

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

Minute of the Meeting held on 24 February 2022

Present: Ruth Taylor (Chair), Euan Bain, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Jason Bohan, Stuart Durkin, Bill Harrison, Richard Hepworth, Alison Jenkinson, Kirsty Kiezebrink, David McCausland, Rona Patey, Shona Potts, Anne-Michelle Slater, Robert Taylor and Joshua Wright with Simon Bains, Rachael Bernard, Nick Edwards, Tracey Innes, Gillian Mackintosh, Kate Smith, and Emma Hay (Clerk) in attendance

Apologies: Harminder Battu, John Barrow, Abbe Brown, Gerry Hough, Ondrej Kucerak, David Mercieca, Graeme Nixon, Michelle Pinard, Susan Stokeld, Steve Tucker, Russell Williams, Julie Bray, Scott Carle, Fiona Ritchie, Graeme Kirkpatrick, Brian Henderson, and Patricia Spence

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2022

(copy filed as UEC/240222/001)

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to the meeting of the University Education Committee (UEC). Members of the Committee considered the minute of the meeting held on 18 January 2022 and approved it as an accurate representation of discussions held.

MATTERS ARISING

(copy filed as UEC/240222/002)

- 2.1 Members of the Committee noted the actions arising following the meeting of UEC held on 18 January 2022. The actions were recorded as complete or in progress. The Committee noted the following:

- With regard to *minute point 4.1*, it was confirmed that a representative of the Postgraduate Research School had been added to the composition of the Aberdeen2040 Work Placements Task and Finish Group (TFG);
- With regard to *minute points 6.1 and 6.2*, the Committee noted that these had been progressed by the School Education Leads;
- With regard to *minute point 8.3*, regarding the circulation of information in regard to feedback to students, the Committee noted that the Chair and Clerk would complete this action in advance of the next meeting of the UEC;

Action: Chair/Clerk

- With regard to *minute point 9.3*, regarding the deadline associated with the completion of Professional Development (PD) courses, the Committee noted that a proposal to amend the deadline had been submitted for approval;
- With regard to *minute point 9.3*, regarding the academic integrity project, the Committee noted that work was underway to ensure the inclusion of resources for vulnerable students;
- Members of the Committee noted that funding had been received for an Institutional pilot of Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment (TESTA);
- The Chair updated the Committee on plans in regard to the presentation of principles for the Delivery of Education in academic year 2022/23 to the next meeting of the Senate. The Committee noted that an academic view on the draft principles would be sought from

Senate, prior to a finalised proposal being considered at the next meeting of the UEC. The School Education Leads were asked to collate and return any feedback from their Schools.

Action: Education Leads

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- 3.1 Members of the Committee noted the Campus Planning Group (CPG) papers and minutes of meetings, available [here](#).
- 3.2 Members of the Committee received a brief update from the Chair on the work of the CPG following the First Minister's recent update. Members noted that the CPG had acknowledged the positive direction of travel and a return to an increased level of normality. The Committee noted the work that would need to be done in relation to decisions about the delivery of education as more information becomes available with respect to Government Guidance (e.g., in regard to physical distancing, ventilation, and face coverings etc.).

RISK REGISTER

(copy filed as UEC/240222/003)

- 4.1 Members of the Committee received the updated Risk Register for Education, available as *UEC/240222/003*. Members of the Committee were invited to return any comments on the Register to the Clerk.

Action: Clerk/Committee

SENATE EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW ACTIONS RELATING TO EDUCATION COMMITTEES

(copy filed as UEC/240222/004)

- 5.1 Members of the Committee noted the paper providing an update on the outcomes of the Senate Effectiveness Review (SER) and the actions specifically relating to the Education Committee structure. The Committee noted the actions related to the UEC, Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and Student Support Committee (SSC). Members were informed that further information, including revised terms of reference for the UEC, QAC and SSC would follow in due course.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (QAA) INSTITUTIONAL VISIT UPDATE

- 6.1 The Committee received a brief update on the first of two visits to the University during the academic year by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Members of the Committee noted the quality assurance focus of this first meeting and that the second meeting, scheduled for June, will be more quality enhancement focused. The Committee were informed that the meeting had been positive, and that discussion had focused on Internal Teaching Review (ITR), QA aspects of Transnational Education (TNE) and the University's annual report on its quality processes to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).
- 6.2 It was noted that a representative of the SFC had also been in attendance, as part of changes to the national quality assurance and enhancement review structure currently under consideration by the SFC and QAA. The Chair informed the Committee that following the meeting, the SFC had asked to meet with the University, to inform the work that SFC is doing on the new quality arrangements.

- 6.3 Members of the Committee noted that while the future approach to Institutional review had not yet been determined, the steer received at the meeting by the SFC, and QAA representatives was that it was unlikely the University would undergo Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) in 2022/23. Finally, members noted that a copy of the note of the meeting would be circulated once finalised.

Action: Chair/Clerk

ABERDEEN 2040 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

(copy filed as UEC/240222/005)

- 7.1 Members of the Committee received the paper and its associated appendices, providing an update on the Aberdeen 2040 implementation plan. Members noted the five areas identified for inclusion: student satisfaction, student progression and continuation, employability, degree awarding gap and classifications, and the quality assurance of provision. The Committee acknowledged the commitments for which it and its subcommittees were responsible, and the high-level 1-year actions identified and, in several instances, already being taken forward.
- 7.2 The Committee agreed the importance of ensuring the wider community are made aware of the actions being undertaken and when. The Chair noted that the plan would return to future meetings of Committee to ensure monitoring of the actions and their progress.
- 7.3 The Committee noted actions within other sections of the plan, for the attention of the UEC. It was agreed that any actions for the UEC or its sub-committees would be highlighted or collated into one area, prior to the next meeting.

Action: Chair

TIMING OF THE 2023/24 ACADEMIC YEAR

(copy filed as UEC/240222/006)

- 8.1 Members of the Committee received the paper on the timing of the 2023/24 academic year, noting the proposal that the University's interim approach to the structure of its academic year, as in use in 2022/23, continue for an additional year. Members of the Committee noted the reasoning for the proposed change provided in the paper and, in particular, that the Aberdeen 2040 Delivery of Education TFG had yet to report and, in so doing, inform future academic year structures.
- 8.2 Members of the Committee provided feedback as follows for further consideration:
- The extension of the summer term, in which PGT teaching is undertaken, to 13 weeks, to mirror the proposed the duration of the first and second half-sessions;
 - Some disappointment at the interim measure being extended for a further year;
 - The possibility of a central exam diet. It was noted that while exams could be scheduled at School level, the lack of a centralised diet could lead to clashes for students;
 - With regard to the lack of exam diet, concern of the risks associated with this, including in regard to academic integrity and grade inflation;
 - Concern with regard to the results deadlines detailed within the proposed structure;
 - Clarity on the dates of the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council holidays provided in the paper.

- 8.3 Overall, the Committee considered the issues identified required further consideration prior to its consideration for approval. In particular, members of the Committee sought the reconsideration of the dates for the return of results.

Action: AMS/RB

RETURN OF FEEDBACK ON ASSESSMENT

(copy filed as UEC/240222/007)

- 9.1 The Committee received a paper providing an update on the return of feedback on assessment during the first half session of 2021/22. Members of the Committee noted that, in addressing National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes regarding assessment, Schools were asked to monitor the timeliness of return of feedback on assessment during the first half-session. The Committee acknowledged the intention of this monitoring, in enabling the identification of issues at an early stage and allowing any problems to be followed-up and addressed. Members of the Committee noted the reasons provided by Schools where delays had occurred, including where 'Friendly Friday' policies prevented the issuing of feedback on a Friday, to ensure students who, on receipt of their results, wished to seek support from the Universities support services weren't prevented from doing so by the weekend closure.
- 9.2 The Committee noted that staff sought to return feedback as quickly as they could, but that factors, including the provision of extensions, led to delays. Members of the Committee acknowledged feedback from staff on the nature of the exercise and that consideration would be given to any future collation of the information. The Chair noted that School Education Committees would need to continue to review all aspects of the assessment and feedback processes so as to ensure that enhancements are taken forward in line with the NSS Institutional Action Plan.

CHANGES IN REGULATIONS FOR VARIOUS DEGREES

(copy filed as UEC/240222/008)

- 10.1 The Committee received the 'Omnibus Resolution' detailing proposed changes in degree regulations for the 2022/23 academic year. Members of the Committee noted that proposals contained within the paper, to substitute the use of 'half-session' with 'term' had not been approved by the QAC and would therefore be removed from the Resolution prior to its consideration by the Senate. Members noted that the issue of terminology would return for consideration in the next academic year.

Clerks' Note: Following the meeting,

- 10.2 For their part, the Committee approved the proposed changes to the Degree Regulations and agreed to forward them to the Senate.

Action: Clerk

GENERIC POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT AWARDS

(copy filed as UEC/240222/009)

- 11.1 The Committee received the paper on Generic Postgraduate Taught Awards and the proposed regulations associated with them. Members of the Committee noted that, following feedback from the QAC, the proposal would be further discussed prior to its progression to the Senate.

Action: GM

BADGING COURSES WITHIN THE CATALOGUE OF COURSES

(copy filed as UEC/240222/010)

- 12.1 Members of Committee received the paper on Badging Courses within the Catalogue of Courses. The Committee noted the proposal, as part of the ongoing implementation of Aberdeen 2040, that taught courses within the University which align with the four commitments within the 2040 strategy are identified as such in the Catalogue of Courses. The Committee were very positive about the proposed change and, while acknowledging that the addition of the functionality to allow it may take time, were content to approve it.

MAKING COURSE READING LISTS OPEN ACCESS

(copy filed as UEC/240222/011)

- 13.1 Members of Committee received the paper proposing that course reading lists be made publicly available. Overall, the Committee were content to approve the proposal. Members of the Committee noted the importance of ensuring reading lists are explained to students, to ensure they are aware where materials are compulsory for reading versus those which are provided as additional suggested texts only.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 14.1 Members of the Committee noted that the next meeting of the UEC would be held at 2.05pm on Wednesday 13 April 2022. In addition, members of the Committee noted that an additional meeting of the UEC, to focus on Aberdeen 2040, would take place on Thursday 17 March 2022 at 2.05pm.

UPDATE REPORTS FROM THE UEC SUB-COMMITTEES

- 15.1 Members of the Committee noted update reports from each of the UEC's sub-committees as follows:
- (i) Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) *(copy filed as UEC/240222/012a)*
 - (ii) Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) *(copy filed as UEC/240222/012b)*
 - (iii) Student Support Committee (SSC) *(copy filed as UEC/240222/012c)*

ADVANCEHE ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(copy filed as UEC/240222/013)

- 15.2 Members of the Committee are asked to note the AdvanceHE Annual Review of the University's Accredited CPD Framework Learning & Teaching.

WORK BASED LEARNING GUIDANCE

- 15.3 Members of the Committee noted the revised [Work Based Learning Guidance Note](#), approved by way of circulation.

GRADUATION ALLOCATIONS (2022) & GRADUATION DATES (2023)

(copy filed as UEC/240222/014)

- 15.4 Members of the Committee noted the attached graduation allocations for summer 2022, approved by way of circulation. In addition, members of the Committee noted, following

consideration and approval by way of circulation, that graduations in summer 2023 will take place during the week of 26 June.