

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

Minute of the Meeting held on 16 May 2023

Present: Ruth Taylor (**Chair**), Waheed Afzal, Akua Agyeman, Euan Bain, John Barrow, Lyn Batchelor, Harminder Battu, Jason Bohan, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Nick Edwards, Bill Harrison, Malcolm Harvey (*vice* Stuart Durkin), Ken Jeffrey, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Helen Knight, David McCausland, Graeme Nixon, Rona Patey, Michelle Pinard, Amudha Poobalan, Shona Potts, Anne-Michelle Slater, Susan Stokeld, Steve Tucker, Joshua Wright with Simon Bains, Julie Bray, Scott Carle, Brian Henderson, Tracey Innes, Graeme Kirkpatrick, Gillian Mackintosh, Rhona Moore, Patricia Spence, Louisa Stratton, Liam Dyker (**Clerk**) and Chris Weir (**Minutes**) in attendance.

Apologies: Stuart Durkin and Alison Jenkinson.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2023

(copy filed as UEC/160523/001)

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the University Education Committee (UEC) meeting. Members of the Committee approved the minute of the meeting held on 23 March 2023.

MATTERS ARISING (ACTION LOG)

(copy filed as UEC/160523/002)

- 2.1 Members of the Committee noted the actions arising following the meeting of UEC held on 23 March 2023. The actions were recorded as complete or in progress.
- 2.2 Consolidation of Action Plans (*minute 11.3 refers*): The Chair highlighted that the action plans are to be placed in an area where the Committee can access them. **Action: Clerk**
- 2.3 The Inclusion of LEO Data in Graduate Outcomes (*minute 15.1 refers*): It was noted that this is in progress and will be included in the graduate outcomes data if it is available.
- 2.4 Implementation of PTES (*minute 16.2 refers*): It was noted that PTES will be live from 26 May. The PRES Research survey has recently closed and once data is received this will be reported.
- 2.5 NSS Action Plans (*minute 10.1 refers*): It was noted this action is complete.
- 2.6 NSS School-Level Data (*minute 10.2 refers*): It was noted that this action is complete.
- 2.7 Dissemination of Good Practice for ChatGPT (*minute 11.4 refers*): It was noted that this action is complete, however, the work will be ongoing.
- 2.8 Teaching and Learning Spaces Group Terms of Reference (*minute 15.3 refers*): The UEC was advised that this was now complete, as the terms of reference were approved by circulation. The new version is to be circulated. **Action: KK/Clerk**

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- 3.1 Members of the Committee noted the agenda item on Health, Safety and Wellbeing. Confirmation was sought as to whether this was formally required as part of the UEC agenda. **Action: Chair/Clerk**

RISK REGISTER

(copy filed as UEC/160523/003)

- 4.1 Members of the UEC discussed the Risk Register with regards to specific risks associated with Education.
- 4.2 The Chair provided the Committee with an update on an additional risk around the marking and assessment boycott and the actions being taken in this regard. Actions included meetings with the Heads of Schools, meetings with the Directors of Education and a paper to QAC with respect to students affected by the boycott. A revised version of the Risk register will be circulated after the meeting.

[Clerk's Note: the revised version of the Risk Register was circulated on 23 May 2023]

- 4.3 It was discussed by the Committee that the Junior Doctors strike will have a potentially significant impact on medical students and, if the strike is during exams, then exams will not be able to run. The Chair agreed to liaise with Rona Patey to discuss if there is strike action and that the impact of any strike should be added to a School-level risk register.

FUTURE ACADEMIC YEAR STRUCTURE

(copy filed as UEC/160523/004)

- 5.1 The Committee heard a summary of the revised proposal in respect of the Future Academic Year Structure. The Chair advised the Committee that the proposal had been revised as a result of feedback from the Education Committees, Senate, and other consultation. The revised proposal retained the three-term structure and included a longer Spring break.
- 5.2 Some members of the Committee suggested that the later start date would be potentially difficult for field courses, but agreed the strengths of a three-term structure outweighed the negatives. Members also suggested that the loss of the clear marking week prior to the Winter Break would mean that staff would lose the opportunity to clear their workload before the vacation period. It was highlighted that it was not possible to move the term any earlier and that staff would still be given appropriate marking time after the Winter Break.
- 5.3 Members of the Committee suggested that nomenclature and numbering of the terms may cause some confusion, particularly with January start PGT students. Members of the Committee also commented on how the wording and structure caused concerns within their Schools regarding an increase in workload. It was stressed that there was no intention for this to cause an increase in workload or in PGT teaching. The Committee showed overall support for the three-term structure.
- 5.4 Members of the Committee highlighted that colleagues were concerned about the proposed start date of Term 1, as it would cause the start date of PGT courses to be too close to the PGR students' start time (the former is two weeks before). However, it was agreed that not having more than a two-week gap would be beneficial for PGR students, as it would allow them to catch up and join PGT courses for the first term.
- 5.5 A concern was raised regarding Term 2 starting in February, which may result in students' attendance dwindling if they end the lease on their flats early. The Chair noted that there are 5 weeks of teaching planned into the structure following the Spring break which should be adequate time to ensure that students see the value in returning and engaging with their education experience.

- 5.6 Members of the Committee noted that the suggested term dates meant that a week would be lost in terms of marking deadlines. The UEC highlighted that whilst having more time in January would be useful, it would result in a tight turnaround for getting assessments marked prior to the start of the new term. It was suggested that moving Summer graduations back a week may be a solution to allow an appropriate window for marking in the second term, extending the Spring marking period to 4 weeks. It was also suggested by a Committee member that the last week of marking for Term 1 could coincide with the ITEW for the start of Term 2.
- 5.7 Overall, the Committee provided support for the proposal to go to Senate for a further academic view.

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS REVIEW (QESR) FINDINGS REPORT

- (i) QESR FINDINGS REPORT** *(copy filed as UEC/160523/005)*
(ii) QESR DRAFT ACTION PLAN *(copy filed as UEC/160523/006)*

- 6.1 The Committee heard a summary of the QESR Findings Report and the draft Action Plan. The Committee noted the actions being taken in respect of (i) student access to External Examiner Reports and (ii) pastoral support. The Committee was content with the QESR Findings Report and draft Action Plan.

FINAL NSS RESPONSE RATE UPDATE

(copy filed as UEC/160523/007)

- 7.1 The Committee noted the update on the final NSS response rate. It was explained to the Committee that the final institutional NSS response rate was 67.38%, comparable to the previous year (67.80%), meeting the required minimum publication threshold of 50%. A total of 47 subjects submitted responses and 45 of these met the publication threshold; two subjects, Chemistry and Counselling, Psychotherapy and Occupational Therapy, did not achieve thresholds for publication of results due to the very small cohort size. The Committee was informed that the next steps would be provided once results were received in the Summer.

DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM UPDATE

(copy filed as UEC/160523/008)

- 8.1 The Committee heard an update on the work of the Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group. The Committee was informed that the Web and Toolkit resources would be available in June and that communications on the launch with Schools would follow. The Committee was also informed that CAD was undertaking training and that the next phase of the Steering Group was being considered.
- 8.2 Members of the Committee requested clarification regarding the timelines for reviewing assessments. The Chair highlighted that Schools should start having discussions regarding Decolonising the Curriculum this academic year and that any changes were to be made in line with the approved [Principles](#). **Action: Chair/Clerk**

INSTITUTIONAL PLAN FOR UPSCALING WORK-BASED LEARNING INCLUDING PLACEMENTS

(copy filed as UEC/160523/009)

- 9.1 The Committee heard an update on the institutional plan for upscaling work-based learning. It was advised that the aim is to enable work-based learning opportunities for all UG and PGT students through a menu of work-based learning types including team and individual placements of varied lengths. The Committee was advised that the next steps include the development of an institutional placement policy and the development of tools/systems to

support the delivery of work-based learning (a project is in place through the Digital Strategy Committee). The central careers team will be working alongside Employability and Skills Champions, identifying opportunities to embed work-based learning in courses and trialling a platform (Riipen) which acts as a marketplace for opportunities to work in teams.

- 9.2 Members of the Committee supported this plan. However, they noted that work would be required to ensure that placements and the curricula align appropriately. It was also noted by members of the Committee that the paper made no mention of additional support required for students on placements. Further, members of the Committee sought clarification on whether the new software would align with current systems to ensure a smooth transition, and it was confirmed that Riipen integrates with MyAberdeen.

TOOLS FOR THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION

(copy filed as UEC/160523/010)

- 10.1 The Committee heard an update on the tools piloted in AY 2022-23 (Authorship, IPAC, Respondus). It was explained that Respondus is a lockdown browser that allows invigilated exams on campus using a computer, and that trialling is going well. IPAC is a piece of software to help steer group work and group marking. Nineteen courses have so far trialled IPAC and it was found to be useful. Authorship is aimed at determining whether students have contract cheated, but not enough cases have been received yet to fully test the software. The Committee was informed of the intention to extend the Authorship pilot.
- 10.3 Members of the Committee showed support for all three pieces of software.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY UPDATE

(copy filed as UEC/160523/011)

- 11.1 The Committee heard an update on Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity. The Committee was made aware of the challenges faced with unacknowledged sources, and it was suggested that the University provides further guidance regarding what students should acknowledge as sources and that this be updated to consider AI. Further, the Committee heard a proposal for an advisory group on academic integrity and practice being implemented.
- 11.2 Members of the Committee discussed the proposed title for the Advisory Group and noted that 'Artificial Intelligence' should feature in it.
- 11.3 It was also highlighted that the Deputy Academic Registrar would no longer be required to attend the Advisory Group, given the responsibility for discipline now sits with the Assistant Registrar for Academic Services.
- 11.4 Support was agreed regarding the proposal, and it was suggested that a finalised version of the remit and membership of the Group be circulated at the next meeting. **Action: KK**

UPDATE REPORTS FROM THE UEC SUB-COMMITTEES

- 12.1 The Committee noted the update reports from the UEC Sub-Committees in respect of:
- (i) Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC)
(copy filed as UEC/160523/012a)
 - (ii) Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC)
(copy filed as UEC/160523/012b)

EDUCATION AWAYDAY UPDATE

13.1 The Education Awayday has been postponed and will be reorganised.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14.1 The next meeting of the UEC will be held on Tuesday 29 August 2023 at 14:05 pm, by way of Microsoft Teams.