

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Minute of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 18 April 2023

Present: Steve Tucker (**Chair**), Nirvan Abedi (*vice Akua Serwaa Agyeman*), Will Barras, Selma Carson, Isabel Crane, Lois Gall, Mark Grant, Faye Hendry, Jacqui Hutchison, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Laura McCann, Gareth Norton, Jeff Oliver, Fiona Robson, Fiona Stoddard, with Scott Carle, Darren Comber, Lucy Leiper, Gillian Mackintosh, Ann Simpson, and Liam Dyker (**Clerk**) in attendance.

In attendance: Ruth Taylor

Apologies: Akua Serwaa Agyeman, Gloria Alvarez, Isa Ehrenschwendtner, Morag MacRae, Thanga Thevar, and Jo Vergunst.

GUIDANCE FOR MARKING AND ASSESSMENT BOYCOTT

- 1.1 The Committee heard a summary of the guidance. The different groups of 'priority students' were highlighted, along with certain assessments that would be prioritised for marking e.g., undergraduate dissertations. It was recognised that quality assurance regulations should not be undermined. The relevant marking deadlines were highlighted. In terms of progression, it was noted there was flexibility in the processes, including the ability to waive regulations by the Students' Progress Committee (SPC) or Vice-Principal (Education). It was noted that degrees will not be awarded without all requirements being met, including allowing students to attend an in-person graduation ceremony with the award to follow in future.
- 1.2 In relation to communication, clarity was sought on whether Heads of School had been consulted. It was advised that the guidance had been shared with Heads of School on a confidential basis. Further clarity was sought on whether there will be a template response to student queries to ensure consistency. It was advised that a series of FAQs will be developed, and staff should consult those prior to responses. It was suggested that any queries that are repeatedly being asked of staff that do not already feature in the FAQs should be highlighted for inclusion.
- 1.3 Clarity was sought on whether marking can be reallocated and whether staff must advise the School if they will be participating in the boycott. Responding, it was advised that a future communication from the Senior Vice-Principal will follow. It was noted that further guidance will follow on these matters.
- 1.4 Concern was expressed in terms of the marking deadlines and the ability to meet these where marking had not been completed.
- 1.5 Clarity was sought on how the boycott might affect students in Qatar, particularly in relation to marking and moderation of assessments. It was noted that there will be a clear FAQ which covers Qatar students. Further, colleagues are ensuring that Schools in Aberdeen are communicating effectively with Qatar, and this has been raised in each meeting with the relevant Heads of School.
- 1.6 In relation to the setting of assessments, clarity was sought on the statement that Schools should undertake to ensure assessments are prepared prior to the start of the second half-session. In response, it was advised that this had been agreed via the NSS Institutional Action Plan. It was suggested that even if assessments had not been in place at the start of term, that it was likely that assessments were in place now.

- 1.7 In relation to Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), clarity was sought on whether there was any scope to complete the deadlines earlier to allow for any accreditation requirements. It was advised that results can be processed early for specific cohorts.
- 1.8 Clarity was sought in relation to the 75% rule and how this will impact student progression. It was advised that this was in relation to course assessments and that students will be able to progress as the Students' Progress Committee will only consider the results that have been marked as completed, and not those that are awaited. Further, in relation to students seeking better grades in the latter part of the course, it was advised that an appeal could be submitted, and the work must be marked. Caution was urged that this could mean the mark goes up or down.
- 1.9 In relation to next steps, it was advised that the guidance will be circulated among QAC, Heads of School, Directors of Education and School Administration Managers. It was advised that the guidance will only be issued to those who require to use it. Further, it was suggested that work is underway to finalise the FAQs, and that other communications from other departments in the University will follow in due course.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 2.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 10 May 2023 at 2:05pm at the Court Room, University Office, and via Microsoft Teams.