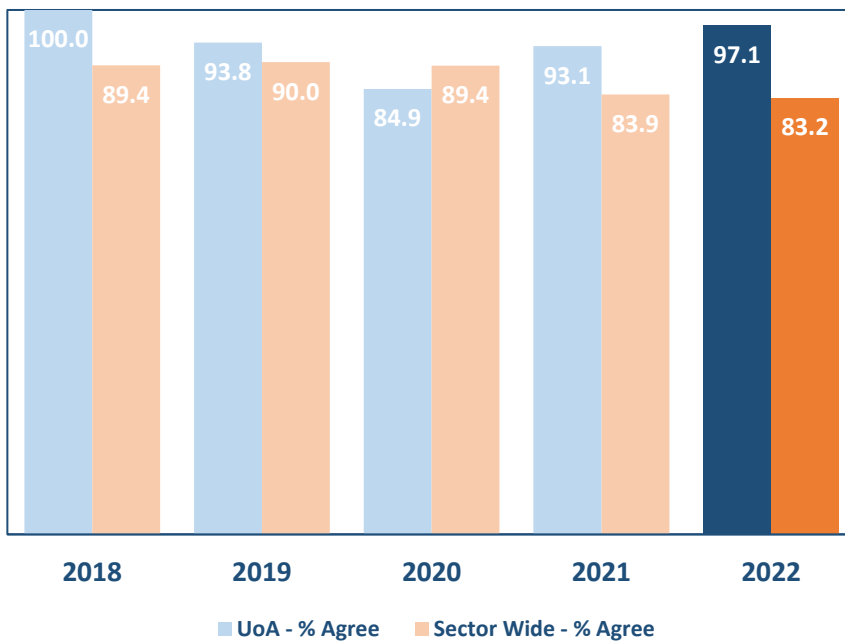


Chart 47: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Pharmacology, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark for Pharmacology every year since 2018 with the exception of 2020. In 2022 it has achieved a score of 97.1%, which is 13.9 percentage points above the sector benchmark.

Philosophy

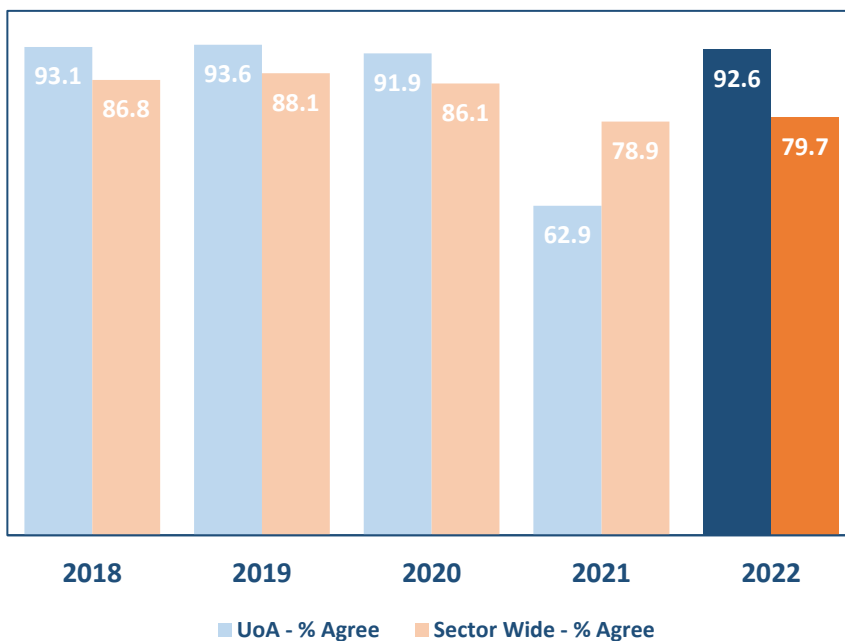


Chart 48: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Philosophy, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has consistently shown strong performance in Philosophy in the past five years, with satisfaction scores above 90%, with the exception of 2021 when scores fell to 62.9% (a negative gap of 16%). In 2022, Philosophy has achieved a score of 92.6% which is 12.9 percentage points above sector benchmark.

Physical Geographical Sciences

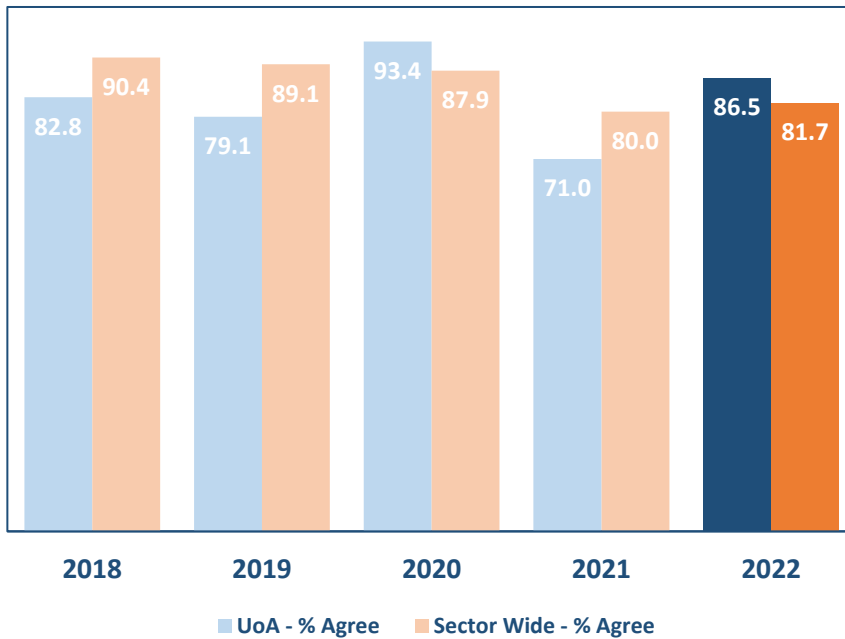


Chart 49: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Physical Geographical Sciences, for 2018 to 2022

Performance for Physical Geographical Sciences has been variable over the past five years. The subject area saw a large fall in satisfaction in 2021 when the score dropped from 93.4% to 71%, but in 2022 the subject has achieved its second highest score in this period of 86.5% compared to a benchmark of 81.7%.

Physics

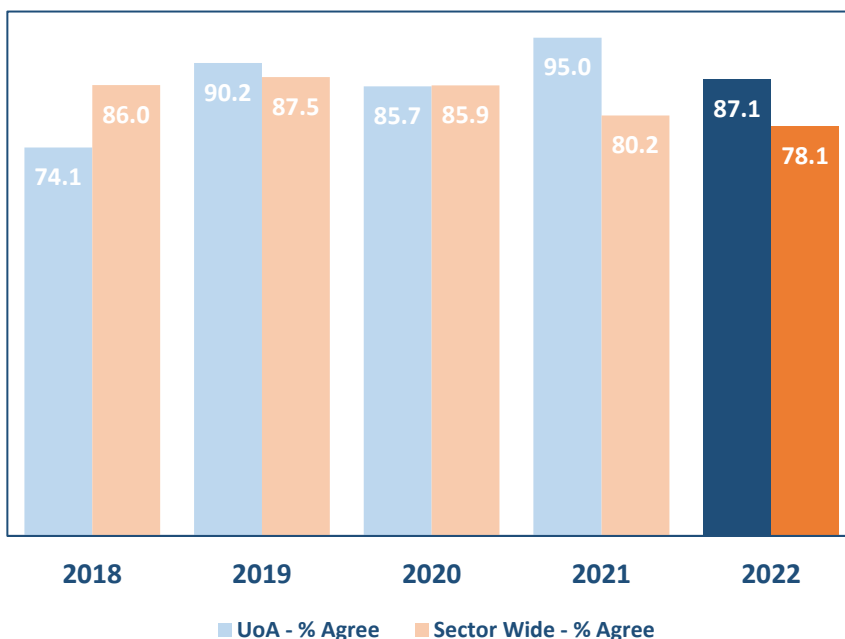


Chart 50: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Physics, for 2018 to 2022

Satisfaction scores for Physics have varied over the five-year period. In 2022, the University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark for the second year in a row, although the gap between the two has shrunk from the previous year.

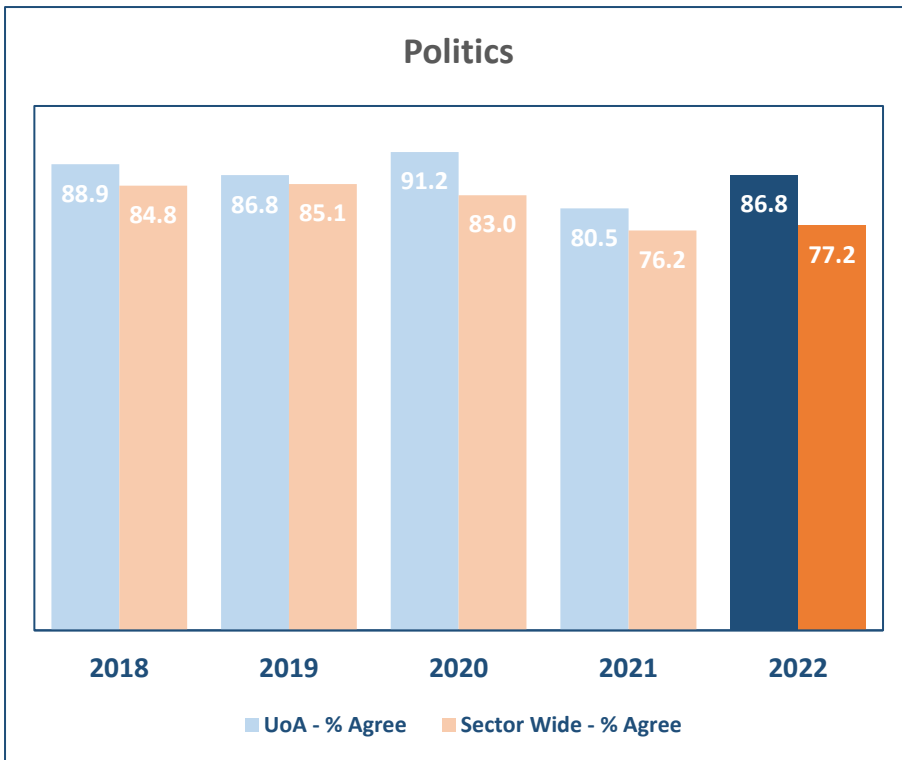


Chart 51: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Politics, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark for all five years for Politics. There has been a rise in satisfaction in 2022 to 86.8% and a positive gap of 9.6 percentage points compared to sector benchmark.

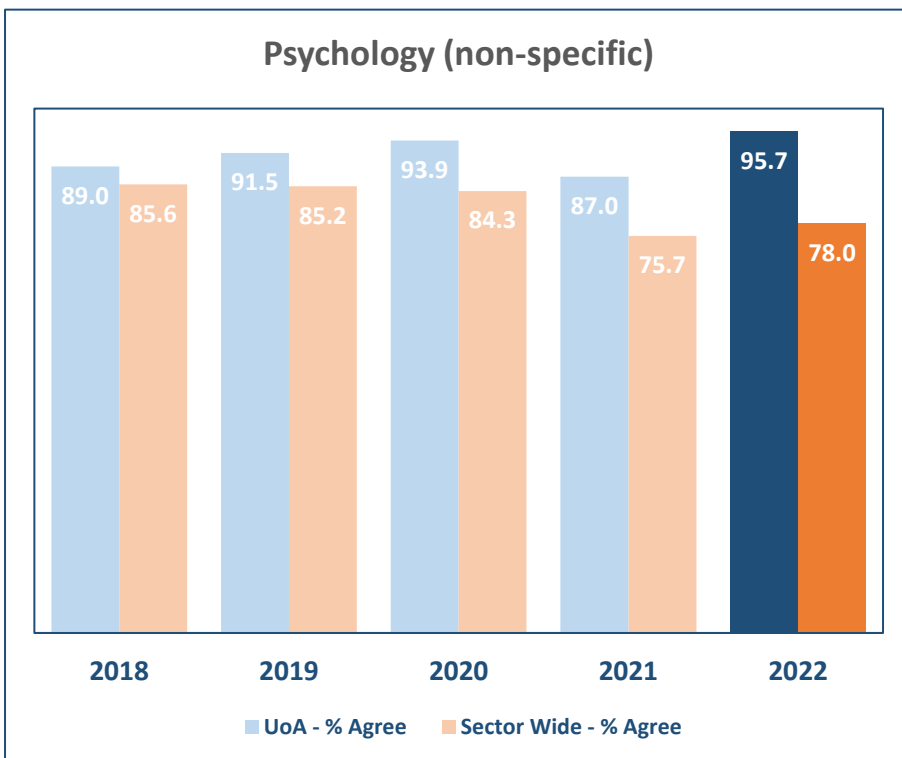


Chart 52: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Psychology (non-specific), for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector for all five years for Psychology. There is an increasing gap between the University and the sector benchmark, with 2022 showing a 17.7 percentage point difference in favour of the University.

Sociology

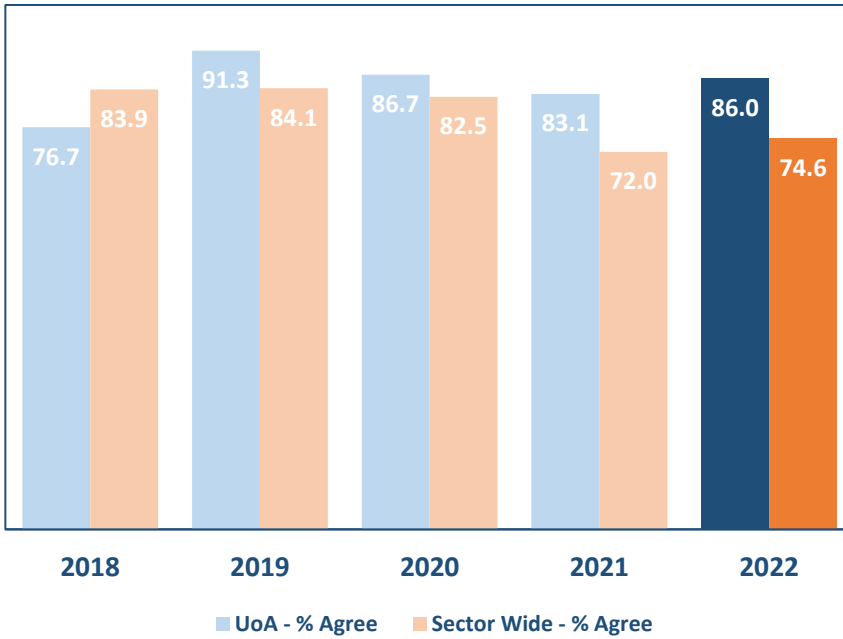


Chart 53: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Sociology, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark for the fourth year in a row for Sociology, with a gap of 11.6 percentage points in 2022, in favour of the University.

Sport and Exercise Sciences

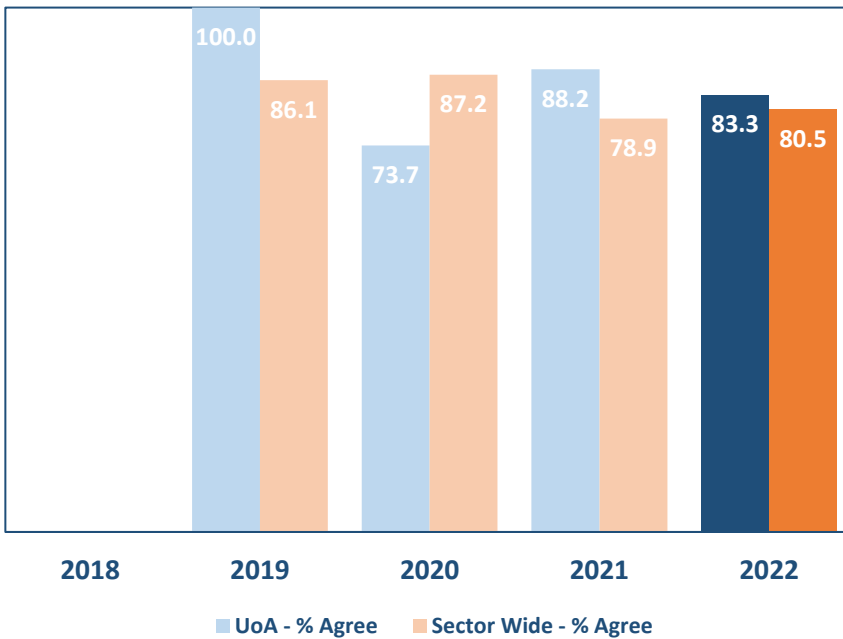


Chart 54: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Sport and Exercise Sciences, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark every year since 2019 with the exception of 2020. For the second year in a row, the subject has performed above benchmark with a score of 83.3%.

Teacher Training

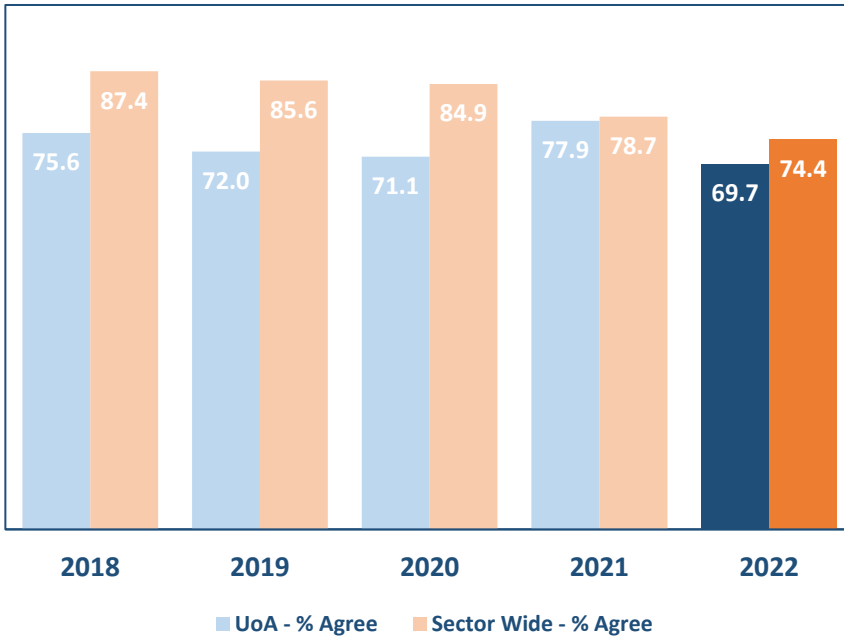


Chart 55: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Teacher Training, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has scored below the sector benchmark for Teacher Training for all five-years. In 2022 there is a negative gap of 4.7 percentage points in favour of the sector.

Theology and Religious Studies

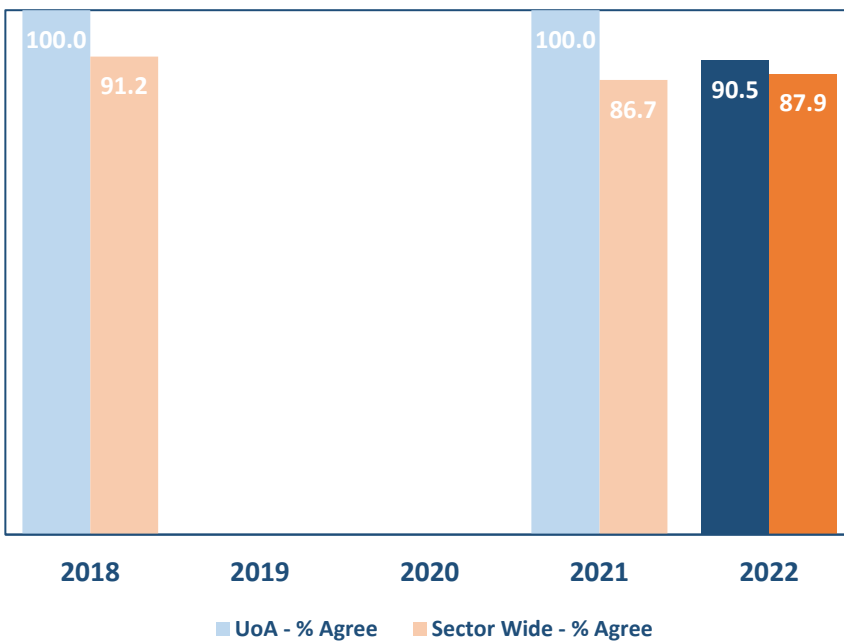


Chart 56: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Theology and Religious Studies, for 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector benchmark for Theology and Religious Studies every year it has been included within the NSS results since 2018 (no result for 2019 and 2020). Following 100% satisfaction scores in 2018 and 2021, the subject area has scored 90.5% in 2022 which is 2.6 percentage points above sector benchmark.

Zoology

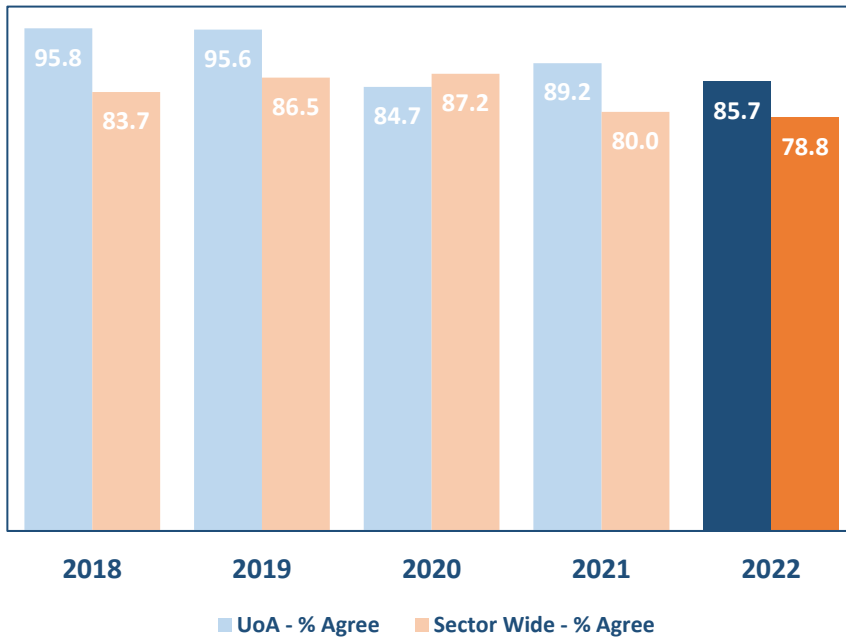


Chart 57: University of Aberdeen performance against Sector for Zoology, 2018 to 2022

The University of Aberdeen has outperformed the sector in the subject area of Zoology every year since 2018 with the exception of 2020. In 2022, Zoology achieved a score of 85.7% which is 6.9 percentage points above sector benchmark.

NSS 2022: Overall Satisfaction by Subject (CAH Level 3) against Sector – Rank

An overview of the University of Aberdeen’s performance for CAH Level 3 with rankings for Overall Satisfaction in the UK is presented in Table 4. Table 4 provides the 2021 and 2022 ranks, the change in rank from 2021, the number of institutions offering the subject, and the % agree for overall satisfaction. Further detail on School performance at this level can be found in the NSS Power BI dashboard.

Table 4: University of Aberdeen performance for CAH Level 3 subjects

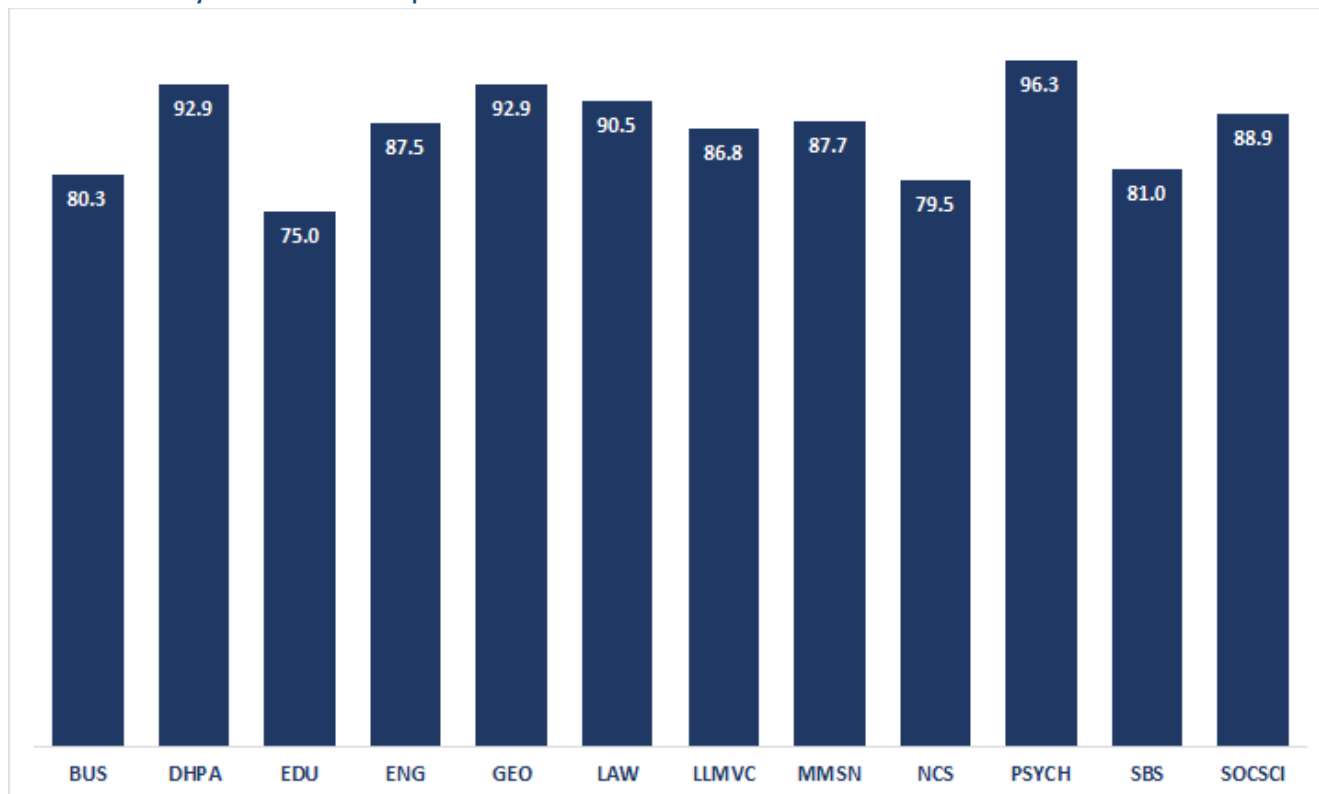
Subject (CAH 3)	2022 Rank	2021 Rank	UK Rank Change	No Institutions (2022)	% Agree
BUS					
economics	57	14	-43 ↓	81	74.2
management studies	16	57	41 ↑	69	83.6
finance	32	3	-29 ↓	87	82.6
accounting	65	58	-7 ↓	102	76.0
DHPAH					
history	14	12	-2 ↓	89	91.4
history of art, architecture and design	1	-	-	19	100.0
philosophy	8	46	38 ↑	47	92.6
theology and religious studies	11	1	-10 ↓	25	90.5
EDU					
education	7	-	-	79	93.6
teacher training	38	37	-1 ↓	58	69.7
ENG					
mechanical engineering	13	11	-2 ↓	73	81.5
civil engineering	13	13	0	58	86.7
electrical and electronic engineering	11	25	14 ↑	69	84.2
chemical, process and energy engineering	1	10	9 ↑	32	96.3
GEO					
earth sciences	4	12	8 ↑	30	91.7
forensic and archaeological sciences	4	-	-	40	92.3
physical geographical sciences	14	33	19 ↑	42	86.5
human geography	1	35	34 ↑	43	100.0
LAW					
law	5	2	-3 ↓	105	90.4
LLMVC					
English studies (non-specific)	23	8	-15 ↓	48	85.1
creative writing	27	7	-20 ↓	54	78.6
French studies	16	2	-14 ↓	34	79.5
linguistics	4	1	-3 ↓	27	92.1
music	1	23	22 ↑	68	100.0
cinematics and photography	2	2	0	74	95.0
MMSN					
medicine (non-specific)	1	17	16 ↑	31	91.5
dentistry	16	14	-2 ↓	19	45.0
pharmacology	2	6	4 ↑	33	97.1
anatomy, physiology and pathology	1	1	0	26	100.0
biomedical sciences (non-specific)	38	3	-35 ↓	74	76.9
microbiology and cell science	14	12	-2 ↓	16	68.8
genetics	13	6	-7 ↓	17	72.2
molecular biology, biophysics and biochemistry	19	38	19 ↑	52	86.2
others in biosciences	14	1	-13 ↓	20	76.9
sport and exercise sciences	29	7	-22 ↓	84	83.3
NCS					
physics	8	1	-7 ↓	47	87.1
chemistry	5	7	2 ↑	58	94.7
mathematics	46	51	5 ↑	68	72.2
computer science	73	12	-61 ↓	103	66.7
PSY					
psychology	3	12	9 ↑	112	95.7
SBS					
biology (non-specific)	32	-	-32 ↓	53	79.0
zoology	10	7	-3 ↓	31	85.7
SOCSCI					
sociology	15	19	4 ↑	102	86.0
anthropology	3	17	14 ↑	22	93.1
politics	13	25	12 ↑	81	86.8

As can be seen in Table 4, the University has achieved excellent rankings in a number of areas. Six subjects ranked 1st in the UK: history of art, architecture and design, chemical, process and energy engineering, human geography, music, medicine (non-specific) and anatomy, physiology and pathology.

Nine subjects ranked in the top five in the UK: earth sciences, forensic and archaeological sciences, law, linguistics, cinematics and photography, pharmacology, chemistry, psychology, anthropology.

Four subjects ranked in the top ten in the UK: philosophy, education, physics, zoology.

Chart 58: University of Aberdeen School performance in Overall Satisfaction for NSS 2022



Across the twelve Schools at the University of Aberdeen, the highest score for overall satisfaction in 2022 is in the School of Psychology with 96.3% agreeing that they are overall satisfied with their programme of study.

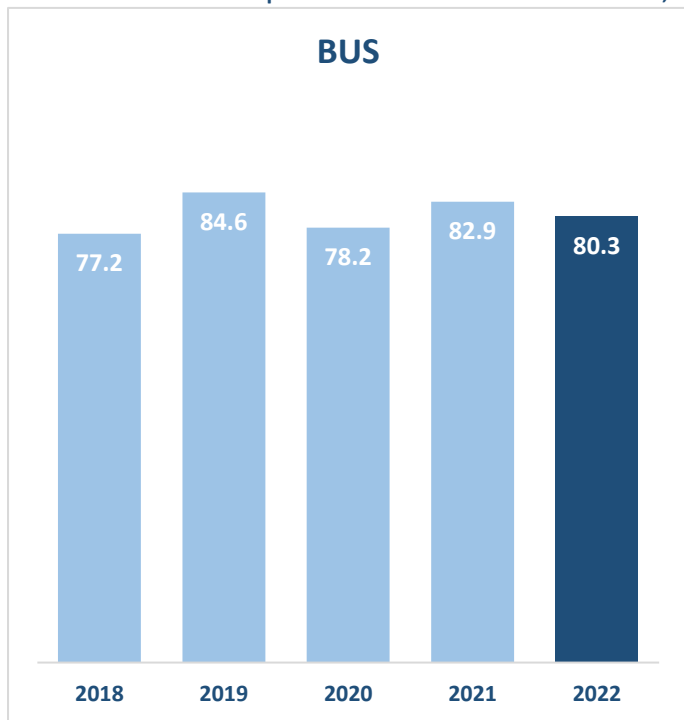
Four out of the twelve Schools have an overall satisfaction rate of 90% and over in NSS 2022: the School of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History, the School of Geosciences, the School of Law, and the School of Psychology.

Six Schools have a score in the 80% to 89% range: Business School, School of Engineering, School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, School of Biological Sciences and School of Social Science.

Two Schools have an overall satisfaction score of under 80%: the School of Education (75%) and the School of Natural & Computing Sciences (79.5%).

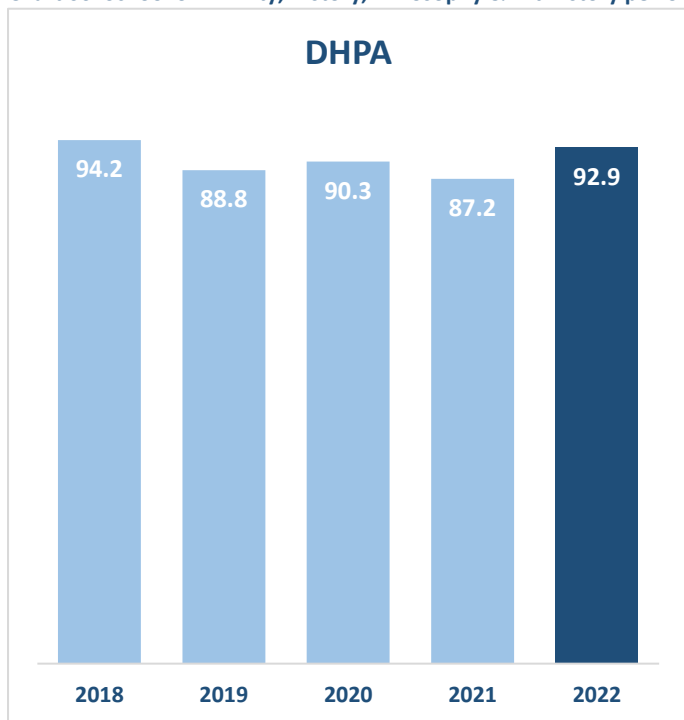
Charts 59 to 70 below provide an overview of School performance for Overall Satisfaction between 2018 and 2022.

Chart 59: Business School performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



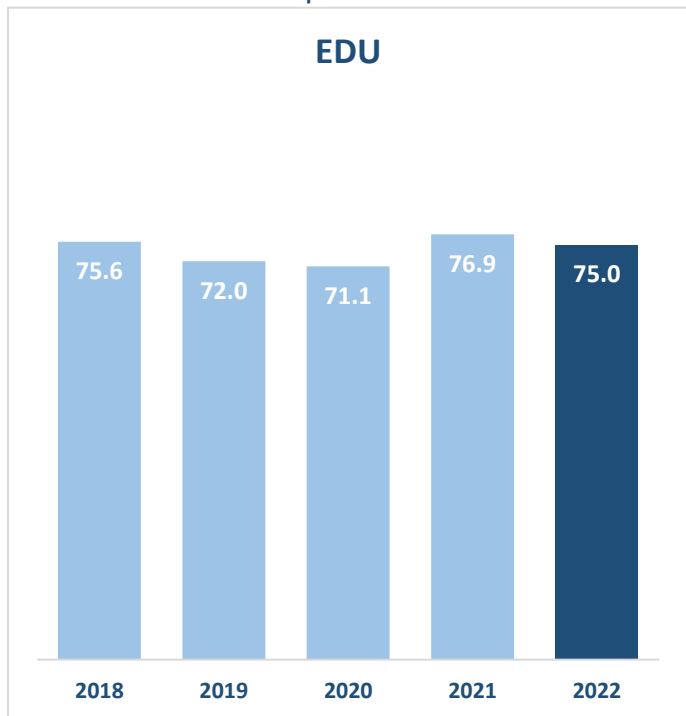
The Business School has shown variable performance in overall satisfaction over the last five years with no year-on-year consistent trend in direction, and the score being around 80% each year.

Chart 60: School of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



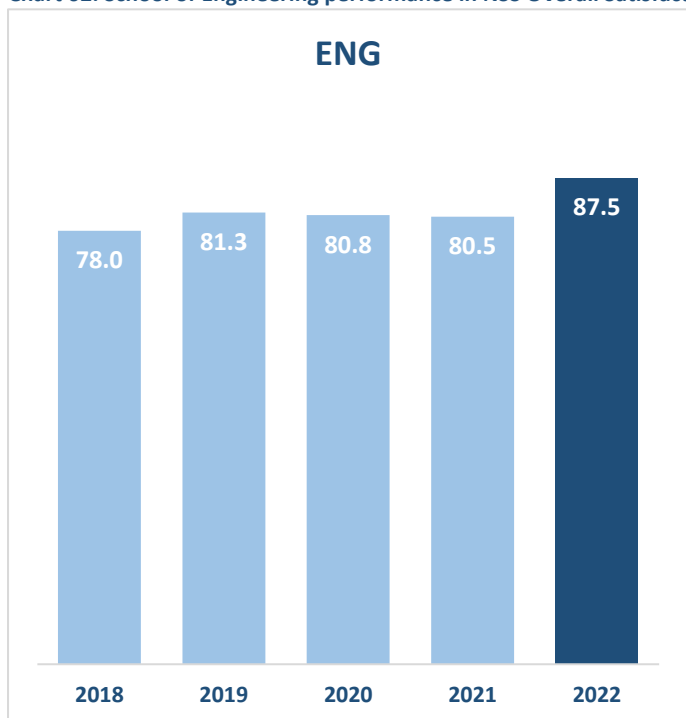
The School of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History has consistently been around 90% for overall satisfaction in the NSS since 2018. A rise of 5.5 percentage points was observed in the 2022 survey from 2021.

Chart 61: School of Education performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



After three years of decreasing scores between 2018 and 2020, the School of Education saw an increase in score in 2021 to 76.9%. However, a decrease of 1.9% is seen between 2021 and 2022.

Chart 62: School of Engineering performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



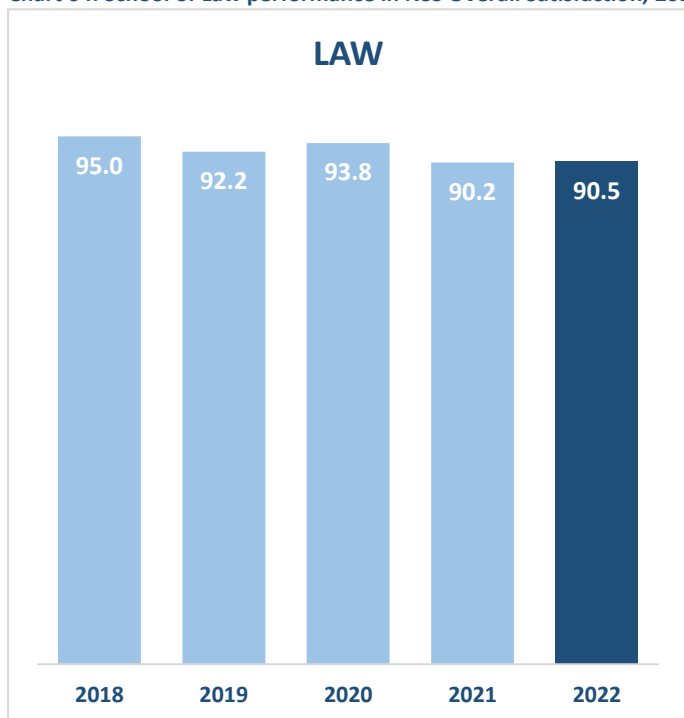
There is a rise of seven percentage points in overall satisfaction for the School of Engineering between the 2021 and 2022 surveys, and the School has achieved its highest score in five years of 87.5%.

Chart 63: School of Geosciences performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



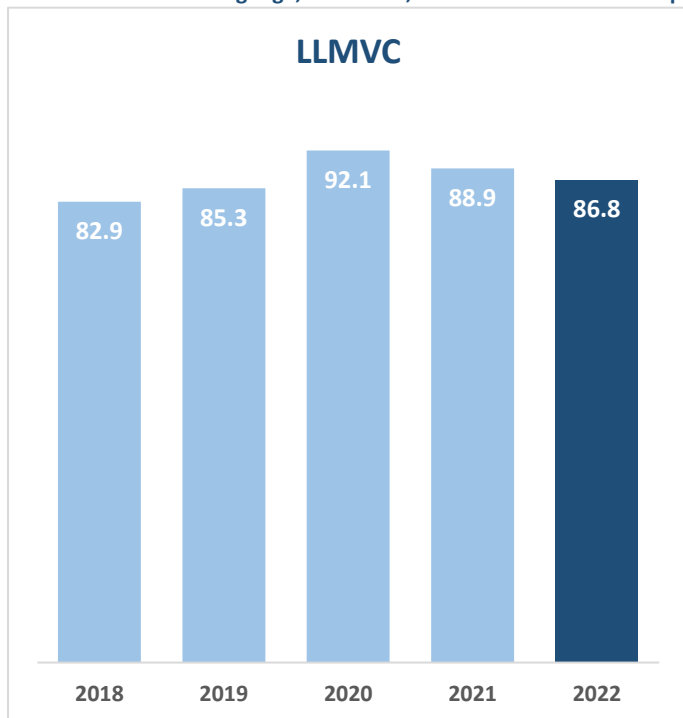
After a fall in NSS 2021, the School of Geosciences has risen by 9.9 percentage points for overall satisfaction, with the NSS 2022 score being the highest in the last five years.

Chart 64: School of Law performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



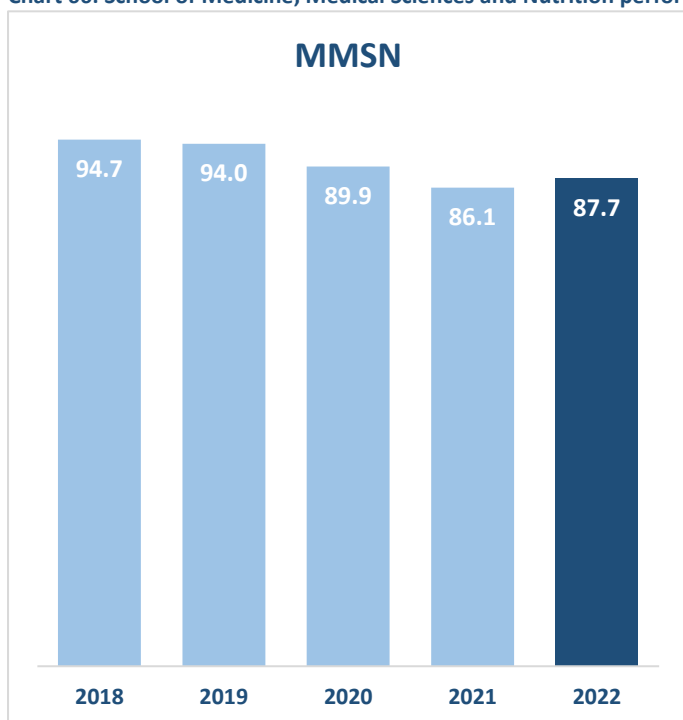
The School of Law has achieved a score of over 90% for overall satisfaction throughout the most recent five-year period. The score has risen from 90.2% in NSS 2021 to 90.5% in NSS 2022.

Chart 65: School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



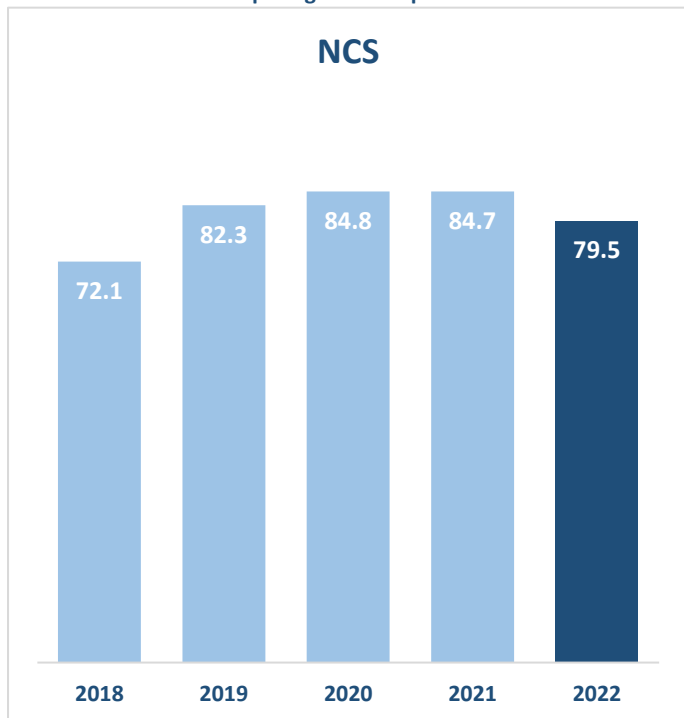
The School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture saw year-on-year increases in overall satisfaction between 2018 and 2020 but has fallen to 86.8% in NSS 2022, a decrease of 2.1 percentage points from NSS 2021.

Chart 66: School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



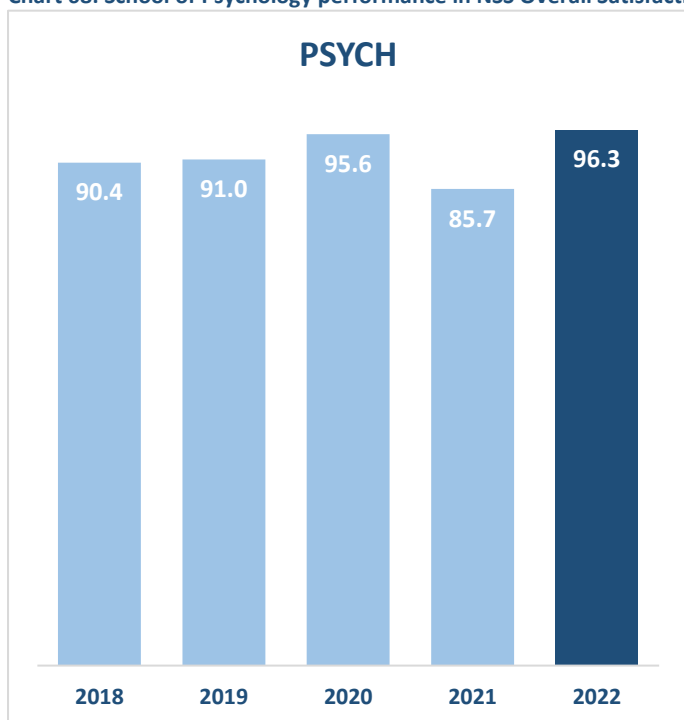
The School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition has seen a year-on-year decrease in overall satisfaction scores between 2018 to 2021. However, a rise of 1.6% has been achieved for NSS 2022.

Chart 67: Natural & Computing Sciences performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



After year-on-year increases in overall satisfaction between 2018 and 2020, the School of Natural and Computing Sciences has fallen to 79.5% in NSS 2022 for overall satisfaction, a decrease of 5.2% from NSS 2021.

Chart 68: School of Psychology performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



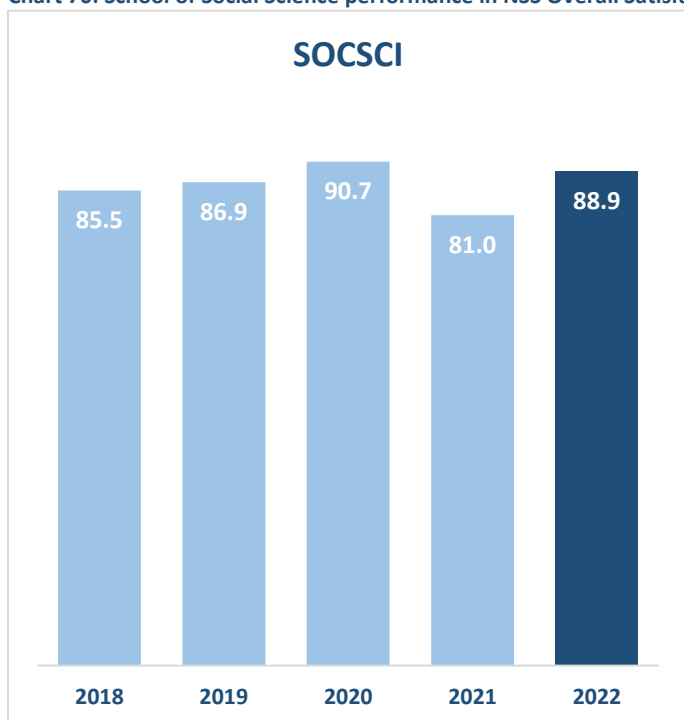
The School of Psychology achieved a satisfaction score above 90% between 2018 and 2020 but experienced a fall to 85.7% in 2021. The School has seen a rise of 10.6 percentage points for overall satisfaction for the NSS 2022 in comparison to NSS 2021, with the score being the highest in the last five years.

Chart 69: School of Biological Sciences performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



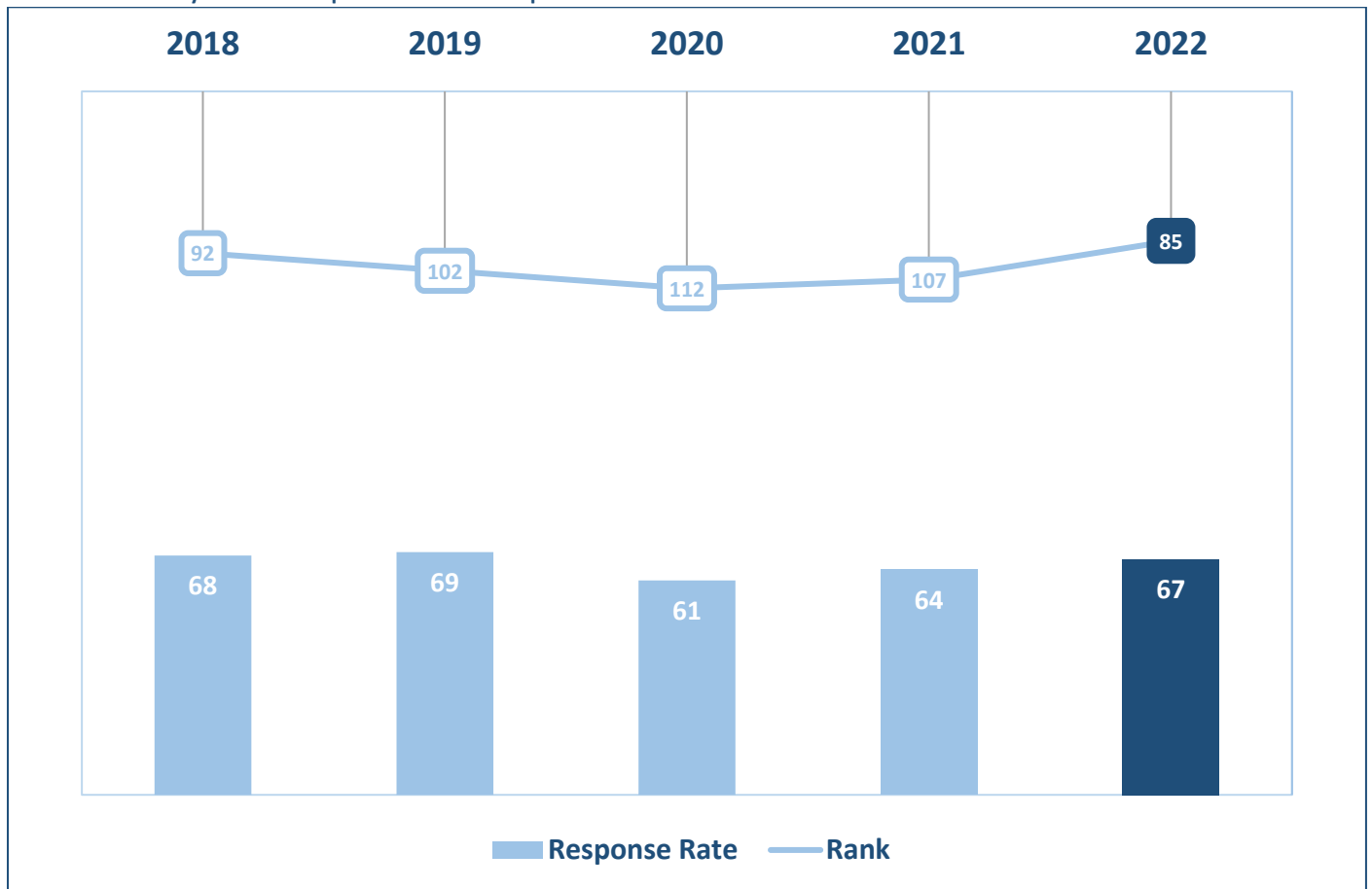
The School of Biological Sciences has seen a year-on-year decrease in score for overall satisfaction since NSS 2018, amounting to a 13.3 percentage points fall over the last four years, including a fall of 4.2 percentage points between 2021 and 2022.

Chart 70: School of Social Science performance in NSS Overall Satisfaction, 2018 to 2022



The School of Social Science saw a year-on-year increase in scores between 2018 and 2020 but saw a drop to 81% in 2021. The overall satisfaction score has risen by 7.9% between 2021 and 2022 to 88.9%.

Chart 71: University of Aberdeen performance for Response Rate 2018 - 2022



For 2022, the University of Aberdeen has seen a rise in response rate rank, moving up 22 places. This is the highest position the University has achieved within the five-year period.

The response rate for the National Student Survey at the University of Aberdeen has increased by 3 percentage points to an overall score of 67% for 2022 compared to 2021.

Expanded report

This report is an initial report on the headline National Student Survey results, and will be followed by an expanded version that will include analysis of the following additional areas:

- Demographic analyses: Age, Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, IMD
- Qualitative analyses of students' comments
- Optional bank questions
- Estimated impact on league tables

It is intended that the expanded version of this report will be made available no later than 10 August 2022.

NSS Results Dashboard

A Power BI dashboard has been made available to Schools for their use. The Dashboard includes the following information:

Overall Results:

Headline	Main headlines for 2022
Summary 2022	Scoring, rank and quartile showing change against 2021 (all questions)
Summary (Benchmark)	Our performance against benchmark for 2022 (all questions)
Rolling Five Years	Scoring, rank and quartile (user has option to choose year)
Ranking List	Listing of universities ranked (allows user to view our performance against other universities). The user has option to choose year and question to view.

Subject Results:

Subject Analysis	Bar chart displaying scores allowing user to compare Aberdeen's performance against other institutions (user has option to choose subject and question).
Subject Score	Heatmap giving an overview of Aberdeen's scoring by School and Subject for all questions.
Subject Rank	Overview of Aberdeen's ranking by School and Subject for all questions (rank is colour coded by quartile)
Subject Details	Scoring and Rank by School and Subject (user has option of choosing question or group of questions)
Highlight 100%	Overview of Aberdeen's scoring by School and Subject for all questions highlighting those which have scored 100%
Top Ten Ranking	Overview of Aberdeen's ranking by School and Subject for all questions highlighting those which are ranked within top 10.

Lisa Gove and John Laing
Directorate of Planning

APPENDIX

For ranking purposes, the University of Aberdeen is ranked out of 124 UK higher education institutions as listed below, which represent participating institutions that are large enough to be ordinarily included in UK university league table rankings. Please note that although this list includes the University of Cambridge and University of Oxford, these two institutions do not currently participate in the National Student Survey, effectively making the ranking out of 122 institutions.

- Aberystwyth University
- Anglia Ruskin University Higher Corporation
- Aston University
- Bangor University
- Bath Spa University
- Birmingham City University
- Bishop Grosseteste University
- Bournemouth University
- Brunel University London
- Buckinghamshire New University
- Canterbury Christ Church University
- Cardiff Metropolitan University
- Cardiff University
- City, University of London
- Coventry University
- De Montfort University
- Edge Hill University
- Edinburgh Napier University
- Falmouth University
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Goldsmiths' College
- Heriot-Watt University
- Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine
- King's College London
- Kingston University
- Leeds Beckett University
- Leeds Trinity University
- Liverpool Hope University
- Liverpool John Moores University
- London Metropolitan University
- London South Bank University
- Loughborough University
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Middlesex University
- Newman University
- Nottingham Trent University
- Oxford Brookes University
- Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
- Queen Mary University of London
- Queen's University of Belfast
- Roehampton University
- Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
- Sheffield Hallam University
- Solent University
- St Mary's University, Twickenham
- Staffordshire University
- Swansea University
- Teesside University
- The London School of Economics and Political Science
- The Robert Gordon University
- The School of Oriental and African Studies
- The University of Bath
- The University of Birmingham
- The University of Bolton
- The University of Bradford
- The University of Buckingham
- The University of Chichester

- The University of Cumbria
- The University of East Anglia
- The University of Essex
- The University of Huddersfield
- The University of Hull
- The University of Kent
- The University of Lancaster
- The University of Leeds
- The University of Leicester
- The University of Liverpool
- The University of Manchester
- The University of Reading
- The University of Sheffield
- The University of Surrey
- The University of Warwick
- The University of West London
- The University of Westminster
- University College London
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Abertay Dundee
- University of Bedfordshire
- University of Brighton
- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Chester
- University of Derby
- University of Dundee
- University of Durham
- University of East London
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Exeter
- University of Glasgow
- University of Gloucestershire
- University of Greenwich
- University of Hertfordshire
- University of Keele
- University of Lincoln
- University of Newcastle upon Tyne
- University of Northampton, The
- University of Northumbria at Newcastle
- University of Nottingham, The
- University of Oxford
- University of Plymouth
- University of Portsmouth
- University of Salford, The
- University of South Wales
- University of Southampton
- University of St Andrews
- University of St Mark & St John
- University of Stirling
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Suffolk
- University of Sunderland
- University of Sussex
- University of the Arts, London
- University of the Highlands and Islands
- University of the West of England, Bristol
- University of the West of Scotland
- University of Ulster
- University of Wales Trinity Saint David
- University of Winchester
- University of Wolverhampton
- University of Worcester
- University of York
- Wrexham Glyndŵr University
- York St John University

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

UPDATE ON PASTORAL REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

This paper provides University Education Committee with the Recommendations of the Pastoral Review Task and Finish Group (TFG), the Report of the TFG and initial proposals for implementation.

University Education Committee are invited to **note** this paper and to comment on the Recommendations, the Report and initial proposals for implementation.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Pastoral Review TFG Student Support and Experience (consideration/approval)	25 May 2022, 28 July 2022, and subsequently by email/posts 23 August 2022
Further consideration/ approval required by	Senate (further academic view) SSEC (approval) UEC (approval) Senate (approval)	14 September 2022 8 December 2022 16 January 2023 8 February 2023

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Pastoral Review Task and Finish Group (the TFG) was established in 2021. Updates were provided to SSC on 2 June 2021, 18 October 2021, 8 December 2021, 3 February 2022, 21 March 2022 and 7 April 2022. Updates were provided to UEC on 6 December 2021, 17 February 2022, 17 March 2022, 13 April 2022 (with further opportunities for comment thereafter by email) and on 10 May 2022.

3.2 An initial academic review on emerging recommendations of the TFG was obtained from Senate on 2 February 2022. The emerging recommendations were then considered with Focus Groups comprising staff and students, Heads of School, Registry, the Centre for Academic Development, Online Education, School Directors of Education and in an internal TFG challenge process. The recommendations and report were then updated for consideration at SSC and UEC in March and April 22 and since then have been considered by the TFG on 25 May 22, with Academic Services and with TFG implementation sub group and TFG meeting in July 22.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORT

4.1 The present draft report of the TFG is attached as Annex 1 to this paper.

- 4.2 UEC is asked to comment on and as appropriate approve the Recommendations and the Report in Annex 1. This same report was also being put to SSEC on 23 August 2022 and feedback will be shared at the UEC meeting. An updated version of the report will be shared with Senate on 14 September 2022 for a further academic view.
- 4.3 A subgroup of the TFG prepared initial thoughts on implementation of the recommendations of the TFG, if the relevant approvals should be obtained in due course. It is hoped that these suggestions, set out in Appendix A to the draft report, will assist Committees and Senate in considering the recommendations.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Abbe Brown, Dean for Student Support (abbe.brown@abdn.ac.uk).

August 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Annex

Pastoral Review Task and Finish Group - Draft 15 August 22

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Executive Summary

Acknowledgements

1. The Pastoral Review Task and Finish Group 2022 (TFG) has carried out its review and it would like to thank all colleagues (internal and external) and students who have kindly shared their views and their time.
2. A list of the TFG members is in pages 52-55. Some members have moved on from this work and we have been delighted to welcome others. Our thanks to the full team.
3. The High-Level Vision of the TFG is set out and then developed in the Recommendations which follow in pages 4 to 8. The context and purpose of the TFG are in pages 8 to 12, the approach taken, consultation undertaken and evidence gathered are considered in pages 13 to 19 and findings and more consideration and reflection on recommendations in pages 20 to 32. There is then some consideration of next steps, implementation and evaluation in pages 32 to 34. Draft implementation thoughts follow in Appendix A (pages 35 to 47) and details of the governance of the TFG and its remit are in Appendix B (pages 48 to 54).
4. The High-Level Vision of the TFG is set out the following section. The changes to the present system are in **bold**.

Our Vision

1. All undergraduate and **postgraduate taught students** will be allocated a Personal Tutor. So far as possible, the student will have the same personal tutor during their time at the University **and this will be someone who is familiar with the student's area of study and at an appropriate level of seniority**. The Personal Tutor will be a first person for the student to contact regarding **academic** and non-academic support and will then support the student in seeking guidance from more specialist staff as needed. **All students are to be offered at least 2 meetings per academic year and are expected to attend. There will be individual and group meetings to support students in their academic decision making, personal development and needs and in building connections and a community. Heads**

of School/Line Managers may decide that some staff are not to carry out the role from time to time. Training and resources will be enhanced to support staff and students regarding the scope of the role and its limits. Enhanced use is to be made of existing data sources and **further consideration is to be given to the University investing in a live dashboard form of learning analytics to support staff in providing students with targeted, relevant and informed support. Workload is to be allocated for all personal tutor activity in a fair and consistent manner across the University.**

2. To bring this about, we make the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

1. The personal tutor will have a holistic and overview role in supporting all UG and PGT students. The personal tutor will triage the provision of support for academic matters (including initial consideration of course selection and its consequences, credits, completion of e-registration) and non-academic matters, for all UG and PGT students, including online students who are registered for a programme. The personal tutors will signpost to other more specialist School and University structures and expertise and engagement as at present, including regarding responses to mental health situations, emergencies, and specific course and curriculum details and visa requirements, and will sit alongside plans to embed resilience in the curriculum.

Recommendation 2

2. All academic colleagues at grade 6 and above, who have their posts funded by the University or AFG, who deliver some teaching or are considered to have relevant expertise by Heads of School/Line Managers, who are on contracts of 12 months or more and who are 0.5FTE or more, are eligible to deliver personal tutor support to UG and/or PGT students. Decisions as to which academic colleagues are not to carry out the UG and/or PGT role from time to time will be made, as is so regarding other roles, by Heads of School/Line Managers as appropriate within the School. Heads of School/Line Managers are to have regard in making these decisions to other

workload and roles of colleagues and their nature, career development and the skills and experience of academic colleagues. A recommended total number of students per academic colleague should be set to avoid colleague overload (to be pro rata-ed as appropriate); in implementing this, there is scope for School flexibility to recognise in particular that some students may need more support than others, a School's student numbers, the importance accorded by the School to discipline matching, the different nature of some postgraduate professional qualifications and other roles played by colleagues. The system would apply for UG and PGT students who are formally registered with the University on all campuses (Aberdeen, AFG-Qatar, online OnDemand) and in all Schools

Recommendation 3

3. There is a goal of consistency of personal tutor support to be provided to all UG and PGT students. This is to include regularity of meetings and the issues which the tutor will offer to explore with the student. All students are to be invited to at least two meetings a year, one at the start of each half-session (recognising that the timing of this will vary across the University). These meetings will be arranged and timetabled by administrative support. Meetings can be group meetings, although students must also be offered the opportunity to have an individual meeting. It is recognised that some differences will be unavoidable in terms of detail regarding issues to be explored and number of meetings for example to reflect regulatory structures, nature of studies, student's situation, staff and student ratios and School professional services support and other support, particularly regarding postgraduate professional qualifications; the goal of consistency must, however, remain.

Recommendation 4

4. A new workload allocation framework should be developed and adopted to reflect the new scope of the personal tutor role including regarding providing preliminary academic advice and the PGT role. There is a goal of consistency of workload allocation framework and system for personal tutor support per student and this is to be the same allocation for UG and PGT students, respecting the equal importance of provision of this support to UG and PGT students. Note that this is also for further consideration by the Workload Allocation Group, including regarding the amount to be allocated and it should also be borne in mind that the proposed level of contact exceeds present approaches in some Schools for UG students.

Recommendation 5

5. Each School is to have at least one **Senior Personal Tutor**, who will likely be an academic. The PGT role is to be distinct from other PGT leadership roles, although it may be held by a person who holds these other roles; if so, additional workload is to be allocated to the colleague. **The senior personal tutor for UG and PGT may be the same person, however, specific workload** allocation is to apply to each element of the role. If there is more than one Senior Personal Tutor in a School, these colleagues will be expected to liaise. The details of the workload allocated to this role will reflect the number of students in the School. Note that this is also for further consideration by the Workload Allocation Group, including regarding the amount to be allocated. There is a goal of consistency in approaches to these roles bearing in mind possible existing differences within Schools, including regarding roles of professional services colleagues. The Senior Personal Tutor(s) will work closely with relevant central administrative colleagues, Heads of School, Line Managers and other Senior Personal Tutors in supporting staff and students and in arranging allocation of students. Senior Personal Tutors will take a lead in resolving issues regarding the tutor-tutee relationships (with the Head of School or the Dean for Student Support to do so if there is a conflict).

Recommendation 6

6. The purpose of the personal tutor system and expectations of staff and student and how this intersects with other forms of support is to be set out clearly to staff and students. Training and resources for colleagues will continue to be enhanced, including, for all students, preliminary discussions of academic matters and making use of existing IT systems and the information they provide; and new resources, training and details of topics to be offered to be explored will be created as appropriate regarding PGT students. Support (including specialist counselling support) for staff regarding issues which may arise from supporting students will continue to be enhanced, and its availability made clear to all staff.

Recommendation 7

7. Tutor and tutee allocation is to be carried out centrally in the University for UG and PGT students, on the basis of information regarding staff provided by the Heads of School/Line Managers. Tutor and tutee would match with reference to School and within that if possible, by discipline (not degree programme); if colleagues in a School have expertise in a different area from the students in the School, then colleagues should be matched with students from a School which more reflects their expertise. The Senior Personal Tutor will work

closely with the central allocation team to implement this. Additional workload and resource are to be made available to enable this central allocation. Within this, present practices could continue of Schools choosing that colleagues having expertise in supporting students who have shared with the University that they have particular characteristics (such as international, advanced entry, estranged from family); however, this matching is unlikely to be possible or sought in all cases and regard should be had to the possibility of a person having multiple characteristics. In any event, other support will continue to be provided to these student groups and the links between this and the personal tutor system will be made clear. The discipline match, when this is possible, would take priority over this other matching.

Recommendation 8

8. IT development work will be explored to ensure that the most effective use is made of existing information about students and their performance and experiences, including their engagement with the personal tutor system. There should also be further consideration by the University of new systems and approaches to data (such as dashboards drawing together student's current experiences and use of university services, as appropriate in light of confidentiality obligations); it is not recommended that predictive technology is explored. This increased use of information, and in particular through a live dashboard, would inform in an efficient manner tutor-tutee and other human interactions, the offering of specialist support and assist in the making of risk-based decisions by humans. The focus of this is to enhance support offered to students.

Recommendation 9

9. Processes and support mechanisms will be developed to enhance staff and student engagement with the personal tutor system. For staff, this could include engagement with Line Managers, personal tutoring being part of the induction process, the annual review system, the provision of additional training and ongoing support, and an IT based means of noting staff and student contact and following up with students. For students, this could include references to personal tutoring in the personal development courses available to UG and PGT students in their first year with the University, an IT based system by which students can see their levels of engagement with their tutor and also a dashboard of their present academic performance and engagement and personal tutor engagement to provide assurance that personal tutor meetings will be individualised. Additional workload and resource are to be made available as necessary to bring this about. It is to be made clear to students that it is expected that they attend personal tutor meetings

Details of the evidence base for these recommendations and more information about the TFG and future related work, including the key questions of implementation, are discussed below (pages 13-34).

Context and Purpose of the Review

“Personal tutoring”

1. Delivery of “personal tutor” support by academic staff is recognised as a norm in the UK Higher Education sector. This support is delivered, however, in varying ways and there are areas of strong debate, including what personal tutor support should cover (notably wellbeing and/or academic advising); whether this should be part of the academic role or provided by specialist colleagues, either centrally or within Schools; the consequences of non-engagement with the system; and of the differences, if any, between support for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) students.
2. The [present Aberdeen UG model](#) reflects a student partnership and empowerment approach by which students are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and personal development. The personal tutor role is to be reflective and challenging and signpost to more specialist support when needed. There is no formal PGT personal tutor system at institutional level, although [some excellent support](#) is provided through Programme Leads, and School professional services colleagues and individual School arrangements. [Strong support](#) is provided to online on-demand students before they start their studies and the online team provide high quality informal support; (although the position regarding pastoral support provided by Schools when students join us is less clear). The [Pastoral Support system](#) as a whole also includes the Regent system for Healthcare students in the School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition and support provided by AFG/Qatar colleagues. The Pastoral Support system does not include South China Normal University (SCNU) partnership students as pastoral support is provided to them by SCNU under the partnership agreement.

External drivers

1. The University of Aberdeen is committed to an enhancement led approach. Reflecting this and the importance accorded to personal tutoring, the Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) of 2018's [reflective analysis](#) refers to personal tutoring, including noting that it was recognised that this could improve.¹ The 2019 Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) [outcome report](#) identified recommendations for personal tutoring as follows: 'Continue to monitor its personal tutoring arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose, in the context of the University's changing student population. The University should progress its intention to introduce personal tutoring for postgraduate taught students, including those studying online'.
2. [The ELIR One Year follow up](#) Report approved at Senate on 5 February 2020 refers to monitoring and expansion of personal tutoring for online students; to a review of the effectiveness of support for PGT students and to the Dean for Student Support undertaking a holistic review of personal tutors for undergraduate students, identifying good practice, engaging with student focus groups and making recommendations for enhancement; to the UG and PGT reviews being managed coherently so that appropriate consistency emerges across the University taking place review; and that the review would also have regard to students studying online and in Qatar. The review of UG PT and PGT pastoral support were discussed in QAA visit in November 2020.

Internal drivers

1. Carrying out this Review is aligned with the Aberdeen 2040 commitments:

Inclusive:

"We value diversity"

"Our commitment to inclusion will guide our education, our research, and the projects we deliver"

¹ 2.1.10, 2.2.9-11, 2.2.37 and 2.3.7 regarding improvement

“We aspire to lead our sector in promoting health and wellbeing, and celebrating diversity.”

Inclusive Commitments:

- 1 “Care for the wellbeing, health and safety of our diverse community, supporting and developing our people to achieve their full potential”
- 2 “Our students will be able to succeed whatever their personal and social background”

International:

“We think across borders”

“We are open to people and ideas from around the world. Whether in Aberdeen or in Qatar, we welcome students and staff from all nations

International Commitments

11. Provide an international education to learners from all around the world, becoming a more diverse and multicultural community
15. Develop our campuses and processes to create a caring environment that is alert to cultural differences

2. The Pastoral Review is part of the University's Education plan alongside the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan to 2025 and reports to the Aberdeen 2040 University Education Committees. The Review reflects the importance of pastoral and guidance roles in supporting students and responding to the need for community, and also the need to support staff, which was increasingly seen in the light of COVID-19 and responses to it. Pastoral support forms a key part in the University's support for students to fulfil their potential and their goals; to choose to remain with the University; student satisfaction; to form part of our wider Community which can enhance mental health and resilience; and to choose to seek support, notably for mental health.

Building the Review

1. In addition to the internal and external drivers, the Review has roots in an informal consultation across the University by the Dean for Student Support when she came into post in early 2020 (the consultation was paused because of COVID-19); a survey carried out by the Aberdeen University Students Association (AUSA) in 2019 (which identified lack of consistency across the University as a key concern); and some surveys and consultation carried out by the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy (as it was then) with staff and students in 2019-2020 (identifying some very positive feedback and also concerns about lack of student engagement, frequent tutor changes, lack of clarity as to the purpose of the system, a lack of confidence in staff in providing support, lack of training, disinterested staff, calls for more training and academic focus and suggested "Super tutors").
2. Against this backdrop, the Dean for Student support prepared a scoping paper for the Review. This was ultimately considered by Student Support Committee on 2 June 2021 and University Education Committee on 23 June 2021; and an oral update on the proposed review was shared with Student Experience Committee on 10 June 2021. The scoping paper noted the rationale of the Review as being to
 - ensure that the pastoral support for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students is sector leading, to support students in making the most of their time with the University and increasing the prospect of students choosing to remain with the University
 - ensure that both staff and students have confidence in the pastoral support regarding its focus, delivery, workload, resources and training.
3. The Pastoral Review Task and Finish Group (TFG) was established in 2021.

Remit and its limits

1. The Remit of the Review provides that the Review will recommend any changes which should be made to the UG personal tutoring and PGT pastoral support on the Aberdeen and Qatar campuses for on campus/blended/online teaching in respect of (i) who is to deliver it; (ii) the nature of the support and information sharing needed to support this; (iii) how to enhance staff and student engagement with the personal tutor and pastoral support systems; (iv) identify priorities and prepare and deliver an implementation plan, including as appropriate requests for additional resource; (v) develop an internal benchmarking and evaluation plan.
2. The Review does not cover PGR students, although there has been engagement with PGR Policy Committee and consideration of support for this group, by supervisors and others, is ongoing. The Regent System for health care students is, as noted, distinct from the personal tutor system. The Review does not engage directly with the Regent system (which includes NHS staff); however, it is hoped that the close engagement between the Regent team and its leaders will continue and that the recommendations made will also be considered for the Regent system as relevant. It is recognised that this will not always be so, given different post holders and regulatory regimes.
3. The Review sits alongside, and also informs, ongoing work regarding the pastoral support systems - reviewing resources (including web pages), orientation and training and other related systems, such as by the Wellbeing and Student Experience Team. The Review also aligns with the QAA Enhancement Theme “Resilient Learning Communities” (including the University’s Community of Practice and its work on supporting students to choose to continue their studies, and funded projects supporting articulating students and resilience courses); and with the Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Task and Finish Group (which is exploring how best to identify and support students who may be in difficulty or there is the potential for this to be so).

Approach, Consultation and Evidence

External: reflections on Literature

1. Resources were reviewed from Wonkhe,² Advance HE, AMOSSHE and UKAT and its professional recognition pathway.³ A common strand is the importance of providing support and community to students to enable them to make the most of their time at University, to belong, and to choose to remain and to complete their studies successfully. Established paths are pastoral (by an academic); professional by specialist experts and support embedded in the curriculum;⁴ and the personal development approach based on mutual connections, community and regular meetings between staff and individual student and groups of students, with clear connections to other support in the University – with the student being at the heart of the system.⁵
2. For some personal tutor structures, there is scope for more complex training and professional development opportunities provided, such as in relation to coaching.⁶ In the proposed Aberdeen model, however, where most if not all colleagues will take on the role, such detailed approaches are not considered to be appropriate and that, indeed, the more detailed the training, the more staff may feel unable to connect with the role and with students.

² [Helping students develop a sense of belonging | Wonkhe](#)

³ [Professional Recognition | UKAT - UK Advising and Tutoring](#)

⁴ Earwaker, J. *Helping and Supporting Students* (Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University (1992),

⁵ See [Personal Development Tutoring - ARU](#) ; Strivens, J., “Transforming personal tutors into personal development tutors at the University of Liverpool” ; Stevenson, N. (2006). Integrating personal tutoring with personal development planning” in Barfield, S., Hixenbaugh, P. and Thomas, L. (eds.) *Critical reflections and positive interventions: an electronic casebook on good practice in personal tutoring* (Higher Education Academy, 2006). [Microsoft Word - E-Casebook Personal Tutoring2.doc](#)

⁶ See D Lochtie et al (eds) *Effective Personal Tutoring in Higher Education* (Critical Publishing 2019)

3. The importance of a student having a person to contact, who will have oversight of the student, including through proactive engagement with them,⁷ and direct the student on to specialist academic with relevant knowledge and pastoral support has been argued to be essential and a base to build up a close connection and for the relationship to have a purpose.⁸ In terms of how this may be done, the importance of clarity in the expectations of the role and its limits is key,⁹ as is the provision of training to make colleagues confident in delivering it; there is also recurring evidence of students not wishing to disturb staff or feeling that staff do not want to see them.¹⁰ The important of a single point of contact is valuable in the light of some suggestions across the sector (and internally) that colleagues feel they are not contributing as all they can do is signpost. This is perhaps because of signposting can have connotations of abandonment, rather than supporting the student to the most effective path and this should be made clear to colleagues. The stressing of limits of the personal tutor role is also very useful. Clearly it is of value for all personal tutors to receive mental health training, for example, but the aim of this is not to turn a colleague into a specialist on any specific issue.¹¹ Narratives in relation to training should be carefully managed to ensure that colleagues do not then attempt to do too much for and in relation to the student.

⁷ [Why personal tutoring is essential for student success | Higher Education Academy \(heacademy.ac.uk\) training and limits](#)

⁸ Thomas, L., *Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change* (Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 2012) 1 [Layout 1 \(heacademy.ac.uk\)](#); Taylor, R. "Creating a connection: tackling student attrition through curriculum development" 2005 *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 29(4), 367–374. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03098770500353698>; Hughes, G., Panjwani, M., Tulcidas. P., & Byrom, N "Student Mental Health: The role and experiences of academics" (Student Minds, 2018) Retrieved from http://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/180129_student_mental_health_the_role_and_experience_of_academics_student_minds_pdf.pdf

⁹ [Why personal tutoring is essential for student success | Higher Education Academy \(heacademy.ac.uk\)](#); Owen, M. (2002). "'Sometimes You Feel You're in Niche Time': The Personal Tutor System, a Case Study". 2002 *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 3(1), 7–23. ['Sometimes You Feel You're in Niche Time' \(sagepub.com\)](https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787402003001002)

¹⁰ Owen, M. (2002). "'Sometimes You Feel You're in Niche Time': The Personal Tutor System, a Case Study". 2002 *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 3(1), 7–23. ['Sometimes You Feel You're in Niche Time' \(sagepub.com\)](https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787402003001002); B Walker [Tackling the personal tutoring conundrum: A qualitative study on the impact of developmental support for tutors \(sagepub.com\)](#)

¹¹ Stones, S and Gizzard, J. *Support for Mental Health in Higher Education* (Critical Publishing 2019); Hughes, G., Panjwani, M., Tulcidas. P., & Byrom, N "Student Mental Health: The role and experiences of academics" (Student Minds, 2018) Retrieved from http://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/180129_student_mental_health_the_role_and_experience_of_academics_student_minds_pdf.pdf

4. It should also be borne in mind the confusion which can arise from different terms – as an example careers advice, professional development or academic writing might be considered part of the personal tutor role, however at Aberdeen they are well embedded in other frameworks, with the present UG personal tutor role including signposting to these services. This raises another theme of the need for a whole university approach - and the need for it to be made clearer which roles are played taken by whom and how the fields interrelate as part of a community of support.

External: reflections on benchmarking

1. In 2020, the UG Aberdeen campus-based system was in line with UK sector norms and practice. It has a focus on academics delivering pastoral support, although there were differing views about how clearly the system is communicated to and understood by colleagues, and different views and experiences of students were shared regarding how effectively and consistently it is being delivered.
2. Very few institutions have formal PGT personal tutor system and when they did there was a reference to it as being the same as UG system without any detailed engagement.
3. Benchmarking with other Universities notably Edinburgh, Bristol, Swansea, City and King's London, between July and September 2021 revealed that since there have been some developments across the UK with some institutions embracing a more specialist and professional form of wellbeing support, with this to sit alongside academic advising.
4. Edinburgh has shared plans, based on significant international research, of having, separately, academic advising, specialist school based wellbeing officers building on a new learning analytics system, teaching teams and peer support. It is unclear if this will be centrally managed or in School with a strong dotted line to central colleagues. There would be around 30 students with each wellbeing colleague. Significant financial investment would be required. One reason shared for this move was the variety of engagement of the role by staff, with some not committed, some doing too much, and some very worried about the role. In Bristol, colleagues leading the academic support were entirely separate from pastoral support and dealing with emergencies and were unable to share with us any details of those systems.

5. In addition, common themes identified are whether there is to be advising on academic matters or not (and challenges of matching by discipline including whether or not this is possible because of an imbalance in staff and student numbers); by academics or specialist welfare colleagues in School or centrally (or both, largely in parallel then signposting on); all colleagues do it or not (and risks of marginalisation of those who do, and possible impact on their careers, and of particular groups bearing more of a load); timetabled in or not; coaching; central delivery or school flexibility including regarding allocation; handbook or website resources (online or not).

Internal: Surveys and focus groups

1. The Review carried out a consultation process with staff and students by focus groups and online surveys between August and December 2021:
 - In August 2021 an online Facebook survey was carried out with PGT students. There were 141 replies.
 - **In August 2021 staff focus groups met to discuss UG support (11 participants) for PGT (14 participants) with a spread across most Schools. These were initial scoping events and the invited participants had been suggested as useful contributors by pastoral leads and in the main were not pastoral leads to enable some wider voices to be heard.**
 - Between 6 October and 22 October 2021, an online survey was open to all UG students. 209 students responded.
 - Between 28 October and 11 November 2021 an [online survey](#) was open to all staff. 112 colleagues completed it.

- 2-17 December 2021 joint staff and student online [further survey](#) open to all staff and students. This explores staff and student opinion about some specific elements which could form part of a Pastoral Support system. This did not revisit issues on which there was already a clear view of opinions. 45 replies.
 - The December 2021 Pastoral Review TFG meeting carried out a trial exercise to test the ease by which existing information can be used in a sample scenario. This revealed the different approaches people use to search and the need for more alignment between present different sets of online resources.
 - December 2021 results of the 2021 Aberdeen Student Experience Survey, section 5.16 of which refers to personal tutoring.
2. From the ASES, there was a theme of variety – some students had very positive experiences, some the opposite. This is aligned with the points seen in the literature and the benchmarking. Some illustrated quotes follow:
- *ASES21 I think the personal tutor scheme is fantastic. It's nice to know there's one person you can go to with any issues even if you know they're not the appropriate person they can direct you to where is best*
 - *ASES21 My personal tutor was absolutely useless and offered no help and wasn't interested*
 - *ASES21 I have been lucky to have an excellent personal tutor, but feel staff should be asked if they want to, rather than lumping some students with a tutor who doesn't want to be in the role*
3. From the online surveys, the following results were obtained regarding possible structures of future support and experiences with the present system.
- PGT students:
 - 92% would like to have someone to talk to about things other than their studies
 - *Who should provide the support*
 - 50% someone who teaches and grades me
 - 18% someone who did not teach on the programme

- 23% no preference.
 - UG students:
 - 66% been contacted by PT.
 - 56% had gone to PT/contacted them when contacted
 - *What one thing would improve system?*
 - regular meetings/communication option 40%
 - *PT role focus?*
 - 51% consider PT evenly focussed studies and personal development and wellbeing
 - 44% primarily on studies with some wellbeing
 - 4% solely on studies
 - Staff and student survey
 - if over 0.5 FTE and doing teaching then should be a PT
 - 72% agree or strongly agree
 - 17% disagree or strongly disagree
 - student attendance should be compulsory
 - 27 % agree or strongly agree
 - 62% disagree or strongly disagree
 - Academic support including interventionist advice on course choices
 - 40% agree or strongly disagree
 - 47% disagree or strongly disagree
 - Proactive monitoring of engagement including through IT, including wider life such as social
 - 21% include in a choice of 3
 - Proactive monitoring of engagement but not including wider life such as social
 - 37% include in a choice of 3.
 - Proactive intervention based on previous experiences
 - 68% agree or strongly agree, 18.2% no view, 14% disagree or strongly disagree
4. From the focus groups, there were concerns from staff about lack of recognition of the role, of the lack of formal academic advice, of a need for academic advice to match with disciplines, views that personal tutoring should not be a role for academics, strong views that

very few colleagues did not wish to help students but were overwhelmed about the role, of some colleagues having to pick up students who are in difficulty when other colleagues are not supporting students, of the need for workload allocation and concerns about escalating student numbers so that the initial arrange for UG personal tutoring of under 20 students was rarely workable. There was strong variety of views about whether or not the system should be student led or have proactive staff intervention and about the extent to which systems across the University should be consistent to avoid perceptions of unfairness for students, as against arguments in favour of flexibility reflecting the culture, student numbers and other structures of the School.

5. In the light of the focus groups, online surveys, benchmarking, and literature review, “Emerging Recommendations” (ERs) were drafted by the TFG. In February 2022 the ERs were presented to Senate and to Heads of School, and feedback was received. In February 2022 Focus groups with staff and students who volunteered in initial online surveys or in the December 21 survey considered the ERs and feedback was again received. In March 22 the ERs were also shared with School Directors of Education, School Administrative Managers, the Online Engagement and Development Team and the Senior Pastoral and Guidance Forum and feedback was received.
6. From this base, the TFG carefully considered the views, evidence base and experiences shared with it throughout and in response to the ERs. The TFG revised its recommendations, to make them clearer and to engage in a balanced manner with concerns raised and suggestions made. These revised Recommendations were presented, together with a draft report of the TFG, to Student Support Committee on 7 April 2022, University Education Committee on 13 April 2022 and to School administrative leads and Registry, Online Education and Centre for Academic Development colleagues in May 2022. Feedback was again received, and the recommendations and report have been considered further and updated.
7. Benchmarking, literature, surveys and focus groups establish a diversity of views. It is not possible to draw clearly on any strand of evidence or combination of them to identify a clear solution to the exclusion of others, however the recommendations we have made are based in the material we have gathered in our work. We have gained feedback from a wide range of colleagues and students through a number of paths, although we acknowledge that the numbers of some of the survey and focus group participants are low. We take comfort from our consideration of the results of the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey and from the opportunity to receive the views of Senate. These also demonstrate a variety of perspectives. We put forward effective and workable recommendations which are driven by Aberdeen 2040, support for students, and respect for staff.

Discussions of findings and recommendations

1. With these recommendations, the TFG's aim is to harness and stimulate the strong commitment evidenced by staff to providing supported and informed academic and non-academic support to UG and PGT students as a part of their academic role; to provide students with a system which is not only a safety net when asked for but also a base for proactive intervention for students who are reluctant or feel unable to ask for help; and to provide a means for a growing community, to reduce the prospect of the student being in difficulty and feeling unable to ask for help. The TFG considers that fair and consistent workload which reflects the proposed nature of the role and recognition of the importance of personal tutoring as a central part of being an academic, and new resources and administrative support (including further consideration of learning analytics), will be essential to effective delivery of the proposed new system. An initial implementation plan has been developed and this accompanies this report. More detailed reflection and details regarding implementation and resources will be developed in due course, building on the feedback received from committees and Senate.
2. The High-Level Vision and the Recommendations are now presented,¹² with a short headline, a note of their link with the TFG remit and some further consideration of key points when appropriate and potential challenges. The changes to the present system are marked in bold.

Our Vision and Recommendations

1. The TFG High Level Vision for the new personal tutor system for UG and PGT students at the University of Aberdeen is as follows.

¹² Both were also set out in the Executive Summary (pages 1-6.)

2. All undergraduate and **postgraduate taught students** will be allocated a Personal Tutor. So far as possible, the student will have the same personal tutor during their time at the University **and this will be someone who is familiar with the student's area of study and at an appropriate level of seniority**. The Personal Tutor will be a first person for the student to contact regarding **academic** and non-academic support and will then support the student in seeking guidance from more specialist experts are needed. **All students are to be offered at least 2 meetings per academic year and are expected to attend. There will be individual and group meetings to support students in their academic decision making, personal development and needs and in building connections and a community. Heads of School/Line Managers may decide that some eligible staff are not to carry out the role from time to time.** Training and resources will be enhanced to support staff and students regarding the scope the role and its limits. Enhanced use is to be made of existing data sources and **further consideration is to be given to the University investing in a live dashboard form of learning analytics to support staff in providing students with targeted, relevant, and informed support. Workload is to be allocated for all personal tutor activity in a fair and consistent manner across the University.**

What [Remit ii]

Recommendation 1

1. *"The personal tutor will have a holistic and overview role in supporting all UG and PGT students. The personal tutor will triage the provision of support for **academic matters (including initial consideration of course selection and its consequences, credits, completion of e-registration)** and non-academic matters, for all UG and PGT students, including online students who are registered for a programme. The personal tutors will signpost to other more specialist School and University structures and expertise and engagement as at present, including regarding responses to mental health situations, emergencies, and specific course and curriculum details and visa requirements, and will sit alongside plans to embed resilience in the curriculum."*
2. This is a change. The UG personal tutor system when introduced did not engage with academic advice. The restriction on this has faded, however the potential for a student to have a personal tutor who has no knowledge of their discipline, particularly in one of the

more diverse Schools, means that colleagues feel very uncomfortable about providing academic advice to their personal tutee. Feedback suggests that systems by which Schools can provide a guidance note for use in personal tutor meetings to discuss academic matters have not addressed this issue fully. There is also a strong feeling that academic and curricular knowledge has been lost since Academic Advising came to an end. Relevant knowledge does remain for example in MyCurriculum and with Registry Officers, year leads and Student Progress Convenors, however there are again strong views on this issue. There is also feedback that most of the points which a student may wish to discuss are related to their studies and if the personal tutor is not familiar with them then the student may not engage with the personal tutor system, thereby removing the opportunity to build a connection.

3. Previously, colleagues who had been Academic Advisers received additional payment and this is an issue on which, for some colleagues, there are again strong views. Recommendation 4 engages with this issue to an extent through workload.

4. Another issue is that moving advice on academic choices to be a role for personal tutors raises the issue long encountered in allocating personal tutors to students: the numbers of colleagues with relevant expertise does not match the students who are taking particular degrees – this is particularly so in multi-discipline Schools and in Schools which have experienced significant growth. Accordingly, it is recommended that there is a combined approach of a personal tutor asking students questions to prompt reflection about academic choices and suggesting that students speak to another colleague if seems an issue arises in respect of which the colleague does not have expertise. Established practices of preparing guidance notes on key points for students in a particular discipline should be enhanced. Consideration is to be given to how the giving of initial academic advice and prompting consideration at the start of term sits alongside students being able to make course choices on MyCurriculum before the start of term. For returning students, this may include conversations at the end of the preceding year.

5. Within this academic and non-academic framework, some details will likely continue to vary to extent e.g. for On-Demand online and Qatar/AFG given nature of campuses and experience, different natures of PGT studies, other forms of support which are provided in the School (e.g. research training). There will be some differences in the Regent system.

6. The approaches taken/planned by Swansea, Edinburgh and Bristol can seem appealing (although they would require significant investment) in removing pastoral issues from the personal tutor role and leaving this to more specialist pastoral colleagues. However the challenges identified by Aberdeen colleagues regarding discussion of personal matters without an understanding of the wider academic context would also apply here. This approach is not recommended.

7. Signposting will continue to other services and resources will be reviewed to make clear the relationship between these and the personal tutor: Student Support and Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisers, and their resources and webpages, monitoring, orientation/toolkit, widening access, careers, class rep/Inform, s4s, school administrative team, GoAbroad, chaplaincy, Disability Team, AUSA, Student Support, other specialist services, Liberation and Equality networks, Student Learning Service, visa/international, accommodation support, school progression leads, Student Progress Convenors/School year leads/Registry Officers and support on placement. Personal tutors will continue to be encouraged to “remain with” the student (metaphorically or literally as appropriate) to avoid perceptions of abandonment.

“Who” [Remit 1, iv]

Recommendation 2

1. ***“All academic colleagues at grade 6 and above, who have their posts funded by the University or AFG, who are on contracts of 12 months or more, who deliver some teaching or are considered to have relevant expertise by Heads of School/Line Managers, and who are 0.5FTE or more, are eligible to deliver personal tutor support to UG and/or PGT students. Decisions as to which academic colleagues are not to carry out the UG and/or PGT role from time to time will be made, as is so regarding other roles, by Heads of School/Line Managers as appropriate within the School. Heads of School/Line Managers are to have regard in making these decisions to other workload and roles of colleagues and their nature, career development and the skills and experience of academic colleagues. A***

recommended total number of students per academic colleague should be set to avoid colleague overload (to be pro rata-ed as appropriate); in implementing this, there is scope for School flexibility to recognise in particular that some students may need more support than others, a School's student numbers, the importance accorded to discipline matching, the different nature of some postgraduate professional qualifications and other roles played by colleagues. The system would apply for UG and PGT students who are formally registered with the University on all campuses (Aberdeen, AFG-Qatar, online OnDemand) and in all Schools."

2. The PGT personal tutor role is new. This reflects the strong need for support to be provided to these students and the comparative short period which PGT students have with the University.
3. The involvement of Heads of School/Line Managers and the statement of eligible colleagues is a change for present UG practices when all colleagues who engage in teaching and are 0.5FTE or more are personal tutors. In reality, however, often this does not happen with informal arrangements being put in place to have regard to a colleague's other interests and situation.
4. If a colleague joins on a contract of less than 3 years, it is suggested that they might be better suited to supporting PGT student rather than UG students (to increase the prospect of the personal tutor staying with the student through their studies), however this will depend on individual circumstances. The Grade 6 baseline is retained given the responsibility inherent in the role and the proposal that academic advice is provided. The criteria of posts funded by the University or AFG, who are on contracts of 12 months or more, who deliver some teaching, and who are 0.5FTE or more reflects the initial arrangements for the Aberdeen UG personal tutor system, however, there has been some movement and uncertainty on this over the years.
5. The consultation process and the experience of members of the TFG is that, as with other roles in the University, and reflecting the importance of the provision of this support, the personal tutor role should ideally be undertaken by colleagues who are committed to it and to engaging with the support, training and resources which will be provided.

6. The present Aberdeen UG model reflects practice until 2020 of personal tutor support being embedded in the role of the academic. Feedback across the sector and from the consultation from staff and from students suggests that this should be revisited. Even taking into account the fact that different personalities respond to different personalities, and so one should take care in stating that a particular person will be good at personal tutoring, some staff find it stressful to deliver the role (including if students do not engage with the process); probably reflecting this, some staff do not respond to student emails or engage with the process at all and this in turn creates pressure on students. A new approach accordingly appears warranted to who should take in the role.

How [Remit ii, iii and iv]

Recommendation 3

1. *“There is a goal of **consistency** of personal tutor support to be provided to all UG and PGT students. This is to include **regularity of meetings** and the **issues which the tutor will offer to explore** with the student. All students are to be invited to at **least two meetings a year**, one at the start of each half-session (recognising that the timing of this will vary across the University). These meetings will be **arranged and timetabled by administrative support**. Meetings can be group meetings, although students must also be offered the opportunity to have an individual meeting. It is recognised that some differences will be unavoidable in terms of detail regarding issues to be explored and number of meetings for example to reflect regulatory structures, nature of studies, student’s situation, staff and student ratios and School professional services support and other support, particularly regarding postgraduate professional qualifications; the goal of consistency must, however, remain.”*
2. This is similar to the present position, although it calls for there to be focus on consistency as a starting point. This is a change from the School led approach to UG personal tutoring [in terms of implementation](#). The benefits of this are recognised, and also the challenges for Schools in addressing this; however, providing a consistent student focussed experienced must be the starting point. The Senior Pastoral and Guidance Forum would be a place within which consistency can be explored.

3. Two meetings a year is considered to be a minimum base for creating a relationship with of course the ability for there to be further meetings as needed. There have been arguments for only one meeting a year, or for no meetings if the student does not wish to come; but this more open and student led approach runs the risk of losing the opportunity for building a close connection and community (particularly through group meetings) and for some students disengaging or feeling that they are not really supposed to go. It is recognised that for some programmes this might impose a workload challenge particularly for large professional programmes and this is noted in this report in relation to implementation and additional resource, and will be the subject of further discussion.
4. Timetabling meetings has often been said to be a burden for academic staff and that it is unclear for students when there will be meetings. Central organisation would address this and would mean that meetings could be put into MyTimetable or other tool. Feedback is that students may be more likely to attend and that the meeting then appears more official.
5. Issues which run through the consultation and debate are whether meetings are compulsory – in the sense that there are consequences for the student if they do not attend. In previous Aberdeen systems, there was a need to meet with an adviser to make academic course choices at the start of the academic year, and there is a view from staff that this reason to attend was valuable in creating a connection on which to build in the future. There is also the view that having compulsory meetings was disempowering of the student and that having a sanction for non-attendance may pose an additional challenge for those in need. Our present technology does enable access to VLEs to not be available until a student has met with a personal tutor at the start of the year; however, there is a view that this might have a negative impact on the students who are most in need, and leave students in a difficult position at the very start. Removal of access to the VLE for not attending personal tutor meetings could be imposed but it is suggested that this does not create an appropriate relationship - on which would ideally be an ongoing positive one, rather than one in which a tutor responds to problems. In summary, students are expected to attend meetings and if they do not do so they should be contacted and offered support; but there will be no penalty for non-attendance.

Recognition [Remit i and iii]

Recommendation 4

1. *“A **new workload allocation** framework should be developed and adopted to reflect the new scope of the personal tutor role including regarding providing preliminary academic advice and the PGT role. There is a goal of **consistency** of workload allocation framework and system for personal tutor support per student and this is to be the same allocation for UG and PGT students, respecting the equal importance of provision of this support to UG and PGT students. Note that this is also for further consideration by the Workload Allocation Group, including regarding the amount to be allocated and it should also be borne in mind that the proposed level of contact **exceeds present approaches** in some Schools for UG students.”*
2. This would be a change. Workloads are varied across the University for UG personal tutoring, and most Schools do not have a workload allocation for PGT pastoral support. It is recommended that the importance of the roles and the value of the support should be recognised in the same workload allocation being awarded to the role across Schools and at UG and PGT level. This should be aligned to workload discussions elsewhere in the University and to ensuring that all colleagues have a fair workload. This will go some way to addressing the additional payment issue in respect of Advisers. See also recommendation 9 in relation to annual review.

Leadership [Remit iii]

Recommendation 5

1. *“Each School is to have at least one Senior Personal Tutor, who will likely be an academic. The PGT role is to be distinct from other PGT leadership roles, although it may be held by a person who holds these other roles; if so, additional workload is to be allocated to the colleague. **The senior personal tutor for UG and PGT may be the same person, however specific workload** allocation is to apply to each element of the role. If there is more than one Senior Personal Tutor in a School, these colleagues will be expected to liaise. The details of the workload allocated to this role will reflect the number of students in the School. Note that this is also for further consideration by the Workload Allocation Group, including regarding the amount to be allocated. There is a goal of **consistency** in approaches to these roles bearing in mind possible existing differences within Schools, including regarding roles of professional services colleagues.*

The Senior Personal Tutor(s) will work closely with relevant central administrative colleagues, Heads of School, Line Managers and other Senior Personal Tutors in supporting staff and students and in arranging allocation of students and will take a lead in resolving issues regarding the tutor-tutee relationships (with the Head of School or Dean for Student Support to do so if there is a conflict)."

2. The role of PGT personal tutoring is a change. It is proposed that Senior Personal Tutors will continue to have an important role in working as a community to lead delivery and support each other and disseminate practice and guidance to their Schools and support their tutor teams in School and assist in allocation. If the Senior Personal Tutor(s) is unable to fulfil the role, such as for research leave or personal reasons, the School is to provide an alternative.

What else [Remit ii and iii]

Recommendation 6

1. *"The purpose of the personal tutor system and expectations of staff and student and how this intersects with other forms of support is to be set out clearly to staff and students. Training and resources for colleagues will continue to be enhanced, including, for all students, preliminary discussions of academic matters and making use of existing IT systems and the information they provide; and new resources, training and details of topics to be offered to be explored will be created as appropriate regarding PGT students. Support (including specialist counselling support) for staff regarding issues which may arise from supporting students will continue to be enhanced, and its availability made clear to all staff."*
2. This is not new in relation to UG; however, it reiterates the importance of this ongoing work. Information has been gathered in the Review regarding possible content for PGT pastoral support and this will be built on.
3. Consideration will be given to the development of more formal online training, similar to that for GBV and EDI including in relation to mental health. A key point again is to stress the limits of the PT role and that the PT is not a mental health adviser nor indeed a specialist adviser on any other specific issue.

With whom [Remit 2, 3 and 4]

Recommendation 7

1. *“Tutor and tutee allocation is to be carried out centrally in the University for UG **and PGT students**, on the basis of information regarding staff provided by the Heads of School/Line Managers. Tutor and tutee would match with reference to School (not degree programme) **and within that, if possible, by discipline; if colleagues in a School have expertise in a different area from the students in the School, then colleagues should be matched with students from a School which more reflects their expertise.** The Senior Personal Tutor will work closely with the central allocation team to implement this. Additional workload and resource are to be made available to enable this central allocation. **Within this, present practices could continue of Schools choosing that colleagues having expertise in supporting students who have shared with the University that they have particular characteristics** (such as international, advanced entry, estranged from family); however, this matching is unlikely to be possible or sought in all cases and regard should be had to the possibility of a person having multiple characteristics. In any event, other support will continue to be provided to these student groups and the links between this and the personal tutor system will be made clear. The discipline match, when this is possible, would take priority over this other matching.”*
2. This is a change. At present there is central allocation for UG students but not for PGT students. There is some informal matching of students with particular characteristics and in relation to discipline by requests made from Schools. The recommendation would create a new emphasis in relation to discipline matching and to enable some colleagues to support students from other Schools when appropriate. Depending on student numbers, this may not always be possible, hence see the fourth paragraph under Recommendation 1. Additional resource and system change would be needed to ensure that relevant information about characteristics which students have shared can be taken into account as appropriate in matching and for this to be able to be done at an appropriate time.

3. For PGT students, when possible, it is recommended that students are not matched with the Director of their PGT programme. There is mixed feedback on this, but some students would find it uncomfortable to discuss personal matters and academic difficulties with someone who they perceive as being in a position of power over them. For PGT students, there would need to be matching process for the growing number of January starts.

With what [Remit ii and iv]

Recommendation 8

1. “IT development work will be explored to ensure that the most effective use is made of existing information about students and their performance and experiences, including their engagement with the personal tutor system. **There should also be further consideration by the University of new systems and approaches to data** (such as dashboards drawing together student’s current experiences and use of university services, as appropriate in light of confidentiality obligations); it is not recommended that predictive technology is explored. This increased use of information, and in particular through a live dashboard, would inform in an efficient manner tutor-tutee and other human interactions, the offering of specialist support and assist in the making of risk-based decisions by humans. The focus of this is to enhance support offered to students.”
2. It is recommended that the University reopen its discussion on Learning Analytics such as solution path and the Tribal CRM personal tutor system (depending on its functionality) to explore what additional benefits might be gained from these in identified predicting students who may be in difficulty and following JISC guidance.¹³ This issue is also being explored in the Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Task and Finish Group. The results set out on page 14 of this report would be relevant to this further consideration. There would be significant resource involved in a Learning Analytics system and there are strong criticisms of a predictive model regarding a lack of empowerment of students, a branding of students and exclusion of students who may also be in need warrants further discussion. It is suggested that making the best use of what the University has from Student Records and VLEs should be the starting point for reasons of financial investment and privacy/student respect. It is also recommended that the live dashboard aspect of Learning Analytics issue should also be re-opened as a topic for discussion in the University.

¹³ <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/learning-analytics>

Making it work [Remit iii and iv]

Recommendation 9

1. *“Processes and support mechanisms will be developed to enhance staff and student engagement with the personal tutor system. For staff, this could include engagement with Line Managers, personal tutoring being part of the induction process, the annual review system, the provision of additional training and ongoing support, and an IT based means of noting staff and student contact and following up with students. For students, this could include references to personal tutoring in the personal development courses available to UG and PGT students in their first year with the University, an IT based system by which students can see their levels of engagement with their tutor and also a dashboard of their present academic performance and engagement and personal tutor engagement to provide assurance that personal tutor meetings will be individualised. Additional workload and resource would be needed to bring this about. It is to be made clear to students that it is expected that they attend personal tutor meetings.”*
2. Research leave and other reasons mean that it is not always possible for a student to have the same personal tutor during their studies, however this should be the goal. Additional support to the InfoHub would help students in being made aware of this and the reasons for it. This should be done sensitively to both staff and student to maintain engagement and support.
3. Queries relating to personal tutoring have been increased in recent years (in terms of queries received by the Info Hub). If the InfoHub is able to respond to these points even more quickly than at present, and with a committed, informed and supportive body of personal tutors, students are likely to have a better experience. Developing a system, perhaps via a VLE when students have not been contacted by the personal tutor could raise this fact, would be an easier way than students emailing the Infohub as at present. It would also be helpful for colleagues to be able to notify the Senior Personal Tutor when they have invited their students to a meeting. See also Recommendation 8 comments regarding Learning Analytics

Next Steps: Consideration and Implementation

1. The Vision, Recommendations and initial proposals for implementation and evaluation will be considered by Senate for a further academic view in September 22 and then considered for approval by Student Support and Experience Committee, University Education Committee and then by Senate, as appropriate, from December 22 to February 23.
2. After this process is complete, the TFG would then develop more detailed proposals for the further implementation of the Recommendations. This is to include staff and student engagement with the personal tutor system; the issues to be explored in meetings, building as needed on the present [practice](#); the details of a new PGT personal tutor system and its content (including for example regarding international students and its intersection with existing support systems for PGT students in Schools; and the new resource which is suggested would be needed including, if this would be helpful, detailed consideration of evidence relating to Learning Analytics.
3. The recommendations made by the TFG stand as a whole, as a package, and so the implementation plans would be for all of the recommendations together. A draft implementation plan which sets out possible paths is in Appendix A.
4. The consideration and as appropriate approval and implementation process will not be completed before academic year 22/3. For ongoing delivery of pastoral support in academic year 22/3, work continues through the Senior Pastoral and Guidance Forum, the Student Experience and Student Support Teams and the Dean for Student Support, to further enhance resources and training (including regarding specific groups such as international students) and to make clear the present scope of the UG personal tutor system. They will also support Schools in any ongoing work to deliver the support for PGT students set out in guidance which was provided to School pastoral PGT leads in January 2022. This is, however, very much an interim solution.

5. For now, it is anticipated that the additional resources set out in the following paragraphs would be needed. See also recommendations 2, 3,7,8,9 which are noted above as requiring additional resource and additional staff in the InfoHub, School offices and academics (in the light of staff student ratios) to enable the proposals to be delivered. Further details would be developed in due course.
6. An extra layer of work would be involved in all School workload allocation processes in identifying who, if anyone, is not to take on the role and the implications of this for other roles to be assumed by colleagues, and the number of students per colleagues. Extra academic staff may be needed to be able to provide to students the consistent support recommended in a workable manner.
7. If the recommendations are adopted, additional resource would be needed in the InfoHub or School offices, to manage PGT allocation (a new role) and to grouping with reference to disciplines and in some cases to characteristics and arranging meeting times.
8. Further discussion would be needed as to the details of the workload to be given, with decisions to be made by the Workload Review Group.
9. Additional resource would be needed in Student Experience/Wellbeing and Student Support to inform and lead training and produce webpages and materials in a coherent and user-friendly manner.
10. IT development time would be needed for VLEs, Student Records and Student Hub and to explore any additional functionality to make the best use of the information that we have. Significant resource would be needed if discussions do continue and any decisions made in relation to a live dashboard and Learning Analytics, and indeed to engage in those discussions.

The future: Evaluation

1. This TFG will also consider this more fully once the further academic view is received from Senate. The TFG will develop a set of baselines and questions from which change can be assessed. This will draw on points made, and questions raised in the Review and in the evidence base and arguments supporting the Recommendations.

2. It is proposed that the actions building on the review would be covered for the next 5 years in the first instance (so covering the student journey of all full-time undergraduates) in the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey and also in the Staff Survey or in additional surveys, taking into account the need to avoid survey overload.
3. Annual focus groups and/or listening sessions will also be held with staff and students.

Appendix A

Draft Implementation Plan August 22

This document sets out initial proposals for implementation of the substantive recommendations of the Pastoral Review TFG *if the University should choose to adopt them. All references to approval in this document should be viewed in the light of this.*

Initial implementation thoughts

The substantive recommendations and these initial implementation proposals will be considered at Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC) on 23 August 2022, University Education Committee (UEC) on 25 August 2022 and then by Senate on 14 September 22 for a further academic view.

The substantive recommendations will be updated in the light of feedback received. They will then be considered with a request for approval at SSEC on 8 December 22, UEC on 16 January 23 and Senate on 8 February 23.

The initial implementations will also be updated and are put forward to assist in these discussions and to provide a base for more detailed consideration in the next phase of the TFG or through a Project Board, including regarding web sources, IT support and change, financial investment and new posts, if the recommendations should be adopted. It is proposed that project management techniques will be deployed to assist in this and initial provisional dialogue has taken place.

Note: related work is ongoing in the Monitoring, Absence and Engagement TFG which will follow the same timetable for consideration and possible approval. It is suggested it may be valuable to explore combining the delivery of some of the outputs of these TFGs.

Vision from Pastoral Review TFG report (taken from present draft)

“All undergraduate and postgraduate taught students will be allocated a Personal Tutor. So far as possible, the student will have the same personal tutor during their time at the University and this will be someone who is familiar with the student’s area of study and at an appropriate level of seniority. The Personal Tutor will be a first person for the student to contact regarding academic and non-academic support and will then support the student in seeking guidance from more specialist staff as needed. All students are to be offered at least 2 meetings per academic year and are expected to attend. There will be individual and group meetings to support students in their academic decision making, personal development and needs and in building connections and a community. Heads of School/Line Managers may decide that some staff are not to carry out the role from time to time. Training and resources will be enhanced to support staff and students regarding the scope of the role and its limits. Enhanced use is to be made of existing data sources and further consideration is to be given to the University investing in a live dashboard form of learning analytics to support staff in providing students with targeted, relevant and informed support. Workload is to be allocated for all personal tutor activity in a fair and consistent manner across the University.”

	Recs from TFG report (summarised)	Procedure/step required to deliver	Governance/Committee approval	Inter-Dependencies	Priority level	Timelines	Asks/resource	Ownership
1	The personal tutor will have a holistic and overview role in supporting all UG and PGT students. (pages 21-3)	PGT personal tutor role to be created	-Education Committees -Senate -Policy -? other committees	Approval required for all formal work on PGT	High/first	Approval in Principle through Academic view Senate Sept 22, approval path SSEC Dec 22, UEC Jan 23, Senate Feb 23		Dean for Student Support

						Detailed policy to follow		
		Approval of wider scope of UG role to cover academic matters	Education Committees, Senate Policy ? other committees	Approval required for academic support for UG to be formalised	High/first	Approval in Principle through Academic view Senate Sept 22, approval path SSEC Dec 22, UEC Jan 23, Senate Feb 23. Detailed policy to follow		Dean for Student Support
2	All academic colleagues at grade 6 and above, posts funded by University or AFG, who deliver some teaching or considered have relevant	Approval of changes for eligibility and holding UG role and for new PGT	-Education Committees -Senate -Policy -? other committees	Approval required for new system to come about	High/first	Approval in Principle through Academic view Senate Sept 22, approval path SSEC Dec 22, UEC Jan 23, Senate Feb 23		Dean for Student Support

	expertise by Heads of School/Line Managers, on contracts of 12 months or more and who are 0.5FTE or more, eligible to deliver personal tutor support to UG and/or PGT students. (pages 23-5)					Detailed policy to follow		
		HoS/ALM to set up formal system of identifying any colleague not to take on role	Approval by SSEC	Needs approval Rec 1 and 2 of roles and that not all do it	High/second	Begin after substantive approval of recs 1/2 Will build on existing informal practices	More formal part in School role allocation process (see p28 point 6 report)	Dean for Student Support, Heads of Student/ALM
		Identify recommended total number of students and guidance on how this	Guidance from SSEC	Needs approval Rec 1 and 2 of roles and that not all do it	High/second	Begin after substantive approval of recs 1/2		Dean for Student Support

		can work flexibly particularly with large professional cohorts						
		If not all colleagues are to take on the role, more academic staff may be needed to deliver it	Commitment in principle from SMT and staff recruitment committees that ability for the School to deliver personal tutor support within the scope of the recommendations is a relevant reason for post approval		High/first	Approval in Principle through Academic view Senate Sept 22, approval path SSEC Dec 22, UEC Jan 23, Senate Feb 23, then decision by SMT and staff recruitment committees	More academic staff (see p28 point 6 report)	Heads of School
3	Goal of consistency of personal tutor support to be provided to all UG and	Approval of Goal	-Education Committees -Senate -Policy	Aligned with approval of rec 1	High /first	Approval in Principle through Academic view Senate Sept 22, approval path SSEC Dec 22, UEC	Increased role for academic staff in some Schools for UG and in all Schools for PGT	Dean for Student Support

	PGT students. (pages 25-7)					Jan 23, Senate Feb 23. Detailed policy to follow		
		Materials to be provided setting up expectations of staff and student, regularity of meetings and content – enhanced for UG and new for PGT.	SSEC	Needs approval of rec 1/2	High/second and ongoing	Some ongoing initial work for PGT support building on existing practices and resources. After approval September - February 2023, more formal development of resources	Development of resources and schedule of expectations. Staff resource Infohub, Student Support, Student Experience to ensure aligned approach	Dean for Student Support
		Central or School admin resource to arrange meetings (not to be done by personal tutors)	Commitment in principle from SMT and staff recruitment committees that new posts will be created to enable this	Needs approval of rec 1/2	High/second	Approval in Principle through Academic view Senate Sept 22, approval path SSEC	New resource required in School or Central	Dean for Student Support

			central/school administrative organisation to be carried out			Dec 22, UEC Jan 23, Senate Feb 23, then decision by SMT and staff recruitment committees		
		Development of systems to arrange meetings		Needs approval of recommendation 1/2 and commitment to resource (see above)	Medium/third	Begin consideration after Academic view Senate Sept 22 approval path completed ending Feb 23 and recruitment approval	IT and human systems	Dean for Student Support and InfoHub
4	A new workload allocation framework to reflect the new scope of the personal tutor role (page 27)	Proposals developed	Student Support and Experience Committee, linked with University workload review group	Recs 1 and 3	High/first	Begin consideration after Academic view Senate Sept 22 approval path completed ending Feb	Will involve increased human hours given growth of role, even with suggested enhanced IT and systems (see	Dean for Student Support/TFG

						23 Tie in with timetable of workload review group	Report page 28 point 8)	
5	Each School to have at least one Senior Personal Tutor, likely an academic (page 27-8)	Appointment		Rec 1 re PGT personal tutor to be created and then lead	High/second – are leads however formalising key to entrench system for PGT ongoing have, need one, can continue	Begin after formal approval (Senate Feb 23) Build on existing practices re UG	Colleague(s) to be allocated role and workload	Heads of School
		Role description to be formalised and publicised on web pages	SSEC	Rec 1	High/second	Begin after formal approval (Senate Feb 23) Build on existing practices re UG	Additional IT and InfoHub resource to update webpages	Dean for Student Support, InfoHub
6	Purpose of the personal tutor system, expectations of staff and student, intersection	Create resources, building on existing UG and new resources for PGT resources (especially		Rec 1	High/second	Begin after formal approval (Senate Feb 23) Build on existing	Additional IT and InfoHub resource to update webpages. Build on consultation as a detail.	Dean for Student Support, TFG

	with other forms of support to be set out clearly (pages 28-9)	monitoring, academic detail, student learning service, CAD specialist services MyCurriculum and for different student groups eg international, widening access)				practices re UG	Will be ongoing process and need resource	
		New Academic training delivered by and for schools in light specific needs eg credits, options, honours issues		Rec 1	High/first	Begin after formal approval (Senate Feb 23)	Human support to develop training gathering central and school knowledge, building on existing CAD and School training	Dean for Student Support Senior Pastoral Leads

		Enhancing existing pastoral training and turn into online compulsory training like eg EDI		Rec 1, 3	High/second	Begin after formal approval (Senate Feb 23) Build on existing training (see report page 28 point 9)	IT support to develop training, InfoHub to provide ongoing support	Dean for Student Support, Senior Pastoral Leads
7	Tutor and tutee allocation to be carried out centrally for UG and PGT students (pages 29-30)	Process established for combining School requests, student characteristic, aligned with other existing systems, Sept and Jan intakes Commitment in principle from SMT and staff recruitment committees that new posts will be created to enable this	Digital Strategy Committee	Rec 1 and 3	High/first	Begin after formal approval (Senate Feb 23) 23/4 action	Need new Central resources to do this for PGT (entirely new) and to have more targeting matching when possible for UG (report page 28 point 7) Resource to match Jan starts	Dean for Student Support

		central/school administrative to be carried out						
		New school resource to identify disciplines and experiences		Rec 1 and 3	High/second	Begin after formal approval (Senate Feb 23)	School workload	Dean for Student Support. Senior Pastoral Leads, Heads of School, SAMs
8	Most effective use is made of existing information about students and their performance and experiences, including personal tutor system (pages 30-31).	New training to make better use of MyAberdeen and SRS			High/second	Summer and autumn 22 (building ongoing work and existing training resources)	Ongoing resource allocated to this issue (see report page 28 point 10)	IT training team, Senior Pastoral Leads
		Creation of new intersections	Digital Strategy Committee		High/first (exploration)	Begin after formal approval	Enhancement of VLEs for staff and	Dean for Student Support, Digital

		between MyAberdeen and SRS/ enhancement of MyAberdeen (including possible flag - without detail - of student having engaged with support services or discipline issue so personal tutor is aware and for PT to be notified)	Privacy policy			(Senate Feb 23) 23/4 action	student, more likely to be used. Flags to humans to then act	Strategic Committee, TFG
	Further consideration by the University of new systems and approaches to data (page 31)	Consideration of reopening live dashboard conversation	Senate, Digital Strategy Committee		High but separate – though links with steps suggested to existing IT systems	Build on discussions leading to Senate 23	New IT systems	Dean for Student Support regarding new conversations
9	Processes and support mechanisms	Induction			High/second	Ongoing based on	Materials and inclusion of issue	Human resources, School orientation leads. Student

	to enhance staff and student engagement with personal tutor system (pages 31-2)					existing practices		Experience/Careers and Employability
		Line management, annual review systems, promotion	[? which Committee?]		High/second	Links with existing work in these areas		SVP, Heads of School
		Students to see on VLE/IT system their engagement with personal tutor system and with their studies	DSC after Senate and committee process		High/second	Begin after formal approval (Senate Feb 23) 23/4 action	Enhancement of VLE	Dean for Student Support, Digital Strategic Committee, TFG
		Engagement of staff with system to be visible to SPT	Digital Strategy Committee after Senate and committee process		High/second	Begin after formal approval (Senate Feb 23) 23/4 action	Enhancement of VLEs	Dean for Student Support, Digital Strategic Committee, TFG

Appendix B

Governance and Delivery of Remit

1. The TFG remit set out below (5.2.1-3) that the TFG will
 - review the present position, develop more targeted questions to be posed and hold focus groups and consider pulse surveys
 - share its thoughts with the full Senior Pastoral and Guidance Forum and the Steering Group of the Enhancement Theme Resilient Learning Communities
 - report to and take views from the Student Support Committee and the University Education committee, Senate and the Student Experience Committee
2. This TFG fulfilled this remit regarding the first item, see pages 12-14. Regarding the second and third items, the work of the TFG was discussed at University Education Committee on 6 December 2021, 18 January 2022, 17 February 2022, 17 March 2022, 13 April 2022, 10 May 2022 and 25 August 2022; Student Support Committee on 18 October 2021, 8 December 2021, 3 February 22, 21 March 2022, April 2022 and 23 August 2022; Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee on 26 October 21, the Steering Group of the Enhancement Theme Resilient Learning Communities on 9 December 2021 and the Senior Pastoral Guidance and Support Forum on 7 March 2022. Details are found in papers for and minutes of these meetings. The TFG met on 9 June 21, 4 October 21, 3 November 21, 8 December 2021, 12 January 2022, 23 March 2022, 25 May 2022 and 28 July 2022. Full notes were circulated to the TEAM site and the TFG also kept in touch in between meetings via the TEAM and email.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

ABERDEEN 2040 STUDENT PASTORAL SUPPORT REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP

REMIT AND COMPOSITION

(Sub-Group of the University Education Committee (UEC))

1. GROUP TITLE

Student Pastoral Support Review Task and Finish Group

2. TERM OF GROUP

Established June 2021. It is anticipated that the Group will submit its recommendations to the UEC by April 2022 and will provide regular updates before then.

3. CHAIR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AREA

Chair: Dean of Student Support

Administrative Support Area: Student Experience

4. PURPOSE

The University's Enhancement Led Institutional Review (EILIR), published in 2019, identified goals of reviewing the pastoral support provided for PGT students, and also the UG PT system which had been established by Senate in 2013. The ELIR One Year on Report

approved at Senate on 5 February 2020 refers to monitoring and expansion of personal tutoring for online students and to support for PGT students. This group will carry out that review.

5. REMIT

The review will recommend any changes which should be made to the UG personal tutoring and PGT pastoral support on the Aberdeen and Qatar campuses for on campus/blended/online teaching in respect of

- 5.1. who is to deliver it?
- 5.1.2 the nature of the support and information sharing needed to support this
- 5.1.3 how to enhance staff and student engagement with the personal tutor and pastoral support systems
- 5.1.4 identify priorities and prepare and deliver an implementation plan, including as appropriate requests for additional resource
- 5.1.5 develop an internal benchmarking and evaluation plan
- 5.2.1 This group will review the present position, develop more targeted questions to be posed and hold focus groups and consider pulse surveys
- 5.2.2 share its thoughts with the full Senior Pastoral and Guidance Forum and the Steering Group of the Enhancement Theme Resilient Learning Communities
- 5.2.3 report to and take views from the Student Support Committee and the University Education committee, Senate and the Student Experience Committee

6. COMPOSITION

Chair: Dean for Student Support

Membership: Representatives from Senior Pastoral and Guidance Forum
Representatives from Enhancement Theme Resilient Learning

Communities Steering Group

Students' Association Representatives (Sabbaticals and School Conveners)

ACCOUNT TO BE TAKEN OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP

7. MEMBERSHIP

The review will be led by Dean for Student Support, with a small working group drawn from the Senior Pastoral and Guidance Forum, Enhancement Theme Resilient Learning Communities Steering Group, AUSA sabbatical officers and School Conveners

The group will comprise

Martin Barker (Senior Personal Tutor SBS)

Anna Bokedal (Senior Personal Tutor LLVMC)

Abbe Brown (Dean for Student Support)

Amy Bryzgel (PGT Lead LLVMC) (*moved on*)
John Cavanagh (Senior Personal Tutor Engineering)
Isobel Crane (Senior Personal Tutor MMSN)
Ivana Drdakova (AUSA VP-Welfare) (*joined*)
Nick Edwards (Head of Student Support)
Tania Fahey Palma (DHPA PGT Senior Personal Tutor) (*joined*)
Grainne Ferrigan (Online Learning)
Fiona Findlater (InfoHub)
David Green (PGT Lead Geosciences)
Tracey Innes (Lead Careers and Employability)
Ken Jeffrey (Senior Personal Tutor, DHPA) (*moved on*)
Ondrej Kucerack (AUSA Vice-President Education)
Jo Kunzlik (PGT Support Lead Law) (*moved on*)
Sally Middleton (Widening Access)
Farhana Mustari (PGT student)
Jemma Murdoch (Lead Student Support Adviser (General))
Helen Pierce (DHPA Resilience Learning Communities Community of Practice) (*moved on*)
Emma Richards (Business School, Student Progression) (*joined*)
Ian Robotham (IT) (*joined*)

Karen Scaife (Student Experience)

Emily Strickland (Student Convenor)

Steve Tucker (MMSN, Lead Resilience Learning Communities Community of Practice)

Max Vallarino (Student Convenor)

Mel Viney (Lead Go Abroad Officer)

Alina Zorn (Student Convenor)

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

Formal reporting line:

Student Support Committee (SSC)

University Education Committee (UEC)

Interface with other committees:

Student Support Committee (SSC)

School Education Committees,

Senior Pastoral and Guidance Forum

Resilient Learning Communities Steering Group

9. FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS

Meetings to be at least monthly for the duration of the working group.

10. PUBLICATION OF PAPERS

The agenda and meeting papers will be made available at least one week prior to meetings of the TFG. Where these papers are

draft, this will be clearly identified.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

UPDATE ON MONITORING, ABSENCE AND ENGAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

This paper provides Student Support and Experience Committee with an update on the activities of the Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Task and Finish Group.

University Education Committee is invited to **note** this paper and to **comment on the draft** Principles and the points in the Appendix regarding the **short term, medium term and longer term**.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Monitoring, Absence and Engagement (consideration) TFG	28 July 2022 and subsequently by email/TEAM posts
	Student Support and Experience Committee (consideration)	23 August 2022
Further consideration/ approval required by	Senate (for a first academic view)	14 September 2022
	SSEC (approval)	8 December 2022
	QAC (approval)	16 January 2023
	UEC (approval)	8 February 2023
	Senate (approval)	

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Monitoring, Absence and Engagement Task and Finish Group (TFG) was established in 2021. Details have been provided of its activities to SSC on 8 December 2021, 3 February 2022, 21 March 2022 and 7 April 2022 and to QAC on 4 May 2022. Updates were provided to UEC on 6 December 2021, 17 February 2022, 17 March 2022, 13 April 2022 (with further opportunities for comment thereafter by email) and on 10 May 2022.

4. UPDATE

4.1 This Paper attaches in the Appendix a presentation and a diagram summarising the work of the TFG and its plans.

4.2 UEC is asked to comment on the points made regarding:

- 4.2.1 Findings (slide 4) – the variety of delivery at present, our move to sharing of good practice, our benchmarking supports the need for a proactive system which combines academic and pastoral support in a more streamlined manner
 - 4.2.2 Suggested goals and principles (slides 5 to 6) in the context of the complex intersections in providing a fair, consistent and supported student experience and meeting academic and regulatory requirements and visa rules
 - 4.2.3 Short term/immediate steps to enhance present systems and deliver principles (slide 7)
 - 4.2.4 Medium term recommendations (current and AY22-3) to enhance present systems and deliver principles, particularly regarding human resource, IT development, reflection on live dashboard, change of name and consideration of new provisions policy (slide 8)
 - 4.2.5 Longer term recommendations and implementation suggestions – key themes are a new monitoring system enabled by a new IT system (and prioritisation of this through Student Records System), more monitoring across a course, earlier and more proactive intervention with a focus on support, and a combination of IT and human action to provide supportive and streamlined delivery for the benefit of staff and students with regard to a student’s full experience (slides 9 to 26).
- 4.3 At the UEC meeting, a short presentation will be made developing 4.2.1-4.2.5 and summarising the points in the Appendix and presenting the longer term proposals in diagram form.
 - 4.4 The same paper and presentations will have been considered by Student Support and Education Committee on 23 August 2022 and details of feedback received will be shared with UEC on 25 August 2022. The presentation will be updated in the light of feedback received and then presented to Senate for a first academic view on 14 September 2022.
 - 4.5 A full report will then be prepared building on all feedback received with a view to further consideration by Education Committees and Senate from December 22 and to future work on implementation using project management techniques, including requests to Digital Strategy Group and engagement as appropriate with the Workload Review Group.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

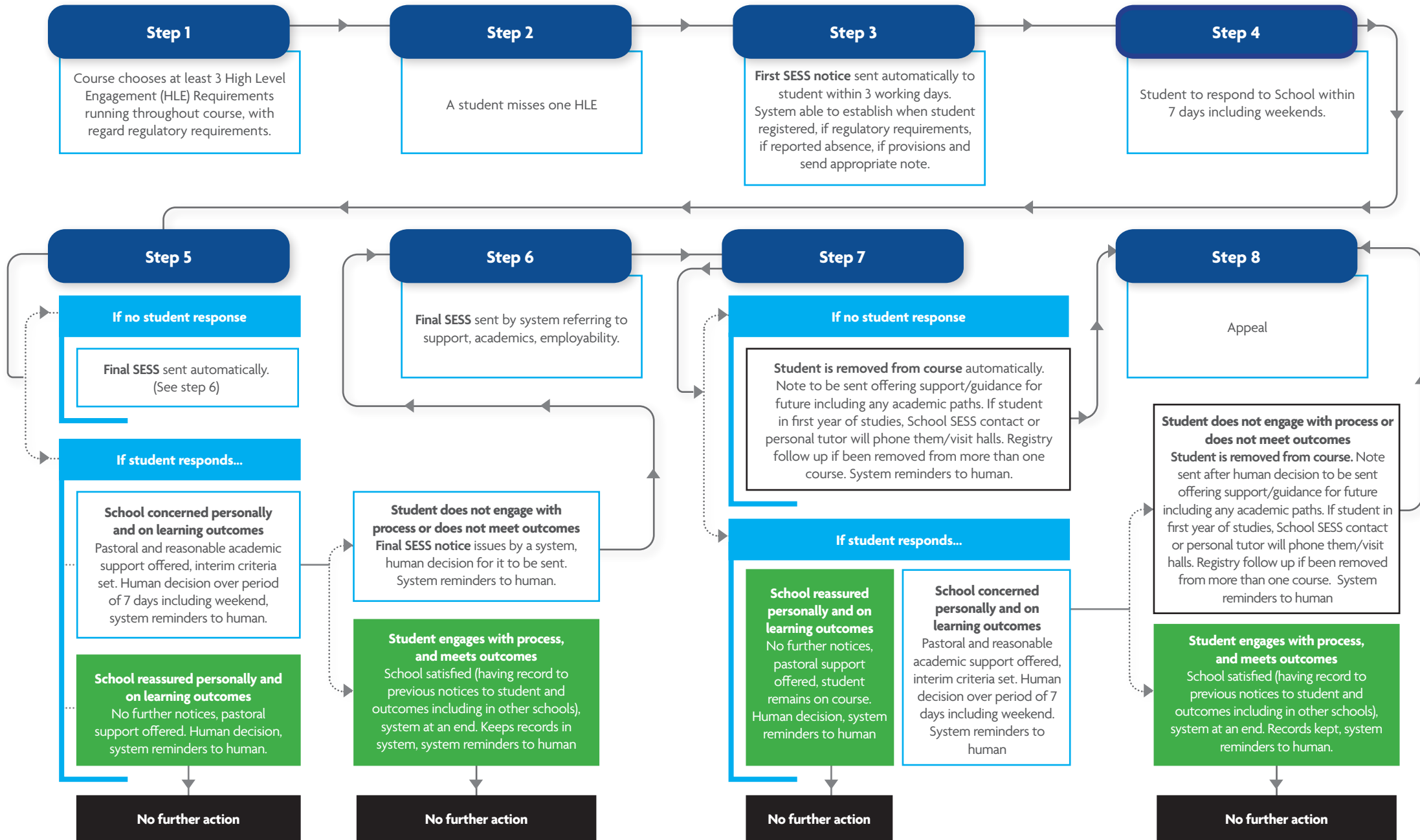
Further information is available from Abbe Brown, Dean for Student Support (abbe.brown@abdn.ac.uk).

August 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Appendix

Monitoring, Absence and Engagement



Note this intersects with visa requirements but given evolution of UK systems, additional requirements may be needed for student visa holders. This is still under discussion

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DEADLINES FOR THE RETURN OF RESULTS 2022/23**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

The purpose of this paper is to seek the **approval** of the University Education Committee (UEC) for the deadlines for the return of results in academic year 2022/23.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/ approved by:		
Further consideration/ approval required by:	University Education Committee (UEC) University Education Committee (UEC)	13 April 2022 23 June 2022

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The UEC is asked to **approve** the proposed deadlines for the return of results in academic year 2022/23, detailed in section 4.5 below.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 At the meetings of the University Education Committee (UEC) held on 13 April and 23 June 2022, members of the Committee were asked to approve deadlines for the return of results in academic year 2022/23 as follows:

(a) January 2023 Assessments

All undergraduate courses **by Friday 20 January 2023**

Postgraduate taught courses **by Friday 27 January 2023**

January Start Postgraduate Taught programmes, for candidates commencing January 2022, **by Friday 27 January 2023**

(b) May 2023 Assessments

All Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 courses and undergraduate programmes **by Friday 9 June 2023**

Postgraduate taught course and programme results, for those candidates eligible to graduate in June 2023, **by Friday 9 June 2023**

All other postgraduate taught courses **by Friday 30 June 2023**

(c) Resit Assessments

All Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 resit assessments **by Friday 11 August 2023**

(d) Postgraduate Taught programmes eligible to graduate in November 2023

Postgraduate Taught summer courses and programme results **by Friday 3 November 2023**.

4.2 At the meetings, however, concerns regarding the dates and whether they provided enough time for staff to undertake marking and for Examiners' meetings to take place were raised. As such, it was agreed that a further review of the dates would be undertaken and the UEC asked to reconsider the proposal at a later date.

4.3 Two reviews of the proposed dates have now been undertaken, the outcomes of which can be seen in detail in the table below. The text in black reflects the outcome of the review undertaken following the meeting held on 13 April 2022, while the text in red reflects the outcome of the review undertaken following the review undertaken following the meeting held on 23 June 2022.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Points of Note
Start of Term	21 Sep 2020	20 Sep 2021	12 Sep 2022	Term in 2022/23 will start a week earlier, exam result deadlines reflect this.
1HS UG Results	29 Jan 2021	28 Jan 2022	20 Jan 2023	UG results are currently due 3 weeks after the conclusion of the 1HS. This is line with our commitment to students that they will receive feedback 'in a timely manner and normally within a maximum of three working weeks'. Teaching for the 2HS begins on 23 January and although the deadline of 20 January does provide some time for students to be informed of 1HS results and to change courses, the window is very tight and could not be further shortened. Following additional review, this position cannot be further altered.
1HS PGT Results (course)	5 Feb 2021	4 Feb 2022	27 Jan 2023	PGT results are currently due 4 weeks after the conclusion of the 1HS. This is out of step with our commitment to students that they will receive feedback 'in a timely manner and normally within a maximum of three working weeks', however, is exceptionally permitted to in recognition of the very busy period for staff. To extend marking periods further would take us further from this commitment. Teaching for the 2HS begins on 23 January and although PGTs are unlikely to be changing courses, this existing deadline provides very little time for students to be informed of 1HS results and to change courses. The deadline cannot be further extended without breaching our commitments further. NB students will require to be informed of the timings of the return of assessment feedback. Following additional review, this position cannot be further altered.
January Start PGT Results (programme)	5 Feb 2021	4 Feb 2022	27 Jan 2023	As above, in terms of the fulfillment of our commitment that feedback will be received within a 3-week window. Following additional review, this position cannot be further altered.
2HS UG results (course & programme)	18 Jun 2021	17 Jun 2022	9 Jun 2023	This deadline allows for 4 weeks for the return of results following the conclusion of the 2HS in excess of the 3-week window we stipulate to students. This is the latest deadline by which

				results can be returned to allow for preparation for graduation and to enable students required to undertake resit assessments to apply to do so. Following additional review, this position cannot be further altered.
2HS PGT results (course & programme)	18 Jun 2021	17 Jun 2022	9 Jun 2023	As above, this deadline allows for 4 weeks for the return of results following the conclusion of the 2HS. In excess of the 3-week window we stipulate to students. This is the latest deadline by which results can be returned to allow for preparation for graduation and to enable students required to undertake resit assessments to apply to do so. Following additional review, this position cannot be further altered. This is further strengthened by the turnaround time between the publication of results and graduations ceremonies.
2HS PGT results (non-graduating)	18 Jun 2021	17 Jun 2022	16 Jun 2023	This deadline allows a very extended period of 5 weeks for the return of results in this regard. Following additional review, if the Committee are content to further extend the period for the return of results for students in this position (from 5 weeks to 6) this date could be extended to 23 June 2023 .
Summer Graduation Ceremonies (w/c)	28 Jun 2021	4 Jul 2022	26 Jun 2023	
Resit Results (all levels)	20 Aug 2021	12 Aug 2022	11 Aug 2023	
PGTs Graduating in November	5 Nov 2021	4 Nov 2022	3 Nov 2023	

4.4 The table above provides commentary on why the dates proposed are appropriate. In summary:

- Results deadlines have already been extended, as far as possible, to enable staff to undertake marking.
- This is with the exception of the return for the return of non-graduating PGT results, which is proposed for extension to 23 June 2023.
- Results deadlines are set to ensure:
 - The University can meet its commitment to students that feedback will be provided *'in a timely manner and normally within a maximum of three working weeks'*.
 - Results are returned in advance of students moving to the next stage of their studies, enabling this feedback to impact upon their studies and (where appropriate) course choice.
- Where possible, the decision to extend deadlines has already been agreed, in breach of our commitment to students. This is permitted to ease the burden on staff as much as possible and in instances with the least student impact (e.g., PGT students who have no course choice).
- The change to the structure of the 2022/23 academic year (the 11+2 model) will help Schools to manage marking. With a designated assessment period, Schools can opt to schedule assessment in a way that is suitable for them and for the student experience (e.g., scheduling a marking intensive exam early in this window, to optimise marking time).

4.5 Overall, for the reasons stated in section 4.4 above, it is not possible to further amend the proposed dates for the return of results in academic year 2022/23. Members of the UEC are therefore asked to approve the following dates for publication:

- (a) January 2023 Assessments
All undergraduate courses **by Friday 20 January 2023**
Postgraduate taught courses **by Friday 27 January 2023**
January Start Postgraduate Taught programmes, for candidates commencing January 2022, **by Friday 27 January 2023**

- (b) May 2023 Assessments
All Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 courses and undergraduate programmes **by Friday 9 June 2023**
Postgraduate taught course and programme results, for those candidates eligible to graduate in June 2023, **by Friday 9 June 2023**
All other postgraduate taught courses **by Friday 23 June 2023**

- (c) Resit Assessments
All Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 resit assessments **by Friday 11 August 2023**

- (d) Postgraduate Taught programmes eligible to graduate in November 2023
Postgraduate Taught summer courses and programme results **by Friday 3 November 2023.**

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

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).

5 August 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW (ITR) GUIDANCE**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

The purpose of this paper is to provide members of the University Education Committee (UEC) with an update on Internal Teaching Review (ITR) guidance ahead of the 2022/23 academic year

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	n/a	
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee (TBC)	4 October 2022

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members of the UEC are invited to **approve** the updated ITR guidance.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Members of the Committee are asked to **approve** the attached updated Internal Teaching Review (ITR) guidance notes, amended to reflect a return to on-campus ITRs, where possible, from the commencement of the 2022/23 academic year. While a move to conducting ITRs via Teams was necessary during the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, following feedback from Schools, students and External Subject Specialists, a move to return to campus will allow for greater interaction between those engaged in review. Where Schools teach across more than one campus, reviews will remain flexible in approach, to allow for input from students and staff representative of all. Revised documentation is attached as follows:

- Annex A: Process and Procedures
- Annex B: Guidance for Schools
- Annex C: Critical Analysis
- Annex D: Curriculum Mapping

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar (e.tough@abdn.ac.uk) or Morag MacRae, Administrative Officer (morag.macrae@abdn.ac.uk).

5 August 2022

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Internal Teaching Review (ITR) Process and Procedures

1. Introduction

Internal Teaching Review (ITR) is the University of Aberdeen's version of periodic review, a requirement of all Scottish HEIs as part of the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland)'s Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF). The QEF was developed by the QAA in conjunction with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), and adherence to its requirements is a condition of SFC grant.

2. Aims

In accordance with Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidance¹, the primary purpose of an Internal Teaching Review is to:

- i. provide assurance regarding the quality and standard of our teaching provision
- ii. promote dialogue in areas where quality could be improved
- iii. identify good practice for dissemination
- iv. encourage and support critical reflection on current practice.

3. Background

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) already has institutional oversight of Quality Assurance (QA) via a range of different monitoring processes throughout the year. Issues are identified and fed back to Schools, and Schools respond in subsequent submissions and in responses to External Examiners' reports. Current QA measures are:

- i. Annual Course Review (ACR),
- ii. Annual Programme Review (APR), feeding into programme revalidation
- iii. External Examiner Reports (EER).
- iv. Course and programme approval through the Curriculum Management System, which ensures School adherence to institutional process, to SCQF requirements and alignment with subject benchmark statements
- v. Consideration of the outcomes of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body reviews (PSRBs).

QAC thus has oversight of any issues with provision, and remedial actions are put in place to address any issues that might occur as they arise.

The School Planning process, led by the Senior Vice-Principal, reviews a range of metrics, with associated action planning on a quarterly basis with the Senior Management Team (SMT). This includes all relevant QA metrics together with benchmarking data such as degree classification, retention, admission, and recruitment. Inclusion of this data and analysis within the ITR process, together with the metrics analysed within the ACR/APR process, meets SFC expectations regarding assuring the quality and standard of our teaching provision without Schools having to provide additional information.

Schools and ITR Panels are expected to draw upon the evidence contained in the processes above during the ITR review process, utilising both the Critical Analysis submission and the related evidence provided.

4. ITR Process

4.1 ITRs are normally conducted at School level, not per Discipline area.

4.2 ITR SharePoint site

An ITR repository for each School has been created in [Quality and Planning SharePoint site](#) into which information pertaining to the ITR is stored. Within the School folders on the SharePoint site, the following is also stored:

- i. ACR/APR/EER and responses thereto;
- ii. PSRB reports and responses;
- iii. past ITR submission, reports and follow up reports;
- iv. School Plan QA metrics and associated Action Plans.

The School ITR submission will be added to this repository. Internal academic members of the panel will be given access to this repository; external panel members and student panel members will receive this information electronically.

In effect, this creates an advance information set, which the ITR Panel can access and review to inform the focus of the Panel Visit.

4.3 ITR Panel

The Panel Chair will normally be an independent member of the QAC, i.e. not the QAC member whose responsibility it is to review the School's QA documentation annually. This gives a fresh perspective on the School's teaching and learning provision. The other internal panel members will normally be drawn from a pool of academic staff, nominated by each School and approved annually by the Vice-Principal (Education). These academics will have a key role in overseeing teaching and learning provision in their own Schools and therefore have a good knowledge of their School's strengths and weaknesses which they can bring into panel discussions.

The panel will also contain student representation, drawn from School Conveners external to the School being reviewed, and a minimum of two External Subject Specialists (ESS). The ESS may come from a UK or overseas institution, from industry or from professional practice. The number of ESS must take account of the range and volume of provision to be reviewed and ensure that the full panel is able to bring a range of experience, perspectives and understanding to the process. It is normally expected that there will be one ESS for each group of cognate programmes within a School, and that a minimum of one ESS will be drawn from an institution or industry based outwith Scotland. Proposed ESS should be approved by the Vice-Principal (Education) as part of their approval of the full panel composition.

This model of panel membership allows the greatest dissemination of good practice between Schools and ensures panel members bring knowledge of institutional education issues and priorities.

4.4 School submission

Schools, following consultation with both staff and students, must submit:

- i. An evidence-based **Critical Analysis (CA)**. The CA allows the School's particular contexts to be set out clearly and should have a clear focus on (i) enhancement and (ii) reflection on effectiveness throughout.
- ii. **Curriculum Map(s)**. These should detail how programmes align with the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and, *where appropriate*, Subject Benchmark Statements. Programmes required to submit curriculum maps will be discussed at the pre-Panel visit meeting with the School (see below).

Submission should be made via email, with one copy sent to the Clerk of the ITR and another uploaded to the repository, allowing extra evidence to be submitted as appropriate. External panel members will be provided with a selection of information from the repository but will be expected to focus on the Critical Analysis documentation. From the submission and the additional information in the repository, the Panel will be able to 'tick off' many aspects of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

Schools do not have to duplicate information that they have responded to elsewhere. The Critical Analysis should reflect on information already provided in the ITR repository.

4.5 Pre-Panel Meetings

Approximately two weeks before the main Panel visit, an Agreement of Themes meeting (1h duration) will be held. During this meeting, the Panel Chair will consult with the other internal panellists to identify a number of key themes for discussion during the Panel visit. External panellists are welcome to submit their thoughts in writing to the Clerk prior to the meeting. Key questions will be highlighted to provide context to these themes. Following this meeting, approximately one week prior to the main Panel visit there will be a pre-Panel visit (1h duration) with the Panel Chair, Clerk, Head of School (HoS), School Director of Education (DoE), School Administration Manager (SAM) and others if requested by the School and/or Chair, to inform the School of the identified themes for exploration at the Panel visit.

4.6 Panel Visit

Panel Visits will normally take place in person on campus over the course of two or three days. Suitable accommodation needs to be provided within the School for the duration of the visit; it is the responsibility of the School to organise this, and for arranging catering during the visit. The aim will be to follow up on key themes identified by Panel from the Critical Analysis submission and lead discussion with key stakeholders as detailed below.

The Panel will hold a minimum of 6 meetings:

- i. QA session with Head of School, Director of Education, Director of Research, School Admin Manager and others as required (1.5h).
- ii. Enhancement-focused discussion with academic staff, with the range of staff depending on themes being discussed (1.5h). Staff attending should be agreed between the Head of School and the ITR Clerk and Chair prior to the review.
- iii. Enhancement-focused discussion with support staff, including a range of administrative and technical staff from within the School (1.5h). In addition, staff from relevant Professional Services teams will be invited (Registry, Careers Service, Student Support).
- iv. Enhancement-focused discussion with students from a variety of levels of study and modes of engagement (1.5h)
- v. Pedagogic Partnership Session, to include students and staff (excluding those present at the initial QA session) (2h). The aim of this meeting will be to have an open-ended discussion of challenges and potential solutions informed by a small number of key questions. The aim of the PPS is to inform the creation of the Action Plan for the School to take forward.
- vi. Final closing session with HoS, School DoE and others as requested by Head of School/Chair, to provide a summary of the ITR and an outline of actions likely to be noted in the action plan.

4.7 Report

The outcome will be a report consisting of three parts:

- i. Part A gives the overall impressions of the teaching provision within the School, formed from the ITR process as a whole
- ii. Part B covers the outcome of various meetings with staff and students, focusing on the themes identified prior to and during the review
- iii. Part C details the School action plan which will form the basis of the annual follow-up reports

The annual follow up reports will consist of an update on progress on the action plan. Exceptionally, QAC may request a response within a shorter timescale, if deemed appropriate. QAC will review the progress reports to ensure that the recommendations have been adequately addressed and reported, including evidence of dissemination of recommendations to students. The report and subsequent actions will be considered by the QAC and posted to the institutional ITR web pages.

4.8 ITR timeline

Milestone	Indicative timeline
School is contacted by Academic Services to initiate the planning of the ITR	6 months before
Initial meeting with Panel Chair and Clerk, Head of School, Director of Education and School Admin Manager to explain process and information required	4 months before
School is provided with a draft schedule for comment	2 months before
Critical Analysis is submitted to the Panel	1 month before
Agreement of Themes meeting attended by internal panellists	2 weeks before
Meeting with Panel Chair and Clerk, Head of School, Director of Education and School Admin Manager to confirm themes for discussion during the Panel visit	1 week before
ITR report is sent to School for factual accuracy check and input on suggested action plan	2 weeks after
ITR report is finalised and sent to Panel, School, Professional Services Leads, and Clerk to QAC for inclusion on the next meeting agenda of the Committee	4 weeks after

Full guidance to help Schools prepare for upcoming Internal Teaching Reviews is available to download from the [ITR pages](#) of the Academic Quality Handbook.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

**INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW
GUIDANCE NOTES FOR SCHOOLS****1. INTRODUCTION**

Internal Teaching Review (ITR) is the University of Aberdeen's version of periodic review, a requirement of all Scottish HEIs as part of the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland)'s Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF). The QEF was developed by the QAA in conjunction with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), and adherence to its requirements is a condition of SFC grant.

The ITR process provides a formal opportunity for a School to reflect on and critically evaluate its provision and to benefit from a constructive dialogue with senior academics from both within and out-with the University. It is intended to be a positive and constructive activity, supporting the School in the enhancement of their provision and learning experience of their students.

In accordance with Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidance, the purpose of an Internal Teaching Review is to:

- i. provide assurance regarding the quality and standard of our teaching provision
- ii. promote dialogue in areas where quality could be improved
- iii. identify good practice for dissemination
- iv. encourage and support critical reflection on current practice

A six-year rolling review schedule is approved, in consultation with the Vice-Principal (Education). Reviews are normally undertaken at School level. The schedule takes account, where possible, of external accreditation timetables.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

Internal Teaching Review covers all credit bearing provision within the School. This includes:

- All Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught provision;
- Any joint degree programmes, including joint degree programmes with other schools or institutions where the University of Aberdeen is the awarding body;
- Service teaching provided for another School within the University i.e. where the School is responsible for the administration, organisation and or content of the courses;
- Collaborative provision, including provision delivery by delivery partners, and student exchange;
- Research programmes

Reviews are normally held in the period October to April when students are available to meet with the Review Panel. The Academic Services team will consult and liaise with the School regarding possible dates.

3. ITR PROCESS

The ITR process is as follows:

(i) Annual Monitoring

Schools submit annual monitoring documentation (Course Feedback Form outcomes, annual course and programme reviews, external examiner reports and School responses thereto, Professional and Statutory Bodies (PSRB) documentation and school planning KPIs (and associated action plans) to the Quality and Planning SharePoint in accordance with publicised deadlines).

ITR Submission

Schools, following consultation with both staff and students, must submit:

- i. An evidence-based **Critical Analysis (CA)**. The CA allows the Schools' particular contexts to be set out clearly and should have a clear focus on (i) enhancement and (ii) reflection on effectiveness throughout. Clear examples should be provided throughout the document.
- ii. **Curriculum Map(s)**. These should detail how programmes align with the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and, *where appropriate*, Subject Benchmark Statements. Programmes required to submit curriculum maps will be discussed at the pre-panel visit meeting with the School (see below).

Submission should be made via email, with one copy sent to the Clerk of the ITR and another uploaded to the [Quality and Planning SharePoint](#), allowing extra evidence to be submitted as appropriate.

Submission deadline: 4 weeks prior to ITR panel visit, precise date advised by Academic Services.

(i) Pre-Panel Meeting

Approximately 2 weeks after ITR documents have been submitted by the School, the internal panel members will meet to discuss and agree the themes to be discussed during the Panel visit., Any areas for clarification with the School or, occasionally, requests for additional information prior to the visit, will be addressed at this time. External panellists are welcome to submit their thoughts in writing to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

(ii) Pre-Review Visit to School

Approximately one week prior to the main Panel visit, there will be a pre-review meeting (1h duration) with the Chair, Clerk, Head of School, School Director of Education, School Administration Manager (SAM), and others if requested by the School and/or Chair, to discuss emerging themes for exploring at the panel visit.

(iii) Panel visit

Panel Visits will normally take place in person on campus, over the course of two or three days. Suitable accommodation needs to be provided within the School for the duration of the visit; it is the responsibility of the School to organise this, and for arranging catering during the visit. The aim will be to follow up on key themes identified by the Panel from submission and discussions with the School at the pre-panel visit.

The Panel will hold a minimum of 6 meetings:

- QA session with Head of School, Director of Education, Director of Research, School Admin Manager and others as required (1.5h).
- Enhancement-focused discussion with academic staff, with the range of staff depending on themes being discussed (1.5h). Staff attending should be agreed between the Head of School and the ITR Clerk and Chair prior to the review.
- Enhancement-focused discussion with support staff, including a range of administrative and technical staff from within the School (1.5h). In addition, staff from relevant Professional Services teams will be invited (Registry, Careers Service, Student Support).
- Enhancement-focused discussion with students from a variety of levels of study and modes

- of engagement, where possible (1.5h)
- Pedagogic Partnership Session, to include students and staff (excluding those present at the initial QA session) (2h). The aim of this meeting will be to have an open-ended discussion of challenges and potential solutions informed by a small number of key questions. The aim of the PPS is to inform the creation of the Action Plan for the School to take forward.
- Final closing session with HoS, School DoE and others as requested by Head of School/Chair, to provide a summary of the ITR and an outline of actions likely to be noted in the action plan.

NB1: The Panel may explore some topics in more than one meeting and will not be restricted from exploring others as they arise on the day.

NB2: Schools are asked to ensure that the students who attend the Pedagogic Partnership Session include representatives of as many different strands of the student body as possible, e.g., each level of study, mode of study (part-time, full-time, distance learning) etc

(iv) Report

The outcome will be a report consisting of three parts:

- Part A** gives the overall impressions of the teaching provision within the School, formed from the ITR process as a whole
- Part B** covers the outcome of various meetings with staff and students, focusing on the themes identified prior to and during the review
- Part C** details the School action plan which will form the basis of the annual follow-up reports

The annual follow up reports will consist of an update on progress on the action plan. Exceptionally, QAC may request a response within a shorter timescale, if deemed appropriate. QAC will review the progress reports to ensure that the recommendations have been adequately addressed and reported, including evidence of dissemination of recommendations to students. The report and subsequent actions will be considered by the QAC and posted to the institutional ITR web pages.

4. ITR TIMELINE

Milestone	Indicative timeline
School is contacted by Academic Services to initiate the planning of the ITR	6 months before
Initial meeting with Panel Chair and Clerk, Head of School, Director of Education and School Admin Manager to explain process and information required	4 months before
School is provided with a draft schedule for comment	2 months before
Critical Analysis is submitted to the Panel	1 month before
Agreement of Themes meeting attended by internal and (optionally) external panellists	2 weeks before
Meeting with Panel Chair and Clerk, Head of School, Director of Education and School Admin Manager to confirm themes for discussion during the Panel visit	1 week before
ITR report is sent to School for factual accuracy check and input on suggested action plan	2 weeks after
ITR report is finalised and sent to Panel, School, Professional Services Leads, and Clerk to QAC for inclusion on the next meeting agenda of the Committee	4 weeks after

5. ITR PANEL

The ITR panel will comprise *at a minimum*:

- **Panel Chair:** The Panel Chair will normally be an independent member of the QAC, i.e. not the QAC member whose responsibility it is to review the School's QA documentation annually. This gives a fresh perspective on the School's education provision;
- At least **two external subject specialists** from other HE institutions, industry or related profession, normally in the UK with one from outside Scotland;
- **A student representative** from out-with the School (normally a School Convener);
- **Two experienced members of academic staff** from out-with the School who have learning and teaching roles;
- **An administrator**, normally from Academic Services, who will also act as clerk to the panel.

External subject specialists: the number of external subject specialists appointed to the panel will take account of the range and volume of provision to be reviewed and ensure that the panel as a whole is able to bring a range of experience, perspectives and understanding to the process. It is normally expected that there will be one external subject specialist for each group of cognate programmes within a School. They may come from a UK or overseas institution (costs allowing), from industry or from professional practice, and must have an awareness of the Scottish or UK HEI system. They cannot be drawn from colleagues who have been a member of staff, a student or an external examiner of the University of Aberdeen in the three years prior to the review. The Head of School will be asked to suggest external subject specialists and forward their CV / online profiles for the consideration of the Vice-Principal (Education) who approves the full panel composition. When nominations are approved, Academic Services will contact the individuals concerned. External members will receive a fee plus reimbursement of expenses. Schools are responsible for the payment of costs of external specialists.

Internal panel members: other internal panel members will normally be drawn from a pool of academic staff, approved annually by the Vice-Principal (Education). These academics will have a key role in overseeing teaching and learning provision in their own Schools, will also be acutely aware of the institution's education priorities and agenda. Internal panel members are often drawn from Schools who will shortly undergo ITR, with a view to giving context to the process within their own School.

Student panel members: student representation will be drawn from School Conveners external to the School being reviewed. The inclusion of a student member provides the panel with a greater focus on the student experience and an additional perspective on other issues from the student point of view.

This model of panel membership allows the greatest dissemination of good practice between Schools and ensures panel members bring knowledge of institutional learning and teaching issues and priorities.

6. DOCUMENTATION

Schools, following consultation with both staff and students, must submit an evidence-based **Critical Analysis and (ii) a Curriculum Map(s)**.

Critical Analysis (CA): The CA allows the Schools' particular contexts to be set out clearly and has a clear focus on (i) enhancement and (ii) reflection on effectiveness. The CA must be **evidence-based** throughout, i.e. examples should be provided wherever possible.

Documentation provided to the Quality and Planning SharePoint as part of annual monitoring or the school planning process does not need to be re-submitted, but should be explicitly referred to, where appropriate, throughout the CA. Examples of the documentation useful to help Schools support their

evidence-based CA reflections are available in 9, below.

The CA is prepared (normally) by the School Director of Education, in conjunction with other School staff and students. Normally, students are consulted via Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings and/or focus groups, to elicit input to the reflection on provision and establish whether it reflects their experience of the School and their programmes.

The format of the CA should follow the guidance provided in 9, below. Should Schools wish to discuss a draft critical analysis they should contact their ITR Clerk in the first instance.

Curriculum Map(s): should detail how programmes align with Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and, *where appropriate*, Subject Benchmark Statements. Programmes required to submit curriculum maps will be discussed at the initial meeting with the School 4-6 months before the ITR virtual panel visit takes place.

Supporting Documentation: to evidence your critical analysis, reflections should be referenced/hyperlinked where possible. Schools are free to use their areas on the Quality and Planning SharePoint site to facilitate this if they wish. It is expected that the following documentation would be referenced to support the CA as a minimum. Please note, the ITR Panel reserves the right to request additional documentation expected of Schools or alluded to in School submissions at any time.

1. Details of School/Discipline organisation, management, and administration (including collaborative arrangements). Please include an organogram and list of key post holders including Disability Coordinator, EDI Lead, Communications Champion etc.
2. Examples of School (discipline)-specific course and programme information provided to students e.g. course and programme handbooks, mapping of any School marking scales, assessment and feedback guidance, standard MyAberdeen templates used within the School etc.
3. In addition to School Education Committees and Staff-student Liaison Committees already on SharePoint, please include membership and remits of any School/Discipline committees concerned with teaching, learning and assessment activities, including Programme Advisory Boards (or equivalents).
4. Other documentation (e.g. minutes, agendas, reports) relating to operation or review of courses and programmes (e.g. minutes of meetings about the School's programme portfolio, agendas of School Away Days etc. This should already be available on the School area of the Quality and Planning SharePoint site. In reviewing the School's submission, ITR Panel members will be asked to consider the extent to which the CA is reflective, evaluative, and constructively self-critical and discusses School's strengths and weaknesses. It will also consider how staff and students have contributed to its development. Additionally, ITR Panel members will be asked to focus on particular aspects:
 - a. Internal Panel members focus on the robustness of the School's procedures and mechanisms for assuring quality and its plans for enhancement, particularly plans related to institutional Education Strategy including engagement with University Task and Finish Groups, current priorities and enhancement initiatives including the national Enhancement Themes.
 - b. External subject specialists are asked to focus on reviewing the School's taught provision and approaches to educational delivery in the light of relevant national subject benchmark statements and other external reference points, including the requirements of any relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (where relevant) and the appropriateness of the School's mechanisms for assuring the standards of awards.
 - c. Student panel members focus on student related matters such as mechanisms for communicating with and engaging students, the usefulness key information, opportunities for students to engage in curriculum, teaching, learning

and assessment development and innovation; and the effectiveness of mechanisms for obtaining and responding to student feedback.

7. ENGAGING STUDENTS IN ITR

Student engagement and participation is a much valued and vital aspect of all ITRs.

Schools are asked to inform students about the review at an early opportunity e.g., at the first SSLC meeting in the academic session in which the review will be held. Further, Schools are expected to engage with their students and to incorporate students' views and feedback whilst producing the documentation submitted for the review. This is usually achieved by liaising with the wider student body on an early draft and then again later to seek endorsement prior to submission. Most Schools tend to do this via its network of School Convener and Student representatives, or by posting a draft on MyAberdeen, or by convening a focus group(s). Schools should also refer to student feedback obtained via routine quality mechanisms e.g. Course Feedback Forms, SSLCs, and annual monitoring reports, student surveys, etc.

The ITR panel will ask to meet a variety of students (undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research, student representatives, online and on campus, and from all across all years of study) to share their views on learning, teaching and assessment, and their wider experience as students of the School. Schools will be asked to arrange for the students to meet the Panel and experience dictates that students are willing to participate, and can do so most usefully, if they have had an early briefing from the School about the review and have been engaged in the School's preparation for it.

During the panel visit, students will be full partners in the Pedagogic Partnership Session which is convened to inform the creation of the Action Plan for the School to take forward.

Following the review, Schools are asked to inform students about the review outcome and share with them the report and action plan. This can be provided for consideration at SSLCs or posted to MyAberdeen.

The School will be asked to report on the steps it has taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review and on the actions taken in the annual follow-up reports / updated action plans to QAC.

8. ENGAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES IN ITRs

The involvement of student-facing Professional Services in teaching and learning is an explicit part of the Internal Teaching Review (ITR) process. Staff from relevant Professional Services, including the Registry, the Careers & Employability Service, Student Experience, and Student Support engage in each School's ITR to review the extent and quality of their interactions with a School and its students. ITRs should demonstrate strengths (and weaknesses, if any) of Professional Services in education-related matters.

9. GUIDANCE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The **Critical Analysis (CA)** should be *evidence-based, including specific examples throughout*, and structured around the headings which follow. Its preparation should involve staff and students, and Schools should refer to their School Action Plans and planning metrics. Annual Course (ACR) and Programme Reviews (APR) and External Examiner Reports since the Schools' previous ITRs, and PSRB reviews and reports where applicable should also be drawn upon.

Internal Teaching Review covers **all credit-bearing provision**: i.e. taught undergraduate provision, taught postgraduate provision, and the training and supervision arrangements for research students, online, on campus and at branch campuses. Please ensure the CA makes reference to matters relevant to all areas of activity as appropriate.

The CA should identify:

- How it was prepared and approved
- How students were involved and the impact of that student engagement
- Brief background information about the size and scale of the School
- The School's overarching strategic priorities

The CA should provide information about the contextualisation of the School, to include areas where the School considers it demonstrates good practice, areas prioritised for development and /or enhancement, and areas that continue to present a challenge. This information should be summarised in the opening section of the Critical Analysis, cross referenced to later sections to provide greater detail as appropriate. The School should refer to the data it uses in its School planning process in identifying its strengths and challenges.

As ITR is contextualised, it is understood that the themes explored in each review will reflect the strategy, priorities, strengths and challenges of the School concerned. Schools are expected to address each of the 4 sections of the CA, but it is recognised that the volume and focus of the content provided by each School will vary. It is generally recommended that the CA should be no longer than **25 pages (approximately 11,000-12,000 words)**, excluding appendices.

The CA documentation should focus on the following four thematic areas:

- i. School context**
 - a. student numbers, demographics, and outcomes;
 - b. any areas of teaching and learning practices that are specific to the School;
 - c. a summary of the School's response to the previous ITR.
- ii. Positive aspects of the School's teaching and learning**
 - a. examples of positive practice and particular strengths of the School;
 - b. how this good practice is shared both within the School and beyond.
- iii. Challenges that have been encountered in the School's teaching and learning provision**
 - a. potential areas identified for improvement;
 - b. an action plan for how the School intends to handle them. These issues can also be discussed at the ITR.
- iv. Future plans**
 - a. areas for development in the next few years;
 - b. intended new course or programme developments;
 - c. intended partnership proposals.

In the context of the CA, Schools should ensure they outline:

- What is distinctive and what is typical about the School
- What the key areas of strength and challenge are
- How the School has evaluated its policy and practice
- How the school intends to build on good practice or address areas for development
- A consideration of both UG and PG (taught and research) provision

- A consideration of Collaborative, Online and Transnational Education (TNE) provision

NB: this should be particular to the School, and not just evidence of School adherence to expected institutional practice.

Be open and honest. Do not be afraid to discuss aspects of concern. The spirit of ITR is intended to be constructive, not punitive or judgemental, and the exercise is intended to contribute to enhancement of teaching and learning across the University as a whole.

University of Aberdeen ITR

Critical Analysis (CA)

Headings to be addressed
&
Guidance for completion

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. SCHOOL CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

- Development of the Critical Analysis
- Key features of the School's content and mission, including any areas of teaching and learning practices specific to the School
- Composition and key trends in the School's student population, including typical routes into and through the School, demographics, and outcomes
- Summary of the School's follow up to previous ITR

2. ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Examples of positive practice and particular strengths of the School
- Approaches to identifying, sharing, and extending good practice within the School and beyond
- Engaging and supporting staff

3. CHALLENGES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Potential areas identified for improvement
- An action plan outlining how the School intends to handle them. Further discussion to this end can also take place during the ITR

4. FUTURE PLANS

- Identified areas of development over the course of the next five years
- Intended new course or programme developments
- Intended partnership proposals

Guidance for Completion of the Critical Analysis

The **Critical Analysis (CA)** should be *evidence-based, including specific examples throughout*, and structured around the headings above. Its preparation should involve staff and students, and Schools should refer to their School Action Plans and planning metrics. Annual Course and Programme Reviews (ACR and APR), External Examiner Reports (EER), PSRB reviews and reports where applicable should all be drawn upon to inform the creation of the CA.

Internal Teaching Review covers **all credit-bearing provision**: i.e. taught undergraduate provision, taught postgraduate provision, and the training and supervision arrangements for research students, online, on campus and at branch campuses. Please ensure the CA refers to matters relevant to all areas of activity as appropriate.

The CA should identify:

- How it was prepared and approved
- How students were involved and the impact of that student engagement
- Brief background information about the size and scale of the School
- The School's strategic priorities and their relation to the overarching institutional education strategy

The CA should provide information about the contextualisation of the School, to include: areas where the School considers it demonstrates good practice, areas prioritised for development and/or enhancement, and areas that continue to present a challenge. This information should be summarised in the opening section of the Critical Analysis and detailed further in subsequent sections as appropriate. The School should refer to the data it uses in its School planning process in identifying its strengths and challenges.

As ITR is contextualised, it is understood that the themes explored in each review will reflect the strategy, priorities, strengths, and challenges of the School concerned. Schools are expected to address each of the 4 sections and all subheadings of the CA, but it is recognised that the volume and focus of the content provided by each School will vary. It is generally recommended that the CA should be no longer than **25 pages (approximately 11,000-12,000 words)**, excluding appendices.

In the context of each of the headings, the CA should indicate:

- What is distinctive and what is typical about the School
- What the key areas of strength and challenge are
- How the School has evaluated its policy and practice
- How the school intends to build on good practice or address areas for development
- Consideration of both UG and PG (taught and research) provision.
- Consideration of Collaborative, Online and Transnational Education (TNE) provision

NB: this should be particular to the School, and not just evidence of School adherence to expected institutional practice.

Be open and honest. Do not be afraid to discuss aspects of concern. The spirit of ITR is intended to be constructive, not punitive or judgmental, and the exercise is intended to contribute to enhancement of teaching and learning across the University as a whole.

Supporting Documentation

Wherever possible please provide (as hyperlinks or appendices) documentation in support of your critical analysis reflections. It is expected that the following documentation would be submitted to support the CA as a minimum. Please note, the ITR Panel reserves the right to request additional documentation expected of Schools, or alluded to in School submissions, at any time.

- Details of School/Discipline organisation, management, and administration (including collaborative arrangements). Please include an organogram and list of key post holders including Disability Coordinator, Communications Champion etc.
- Examples of course and programme information provided to student e.g. course and programme handbooks, mapping of any School marking scales to CGS, Assessment and Feedback Guidance, standard MyAberdeen templates used within the School etc.
- In addition to School Education Committees and Staff-student Liaison Committees already on SharePoint, please include membership and remits of any School/Discipline committees concerned with teaching, learning and assessment activities, including Programme Advisory Boards (or equivalents).
- Other documentation (e.g. minutes, agendas, reports) relating to operation or review of courses and programmes (e.g. minutes of meetings about the School's programme portfolio, agendas of School Away Days of Teaching and Learning Fora etc).

CRITICAL ANALYSIS: GUIDANCE ON HOW TO APPROACH EACH HEADING

1. SCHOOL CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

- **Development of the Critical Analysis. Consider:**
 - Who was involved in the process?
 - How was consultation and feedback managed?
 - How were students engaged in the development of the document?
- **Key features of the School's content and mission, including any areas of teaching and learning practices specific to the School. Consider:**
 - The School's key aims, how the School Plan maps with institutional priorities and activities
 - The range of provision under review

- Staffing matters, such as a summary of staff cohort, FTEs and SSR
- Significant changes since the last review e.g. restructuring, physical resources
- Specific examples of teaching and learning unique to the School, or those which are particularly challenging or successful
- **Composition and key trends in the School's student population, including typical routes into and through the School, demographics, and outcomes. Consider:**
 - Student numbers throughout the period since the last ITR (UG, PGT, PGR)
 - Modes of engagement (on campus, online, blended delivery, those on collaborative programmes)
 - Students who begin study through articulation routes and related targets
 - Diversity of the student population, including any specific enhancements in this area or areas for future focus
- **Summary of the School's follow up to previous ITR. Consider:**
 - What were the key actions identified in the previous review?
 - How did the School address these actions?
 - What was the Quality Assurance Committee response to these actions?

2. ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- **Examples of positive practice and particular strengths of the School. Consider:**
 - Evidenced success in relation to curriculum design and development, teaching delivery and assessment and feedback
 - Aspects of provision that are particularly successful and or worthy of wider dissemination as examples of good/best practice, where the evidence supports this
- **Approaches to identifying, sharing, and extending good practice within the School and beyond. Consider:**
 - Feedback on, evaluation of, and impact of activities and the mechanisms used to share good practice across the School
 - The School's contribution to institutional projects and opportunities e.g. Annual Symposia, LTEP activities and educational scholarship networks, and the impact thereof
 - The School's involvement to external, sector- wide enhancement activity e.g. QAA annual conferences, QAA National Enhancement Themes and Subject Networks, and the impact thereof
- **Engaging and supporting staff. Consider:**
 - School-based probationer and early career development support, ongoing support, and development during academic careers
 - Support and training for tutors and PGRs who teach
 - Extent of engagement with CAD annual programme of activity; support for staff to undertake HEA fellowships and the PG certificate in Higher Education in Learning and Teaching

3. CHALLENGES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

- **Potential areas identified for improvement. Consider:**
 - Areas in which the School would appreciate further guidance or opportunity for enhancement
 - How these could be tackled: what could the School/institution do to facilitate enhancements in these areas?
 - The effectiveness of aligning with Aberdeen 2040 and the University's identified Graduate Attributes
- **An action plan outlining how the School intends to handle them. Further discussion to this end can also take place during the ITR. Consider:**

- The key areas for improvement and enhancement
- The actions identified to promote effective changes
- The resulting impact on resource within the School, in addition to any wider institutional impact

4. FUTURE PLANS

- **Identified areas of development over the course of the next five years, including new course or programme developments and intended partnership proposals. Consider:**
 - The Action Plan created in Item 3 above, and its relation to the existing future plans of the School
 - Any areas of success which are earmarked for further development
 - The University's institutional strategic plan (Aberdeen 2040) and how the School might align its own plans with those of the wider institution
 - What trends exist within the current student population which may shape the School's future plans
 - The impact of student feedback on the plans of the School

Curriculum mapping to Subject Benchmark Statements

Subject Benchmark Statements are part of the QAA Quality Code – Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards (see <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>). According to the QAA they “set out expectations about standards of degrees in a range of subject areas. They describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject.”

Subject benchmark statements are regularly updated, and it is important to map degree programmes to their benchmark statements on a regular basis to ensure the programmes remain appropriate. The documents provided by QAA are extensive and can cover a very large set of skills. For example, the one for biosciences covers intellectual skills, analytical skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and professional development skills as well as core knowledge and understanding expected in that discipline. The benchmark standards are also couched in terms of generic standards and subject-specific standards and each of those is split into threshold standards and typical standards. Given this complexity you are advised to map your programme to the **typical** level of the **subject-specific** standards. See overleaf for a typical mapping of the biochemistry degree programme to the relevant biosciences subject benchmark statements.

Curriculum mapping to Aberdeen Graduate Attributes

The Aberdeen Graduate Attributes describes a set of 19 attributes that students should have the opportunity to develop during their time studying at the University of Aberdeen. Not every course has to offer the opportunity to develop every attribute, but the expectation is that each programme will afford students the opportunity to develop all 19 Aberdeen Graduate Attributes. This information is required as part of the course and programme approval process, but it is useful to revisit this every few years as programmes change over time. The Internal Teaching Review (ITR) process is a timely opportunity for programme leaders to map the programme as it currently stands against the 19 Aberdeen Graduate Attributes to ensure that all are covered within the degree programme.

Shown overleaf is an example for the Biochemistry degree programme. Whilst we do not ask where or how in the course a particular attribute may be developed, bear in mind that an ITR panel may request this information.

Example 1: Curriculum mapping to subject benchmark statements: biochemistry and related subjects (biosciences) - Biochemistry degree programme

Subject-specific standards; typical standard: On graduating with an Honours degree in biosciences in which the study of molecular aspects of biology (including biochemistry) forms a significant proportion, graduates will be able to:

Subject benchmark statement	SM1501 (the cell)	BI20M3 (mol. Biol. of the gene)	BI2017 (genes & evolution)	BI25M5 (microbes, infection & immunity)	BI25M7 (energy for life)	BC3503 (mol. Control cell function)	SM3001 (frontiers mol. Med. Sci.)	MB3006 (Molbiol of cell)	BC4014 (Biochem option 1)	BC4314 (Biochem option 2)	MB4050 (core Hons course)	MB4502 (project)
understand the chemistry that underlies biochemical reactions and the techniques used to investigate them	X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
explain the principles that determine the three-dimensional structure of biological macromolecules and give detailed examples of how structure enables function	X	X				X		X	X		X	
demonstrate a critical understanding of the molecular basis of genetics and explain some detailed examples			X								X	
demonstrate critical knowledge and understanding of gene expression, with a detailed knowledge of specific examples; the structure, arrangement, expression, and regulation of genes; and relevant experimental methods	X	X				X	X	X			X	
demonstrate knowledge of a wide range of cells (both prokaryotic and eukaryotic) and explain critically how their properties suit them for their biological function, and how they could be investigated experimentally	X			X	X	X		X		X	X	

Subject benchmark statement	SM1501 (the cell)	BI20M3 (mol. Biol. of the gene)	BI2017 (genes & evolution)	BI25M5 (microbes, infection & immunity)	BI25M7 (energy for life)	BC3503 (mol. Control cell function)	SM3001 (frontiers mol. Med. Sci.)	MB3006 (Molbiol of cell)	BC4014 (Biochem option 1)	BC4314 (Biochem option 2)	MB4050 (core Hons course)	MB4502 (project)
devise and evaluate suitable experimental methods for the investigation of relevant areas of biochemistry and molecular biology					X	X	X	X				X
demonstrate a critical understanding of essential features of cell metabolism and its control, including topics such as energy and signal transduction, respiration and photosynthesis (including knowledge and experience of some experimental techniques)	X				X	X						
explain the chemical and thermodynamic principles underlying biological catalysis and the role of enzymes and other proteins in determining the function and fate of cells and organisms	X					X						
mine, manipulate and interpret data from small molecule and/or macromolecular databases.							X				X	

Example 2: Curriculum mapping to Aberdeen Graduate Attributes - Biochemistry degree programme

Aberdeen Graduate Attribute	SM1501 (the cell)	B120M3 (mol. Biol. of the gene)	B12017 (genes & evolution)	B125M5 (microbes, infection & immunity)	B125M7 (energy for life)	BC3503 (mol. Control cell function)	SM3001 (frontiers mol. Med. Sci.)	MB3006 (Molbiol of cell)	BC4014 (Biochem option 1)	BC4314 (Biochem option 2)	MB4050 (core Hons course)	MB4502 (project)
Academic Excellence												
In-depth and extensive knowledge, understanding and skills at internationally-recognised levels in their chosen discipline(s)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
A breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills beyond their chosen discipline(s)	X		X	X							X	
An ability to participate in the creation of new knowledge and understanding through research and inquiry								X				X
A contextual understanding of past and present knowledge and ideas;						X	X	X		X	X	X
An intellectual curiosity and a willingness to question accepted wisdom and to be open to new ideas									X	X	X	X

Aberdeen Graduate Attribute	SM1501 (the cell)	BI20M3 (mol. Biol. of the gene)	BI2017 (genes & evolution)	BI25M5 (microbes, infection & immunity)	BI25M7 (energy for life)	BC3503 (mol. Control cell function)	SM3001 (frontiers mol. Med. Sci.)	MB3006 (Molbiol of cell)	BC4014 (Biochem option 1)	BC4314 (Biochem option 2)	MB4050 (core Hons course)	MB4502 (project)
Critical Thinking & Effective Communication												
A capacity for independent, conceptual and creative thinking;						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
A capacity for problem identification, the collection of evidence, synthesis and dispassionate analysis;					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
A capacity for attentive exchange, informed argument and reasoning;						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
An ability to communicate effectively for different purposes and in different contexts;	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
An ability to work independently and as part of a team;	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
A diverse set of transferable and generic skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Learning & Personal Development												
An openness to, and an interest in, life-long learning through directed and self-directed study;						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
An awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses,	X						X	X				X
A capacity for self-reflection, self-discovery and personal development					X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Active Citizenship												
An awareness and appreciation of ethical and moral issues;	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
An awareness and appreciation of social and cultural diversity;			X		X					X		
An understanding of social and civic responsibilities, and of the rights of individuals and groups;	X				X							
An appreciation of the concepts of enterprise and leadership in all aspects of life;	X				X							X
A readiness for citizenship in an inclusive society	X				X					X		

Updated: Summer 2022

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology

The Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology is conferred in accordance with Resolution No 258 of 2008, which was approved by the University Court on 24 June 2008. Amendments to these regulations shall come into force on the day on which they are passed by the University Court.

1. The Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology may be conferred by the University of Aberdeen. All subsequent references in these Regulations to the University Court, the Senate, the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition or the Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine & Dentistry) are to those bodies as constituted within the University of Aberdeen.
2. The curriculum shall extend over a period of three years and can be undertaken by part time study only. A candidate's course of study should be pursued in consecutive academic years except with the permission of the Senate on the recommendation of the Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition
3. The examiners for the Diploma shall be academic staff, Clinical Lecturers, Tutors, Teaching Fellows and NHS staff who conduct courses qualifying for graduation in Dental Technology in the University, and such other internal and external examiners as the Court shall appoint.
4. Every candidate for the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology must, before admission, possess all employment requirements and qualification at an appropriate standard as set out in the admissions criteria for the programme, and other such personal qualities, as in the view of the Senate afford evidence of the ability of the candidate to cope with the academic and other demands of the programme. Possession of such employment requirements and qualifications does not of itself guarantee admission.
5. The subjects to be followed and the Diploma assessments shall be as prescribed in the Programme Specifications listed in the University Calendar at <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar/medicine.php>
6. Candidates' knowledge of the various subjects listed in the Programme Specifications shall be assessed from time to time as the Senate may determine and the results may be taken into account in the prescribed diploma assessments.
7. Candidates shall not be permitted to present themselves for an end-of-course assessment in any course unless they have obtained a class certificate. The validity of the class certificate as an entitlement to admission to an end of course assessment shall be limited to the academic year in respect of which it is awarded. Any student who has been monitored and warned of being 'at risk' of losing their class certificate (C6) for any particular course in any one academic year can lose their class certificate (C7) with no further warning if this behaviour is repeated for the same course. The Senate may terminate at any time the studies of candidates who persistently fail to perform the required work of the course (s) or to attend the teaching which they are required to attend.
8.
 - (i) In each academic year candidates shall not be afforded in any course more than two opportunities of diploma assessment, including continuous assessment and/or written examinations as appropriate.
 - (ii) Where a candidate successfully completes a course on more than one occasion, only the credit points obtained on the first occasion may be counted toward the credit requirements necessary for progression and graduation.
9.
 - (i) Candidates shall not be admitted to a prescribed assessment in any subject unless they have attended the course or courses of instruction in that subject in that academic year and fulfilled such conditions as may from time to time be prescribed by the Senate.
 - (ii) Except by permission of the Senate, candidates may not proceed to the next part of the programme unless they have completed or gained exemption from all the previous prescribed diploma assessments.
 - (iii) A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners in any element of assessment will normally be given one further opportunity for re-assessment in that academic year. A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners following re-assessment shall be entitled to repeat any one year within the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology programme, and shall be required to re-sit all courses in that academic year to a maximum total of three opportunities of assessment for any course

- within the programme.
- (iv) Candidates who fail to pass completely the programme assessments in a repeat year shall be required to discontinue their studies for the programme and be excluded from further assessment except under exceptional circumstances of health or personal issues, which must be notified to the Director of the Institute of Dentistry prior to the Diploma examinations, and substantiated by documentary evidence. Retrospective claims will not be acceptable. In the event of health issues being raised, candidates will be required to undergo Occupational Health assessment as well as providing supportive evidence from their medical specialist. The decision to waive the regulation on discontinuation following failure of a repeat year shall lie with the University Court.
 - (v) Notwithstanding the provisions of University regulations which permit candidates to present themselves for assessment in the same subject at two diets of assessment in any one session, candidates may be required to undertake an additional period of clinical study or a repeat period of study, specified by the Examiners, before being permitted to present themselves at a second diet of assessment in that subject.
 - (vi) Candidates must normally satisfy all requirements for the award of the diploma within five calendar years of the date of their first matriculation as candidates for the programme, except where a candidate has been unable to complete a full academic year for health reasons or has taken a full gap year for health, personal or other reasons approved by the Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition.
 - (vii) Candidates who wish to establish that their academic performance has been adversely affected by their health are required to secure medical certificates relating specifically to the periods which are relevant and will be required to undergo Occupational Health assessment. Absences for health reasons must be notified to the Institute of Dentistry Offices as soon as practically possible, and absences for other reasons must be approved in advance by the Programme Coordinator.
 - (viii) Illness and/or other personal circumstances which affect a student's performance at examination must be notified in writing, along with supporting documentary evidence, to the Assessment Lead for Dentistry or Institute Administrative Officer in accordance with extenuating / medical circumstances process.
 - (ix) Where events prevent a student from notifying the University within seven days, the student should set out in a letter, details of the events which prevented him/her from notifying the Education Lead for Dentistry or Institute Administrative Manager within the prescribed period and submit supporting documentary evidence of both the illness and/or personal circumstances and the events which prevented timely notification. Students should note that under no circumstances will the Examination Board take such illness or personal circumstances into account in permitting a student who has not reached an acceptable level of competence to progress into the next Year. Health issues may be taken into account in determining whether a student may be exempt from the 5 year rule in Regulation 8(v).
10. The Senate shall have power to terminate during the academic year the studies of candidates who persistently fail to perform the required work of the classes or to attend the classes which they are required to attend.
11. Any health, conduct, behaviour or other issue that could give rise to the question of whether or not a student's fitness to practise is impaired will be considered and determined by the School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition's Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine & Dentistry) under its Fitness to Practise Rules. The Senate, on the recommendation of the Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine & Dentistry), may suspend or terminate the studies of candidates for the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology who, following a proper process of investigation by that Committee, are judged not fit to practise. In exceptional circumstances only, the Head of School of SMMSN or the Director of the Institute of Dentistry may suspend the matriculation of, or exclude from specified activities of the University, any candidate in respect of whom there is a question of whether or not his/her fitness to practise is impaired, pending further process. If candidates are pre-registered with GDC the University is obliged to inform it of any such process since it may impact on registration. In this Regulation, any reference to impaired fitness to practise is to be taken as a reference to that concept as defined in s.27 of the Dentists Act 1984, and as explained in the General Dental Council's current published guidance entitled Student Professionalism and fitness to practise: Standards for the dental team; Guidance for students, October 2016, or any such document which may follow.
12. The diploma shall not be conferred on candidates who have not passed all the programme assessments prescribed by Regulation 5, by the end of the period allowed for submission.
13. Students who fail to complete the requirements for the Diploma but who have achieved 120 credits at SCQF level 7 or above, shall be eligible for the award of a Certificate of Higher Education in Dental Technology.



WINTER GRADUATION CEREMONIES

NOVEMBER 2022

Wednesday 23 November at 11.00 a.m.

Higher and First Degrees in the Schools of Engineering, Geosciences and Natural & Computing Sciences

Wednesday 23 November at 3.00 p.m.

Higher and First Degrees in the Schools of Biological Sciences, Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition, and Psychology

Thursday 24 November at 11.00 a.m.

Higher and First Degrees in the Schools of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History, Education, Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture, Law and Social Science

Thursday 24 November at 3.00 p.m.

Higher and First Degrees in the Business School

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
EDUCATION COMMITTEES IN 2022/23
ITEMS OF BUSINESS PLANNER

EDUCATION COMMITTEES 2022-2023					
	Senate	QAC	UEC	SSEC	EEC
Cycle 0 (C0)	14 September 2022				
Cycle 1 (C1)	2 November 2022	4 October 2022	10 October 2022	22 September 2022	29 September 2022
Cycle 2 (C2)	8 February 2023	14 December 2022	16 January 2023	8 December 2022	6 December 2022
Cycle 3 (C3)	19 April 2023	14 March 2023	23 March 2023	7 March 2023	28 February 2023
Cycle 4 (C4)	7 June 2023	10 May 2023	16 May 2023	25 April 2023	27 April 2023
Cycle 5 (C5)	Sept/Oct 2023	8 June 2023	15 June 2023	1 June 2023	30 May 2023

EDUCATION COMMITTEES | BUSINESS PLANNER | 2022/23

Item*	Owner	Action Required	Consideration
Monitoring, Absence and Engagement TFG	Abbe Brown	Academic View	(C0) Senate (S)
		Approval	(C2) SSEC, UEC, Senate (S)
Pastoral Support Review	Abbe Brown	Academic View	(C0) Senate (S)
		Approval	(C2) SSEC, UEC, Senate (S)
NSS 2022	Abbe Brown	Information / Discussion	(C0) UEC, Senate (R)
Academic Year 2023/24	Alan Speight / Ruth Taylor	Academic View	(C0) Senate (S)
		Approval	(C1) QAC, UEC, Senate (S)
Progression, Attainment and Employability Action Plan: Priority Groups and Wider Student Population	Abbe Brown	Discussion	(C1) EEC, SSEC, UEC, Senate (R)
Degree Classifications and Closing the Awarding Gap Action Plan	Abbe Brown	Approval	(C1) SSEC, UEC, Senate (R)
Graduate Outcomes and Employability	John Barrow	Academic View	(C1), EEC, UEC, Senate (S)
Graduate Outcomes 2022 (2019/20 Cohort) Report	John Barrow	Discussion	(C1) UEC, Senate (R)
End-of-Year 2021/22 Withdrawals Report	Abbe Brown	Discussion	(C1) UEC, Senate (R)
Decolonising the Curriculum	Ruth Taylor	Academic View	(C1) UEC, Senate (S)
		Approval	(C2) UEC, Senate (S)
Graduate Attributes and Skills	John Barrow	Academic View	(C1) EEC, SSEC, UEC, Senate (S)

*This is based on the Business that will require discussion or approval at Senate. It is recognised that the UEC and the QAC will provide regular reports to the Senate and that further items of business may be included on these reports for information, discussion, approval or routine approval.

		Approval	(C2) EEC, SSEC, UEC, Senate (S)
Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Non-Academic)	Nick Edwards	Approval	(C1) SSEC, UEC, Senate (R)
Student and Staff Carers Policy	Abbe Brown	Academic View	(C1) SSEC, UEC, Senate (R)
		Approval	(C2) SSEC, UEC, Senate (R)
Update on Military Education Committee	Abbe Brown	Information	(C1) EEC, SSEC, UEC, Senate (R)
Student Futures Manifesto	Nick Edwards	Discussion	(C1) SSEC, UEC
Omnibus Resolution	Emma Tough	Approval	(C2) SSEC, QAC, UEC, Senate (R)
Appeals and Complaints Update for 2021/22	Emma Tough	Approval	(C3) QAC, UEC, Senate (R)
Academic Year Structure 2024/25 and Beyond	Ruth Taylor	Academic View	(C2) QAC, UEC, Senate (S)
		Approval	(C3) QAC, UEC, Senate (S)
Inclusion Provisions Policy	Nick Edwards	TBC	(C2) SSEC, UEC, Senate (R)
Support for Study Policy	Nick Edwards	Approval	(C3) SSEC, UEC, Senate (R)
In-Year 2022/23 Withdrawals Report	Abbe Brown	Approval	(C3) UEC, Senate (R)
Work Placements	Tracey Innes	TBC	(C4) EEC, UEC, Senate (S)
Degree Classifications and Awarding Gaps	Abbe Brown	TBC	(C4) SSEC, UEC, Senate (R)
Degree Classification 2021/22 Report	Abbe Brown	Approval	(C4) UEC, Senate (R)
Non-Continuation 2021/22 (Internal Data) Report	Abbe Brown	Approval	(C4) UEC, Senate (R)

For Senate Items:

(S) Standalone Item on Agenda

(R) Contained within UEC or QAC Report

*This is based on the Business that will require discussion or approval at Senate. It is recognised that the UEC and the QAC will provide regular reports to the Senate and that further items of business may be included on these reports for information, discussion, approval or routine approval.



Institutional Liaison Meeting 2 Record

Institution	University of Aberdeen
QAA Attendees	Dr Demelza Curnow, Quality Enhancement Manager
Institution Attendees	Professor Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education, University of Aberdeen Akua Serwaa Agyeman, AUSA VP Education Dr Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean for Educational Innovation Dr Gillian Mackintosh, Director of Academic Services & Online Education, University of Aberdeen Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar, University of Aberdeen Professor Steven Tucker, Institutional Lead for Enhancement Theme Liam Dyker, Administrative Officer (observing)
Date	12 July 2022

Key Topics / Issues discussed

Topic 1: Follow-up from Liaison Meeting 1

- Recruitment to the proposed Head of Quality role is continuing to progress.
- Academic governance developments: a proposal regarding the changes to QAC and UEC was scheduled for the last Senate of the academic session and a further paper will be returning at the meeting in mid-September refining final aspects of the proposal. Other proposals are going ahead as planned, including amalgamation of the student support and experience committees. The work of the committees is continuing as usual with the developments providing an opportunity to enhance the overall effectiveness.
- The re-licensing in Qatar is in progress. The necessary documents were submitted to the relevant Ministry and the submission is under consideration at the moment. Although there is no indication of a date by which a response should be expected, an event is anticipated to take place in the first half of September.

Topic 2: Update on strategic developments linked to Learning & Teaching

- We discussed “Education at the University of Aberdeen: Strategy and Planning”, which is the Education response to *Aberdeen 2040*. From AY2022/23, there will be a sub-group of the University Education Committee which will continue to take this work forward, including impact across actions. This group will report to UEC and will seek approvals as necessary through UEC and Senate. These are early days, as the work plan began in 2021 and the targets are 2025. It is being kept under review, including adjusting the timing of some outputs where it becomes evident that they would benefit from a greater investment of time to enable a more meaningful and/or impactful outcome. An Education away day had recently taken place which had supported the progression of work through

high-level discussions that drew together some of the work that was in progress and planned to maximise enhancement opportunities.

- The University representatives outlined the work that was taking place in relation to Academic Integrity. That includes supporting staff in identifying possible infringements and then responding in an appropriate and proportionate way. There was recognition that students are placed in a vulnerable position when suspected of breaching academic integrity regulations and an emphasis on detection as a deterrent was often unhelpful, particularly if it prevented a student from coming forwards to admit a mistake and ask for help. We also discussed the risks of policy developments and media attention on “contract cheating” potentially overshadowing other types of academic misconduct or poor practice, and the University’s efforts to mitigate this. The University’s work centres around a focus on positive messaging, including what is meant by academic integrity, the ethics and values of the University community, and how to ensure good academic practices. This work was drawing in staff across the University, including student support teams.
- The University’s work around Academic Integrity also links to work enhancing practices around assessment, recognising that this is an area that has evolved significantly in a short period. Staff are being supported to continue success stories around assessment practices and there is an appetite to increase authentic assessments, with academic integrity built into these.
- In reflections on the theme of “Hybrid” the University’s representatives observed that, even before the Covid-19 pandemic, “on-campus” had been a complementary on-campus and digital learning experience. As such, new and returning students are expected to come back to campus if they would have been on campus previously, with socialisation and peer support considered fundamental to their academic experience. Opportunities had been developed, however, to enhance further some aspects of online and digital support, particularly for those with caring responsibilities or some forms of disability. Feedback from students with particular characteristics had provided a valuable perspective on ways in which the University could support them further in the future. There are agreed standards in place intended to enable an optimal on-campus/online academic experience that everyone should meet but how they do that is decided locally. If areas identify opportunities to enhance provision and opportunities further through greater use of technology, they will be supported in that and the University is continuing to develop enhanced digital capabilities into teaching spaces.
- Active decisions regarding dual-mode options would be made in the future, as appropriate. Other current innovations in this area include a collaborative online international learning pilot which is taking place in social science and is intended to support students in having an international experience while based on the ‘home’ campus.

Topic 3: Data trends (held over from ILM 1)

- We discussed the steady improvement in degree outcomes that the University of Aberdeen has continued to monitor carefully. Part of this is likely to have been a consequence of the introduction of the Common Grading Scale in 2014/15 which, in common with best practice in the sector, was designed to give examiners confidence in using the full range of the marking scale through increased granularity in the top classification band. The University’s representatives outlined the holistic approach to

considering data and information throughout the student lifecycle and observed that the University had the 8th highest entry qualifications in the UK and the 12th highest degree outcomes, which was considered to be a reasonable correlation. Further, external examiners were not suggesting any disparity between the assessment and standard of achievement by students in comparison to the sector. The University is shortly to move from a Grade Spectrum degree algorithm to one based on Grade Point Average which is expected to have some impact on degree classifications. The introduction of this had been postponed owing to the emergency measures of “no detriment” during the pandemic. The University will continue to monitor degree classifications very carefully.

- The University’s representatives noted that awarding gaps were more of a concern to them, in particular in relation to BAME, SIMD20 and U25/25+ achievement. Action plans were being put in place to review current initiatives for these groups of students and would include non-continuation as well as final outcomes. An approach was outlined that was sensitive to any action that could make students with particular characteristics feel singled-out. The approach is also intended to consider the whole student experience, with pastoral support recognised as playing a critical part in enabling students to achieve their potential.
- The University’s representatives also emphasised that the University and Students’ Association were keen to work together on this. They agreed that there was a growing sense of partnership working and gave an example of a joint University-AUSA project in improving accessibility.

Topic 3: Student Engagement

- The Student Partnership Agreement is being developed at the moment through the Student Support Committee. In terms of plans for next year, there is a good relationship between the Students’ Association and the University, particularly around wellbeing. Another area that was strengthened over the last academic session was around EDI, and that was through collaborative working by the Students’ Association and the University.
- The three priorities identified in the 2021-22 Partnership Agreement are recognised across the University as important issues and they are reflected in the Education strategy. Ongoing work aims to consider how approaches to supporting mental health and wellbeing can be embedded within the curriculum, in addition to all of the work by Professional Services (which is both proactive and reactive).
- Proposals to introduce *Unitu* are still under discussion as the University explores whether it can integrate successfully with other systems already in place.

Topic 4: ELIR follow-up

- Further to the follow-up report, the University’s representatives outlined a thorough response in relation to management and oversight of Collaborative Provision. This has included enhanced practices for both UK-based and international partnerships. Developments include strengthening the team overseeing collaborative provision and more effective structures. In governance, there is now greater clarity over authority and decision-making, which has improved strategic oversight, and in future all partner provision will be considered in one QAC meeting to enhance this further. The revised arrangements also take account of the greater risk inherent in international partnerships.
- The University of Aberdeen is part of QAA’s QE-TNE Scheme.

Topic 5: Enhancement Theme

- Students contribute to Learning & Teaching Enhancement Projects in a number of ways, including as co-creators. All projects have a student intern, and there is genuine partnership with the student member(s) working alongside academic staff as equals and explicitly not viewed as “an extra pair of hands”. This has been found to help ensure the student voice is fully integrated. Interns are always paid and the role adapts to fit the project, enabling students with a range of personal circumstances to be part of the LTEPs. Opportunities include the summer scheme, which is for a period of 12 weeks and only open to 3rd year students. The University representatives noted that there is stiff competition for students to get these roles.
- All Enhancement Theme budget has been spent to date. This has primarily been to fund the LTEPs, which the University then match-funds. Two this year have been around the theme of assessment and feedback and momentum is continuing beyond the LTEPs. The University is about to open a call for year 3 and there are already informal enquiries. The University’s representatives suggested that this is due, at least in part, to the fact that a lot of emphasis is placed on the outputs from LTEPs and they are promoted widely and through a range of media (as well as word of mouth) so they have a high profile.
- The work related to the Enhancement Themes has a visible legacy within the University: for example, the development of a Community of Practice around the Resilient Learning Communities theme. That forum is also used to share challenges and that, in turn, is germinating projects. It has also enabled a unified way in which to discuss things across the University. Similarly, the collaborative cluster of micro-credentials and work on Recognition of Prior Learning work have finished but both have informed further developments at the University. In terms of stakeholder and employer understanding of micro-credentials, outputs have been useful across the sector as well as internally. The valuable contribution of representatives from the University of Aberdeen to the development of QAA’s Characteristics Statement for Micro-credentials was also acknowledged.
- The QAA officer noted that Ondrej Kucerak, who has just completed a term as Vice-President: Education in the Students’ Association, had been an exceptional Student Theme Lead and Chair of the Student-Led Project Steering Group. He was an excellent ambassador for Aberdeen University and had clearly been well-supported by the University in this work as well.

Topic 6: Analysis of student feedback

- At the first ILM in February, the University had outlined the efforts it was making to respond to student feedback, with particular attention to assessment and feedback. The NSS 2022 results had recently been released and Aberdeen had performed very strongly, seeing significant increases in student satisfaction, including being ranked 4th in the UK (out of 122 HEIs) for overall satisfaction, 4th for teaching and 5th for organisation and management, as well as now being ranked 1st in the UK for a number of disciplines. Notably, the University has moved up in relation to its benchmark in all but one of the eight areas and with some considerable percentage increases. This included an improvement of 32 places in relation to their benchmark for assessment and feedback. Although the University’s representatives commented that there was more they believed

they could do in this area, the results had shown that the work being done is having a positive impact for students. Next steps will include analysing free text comments, then the results will be considered through the University's governance structures and action planning will take place across the University. The University and Students' Association would work together on this.

- The University's representatives outlined some of the approaches that they had found helpful. An important aspect of this had been working with the Students' Association to understand what students wanted from feedback. Through engagement with staff and students, the range of ways in which feedback is given to students has increased, and has supported students in recognising feedback so that they can respond positively and make best use of it. The University's approach has also focused on getting the basics right: for example, ensuring that deadlines are met, communicating to students ahead of time, and being clear of any delays and the reasons for them. Another adjustment to practice has been to give students feedback ahead of assessment marks, so they have more confidence on what to expect and understand better what has worked well.
- Another notable development related to this is that improving the quality of feedback that is given is leading staff to look more critically at the design of assignments, and that is improving as well. Further, staff are now sharing good practice and tips with each other, for example from conferences.
- Funding has been secured for a pilot of Testa (transforming student experience through assessment and feedback in the digital age), which will be supported by two student interns and will look across a breadth of disciplines. A postgraduate research studentship is attached to the project which will enable a student to undertake a three-year PhD on it.
- University representatives also observed that the pandemic has had a positive impact in a number of ways around assessment, including growing confidence in developing authentic assessment. A greater connection between staff and students has developed for a number of reasons and, overall, a greater sense of community, with students much more likely to feel genuinely part of that community. Students are actively involved in a number of initiatives.

Topic 7: Update from QAAS

- The **Focus On** [professional services partnership](#) event resources including student perspectives video, report and slides from the event have been published.
- In addition to the **ELIR thematic reporting** mentioned previously, we will additionally be updating the [ELIR4 database](#) to reflect the Abertay and UHI ELIR reports and hope this has been helpful for colleagues.
- **In-year thematic review in partnership with Education Scotland on self evaluation** Phase 1 of the work has been completed and we are grateful to HEIs who agreed, and provided, documents as part of the phase 1 review. Phase 2 is underway and HEIs are again thanked for their participation.
- **Enhancement theme conference.** Held on 8 and 9 June. In addition to the conference we have a number of other Theme-related activities. We now have a [Themes activity calendar](#) as well as our events page.
- **Resources.** An addition to the year 1 theme resources is the output/outcomes from the cluster on [Re-imagining resilience for taught PGT](#) students.

- **The Anti-Racist Curriculum Project.** We have appointed a consultant to road-testing and evaluating the resources. Three workshops were scheduled for April and May which explored the issue in different subject contexts, and we have at least one workshop lined up for session 2022-23. The collaborative cluster on decolonising the curriculum, which began its work in 2020-21, is continuing in the form of a network of academic developers being managed by Edinburgh Napier University and has appointed a student intern who is producing some podcasts and other resources.
- **Micro-credentials project.** The 3rd meeting of the Micro-Credentials Network took place in person in late May along with a micro-credential webinar in May with a theme of international perspectives.
- **Student-Led Project – Promoting Equity of the Student Experience** - progressing well with the first outputs published.
- **Theme evaluation.** [Sensational Surveys webinar](#) was posted online as a resource that colleagues can use. We hope colleagues are taking advantage of these capacity building activities.
- **Wales Quality Network** Going forwards the Wales Quality Network is open to all QAA Members around the UK. Therefore, if there are topics of interest relevant for colleagues (and students) in Scotland, Northern Ireland or England, they are very welcome to attend.
- **QAA Scotland Annual Report** we have now published our [Annual Report](#).
- **QAA at 25: Championing UK quality and standards for a quarter of a century** To mark 25 years as the UK's independent quality body, QAA will facilitate a series of conversations stimulated by experts from across the UK and international higher education including academic leaders, students, quality agencies and other sector bodies. The [programme](#) has a number of ongoing activities.
- **Student reviewers.** That there would be a future call for student reviews
- The QAA officer confirmed that, as Aberdeen was historically third in the ELIR cycle and had most recently been through ELIR in November 2018, the University would be scheduled for Quality Enhancement and Standards Review in the 2022/3 academic session. Communications relating to scheduling were in the process of being sent and, if the University had not heard formally by the end of the week, they were advised to contact the QAA officer who would then follow up on this.

Follow-up actions agreed between QAA Officer and Institution

- There were no follow-up actions.

Observations / Recommendations by the QAA Officer

- The NSS outcome for 2022 has been very positive. In particular, it is encouraging for the correlation with a number of the University's initiatives to enhance the student experience.
- Although degree outcomes have steadily risen and are relatively high in the sector overall, the University is monitoring this very carefully through holistic consideration of data. As they note, in comparison to HEIs with a similar profile, they are not an outlier, and there would be concern if there was not correlation between entry qualifications and degree outcomes as that could imply they were not enabling students to achieve the potential they had shown at the point of selection.