UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minute of the Meeting held on 16 January 2024

Present: Ruth Taylor **(Chair)**, Waheed Afzal, Euan Bain, John Barrow, Lyn Batchelor, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Jason Bohan, Stuart Durkin, Bill Harrison, Ken Jeffrey, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Helen Knight, David McCausland, Rona Patey, Stuart Piertney, Michelle Pinard, Amudha Poobalan, Shona Potts, Sai Shradda S Viswanathan, Susan Stokeld, Steve Tucker, Asha Venkatesh, Josh Wright, with Simon Bains, Julie Bray, Scott Carle, Rob Cummings, Nick Edwards, Tracey Innes, Gillian Mackintosh, Rhona Moore (*from minute 10.1*), Patricia Spence, Louisa Stratton, and Liam Dyker **(Clerk)** in attendance.

Apologies: Harminder Battu, Brian Henderson, Graeme Kirkpatrick, Rhiannon Ledwell, Anne-Michelle Slater, and Emma Tough.

MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2023
(copy filed as UEC/160124/001)

1.1 The Committee was content to approve the minute of the previous meeting held in October.

MATTERS ARISING
(copy filed as UEC/160124/002)

2.1 Decolonising the Curriculum Assessment Review Timelines *(minute 8.2 refers):* It was noted that this action is complete, and that information is issued annually with respect to the timing of assessment changes generally, which is communicated to Schools at the start of each academic year. It was noted that, whilst there are deadlines for the change of assessment (June for term 1, November for term 2), assessment changes can be identified at other points in the year and then managed through University processes.

2.2 Graduate Outcomes School-Level Data *(minute 12.1.1 refers):* It was noted that this action is compete, and that the information can be found on the Graduate Outcomes Dashboard.

2.3 Artificial Intelligence Tools *(minute 7.2 refers):* It was noted that this action will be removed from the action log, as it is an ongoing action.

2.4 Future Academic Year Structure Implementation *(minute 8.1 refers):* An update was provided in this regard, to which it was noted that this action is complete.

2.5 Undergraduate vs Postgraduate Taught Skills *(minute 10.4 refers):* It was noted this action is complete, and it is included in the paper related to Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills.

2.6 NSS Data *(minute 11.2 refers):* It was noted that this action is complete.

2.7 Copyright Literacy Steering Group Terms of Reference *(minute 13.1 refers):* It was advised that this action is in progress, and the Terms of Reference will follow to a future meeting, following consideration at University Research Committee.

RISK REGISTER

3.1 The Committee heard an overview of the Risk Register, with specific interest in the risks pertinent to Education. It was noted that the risk pertinent to the Marking and Assessment Boycott had been removed, as it is now complete, with updates provided to other actions.

3.2 Discussion ensued regarding the risk posed to the teaching estate as a result of recent challenges within the Fraser Noble building. Following discussion, it was agreed that the action would be added to the risk register and it would be discussed at a future risk workshop as to which section of the risk register it belongs. **Action: Chair / Clerk**

ABERDEEN 2040

(i) ABERDEEN 2040 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

4.1 The Committee heard an overview of the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan for Education. It was noted that the updates will be discussed at a future meeting of the Senior Management Team.

(ii) ABERDEEN 2040 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

5.1 An overview of the proposed Graduate Attributes and Skills was provided to the Committee, noting that the paper was presented for approval prior to further consideration and approval at Senate.

5.2 Some members raised issues in relation to potential system changes, notably (i) the Curriculum Management System (CMS), and (ii) the MySkills system. In relation to the CMS, it was advised that work is ongoing to determine whether the Graduate Attributes can be changed within the system institutionally or whether there will be a cost involved. In relation to MySkills, it was advised that the tender for the careers system would be reviewed in due course, which may have an impact for the MySkills system.

5.3 In respect of mapping Graduate Attributes to courses, it was suggested that the expectation should not be that all courses must map to all Graduate Attributes, and that staff should be encouraged to reflect within Annual Course and Programme Reviews as to which Graduate Attributes are appropriate.

5.4 The Committee was content to approve the proposals for onward consideration at Senate, subject to minor amendments.

(iii) ABERDEEN 2040 CURRICULUM

6.1 A summary of the paper was provided to the Committee, noting its basis on the discussions which took place at the Education Awayday in November 2023. The Committee was advised of the next phase of strategic work, as identified within the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan.. It was advised that the paper included a summary of the key themes which arose as part of the discussions.

6.2 The Committee noted the proposed next steps which would be available for the new Vice-Principal (Education) to consider. **Action: Incoming Vice-Principal Education**

(iv) DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM: COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
(copy filed as UEC/160124/007)

7.1   An overview of the proposed approach in relation to the next steps for the Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group was provided to the Committee. The Committee was advised that the Steering Group has delivered on the remit of the group, and that implementation of the Decolonising the Curriculum work is underway. It was suggested that a Community of Practice including the existing Decolonising the Curriculum Leads be established to replace the Steering Group. It was noted that the Decolonising the Curriculum Leads will continue to report via, and liaise closely with, the School Education Committees.

7.2   Clarity was sought in relation to a role descriptor for the Decolonising the Curriculum Leads, to which it was advised that a role descriptor did not exist and that Leads were selected by their relevant Heads of School based on their interest and expertise in the area. The distinction between the Decolonising the Curriculum Leads and Race Equality Champions was highlighted.

7.3   The UEC was content to approve the proposed approach in the establishment of a Community of Practice and that this would be taken forward with immediate effect.   **Action: KK**

UPSCALING WORK-BASED LEARNING UPDATE
(copy filed as UEC/160124/008)

8.1   A summary of the update provided in respect of upscaling work-based learning was provided to the UEC. It was noted that the work associated with work-based learning has been lagging, due to resource challenges. The Committee was advised that the paper provides a summary of the activities which have been ongoing and an emphasis on the commitment to work-based learning. The courses available offered centrally were highlighted to the Committee.

GO ABROAD UPDATE
(copy filed as UEC/160124/009)

9.1   The Committee heard a summary of the update provided in relation to Go Abroad and Student Mobility. The UEC noted that the International Experience Task and Finish Group had been paused pending the development of guidance from Universities UK International regarding the definitions of international experience. The UEC discussed the data provided in respect of incoming and outgoing student mobility. The Committee was advised that the Go Abroad team is reviewing opportunities for expansion and development within the Schools for student mobility. The impact of any decision taken in respect of modern languages provision was noted in relation to Go Abroad.

9.2   The Committee discussed opportunities for international experience which may not be included in the data, as they are not managed centrally, such as the intercampus exchanges between Aberdeen and Qatar, and exchange opportunities in Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition.

ACADEMIC YEAR STRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION: UPDATE ON INDUCTION, TRANSITION AND EMPLOYABILITY WEEK
(copy filed as UEC/160124/010)

10.1   The Committee heard a summary of the paper providing an update on planning for the Induction, Transition and Employability Week (ITE Week) as approved as part of the Future Academic Year structure. It was noted that planning currently included discussions with Careers and Schools in relation to centrally delivered and School-delivered sessions. The UEC noted a working group will be established to take forward the development of the ITE Week. It was noted that there would be differences in approach for new and returning students, with the current work focusing on returning students. It was suggested that initially activities should be

delivered centrally primarily. It was noted that the Welcome Week Planning Group would be consulted as part of the next steps in taking forward the development of the ITE Week.

10.2 Clarity was sought in relation to the communication of the ITE Week for returning students to ensure that students are aware there will be activities to return to Aberdeen for. Further clarity was sought regarding the type of engagement we expect from students, whether all students were included and whether it will be optional. It was suggested that there must be value in the activities which students will undertake, and that all students would be offered the opportunity to engage. Some members highlighted the importance of engagement with student societies as part of induction. It was noted that timing and communication would be important particularly for January start students.

10.3 Discussion ensued regarding late arriving students and the ability to engage with the ITE Week activities. It was suggested that sessions should be delivered in a hybrid format which would allow in-person and online engagement.

10.4 It was suggested that personal tutoring should be included as part of the ITE Week, in particular the prospect that personal tutor meetings should be scheduled as part of MyTimetable. In response, it was agreed that this was a useful suggestion, and that further discussion will take place to discuss its feasibility.

10.5 The UEC noted that the paper would be updated based on the discussion at UEC prior to it being taken to Senate, and that the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee would be responsible for taking this work forward, and progress reports will follow to the Committee in that regard.   **Action: J Barrow**

ONLINE EDUCATION UPDATE
(copy filed as UEC/160124/011)

11.1 The UEC heard an update in regard to Online Education and the proposed establishment of the Online Education Forum. The Committee noted the disestablishment of the Online Education Development Committee. The Committee was advised of the new Online Learning Design Service to support Schools with the development of online courses and programmes, and which will help to ensure consistency across all online provision. An event due to take place in February 2024 was highlighted in relation to encouraging support and development of online education provision. The Committee was advised of the intention to review the Principles for the Delivery of Education to include more explicit reference to online and blended modes of delivery.

11.2 Concerns were raised in relation to the challenge with obtaining feedback from online students. The Committee was content to approve the recommendations contained within the paper.

EDUCATION DATA

(i) NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY – PLAN FOR 2024
(copy filed as UEC/160124/012)

12.1 A summary of the preparations for the National Student Survey (NSS) 2024 was provided to the UEC. It was noted that the survey would be launched at the end of January, and that the key questions which will be asked is summarised in the paper. It was highlighted that results are expected in Summer 2024. Schools were thanked for clarifying their launch dates for the survey.

12.2 Discussion ensued regarding the checking of data. It was noted that a significant amount of checking is required, and a plea was made for more nuance within University systems to avoid the associated workload. It was advised that the Dean for Student Support & Experience would follow this up. A concern was raised in relation to the data being used in relation to student

population. Clarity was sought as to whether this had been rectified for NSS 2024. It was advised that this would be actioned separately, and that the Dean for Student Support & Experience would follow up. **Action: JB / RP / EB**

12.3 Concerns were raised in relation to the response rates for Course Evaluation Forms, and a concern that students are experiencing survey fatigue. Some members noted the proactive means of addressing this such as utilising dedicated class time to allow students to respond to the Course Feedback forms. In response, it was suggested that demonstrating the University is listening to student feedback and closing the feedback loop is likely to increase student participation if students can see the impact. It was agreed that further work would take place to address this issue. **Action: JB**

(ii) APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS DATA 2022/23
(copy filed as UEC/160124/013)

13.1 The Committee heard a summary of the paper, noting the trends which date back to academic year 2015/16. The UEC noted that the number of submissions has risen, with peaks in certain Schools. The Committee noted the large volume of cases related to C7 appeals, and in particular, the ongoing work to review the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals which seeks to alleviate the number of these appeals. The time commitment associated with appeals and complaints cases was highlighted to the Committee.

13.2 It was suggested that the appeals and complaints policies should be reviewed in relation to group cases, particularly in relation to their handling at School-level. **Action: ST/GM**

(iii) ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE DATA 2022/23
(copy filed as UEC/160124/014)

14.1 An overview of the academic discipline data for academic year 2022/23 was provided to the Committee, noting the summary of trends. The Committee noted that most of the instances of academic misconduct relate to plagiarism, but there are a growing number of contract cheating cases.

(iv) EDUCATION DATA REPORTING SCHEDULE
(copy filed as UEC/160124/015)

15.1 The Committee noted the Education Data Reporting Schedule, which had been compiled by colleagues in Planning.

VICE-PRINCIPAL (EDUCATION) AND CHAIR OF UEC

16.1 The Committee heard an oral update from the Chair in relation to the new Vice-Principal (Education) and Chair of UEC. The Committee noted it was the Chair's final meeting and the Chair expressed her thanks to all members for their support and work during her tenure. In response, the Committee expressed its thanks to the Chair for all her work during her time as Vice-Principal and Chair of UEC.

REMIT AND COMPOSITION
(copy filed as UEC/160124/016)

17.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, an amendment to the UEC Remit and Composition.

MINUTES FROM THE UEC SUB-COMMITTEES

18.1   Members of the Committee noted updates from the UEC Sub-Committees as follows:

(i)   Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC)   *(copy filed as UEC/160124/017a)*
(ii) Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC)   *(copy filed as UEC/160124/017b)*

INSTITUTIONAL LIAISON MEETING DOCUMENTATION

19.1   The Committee noted the submission to QAA Scotland for the University's upcoming Institutional Liaison Meeting.

ACADEMIC STUDENT SURVEYS

(copy filed as UEC/160124/018)

20.1   The Committee noted the paper on Academic Student Surveys.

NEW AND REVISED GUIDANCE FOR GENERATIVE AI IN EDUCATION

21.1   The Committee noted the following new and revised guidance for Generative AI in Education:

(i)   [Quick Guide on Acknowledging the Use of GenAI Tools](#)
(ii)   [Quick Guide on Assignment Notes, Drafts and Versioning](#)
(iii)   [Student Guidance on Use of GenAI tools in Education](#)
(iv)   [Staff Guidance on Use of GenAI tools in Education](#)

UNIVERSITY CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

(copy filed as UEC/160124/019)

22.1   The Committee noted the annual report from the Careers and Employability Service.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

23.1   The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Tuesday 5 March 2024 at 1:05pm in the Court Room, University Office and by way of Microsoft Teams.