UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

A meeting of the University Education Committee will be held on **Monday 13 May 2024 at 1:05pm**, in the **Court Room, University Office** and by **Microsoft Teams**.

Mrs Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar
(e.tough@abdn.ac.uk)

AGENDA

FOR DISCUSSION

1.   Approval of the Minute of the Meeting Held on 5 March 2024   *(UEC/130524/001)*

2.   Matters Arising/Actions   *(UEC/130524/002)*

3.   Substantive Items

    3.1   Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals   *(UEC/130524/003)*
    Members of the Committee are asked to **consider** and **approve,** for progression to Senate**,** the proposed changes to the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals.

    3.2   Policy and Procedures on Extensions and the Late Submission of Work
    (UEC/130524/004)
    Members of the Committee are asked to **consider** and **approve** for progression to Senate**,** the proposed introduction of a Policy and Procedures on Extensions and the Late Submission of Work.

    3.3   Marking and Moderation Procedures   *(UEC/130524/005)*

    Members of the Committee are provided, for **information** and **comment**, updated Marking and Moderation Procedures. Although there is no requirement for Committee approval, comments are welcomed ahead of the consideration of the Procedures at Senate.

4.   Governance / Standing Items

    4.1   Sector Updates   *(Oral Item)*

    4.2   Risk Register   *(UEC/130524/006, to follow)*

    4.3   Updates from the Education Deans:

        4.3.1   Dean for Educational Innovation
        (i)   Updated Delivery of Education Principles   *(UEC/130524/007)*
        (ii)   Update on Work on Generative AI in Education   *(UEC/130524/008)*
        (iii)   Academic Integrity Resources   *(Oral Update)*
        (iv)   Online Education Forum   *(UEC/130524/009)*

4.3.2   Dean for Quality Assurance & Quality Enhancement
(i)   External Quality Processes   *(UEC/130524/010)*

4.3.3   Dean for Student Support
(i)   Undergraduate Non-Continuation Data   *(UEC/130524/011)*

4.3.4   Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship
(i)   Induction, Transition and Employability Week (ITEW) *(Oral Update)*

5.   Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 1 October 2024 at 1:05pm, location to be confirmed.

6.   Items for Routine Approval – see overleaf

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 under item 4.

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.

6.   FOR ROUTINE APPROVAL

6.1   Internal Teaching Review: Review Chairs   *(UEC/130524/012)*

On the recommendation of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), members of the Committee are asked to approve the proposal in regard to Internal Teaching Review (ITR) Panel Chairs.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

Minute of the Meeting held on 5 March 2024

Present: Jo-Anne Murray (Chair), Euan Bain, John Barrow, Lyn Batchelor, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Jason Bohan, Stuart Durkin, Bill Harrison, Ken Jeffrey, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Helen Knight, David McCausland, Stuart Piertney, Michelle Pinard, Amudha Poobalan, Shona Potts, Steve Tucker, Asha Venkatesh, Josh Wright, with Simon Bains, Julie Bray, Scott Carle, Rob Cummings, Nick Edwards, Tracey Innes, Gillian Mackintosh, Rhona Moore, Patricia Spence, Louisa Stratton, Emma Tough (Clerk) and Liam Dyker.

Apologies: Waheed Afzal, Harminder Battu, Rhiannon Ledwell, Rona Patey, Sai Shradda S Viswanathan, Anne-Michelle Slater, Susan Stokeld and Brian Henderson, Graeme Kirkpatrick, and Louisa Stratton.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2024
(copy filed as UEC/050324/001)

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 16 January 2024 and approved it as an accurate representation of discussions held.

MATTERS ARISING
(copy filed as UEC/050324/002)

2.1   Members of the Committee noted the actions arising following the meeting of UEC held on 16 January 2024. The actions were recorded as complete or in progress. The Committee noted the following:

- With regard to *minute point 16.1* of the meeting held on *10 October 2023*, regarding the circulation of the Terms of Reference of the Copyright Literacy Steering Group, to allow for the nomination of representatives, members of the Committee noted that these would shortly follow.   ***Action: SB***

- With regard to *minute point 3.2* of the meeting held on *16 January 2024*, regarding concerns in relation to the Fraser Noble building, members of the Committee noted that this would be further discussed as part of the agenda item on the Risk Register.
- With regard to *minute point 6.2*, regarding the progression of next steps in relation to Aberdeen 2040 curriculum work, members of the Committee noted that work in this regard would be progressed by the Chair, the new Vice-Principal (Education) in collaboration with the wider Committee.
- With regard to *minute point 7.3*, regarding the progression of the establishment of the Decolonising the Curriculum Community of Practice, and dissolution of the Steering Group, the Committee noted that was ongoing in this regard and further updates would follow to future meetings of the UEC.
- With regard to *minute point 10.5*, regarding the Induction, Transition and Employability Week (ITEW), members of the Committee noted that this would be further discussed as part of the agenda item on the ITEW.
- With regard to *minute point 12.2*, regarding (i) the effective use of University systems in relation to the compilation of data, (ii) the correction of student population data. (iii) and the closure of the feedback loop in providing information to students, members of the

Committee acknowledged ongoing work in regard to each. Members of the Committee noted that further updates on each would follow to future meetings of the Committee.

- Lastly, with regard to *minute point 13.2*, regarding the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals, members of the Committee noted work ongoing in regard to a review of the existing document. Members of the Committee were advised that 'group submissions' would be addressed as part of this work and that further updates would follow.

RISK REGISTER
(copy filed as UEC/050324/003)

3.1 Members of the UEC discussed the Risk Register with regards to the specific risks associated with Education. Members of the Committee discussed the addition of risks in regard to (i) University buildings, such as Fraser Noble (to be further discussed with Estates, in regard to ownership of this risk) and (ii) staffing, particularly in recognition of anticipated industrial action. Members of the Committee agreed that an updated Risk Register should follow to the next meeting of the Committee. **Action: JM**

UPDATE ON THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (QAA) INSTITUTIONAL LIAISON MEETING (ILM)

4.1 Members of the UEC received an update on the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM), held on 29 February 2024. Members of the Committee noted the positive nature of the meeting and key issues discussed. The Committee were informed that a note of discussion was currently being prepared by the University's QAA liaison officer and that once finalised, a copy would follow for the information of members.

STUDENT SURVEYS UPDATE
(copy filed as UEC/050324/004)

5.1 Members of the Committee received an update on 'survey season' and, in particular, on work ongoing in regard to the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (ASES) and the National Student Survey (NSS).

5.2 Members of the Committee noted response and satisfaction rates in regard to ASES as broadly similar to previous years. The Committee further noted that qualitative data was currently being shared with Schools for their consideration and to allow for action plans to be informed. The Committee acknowledged work would also be undertaken to update 'You Said, We Did' webpages to reflect feedback and the University's response to it.

5.3 In regard to NSS, members of the Committee noted the survey had opened at the end of January and would run until the end of April. The Committee were updated on work to monitor response rates, currently noted as similar to previous years at this point. The Committee agreed the importance of continuing to publicise the NSS to students and to ensure access to survey is easily accessible to them. The Committee noted further updates on the NSS would follow to future meetings of the UEC.

SUPPORT FOR STUDY POLICY
(copy filed as UEC/050324/005)

6.1 The Committee discussed proposed amendments to the Support for Study policy, first introduced in November 2016, to provide a useful and supportive framework to work with students whose engagement is impacted due to significant health or personal challenges, and in recent years it has allowed for positive proactive support to be delivered to students at risk, and swift reactive support to be discussed and delivered to those who may have otherwise been unable to engage positively in University life and/or continue with their studies.

6.2   The UEC acknowledged the work undertaken to review the policy by the Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC). Members agreed the importance of ensuring appropriate links between the policy and other policies and procedures, such as the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals. Overall, members of the UEC were content with the proposed changes and agreed to forward the policy to the Senate for final approval.

Action: Clerk

STUDENT WITHDRAWALS REPORT 2022/23

(copy filed as UEC/050324/006)

7.1   The Committee received and discussed the paper providing data on withdrawal rates for on-campus degree students during the 2022/23 academic year. In summary, the Committee noted that at Undergraduate Level, withdrawal rates were 4.9% for the last year compared to 5.2% in 2021/22. At Postgraduate Taught level, withdrawal rates fell to 4.8% in 2022/23, from 9.8% the year before. The Committee noted the data was being issued to Schools to allow for its consideration and the development of strategies in regard to tackling future withdrawals.

7.2   The Committee noted the data provided excluded students undertaking their studies online or through a Transnational Education partner. The Committee agreed the importance of this data and in comparing it to the withdrawal rates of students undertaking their studies in Aberdeen. It was noted that plans were underway to include this as part of future reports.

7.3   Members of the Committee noted challenges in regard to existing University systems following the withdrawal of students, in particular in MyAberdeen where students who withdraw are able to continue to access materials. Further, the Committee noted concerns as to the ability of Schools to obtain and interpret data from the Planning team.

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

8.1   Members of the Committee received an update in regard to Graduate Attributes and Skills and work underway to setup a working group to support work ongoing in this regard. Members of the Committee discussed the existing Graduate Attributes (GAs) and how/if work would be undertaken to review existing courses and to amend the GAs associated with each. It was noted discussions were underway with the relevant teams in this regard. The Committee discussed updates to the GA webpages to ensure the appropriate publication of the revised attributes and further noted the importance of student and staff communications. Members of the Committee sought examples of Course Proposal forms, completed with GAs.

Action: JBarrow

INDUCTION, TRANSITION AND EMPLOYABILITY WEEK (ITEW)

9.1   Members of the Committee received an update on the Induction Transition and Employability Week (ITEW). The Committee noted that the ITEW is part of the new academic year structure as approved by Senate. The Committee noted that work was ongoing regarding the activities that would form part of ITEW and how this would operate. Members of the committee agreed specific proposals should be further discussed ahead of the new academic year.

Action: JBarrow

WORK-BASED LEARNING COURSES AND IDEAS

10.1   Members of the Committee received a presentation on Work-based Learning (WBL) Courses, a copy of which is available from the Clerk.

UPDATED DELIVERY OF EDUCATION PRINCIPLES

(copy filed as UEC/050324/008)

11.1   Members of the Committee received the paper providing updated on the Delivery of Education Principles.

UPDATE ON WORK ON GENERATIVE AI IN EDUCATION
(copy filed as UEC/050324/009)

12.1   Members of the UEC received an update on work on Generative AI in Education.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY RESOURCES

13.1   Members of the UEC received an update on Academic Integrity Resources.

ONLINE EDUCATION FORUM
(copy filed as UEC/050324/010)

14.1   Members of the Committee received an update on the Online Education Forum.

RETENTION POLICY FOR VIDEOS IN PANOPTO
(copy filed as UEC/050324/011)

15.1   Members of the UEC received the paper outlining current practice for managing video content (including audio) within Panopto and discussed the recommendation to implement a Panopto Video Retention Policy for academic year 2024-25. Members of the Committee agreed to support the recommendation.

MINUTES FROM THE UEC SUB-COMMITTEES MEETINGS
(copy filed as UEC/050324/012 and UEC/050324/013)

16.1   Members of the Committee noted the minutes of the most recent meetings of the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) and the Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC).

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEY (PRES) RESULTS
(copy filed as UEC/050324/014)

17.1   Members of the Committee noted the Postgraduate Research Experience (PRES) results.

VIDEO ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

18.1   Members of the Committee **noted** a video prepared in regard to academic integrity.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19.1   The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 13 May 2024 at 1:05pm, in the Meeting Room 1 in the Sir Duncan Rice Library and by way of Microsoft Teams.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ACTION LOG

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 13 MAY 2024

Minute Point	Identified Action	Individual(s) Responsible	Action Status/Update
2.1	With regard to *minute point 16.1* of the meeting held on *10 October 2023*, circulation of the Terms of Reference of the Copyright Literacy Steering Group, to allow for the nomination of representatives.	S Bains	**Complete.** The Terms of Reference and a call for representatives, has been issued.
2.1	An updated Risk Register to follow to the meeting of the Committee taking place on 13 May 2024.	J Murray	**In progress.**
6.2	In regard to the Support for Study policy, ensuring appropriate links between the policy and other policies and procedures, such as the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals.	Clerk	**Ongoing.** Meeting between Academic Services and Student Support scheduled to progress.
8.1	Update in respect of Graduate Attributes and Skills.	J Barrow	**Complete.** 13 May agenda refers.
9.1	Update in respect of Induction Transition and Employability Week (ITEW).	J Barrow	**Complete.** 13 May agenda refers.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON STUDENT APPEALS

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> The purpose of this paper is to seek the **approval** of the University Education Committee (UEC) for proposed changes to the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals.

2.   PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	**Date**
Previously considered/ approved by:		
Further consideration/ approval required by:	Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG)	2 May 2024
	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)	9 May 2024
	University Education Committee (UEC)	13 May 2024
	Senate	5 June 2024
	Court	19 June 2024

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

> The UEC is asked to **approve** the proposed changes to the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals.

4.   DISCUSSION

4.1   The Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals was first approved by the University Senate and the University Court in February 2011. The Policy is designed to seek appropriate, early resolution and aimed to be accessible, fair, user-focused, confidential, timely, clear, and simple. The Policy includes appeals against the outcome of disciplinary hearings under the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic and Non-Academic), decisions taken by the Students' Progress Committee under the policy on Undergraduate Student Progress, and decisions taken under the policy on Fitness to Practise. The current version of the Appeals Policy is available on the University's webpages for staff and students.

4.2   Changes to the current version of Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals to be introduced with effect from 2024/25, are proposed to ensure the Policy and Procedures remain fair and appropriate for the student body, while ensuring the workload for staff associated with them is both reasonable and manageable. The changes proposed are provided in the attached *Appendix A.* The details of the *s*ubstantial changes proposed are provided below, alongside the rationale and actions associated with each. Further changes detailed in *Appendix A* (in track changes)

include typographical changes, updates to terminology and improvements to layout and readability.

4.2.1 INTRODUCTION OF A TEST FOR COMPETENCY

Proposal: The addition to the existing Policy and Procedures of a test for competency.

Rationale: Despite the fact the Policy and Procedures have always included reference to the questioning of academic judgement not being grounds on which an appeal can be progressed (section 1 refers), since the introduction of the Policy and Procedures in 2011 there has been no test for competency before a case is forwarded to the appropriate Head of School or Section for initial consideration. The reasoning behind this being, the initial meeting with a Head of School was designed to consider the case but also to provide feedback and further explanation to a student on the issues they have raised. Following a review of appeal cases, and in recognition of feedback from Schools and Sections, however, it is proposed a test for competency, undertaken on the submission of a case to Academic Services, be undertaken to ensure those cases proceeding for investigation are not questioning academic judgement alone. It is hoped this change will not only reduce the number of cases for consideration by Schools, but also serve to ensure the expectations of students, who submit a case of this nature, are not raised by it being accepted into the process and assigned for investigation.

Actions: Appendix A details the changes proposed to the Policy and Procedures to enact this change. These include:
- The amendment of section 1 to clearly articulate the grounds on which an appeal can be progressed;
- The amendment of section 11.2 to include details as to how a case will now be processed on receipt by Academic Services. This includes the extension of the timeline for the acknowledgement of a case from 3 to 5 working days, and the consideration of each case (termed a 'competency review' by a 'Competency Panel' which will be comprised of two senior academics, drawn from those currently engaged in the handling of appeals, who will determine (i) whether the case is in time and (ii) whether the case is competent for progression. As with other stages of the Policy and Procedures, this process will be supported by Academic Services, including the initial review and triaging of cases for the consideration of the panel.
- The amendment of 'Part A' of the form associated with the Policy and Procedures, to include a section for students to complete in regard to the grounds they feel they have.

4.2.2 CLARIFICATION ON GROUP APPEAL SUBMISSIONS

Proposal: The amendment of the existing Policy and Procedures to clearly articulate how a case, submitted by a group of students, will be handled.

Rationale: Group submissions are not uncommon under the current Policy and Procedures. The amendment of section 8 aims to ensure clarity for both students and Schools in the handling of these cases.

Action: Amendment of section 8 in this regard.

4.2.3 FRONTLINE RESOLUTION FOR APPEALS AGAINST THE REMOVAL OF A CLASS CERTIFICATE (C7)

Proposal: The amendment of the existing Policy and Procedures to provide detail that while there is an expectation that students undertake to resolve any issue at the frontline, prior to the submission of a formal 'Part A' form, in the case of an appeal in regard to the refusal of a class certificate (C7), frontline resolution is required in seeking to resolve the issue in a timely manner.

Rationale: Of the 570 appeal cases processed in academic year 2022/23, 40.9% (233) were appeals against the refusal of a class certificate (C7). 71.7% (167) of these were upheld or partially upheld and thereby removing one or more C7s from a student's record and reinstating them on the course(s) in question. The amendment to the Policy and Procedures is therefore proposed in an attempt to reduce the number of cases which become formalised, and to seek to ensure students and Schools are enabled to resolve issues of this nature at the frontline, thus removing unnecessary workload for Schools and the engagement in a formal procedure for students. Formal appeal cases in this regard will only be progressed on procedural grounds, as stipulated in section 1 of the Policy and Procedures, and therefore cases which can be resolved, should be dealt with at the frontline.

Action: Amendment of section 11.1 in this regard. Schools will also be reminded that the decision to rescind a C7 can be taken at School level and without the need for a student to engage in the formal appeals process.

4.2.4 **PROVIDING CLARIFICATION THAT, AT 'PART A' STAGE OF THE PROCESS, AN OUTCOME MAY TAKE LONGER THAN 3 WORKING DAYS**

Proposal: The amendment of the existing Policy and Procedures to provide clarification to students that while they will normally receive an outcome to the initial consideration of their case 3 working days following a meeting with the Head of School or Service, that this may be longer where there is good reason (e.g. the Head of School or Service must interview a member of staff in relation to the case).

Rationale: This proposal reflects existing practice and seeks to provide clarification within the Policy and Procedures themselves that this stage of the process can, for good reason, take longer than 3 working days. In such instances, the Case Officer should be kept up to date in regard to the delay and the reasoning for it, to ensure the student (and the associated File Record) can be kept up to date.

Action: Amendment of section 11.1 in this regard.

4.3 Members of the UEC are asked to approve, and forward to the Senate, the changes to the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals as provided in *Appendix A*.

5. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further information is available from Steve Tucker, Dean for Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement and Assurance (s.j.tucker@abdn.ac.uk) or Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar (e.tough@abdn.ac.uk).

21 April 2024

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON STUDENT APPEALS

This Policy and Procedure was approved by the University Senate on 9 February 2011, by the University Court on 24 February 2011, and was most recently revised on the 25 August 2020[Date TBC].

The University is committed to providing a high level of service to its students at each stage of their relationship with the University, from time of application until graduation. In particular, it is committed to excellence, fairness and equality, and continuous improvement of quality.

However, the University recognises that there may be occasions when students may consider that they have grounds to appeal against an academic decision. This policy and procedures reflects the University's commitment to valuing appeals and is underpinned by the following principles:

- Clarity and sSimplicity
- Confidentiality
- Fairness and adherence to processes and academic standards
- Timeliness/frontline resolution
- User-focused and accessible

1.   WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC APPEAL?

An academic appeal is where a student seeks review of a decision made by the University with regard to his or her:

- Admission or re-admission
- Assessment*
- Degree or programme award
- Class certificate *(see glossary of terms)*
- Progression within a postgraduate programme of study
- Termination of studies on academic grounds
- Outcomes of disciplinary hearings under the Code of Practice of Student Discipline
- Decisions taken by the Undergraduate Students' Progress Committee (SPC)
- Decisions taken under the Policy on Fitness to Practise

* Academic appeals against assessment will only be accepted where the appeal is made against the final CGS mark for a course (i.e. the mark as released to student hub).

Those involved in investigating academic appeals will <u>not</u> pursue an appeal that does nothing more than question academic judgement *(see glossary of terms)*. For example, a student cannot appeal simply because they are unhappy or disagree with a CGS mark awarded. Academic judgement is a matter solely for the relevant School(s) and the Examiners. Academic appeals will only be pursued on grounds where:

(i)   it is believed that the University's procedures were not followed;
        OR
(ii)   it is believed that the person/body making the decision did not have the authority to do so;
        OR
(iii)   it is believed that the person/body making the decision did not act impartially;
        AND
(iv)   a student considers that they have suffered, or could suffer, material disadvantage *(see glossary of terms)*.

2.   SUPPORT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF AN ACADEMIC APPEAL

The ~~Aberdeen~~ University's Students' ~~Association (AUSA)~~Union *(see glossary of terms)* can provide independent advice, assistance or support to students at every stage of the appeals process, including accompanying or representing students at a meetings or hearings *(see glossary of terms)*. Initial enquiries can be directed to the ~~AUSA~~ Students' Union Advice Centre in the Student Union Building in person, by telephone to +44 (0) 01224 274200 or by email to ausaadvice@abdn.ac.uk.

3.   EXTENUATING OR MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

If a student believes that a medical condition or other personal circumstances have affected their performance in an assessment or prevented them from ~~taking an examination or meeting a deadline for submission of coursework~~completing a piece of assessment they must notify the ~~Head of the~~ relevant School(s) immediately. ~~This must be done in writing, not more than three days after the date of submission of the assessment or the exam concerned.~~ The University's Policy and Procedures on Student Absence provides further information on the procedure which must be followed.

Where a student has **not** given notice of such extenuating or mitigating circumstances *(see glossary of terms)* within the permitted timescale, they cannot be accepted as evidence *(see glossary of terms)* in support of an appeal unless a satisfactory explanation for the delay in providing the information can be given. If those circumstances are raised for the first time at the Initial Stage (i.e. with the Head of School or Service *(see glossary of terms)* (or their nominee)) the Head of School or Service (or their nominee) will decide whether it is appropriate to take them into account. If raised, or raised again, at the Further Stage it will be for the Grounds to Proceed Panel to decide whether there are grounds on which to accept late notification. They will make this decision having regard to the timescale for submission of evidence and the reason for the delay. Their decision will be final.

4.   EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The University is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all its activities. ~~Further information can be found in the University's Equality & Diversity Policy Statement.~~ Any appeal which involves any allegation of discrimination *(see glossary of terms)* against another student or a member of staff will be taken very seriously. Any allegation must be substantiated with evidence and will be investigated. Unsubstantiated claims will not be considered. Any allegation of discrimination that is found to be vexatious *(see glossary of terms)* may result in disciplinary procedures.

The University will monitor appeals to ensure that no discrimination exists either in the actions of the University which have resulted in the case being brought, or in the manner in which the case is handled by the University.

5.   DISCIPLINARY AND STUDENT PROGRESS MATTERS

If an appeal raises any issue which is appropriate for review under a separate ~~the~~ relevant University code~~s~~ of practice, policy~~ies~~ covering student or staff discipline or undergraduate student progress, these issues will be considered taking account of the relevant policy. Separate proceedings may be triggered as a consequence of such an appeal. The student who initiated the appeal will be informed that other procedures have been engaged.

Where separate procedures are started, for example a staff or student disciplinary process, any evidence (or findings) from the appeal that is relevant to the other process may be submitted. Where appropriate a member of the University's Human Resources section may be invited to attend as an observer at a hearing of an Appeal Panel.

Where a separate process is required, an Appeal Panel, having considered the evidence presented to it, may choose to allow a student to progress or to continue their studies pending completion of the separate process. This will not prejudice the outcome of the appeal or any further investigation that may be required as part of a separate procedure.

Should the outcome of a separate process subsequently determine that claims made were not proven, the University retains the right to reverse a previous decision in regard to progression or continuation of studies.

6. MEDIA INVOLVEMENT, EXTERNAL ~~LEGAL ADVISERS AND COSTS~~

All University staff and students involved in an appeal process must respect confidentiality. This includes neither party contacting or involving the media *(e.g. radio, newspaper journalists)* until the University's internal process is complete. The University aims to ensure that a student can complete this process in a timely manner and cannot be held responsible for any delay which may arise from it having to deal with media enquiries linked to an appeal.

Where media involvement so undermines the appeal process, the University reserves the right to suspend or abandon the process. The University will seek to avoid this, however, and will ensure that a student's rights under all other processes are not affected.

7. EXTERNAL LEGAL ADVISERS AND COSTS

Students, who begin an alternative external legal process, e.g. by raising a Court action against the University, should recognise that the University will **NOT** reimburse any legal expenses incurred by the student in relation to such action regardless of outcome, unless ordered by a UK court. Students are strongly encouraged to seek assistance from the Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) before contacting a legal adviser.

8. SIMILAR / GROUP APPEALS

If the University receives a number of appeals relating to the same or a similar issue, in the interests of achieving a timely resolution of the matter, the University reserves the right to deal with such cases together and to apply its decision to all related cases. The University will ensure that there is no disadvantage to those students whose cases are considered together. Where the University chooses to take such an approach, those students concerned will be informed that this is the approach being proposed and will have the right to request that their case be heard separately.

Students seeking to appeal regarding the same or a similar issue may also elect to submit a group appeal. In such instances, the appeal should be submitted with the name of each appellant, student ID number (where relevant) and contact details clearly stated. A lead appellant *(see glossary of terms)* should also be identified, with whom the University will correspond in regard to the case. It is the responsibility of the lead appellant to ensure all members of the group are kept up to date in regard to the progress of the case. Where a 'lead appellant' is not named, the group will be contacted to provide this information.

9. APPEALS PROCEDURE

9.1 CLARITY AND SIMPLICITY

The University aims to make its Appeals Procedure clear and simple and to deal with cases as quickly as possible to reduce any stress or uncertainty for students or staff members. Recognising that problems are often most easily and quickly resolved at or close to the point of origin, the procedures provide an opportunity, before a student formalises an appeal, to seek frontline resolution. There is, however, a

time limit on this.

The procedures provide, exceptionally, for a student to seek to move immediately to the formal stages of the process should they feel this is necessary. Students are, however, normally expected to seek frontline resolution in the first instance and, if they have not done so, are asked to stipulate the reasoning for this.

Section 11 ~~and the table on page 9~~ summarises the stages of the Appeals Process. These include the 'Frontline Stage', an 'Initial Stage' at which an appeal is formalised and a possible 'Further Stage' involving a formal hearing. Beyond these internal stages, there is scope for an independent review of the University's procedures by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

9.2   FAIRNESS AND STATUS OF STUDENTS PENDING OUTCOME

Students who submit an appeal will not suffer any disadvantage as a result of doing so and their student status will not normally be affected during their appeal. Further information is available in the Guidance Note on the [Status of Students Pending an Appeal or Complaint](#).

Students have the right to expect that everyone who responds to, investigates, or adjudicates upon an appeal will do so impartially. No individual will be permitted to act in any manner in a case in which they have a material interest or in which any actual or potential conflict of interest may arise. The student's privacy and confidentiality will be respected at all stages of the process. However, it must be accepted that limited disclosure will be required to enable investigation of the case to proceed.

9.3   TIMELINESS/EARLY RESOLUTION

A timeline is given for each stage of the process to assist students in obtaining an outcome as quickly as possible. It is the responsibility of all parties to ensure that the timelines are adhered to as closely as possible. It should be recognised, however, that to ensure a thorough review of a submission it may, by exception, be necessary to take a case beyond the standard timeline. In such circumstances all parties will be notified of this in writing.

Appeals should be made as soon as possible after their cause (e.g. the date of notification of a ~~an exam~~ course result) and no later than **10 working days** after the cause occurred or became known to the student. The date of the cause and the date it was raised at the frontline must be stated on the Appeal Form.

10.   UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR INAPPEALS

It is recognised that people may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. The circumstances leading to an appeal may result in the appellant acting in an unacceptable way. Appellants who display unacceptable behaviour may still have a legitimate case, and the University must therefore treat all appellants seriously and assess them properly.

The University places the same expectations in regard to behaviour on appellants as it does with its staff and students and all others who interact with the University. The University also has a duty of care to ensure the safety and welfare of all staff and students. Consequently, the University will not tolerate appellants behaving in an unacceptable manner.

Appellants should feel able to raise any matter of concern without any risk of disadvantage, however, where the University deems an appellant's behaviour to be unacceptable the University will take appropriate action as necessary. Where it is deemed necessary to take steps to address unacceptable behaviour, the appellant will be advised of this and attempts will nevertheless be made to complete the investigation of the appeal although contact with the appellant may be restricted. The University's [Policy](#)

on Unacceptable Actions provides further information.

11. STAGES OF THE APPEALS PROCEDURE

The appeals process is outlined below. Students should note that where they are subject to other University procedures (e.g. discipline, termination of study) the entire process may not be applicable. In such circumstances, students will be advised of this, including the appropriate procedure and timeline to be followed.

11.1 FIRST STEPS: FRONTLINE RESOLUTION

Where a student feels they wish to raise an appeal, initially they should do so at the frontline, by raising their concern as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff within the related School or Service. This can be done in the first instance by approaching the School or Service Office. Where a student is unsure who to talk to or how to approach an appeal they should discuss the matter with the ~~Aberdeen University~~ Students' ~~Association (AUSA)~~Union (see Section 2 above). The ~~AUSA~~ Students' Union will be able to offer advice and guidance throughout ~~an~~ the appeal ~~or~~ process.

The University anticipates that by ensuring that all matters are considered at the frontline at an early stage, problems can and will be resolved quickly and effectively at a local level. Such concerns should be raised within **10 working days** of the issue causing concern arising. The relevant School or Service will respond to the frontline appeal within **5 working days**.

In the case of appeals regarding attendance monitoring and the refusal of a class certificate (C7) it is an expectation that a student will, in the first instance, seek to resolve the issue at the frontline. Where it is possible for a student to be reinstated on a course, timely resolution is imperative in ensuring they can remain on track with their studies.

If the matter has been resolved at the frontline but concerns something which the University should address more generally (e.g. a problem with a classroom), the member of staff dealing with the case at the frontline will, in consultation with the relevant Head of School or Service, ensure that it is reported appropriately (e.g., to ~~the~~ Academic ~~Registrar~~ Services (for academic matters), the University Secretary (for non- academic matters) or the ~~Director of~~ Human Resources (for matters involving a staffing issue) and where appropriate, the ~~Aberdeen University~~ Students' ~~Association (AUSA)~~Union.

11.2 INITIAL STAGE: FRONTLINE REVIEW BY HEAD OF SCHOOL OR SERVICE

The University encourages both staff and students to aim for frontline, early resolution of appeals. However, if an issue is not satisfactorily resolved at the frontline, and a student wishes to formalise an appeal they should complete and submit Part A of an Appeal Form and submit this to Registry *(see glossary of terms)* via academicservices@abdn.ac.uk with all relevant supporting evidence. This should be done within **5 working days** of being unable to resolve the matter at the frontline.

Occasionally, a student may not feel able to raise their concerns at the frontline (see 11.1) and may choose to move immediately to submit an Form for Appeals. Where a student chooses to do this, the reasons for not pursuing the matter at the frontline must be stated on the Form.

The submission of the Form for Appeals (and supporting documentation) will, **within 5~~3~~ working days**, be considered by a Competency Panel *(see glossary of terms)*, comprised of two senior academics, in regard to:

    (i)   **Timeliness:** Cases should be submitted formally no later than 10 working days after an issue arises, or 5 working days after being able to resolve an issue at the frontline. Late submission will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances where good reason can

(ii)   **Competency**: The instances in which an academic appeal will be progressed are detailed in section 1 above. Academic appeals will not be progressed where they do nothing more than question academic judgement.

Cases which are deemed out of time and/or not competent will be rejected as such, and an email sent to the student confirming this outcome.

Cases which are deemed to be (i) in time and (ii) competent, will be logged, given a reference number and ~~will be~~ allocated to a Case Officer *(see glossary of terms)*. An email will be sent to the student confirming these details. ~~Late submission will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances where good reason can be given for the delay.~~

~~Occasionally, a student may not feel able to raise their concerns at the frontline (see 11.1) and may choose to move immediately to submit an Form for Appeals. Where a student chooses to do this, the reasons for not pursuing the matter at the frontline must be stated on the Form.~~

The Form includes guidance on completion, and relevant signposting. The Form and any supporting evidence will create a File Record *(see glossary of terms)* that will go on to contain all submissions and responses of both the student and the University. The File Record will form the basis of all subsequent proceedings, including being provided to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) if the matter proceeds to external procedural review (see section 12 below).

The File Record will then be forwarded to the relevant Head of School or Service for initial local investigation and response. This stage will include the opportunity for the student to meet with the Head of School or Service (or their nominee) with a view to achieving a formal resolution. Such meetings will be held in the appropriate way, whether on-campus or online. The School or Service representative will not be the same person involved in the frontline stage (see 11.1 above) or any person named in the appeal documentation. The Head of School or Service will arrange a meeting within **10 working days** of receiving the File Record, giving the student at least **3 working days** notice of the meeting.

The procedure to be followed at this meeting is included as **Annex A**. The student may be accompanied at the meeting by one person of their choice or be represented by a third party (e.g. the ~~AUSA~~Student Union). Where a student wishes to be accompanied or represented, it is their responsibility to make these arrangements. Any staff member named in the appeal will similarly be invited to attend the meeting and will be entitled to be accompanied or represented by a person of their choice. Where the student or staff member is not able to attend on the date given, an alternative meeting will be arranged. If the student or staff member is unable to attend on this alternative date, the meeting will proceed in their absence. An administrator will be present at the meeting to take notes.

Following the conclusion of their investigations, the Head of School or Service (or their nominee) will complete Part B of the Form for Appeals and submit this to the Case Officer. This will detail the outcome of the meeting, including any proposed remedy *(see glossary of terms)*, together with any relevant supporting documentation provided by the student or staff. It should be noted that this is the **FINAL** stage at which additional issues can normally be submitted by a Head of School or Service. If a Head of School or Service's decision requires the matter to be referred back to Examiners, this stage will only be concluded once that response is received. The student will normally be provided with the outcome of the meeting within **3 working days**, however, there may be instances where, for good reason, there is a delay. In such instances, which may include where a Head of School or Section (or nominee) must undertake further meetings or ~~to~~ gather further information, the student will be advised of the delay and of an estimated timescale for the outcome. On receipt of the outcome, the student ~~and~~ will have a further **5 working days** from receipt of this to decide whether to take the matter further.

If a student considers that the matter has not been satisfactorily dealt with, and feels that the matter

should be taken further, they should complete the Part C of the Form for Appeals (which will be sent to the student with the Head of School or Service's response). The student should state the reasons why they are not content and attach any additional evidence. It should be noted that this is the **FINAL** stage at which any additional issues can normally be submitted by the student. The remedy sought by the student should be clearly indicated on the Form. However, it should be noted that even if an appeal is upheld on procedural grounds this may not include support for the remedy requested.

11.3   FURTHER STAGE: INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION AND FORMAL HEARING

On receipt of the completed and submitted Part C of an Form for Appeals and Complaints, a Grounds to Proceed Panel composed of ~~the Case Officer and~~ two senior academic or administrative staff members (depending on the nature of the case), supported by the Case Officer, will review the case to determine whether there are grounds for a further investigation or hearing to proceed. Where members of the Grounds to Proceed Panel fail to agree, a third member of staff will be asked to consider the case. Where agreement between 2 of the 3 panelists is reached, the decision will stand. Grounds to proceed are explained within the Frequently Asked Questions and in the Glossary of Terms.

This review will be completed within **5 working days** from receipt of the Form. If the appeal is deemed not to contain grounds to proceed, the student will be advised of his or her right of review by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) (see 11.7 below).

If the Grounds to Proceed Panel consider that the appeal should proceed, a hearing *(see glossary of terms)* of an Appeal Panel *(see glossary of terms)* will be convened. Hearings will be convened on-campus or online (e.g. by Microsoft Teams).

The Grounds to Proceed Panel may refer the appeal back to the School or Section who took the decision within the Part B for review should they feel there are grounds to do so. Should the School or Section not amend their decision at this point, a hearing will be held no later than **20 working days** from the date of the Grounds to Proceed decision. Every effort will be made to provide at least **10 working days** notice of the date of the hearing, including detail of the composition of the Appeal Panel. All parties will have an opportunity to inform the Case Officer, no later than **5 working days** in advance of the hearing, if they feel that any panel member may have a conflict of interest (e.g. if they know the student). Papers will be submitted to all parties at least **5 working days** before the date of the hearing.

Where a student or staff member is unable to attend a hearing on a given date, an alternative date for the hearing will be arranged. If the student or staff member is unable to attend this alternative date, the hearing will proceed in their absence and a note of the hearing will be taken.

The Appeal Panel will be comprised of three members (two staff and one student). The Case Officer will also be present at the hearing to take notes. Panel members will be drawn from a trained pool appointed by the University Senate *(see glossary of terms)* including members of senior academic and senior administrative staff and representatives from the AUSA. One member of staff will be appointed as Panel Convener. The Panel Convener will, prior to the hearing, invite any witness(es) to attend as is deemed appropriate. The Panel Convener will also invite witness suggestions from the person who has made the appeal, and those who oppose it.

The student may be accompanied by one person of their choice or be represented by a third party. The student may also ask that witness(es) attend the hearing to provide evidence, where appropriate. The student is responsible for ensuring that their witnesses and representatives are informed of the date and time of the hearing, and for advising the Case Officer in a timely fashion whether any witnesses will be attending.

The Head of School/Service (or nominee) to whom the appeal was first addressed will be invited to be present at the hearing to present their response to the case and to respond to any questions. They may

also be accompanied by relevant witness(es) where appropriate.

Any staff member named in the appeal will similarly be invited to attend the hearing and will be entitled to be accompanied by one person of their choice or to be represented. The staff member may also ask that witness(es) attend the hearing to provide evidence, where appropriate. The staff member is responsible for ensuring that their witnesses and representatives are informed of the date and time of the hearing.

The procedure which will be followed at a hearing is detailed in **Annex B**. The Appeal Panel will consider the documentation included in the File Record (including the Form for Appeals and supporting evidence) and any evidence presented at the hearing. The Appeal Panel will agree an outcome and, where appropriate, a proposed remedy at the hearing. Written confirmation of the outcome of the hearing will be sent to all parties no later than **3 working days** after the hearing.

The outcome of the hearing will be recorded in the File Record and will include reference to the issues considered, parties involved, documents reviewed, and the reason for the decision. Where any proposed remedy requires further review of an academic decision, the matter will be referred back to the Examiners via the Head of School, or the Academic Registrar where appropriate. Where the matter requires review of staff behaviour, processes or standards within a School or Service, this will be referred to the person with responsibility for those matters. Any claim for compensation will be considered in accordance with the standard rates of compensation and may be offered subject to acceptance conditions. It will not be possible for a student to make a further Appeal on the same matter.

11.4   APPEALS AGAINST THE OUTCOME OF DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS UNDER THE CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC)

Under the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) and Code of Practice on Student Discipline (non-Academic) *(see glossary of terms)* a student can appeal against the decision of a Disciplinary Officer, a Senior Disciplinary Officer or a Disciplinary Committee, but only if there are valid grounds to do so (point 2 above refers). A student in this position will be considered to have exhausted the first steps and initial stage of a standard appeal and, as such, will be invited to **complete a form equivalent to that of a Part C**.

The submission of the appropriate form (and supporting documentation) will be logged, given a reference number and will be allocated to a Case Officer. An email will be sent to the student confirming these details. Late submission will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances where good reason can be given for the delay.

Where the discipline case File Record has not been provided by the student, this will be sought from the appropriate internal department by the case officer. The process for this type of appeal will then follow the procedures as laid out above (point 11.3 refers).

11.5   APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEE (SPC) UNDER THE POLICY ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS PROGRESS

Under the policy on Undergraduate Students' Progress *(see glossary of terms)* a student can appeal against the decision of the Students' Progress Committee (SPC), but only if there are valid grounds to do so (point 2.2 above refers). A student in this position will be considered to have exhausted the first steps and initial stage of a standard appeal and, as such, will be invited to complete a form equivalent to that of a Part C.

The submission of the appropriate form (and supporting documentation) will be logged, given a reference number and will be allocated to a Case Officer. An email will be sent to the student confirming these details. Late submission will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances where good reason

can be given for the delay.

Where the Student Progress Committee case File Record has not been provided by the student, this will be sought from the appropriate internal department by the case officer. The process for this type of appeal will then follow the procedures as laid out in above (point 11.3 refers).

11.6   APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE (EDUCATION) OR FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE (MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY) UNDER THE POLICY ON FITNESS TO PRACTISE

Under the policy on Fitness to Practise a student can appeal against the decision of a Fitness to Practise Committee, but only if there are valid grounds to do so (point 2 above refers). A student in this position will be considered to have exhausted the first steps and initial stage of a standard appeal and, as such, will be invited to complete a form equivalent to that of a Part C.

The submission of the appropriate form (and supporting documentation) will be logged, given a reference number and will be allocated to a Case Officer *(see glossary of terms)*. An email will be sent to the student confirming these details. Late submission will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances where good reason can be given for the delay.

Where the Fitness to Practise case File Record has not been provided by the student, this will be sought from the appropriate internal department by the case officer. The process for this type of appeal will then follow the procedures as laid out in point 11.3 above.

Please note, however, in respect of appeals against decisions taken by a Fitness to Practise Committee, any outcome of the Appeal Panel can be only to refer the case to be reheard by a trained Fitness to Practise Committee on the basis of procedural irregularities. A decision on Fitness to Practise cannot and will not be taken by an Appeal Panel.

12.   EXTERNAL PROCEDURAL REVIEW - SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (SPSO)

A student will be deemed to have exhausted the University's internal Appeals Procedures:

- if an appeal is deemed not to have Grounds to Proceed to an Appeal Panel hearing; *or*
- on receiving the formal written outcome of an Appeal Panel hearing

If at this stage a student believes that the University has failed to follow its procedures in arriving at a decision on the appeal, s/he may ask for an external procedural review to be undertaken by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

Information on how to do this will be given in the outcome letter sent to the student at the conclusion of internal procedures but is also available at www.spso.org.uk.

It should be noted that the SPSO will not consider any case where the University's internal procedures have not yet been concluded. In undertaking its review the SPSO will contact the University to obtain a copy of the File Record.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Academic Judgement: relates to the considered application of academic expertise in the assessment and grading of a student's academic work. It is a matter solely for the person or committee that has made that academic judgement. The University's academic judgement procedures are approved by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The University will not normally consider appeals concerning the academic judgement of any of its examiners or committees unless it can be shown that they have not followed correct procedures or that their decision was perverse (i.e. that the decision was one that no reasonable person, properly advised, could have reached). Where a student disagrees, or is unhappy with a decision of academic judgement, for example the award of a particular CGS mark, that student cannot submit an appeal solely because they disagree or are unhappy. To submit an appeal there must be valid grounds, for example, if the procedure used in reaching the decision was flawed.

Appeal Panel: the body of trained staff and student representatives that will hear an appeal at the 'Further Stage' of the University's Appeals process.

Case Officer: a University Officer assigned by Registry to a student's appeal. This person will be a student's main point of contact throughout their appeal.

Class Certificate: confirmation that a candidate has attended and duly performed the work prescribed for a course.

Code of Practice of Student Discipline (Academic) and (non-Academic): refers to the procedures of the University in relation to prescribing sanctions against misconduct by students which interferes with the proper functioning of the University, its activities, or with the legitimate interests of those who work or study in the University.

Competency Review: a review, undertaken at the point of submission of a case to determine (i) whether the case is in time and (ii) whether the case is competent for progression on procedural grounds.

Discrimination: there are nine 'protected characteristics' in equality and diversity related legislation that make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of: sex; age; race; disability; religion & belief; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; pregnancy & maternity; and marriage & civil partnership.

Extenuating or Mitigating Circumstances: circumstances or events which may be considered to have had a disadvantageous effect (e.g. serious illness supported by a medical certificate)

Evidence: supporting statements or information which must be independent (e.g. provided by a medical practice).

File Record: the case documents compiled during an appeal and consisting of a Form for Appeals, supplementary evidence (e.g. medical certification), formal outcome letters and other related correspondence.

Fitness to Practise: refers to the guidance of the General Medical Council (GMC), the General Dental Council (GDC), and the General Teaching Council (GTC) on the fitness (or suitability) of students undertaking medical, dentistry and teaching qualifications to go on to work with the public in those fields.

Grounds to Proceed: the procedural grounds (or basis) upon which an appeal is considered suitable to proceed to a formal hearing by an Appeal Panel. This decision will be made by the Grounds to Proceed Panel, consisting of the Case Officer and twoa senior members of University staff. The decision will be based on whether the appeal satisfies the criteria for such an action (e.g. it relates to procedures rather than the questioning of academic judgement).

Head of School or Service: the head of an academic 'School' (e.g. the School of Social Sciences or the School of Biological Sciences). Where an appeal involves the Head of School, or where deemed appropriate, the

Head of School may nominate another member of staff to lead on an appeal.

Hearing: a meeting of an Appeal Panel to hear and decide a case at the Further Stage of the University's appeals process.

Material disadvantage: is the verifiable disadvantage that a student feels they have suffered. For example, where an irregularity has resulted in a student failing to be admitted to an Honours programme, or where an Honours classification has been adversely affected by problems with an individual course. Material disadvantage must have resulted from a breach of procedure or lack of competency or prejudice.

Lead appellant: In the case of group appeals, an individual assigned by the group to act as liaison between the University and appealing group.

Policy on Undergraduate Student Progress: refers to the University's policy on Undergraduate Student Progress and applies to those undergraduate students[1] wishing to put forward a case against not being permitted to progress to the next Programme Year of their undergraduate degree programme or a requirement that they discontinue attendance on courses as set out in the relevant Degree Regulations;

Registry: the Registry is part of the University's central administration and has responsibility for many aspects of student and academic administration, including appeals.

Remedy/Remedies: the agreed action to be taken as a result of an upheld appeal. For example, a student who had an appeal against an academic decision upheld (e.g. a CGS mark) would be advised that the decision in question would be returned to the examiners for review. This is because a decision of the examiners can only be altered by the examiners (see Academic Judgement above). The examiners would be invited to re-consider their academic judgement in light of the grounds of appeal and of the Appeal Panel's decision and will only be asked to do so where it can be shown that they have not followed correct procedures or that their decision was perverse (again, see Academic Judgement above). Students should note that in reviewing an academic decision the examiners may decide not to revise an award, or may revise it up or down.

Senate: the Senatus Academicus (or University Senate) is the supreme academic body of the University of Aberdeen.

Students' Union: the Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) is the organisation that represents and serves the interests of all Aberdeen University students. It is an independent body to the University but works closely with it.

University Court: the University Court is the supreme governing body of the University of Aberdeen.

Vexatious: where an action that has been deemed to be without merit is pursued with undue persistence or is pursued in a manner that harasses a member of University staff or a fellow student.

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[1] For the purposes of this policy, the term 'undergraduate student' includes students registered on the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education.

Annex A

OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES: MEETING WITH A HEAD OF SCHOOL OR SERVICE

The Head of School or Service (or nominee) has an obligation to ensure that appeals made by students are fully and properly explored.

On receiving a Form for Appeals and Complaints from Registry, the Head of School or Service will arrange to meet with the student, and such additional staff members as are required, to seek resolution of the matter. An administrator will also be present to take notes of the meeting.

During an appeal meeting the Head of School or Service will ensure that all statements made are substantiated and are made in an appropriate manner. Where the Head of School or Service believes that any written or verbal statement is inappropriate, derogatory or defamatory ~~he or she~~they will ask that such statements are retracted and/or rephrased.

The procedure to be followed at an appeal meeting with the Head of School or Service will be kept as informal as possible but will include the following:

1. The Head of School or Service will ensure that all of those present, including any representatives, are introduced at the start of the meeting.

2. The Head of School or Service will invite the student (or ~~his/her~~their representative) to make an opening statement based on the written grounds of the appeal.

3. The Head of School or Service may address questions to the student (and/or ~~his/her~~their representative).

4. The Head of School or Service will then invite any member of staff present (or ~~his/her~~their representative) to comment on the circumstances of the case.

5. The Head of School or Service may address questions to the member of staff (and/or ~~his/her~~their representative).

6. The Head of School or Service will invite the student (or ~~his/her~~their representative) to address questions to the member of staff (or ~~his/her~~their representative).

7. The Head of School or Service will invite the member of staff (or ~~his/her~~their representative) to address questions to the student (or ~~his/her~~their representative).

8. The Head of School or Service will invite the staff member (or ~~his/her~~their representative) and the student (or ~~his/her~~their representative) to make a closing statement.

9. When the Head of School or Service is satisfied that no party or respective representative has any further question to ask or statement to make, the Head of School or Service will ask all parties to leave the room while ~~he or she~~they consider~~s~~ the outcome of the meeting.

10. The Head of School or Service's decision, including any proposed remedy, will be conveyed in writing to the student, and where appropriate any member(s) of staff, normally within three working days of the meeting. The outcome and any proposed remedy will be recorded on Part B of the Form for Appeals. The Head of School~~/~~ or Service should address **all points** raised by a student within their appeal within Part B. It will also include the procedure and grounds for further appeal to an Appeal Panel.

Annex B

OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES: APPEAL PANEL HEARING

A University Appeal Panel has powers delegated to it by the University Senate and Court to hear and decide on student appeals and to apply such remedies as it considers appropriate.

The Panel Convener has an obligation to ensure that appeals made by a student are fully and properly explored. During an Appeal Panel hearing, the Panel Convener is responsible for ensuring that all statements made are substantiated and are made in an appropriate manner. Where the Panel Convener believes that any written or verbal statement is inappropriate, derogatory or defamatory ~~he or she~~they will ask that such statements are retracted and/or rephrased.

The procedure to be followed at an Appeal Panel hearing will be kept as informal as possible but will include the following:

1. The Panel Convener will introduce the Panel members to the student and/or, where in attendance, the student's representative and witness(es).

2. The Panel Convener will invite all other University staff in attendance to introduce themselves to the Panel and to the student (and/or his or her representative).

3. The Panel Convener will outline the procedure to be followed.

4. The Panel Convener will ask any witness(es) to wait outside the hearing room until called.

5. The Panel Convener will invite the student (or his/her representative) to make an opening statement and the Panel will have an opportunity to ask the student (and/or his/her representative) questions.

6. The Panel Convener will invite the Head of School (or nominee) to comment on the case and the Panel will have an opportunity to ask the Head of School or Service (or nominee) questions.

7. The Panel Convener will call, where relevant, any witness(es) named by the student for questioning by the Panel. The witness(es) will be asked to leave the room after answering questions.

8. The Panel Convener will call, where relevant, any staff witness(es) invited by the Head of School or the Panel for initial questioning by the Panel. The student (or ~~his/her~~their representative) will be given an opportunity to question the witness(es). The witness(es) will be asked to leave the room after answering questions.

9. The Panel Convener will invite the student (or ~~his/her~~their representative) to make a concluding statement.

10. Once the Panel Convener is satisfied that no parties or representative has further questions to ask or statements to make, ~~he or she~~they will invite all parties, except the Panel members and the Case Officer, to leave the room while the Panel considers its decision.

11. The decision of the Panel, including any proposed remedy will, where possible, be communicated to the student and Head of School or Service verbally on the day of the hearing. It will normally be provided in writing to all relevant parties within three working days.

12. The decision of the Panel is final and is not subject to further appeal within the University. The student will be provided with detail of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's procedure for conducting external review of the University's handling of the appeal.

STUDENT APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS FORM
<u>PART A</u>: Raising an Issue for Investigation

The University is committed to providing a high level of service at all times. The University recognises, however, that there may be occasions when students or members of the public may feel that the level of service or treatment that they have received from the University has fallen short of what might reasonably be expected. It is also recognised that sometimes students may consider that they have grounds to appeal against their academic results.

This form should be completed by: anyone who wishes to formalise an academic appeal (including appeals against class certificate refusal [C7]) *or* a complaint with reference to either (i) the University's Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals **and/or** (ii) the Complaint Handling Procedure **and** (ii) the University's Unacceptable Actions Policy. This purpose of this form is to gather the relevant information to permit the University to investigate and respond to your concerns.

SECTION 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name(s):   Student ID:

Programme of Study:

Contact Details including preferred email address for correspondence:

Address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

SECTION 2: YOUR APPEAL OR COMPLAINT

Do you consider that your case is an appeal, complaint, or both?
Appeal ☐   Complaint ☐   Both Appeal and Complaint ☐

Are you appealing a decision to withdraw a Class Certificate (C7)?
Yes ☐   No ☐   If yes, please indicate the course(s) concerned:

What is the issue you wish the University to investigate?

In the case of an academic appeal, on what grounds are you seeking to appeal?
Section 1 of the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals provides details of the grounds on which an appeal can be progressed. Cases which question academic judgement only will not be progressed.

[ ]

What action have you taken to try to resolve this matter already?
Please provide details of the attempts made to resolve this issue at the frontline (NB: In the case of appeals regarding the refusal of a class certificate (C7) it is an expectation that a student will seek to resolve the issue at the frontline).
Where an attempt to resolve the issue has not been made at the frontline (i.e. to your course coordinator) please provide detail as to why.

[ ]

Have you consulted any of the following?
Please select all that apply:

Course Coordinator	☐	Class Rep	☐
Personal Tutor	☐	Registry Staff	☐
Students' Association	☐	Other	☐

Please specify the name of the person you spoke to or give details of the reasons for not having made an approach at the frontline (i.e. to your course coordinator) regarding this issue:

[ ]

Has a remedy been offered to you?
Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, please provide details of the remedy and why this isn't satisfactory:

[ ]

What remedy (or outcome) are you seeking?

[ ]

What evidence do you have to support your case?
Please list the documentation you hold below and attach copies to this form.
1.
2.

Is your submission 'in time'?

To allow for appropriate investigation, an appeals must be submitted five working days from being unable to resolve the matter at the frontline. Complaints must be submitted six months from first becoming aware of the issue. If you are submitting this form <u>outside</u> the permitted timescales please give details below to explain the reasons for this.

Please note that it cannot be guaranteed that your case will be progressed.

SECTION 3: DECLARATIONS AND SIGNATURE

Please read carefully and confirm, by selecting the tick box, the statement below.

☐ I have read and understood (i) the University's Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals and/or (ii) the Complaint Handling Procedure and (ii) the University's Unacceptable Actions Policy.

Signed: Date:

An electronic signature will be accepted.

Please complete this form and return to academicservices@abdn.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED LATE SUBMISSIONS OF COURSEWORK

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> This paper provides detail on the proposed introduction of an institutional extension policy with this being incorporated with the existing Policy on penalties for late submission of coursework into a single policy. The committee is invited to note the paper, discuss, and comment on the proposed policy.

2.   PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Considered/approved by	APRG	2 May 2024
	SSEC	7 May 2024
	QAC	9 May 2024
	UEC	13 May 2024
	SENATE	5 June 2024

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

> The UEC is invited to **approve** the proposed Policy and Procedures on Extensions and Penalties for Unauthorised Late Submission of Coursework for introduction in AY2024/25.
>
> Subject to approval of this policy, UEC is further invited to **approve** the amendments to the existing Absence Policy to ensure alignment of the two policies.

4.   BACKGROUND

4.1   There may be times on a student's academic journey when they need to request an assessment deadline extension. Requesting an extension can be very challenging to navigate for students who study subjects across Schools because Schools (and sometimes even disciplines within Schools) may have very different procedures relating to extension requests in terms of how to apply, understanding when extensions will/not be granted, and length of extensions granted.

4.2   Student Support services report that extension requests are a common cause of concern for students and encompass a significant part of their workload with students seeking advice and support in requesting an extension.

4.3   Prior work on the Student Mental Health Agreement identified that a common institutional approach to granting extensions would be more inclusive for all students for reasons related to mental health and the evidence requested in these circumstances. Information on the agreement is available here.

4.4   Schools have reported that in recent years there has been an increase in the volume of extension requests submitted and the workload associated with processing these. They have requested advice and guidance on how to process requests (e.g. on length of extensions, reasons for accepting/rejecting requests etc) and the development of an institutional extension policy.

4.5   Current UG and PGT Education polices frequently mention that extensions are available (for a full list see below), including when penalties should be applied, but do not provide clarity for students and Schools on the universities approach to granting extensions.

<u>Assessment Policies and Guidance</u>

- <u>Late Submission of Work Policy</u> - sections 1, 2, 7, 8 – this policy described the penalties that should be applied to late coursework in instances where an agreed extension has not been granted, or work submitted past the agreed extension deadline.
- <u>Policy and procedures on student absence</u>- section 1.4 outlines that students must report absence through the absence reporting system and details that when a student is absent and does not submit a piece of in-course assessment by the required deadline, absence reporting is of particular importance. Some Schools may use this for requesting extensions, but not all Schools.

<u>Supporting students</u>

- <u>Support for Study Policy</u> – section 4 recommends that appropriate extensions may be arranged if required.
- <u>Provisions Guide</u> - page 7 details how the provision of 'agreed extensions to deadlines' works at the University.

<u>Student Progress</u>

- <u>Code of Practice: Postgraduate Taught</u> – section 7.4 Extensions for submission of a dissertation maximum period 9 months.

5. SCOTTISH SECTOR

5.1 In considering the development of an extension policy, a review of the Scottish sector was undertaken (see Appendix C). Information was taken from publicly available pages and indicates that all Scottish universities have regulations surrounding the length of extension, the majority have information on acceptable grounds for good cause/mitigating circumstance policies, and application procedures.

5.2 The length of extension varies across institutions varying between 5 – 7 days, although longer extensions (e.g. 7 + days) were available with supporting evidence

5.3 The majority of institutions provide an indicative list of circumstances which would be considered (or not) as good cause for an extension.

5.4 A number of institutions use a standard form / central tool for requesting extensions, with others advising students to contact course coordinators or personal tutors.

6. CONSULTATION PROCESS

6.1 An initial discussion on an institutional extension policy was held at SSEC (March 7th 2023) and it was agreed to hold a consultation with key stakeholders. An initial survey of current School practices in relation to extension procedures was conducted at the end of 2023, followed by a series of meetings with School Directors of Education (DOEs), School Administration Managers (SAMs), AUSA, and Student Support in November/December 2023. Meetings were very positive towards developing a common institutional extension policy and an Extension Policy Working Group was established in February 2024 and included academics, administrative leads, student support and AUSA/Students' Union to develop a draft policy (see Appendix D for membership). The draft policy was then reviewed by DOEs, SAMs, AUSA, Student Support, 2 x student focus groups, and the Online Education Forum.

6.2 The initial survey of School practices revealed that there is not a standard approach across the institution in how Schools deal with extension requests. Some schools stipulate when requests can be submitted (e.g. can only be submitted within the week prior to a deadline), others don't. Some schools stipulate the maximum length of extensions (e.g. 3-7 days), whereas others don't. Some Schools determine the length of an extension on a case-by-case basis, others have a standard extension period for all requests. Some Schools have a standard procedure that applies to all programmes, whereas others have different procedures across disciplines within their own School. Some Schools provide information to students on what are considered acceptable grounds for requesting an extension, and others don't. What emerged is a very complex and

confusing picture with different solutions being developed within Schools to cope with the administrative demands of processing a large volume of extension requests. See Appendix E for summary.

6.3   The initial meetings with key stakeholders confirmed that a standard institutional approach to extensions would be welcomed by students who find the varied approaches across Schools/Disciplines confusing to navigate. An institutional policy was also welcomed by academics, school administrators, and student support colleagues who felt that a standard approach would help manage the workload associated with extension requests by providing clarity on policies and procedures, as well as supporting interdisciplinary activities (e.g. joint degrees). It was also noted that a standard institutional approach would support successful TNE delivery in ensuring a consistent student experience. Meetings identified the main requirements from an institutional policy which would be developed further by the working group.

6.4   The working group met to develop a draft for an institutional extension policy which considered issues surrounding when students could apply for extension, length of extensions, evidence required for supporting requests, and procedures for applying for an extension. Consideration was also given to existing policies and how the proposed policy would sit in relation to these policies. It was agreed that the proposed extension policy should be aligned with the current Policy on the Penalty for Unauthorised Late Submission for Coursework, resulting in a combined policy covering extensions as well as penalties. It was also agreed that regulations surrounding supporting evidence should dovetail with the evidence required for absence as outlined in the Policy and Procedures on Student Absence.

6.5   After the initial round of consultation and working group meetings to develop the policy details, a further round of consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken to provide the opportunity for further comment and refinement of the draft policy.

6.6   The benefit of a central tool for submitting extension requests was also considered, which would be welcomed by students to help simplify how they would apply for extensions, and also by Schools who felt a centralised tool would help manage the administrative workload. SBS, Business, and SMMSN (for UG programmes) currently use the Absence Reporting Tool on the Student Hub as a central tool for students to submit requests and they report positive experiences of using a centralised tool in managing administrative workloads. Other Schools were hesitant in using the Absence Reporting Tool due to the current name only referring to absence, as well as aspect of the functionality of the tool as it currently stands. A meeting with DDIS was held in April to discuss the adaptation of the tool to meet School requirements, including changing the name of the tool to Absence Reporting and Extension Request Tool (current working name) and feasibility of improving functionality for September 2024 which is currently being considered.

7.   THE EXTENSION POLICY

7.1   A full copy of the proposed policy and procedures on extensions and penalty for unauthorised late submissions of coursework can be found in Appendix A. In addition appendix B contains a copy of the current policy on the penalty for unauthorised late submission of coursework with track changes to identify changes to current policy. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and indicates no issues of concern (see Appendix F). The main points of the Policy are:

- Applies to all UG and PGT, full and part-time students, across all campuses, and online students. It does not apply to PGR students.
- Details the expectations from students and Schools.
- Includes an indicative list of mitigating circumstances that normally will be considered as grounds for granting an extension, as well as circumstances which are not normally accepted.
- States that requests can normally only be submitted one week prior to the due date
- States that the length of an extension is normally for 7 calendar days (may be shorter dependent on the type of assessment, e.g. weekly class tests)
- The length of an extension cannot go beyond the advertised feedback return date, with a caveat of individual discretion in exceptional circumstances.

- Provides details on supporting evidence, in line with the Policy and Procedures on Student Absence.
- States that extension requests should be submitted via a centralised Absence Reporting and Extension Request Tool.

8. UPDATES TO THE ABSENCE POLICY

8.1 Once the Policy and Procedures on Extensions and Penalty for Unauthorised Late Submissions of Coursework is approved, the Policy and Procedures on Student Absence will also be updated to reflect the introduction of this Policy.

8.2 An updated version of the Policy and Procedures on Student Absence has been provided as Appendix G.

8.3 Section 1.6 of the Policy and Procedures on Student Absence has been updated to refer to the Policy and Procedures on Extensions and Penalty for Unauthorised Late Submissions of Coursework.

8.4 In addition, wording in Sections 2.2.1, 2.3.6, 2.4.4 and 2.6.1 has been updated, in line with the Policy and Procedures on Extensions and Penalty for Unauthorised Late Submissions of Coursework.

9. NEXT STEPS

9.1 Once the Policy and Procedures on Extensions and Penalty for Unauthorised Late Submissions of Coursework is approved, other Policies may be updated as required to reflect the introduction of this Policy.

9.2 Once the Policy is approved, Guidance for Schools will be prepared, including examples of best practice.

10. SUMMARY OF APPENDICES

10.1 **Appendix A**: Clean copy of the policy and procedures on extensions and penalty for unauthorised late submissions of coursework.

10.2 **Appendix B:** a copy of the current policy on the penalty for unauthorised late submission of coursework with track changes to identify changes to current policy.

10.3 **Appendix C:** Summary of Scottish sector extension policies.

10.4 **Appendix D:** Extension policy working group membership.

10.5 **Appendix E:** Summary of current School extension policies and procedures.

10.6 **Appendix F:** Equality Impact Assessment.

10.7 **Appendix G:** a copy of the updated Policy and Procedures on Student Absence with track changes to identify changes to current policy.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Jason Bohan, Dean of Student Support jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk, and Isabella Fausti, Academic Services/CAD isabella.fausti@abdn.ac.uk

April 2024
Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED LATE SUBMISSIONS OF COURSEWORK

This Policy and Procedures on Extensions and Penalties for Unauthorised Late Submissions of Coursework was approved by Senate on [insert date once approved].

The University places a high value on the health and wellbeing of its students and is committed to supporting students during their studies. The University is keen to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support students in planning their work sensibly and to limit the consequences for students when genuine exceptional circumstances do occur that affect their ability to submit their coursework by the deadline. This policy aims to provide a consistent approach across the University to the consideration of requests for extensions to coursework submission deadlines and the penalty to be applied to unauthorised late submission of coursework by students. The policy is underpinned by a commitment to supporting students in their studies, while recognising the respective responsibilities of students and staff.

This Policy applies to all students studying on any undergraduate and postgraduate taught course regardless of mode of study or delivery[1].

1.   EXTENSIONS FOR COURSEWORK DEADLINES

1.1   What are the responsibilities and expectations?

1.1.1   The University expects students to be responsible for their own workload planning and to complete and submit coursework by the due date.

1.1.2   Students should note that extensions to coursework submission deadlines may prevent progression to the next academic year and, if towards the end of their studies, may delay graduation.

1.1.3   Submitting an extension request does not automatically mean that the extension has been approved. Until the outcome has been confirmed in writing, students should continue working on the assumption that the request has not been approved.

1.1.4   Schools are responsible for:

- Clarifying which assessments will not be eligible for extension requests.
- Responding to all extension requests as soon as possible and communicating the outcome to the student by email, both in case of the request being approved and in case of it being denied.

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[1] This Policy does not apply to postgraduate research students (they should consult the PGR Handbook for this information).

- Ensuring that the School guidance clarifies how extension requests are processed, when students will be notified of the decision, and who has sight of any sensitive information shared by the student.

1.2 What are the grounds for applying and granting an extension?

1.2.1 Students who experience illness, accident, or exceptional circumstances that affect their ability to submit coursework by the deadline may apply for an extension. The following list of circumstances may be considered as mitigation for an extension, however each application will be judged on its own merit. The list should be considered indicative and is not exhaustive.

- Illness (whether physical or mental) shortly before a coursework deadline that has a notable impact on ability to complete the assessment;
- Bereavement;
- Sudden illness or emergency involving a close family member, including unforeseen caring commitments;
- Unexpected and exceptional personal circumstances (for example, a serious or traumatic event, being the victim of a crime, etc.);
- Exceptional, unforeseen and unavoidable changes in work commitments;
- Previously agreed upon inclusion adjustments for extensions to deadlines[2].

1.2.2 The following list of circumstances will not normally be considered as mitigation for an extension:

- A minor illness or injury which would not reasonably have had a significant adverse impact on a student's ability to complete the assessment on time;
- Circumstances which were foreseeable or preventable;
- Holidays;
- Regular and planned work commitments;
- Poor planning and time-management[3];
- Proximity to other assessment deadlines;
- Minor IT/Computer problems (students should regularly back up their work and make use of library and IT resources)

1.2.3 Students should note that extensions are not available for some assessments such as exams, whether online or on campus, and may not be available for other assessments[4] (e.g. class tests, group projects, practicals, timed assessments, live presentations). Assessments where extensions cannot be granted are detailed in the course information. Where an extension cannot be granted and a student was unable to complete an assignment due to exceptional

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[2] Students should note that, even if they have adjustments for extensions to deadlines, they should still notify the School when they need an extension by submitting an extension request. However, they are not required to provide evidence or an explanation.

[3] Students with conditions which may impact their time-management should contact Student Support to ensure the inclusion adjustments for extensions to deadlines is in place.

[4] Instances where extensions are not available should be agreed with the School Director of Education (or nominee) and a record of assessments where extensions are not available, and why, should be kept by the relevant Education Committee.

circumstances, the school will provide guidance on reassessment procedures, in line with Sections 5 and 6 of the underbuilding-and postgraduate taught Codes of Practice on Assessment.

1.2.4   In the case of group assignments, at the School's discretion, it may be possible to grant an extension if all members of a group need this. However, it is normally not possible to grant extensions for individual group members. If a student is unable to submit a group assignment in time, they may be provided with an alternative assignment or be required to take a resit, as outlined in the course information.

1.3   What is the timeframe for applying for an extension?

1.3.1   Students will normally be allowed to apply for an extension for a specific piece of coursework during the following timeframe:

(a)   No more than seven calendar days in advance[5], and

(b)   No later than the due date of the assignment for which the extension is being requested, unless there are extenuating circumstances which have prevented the student from making the application in advance (See 1.3.2).

1.3.2   Schools will endeavour to respond to all extension requests before the due date, however this may not be possible if requests are submitted too close to the deadline (See also Section 1.8 on how requests are processed by the School).

1.3.3   Students should note that, if an extension request is submitted late and rejected, a penalty for late submission may apply, in accordance with Section 2 of this Policy (Policy on the Penalty for Unauthorised Late Submission of Coursework).

1.4   How long can extensions be for?

1.4.1   Agreed extensions will be for the shortest reasonable time to allow the student to complete their assignment while minimising impact on their subsequent studies:

(a) Extensions will not exceed seven calendar days as a standard[6];

(b) Students with adjustments may apply for an additional extension of up to seven calendar days if needed;

(c) Longer extensions may be possible, at the discretion of the School, only in exceptional circumstances;

(d) Extension cannot be longer than the feedback due date for that assessment, except in specific situations, e.g. when feedback for individual assignments is not common to all students.

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[5] With the exception of students competing in high performance sports, for whom the Policy and Procedures on Academic Flexibility applies.
[6] However, there may be some assessments where shorter maximum extensions to deadlines may be applied (e.g. weekly class tests). Course guidance will clarify where this is the case.

1.5   How should students apply for an extension?

1.5.1   Students should apply for extensions via the Absence Reporting and Extension Request Tool on the Student Hub or, where a student is unable to access the Student Hub, the extension request should be sent directly to the School concerned. In some instances, an alternative tool may be used. Where this is the case, students should follow the procedures outlined in the course documentation.

1.6   When is supporting evidence required?

1.6.1   Supporting evidence is required for students in UG programme years 3-5 and in PGT programmes.

1.6.2   Students with inclusion adjustments for extensions to deadlines are required to submit an extension request. However, in line with the adjustment, they are not required to provide evidence or an explanation for their application.

1.7   What is considered supporting evidence?

1.7.1   In line with Section 2.4 of the Policy and Procedures on Student Absence, appropriate supporting evidence may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

i. Written evidence from a clinical practitioner who has been providing health assessment/care, including a secondary (e.g., hospital clinic, specialist doctor), tertiary (e.g., highly specialised national or regional centre) or community care service, or a private surgery/clinic, etc[7];

ii. A letter/email from a support service (including services within the University, e.g. Student Advice & Support Team or University Counselling Service, but also an external counsellor), if they have an ongoing relationship with the student and are already aware of the student's circumstances, detailing how the student's circumstances impacted on their ability to prepare for and submit the assessment by the required deadline;

iii. A description of the cause, provided by the student, including the impact that it has had on their ability to prepare for and submit the assessment by the required deadline.

iv. Other evidence acknowledged by the University to be of a significant nature, such as a police report, notification of a death, etc.

1.7.2   Where appropriate, documentation submitted as supporting evidence should be in English. Any documentation not in English must be translated into English and verified.

1.7.3   Schools will decide on whether the evidence is satisfactory but may request additional information if required.

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[7] In case of illness, students should refer to the Know Who To Turn To and Pharmacy First guidance for advice on which service they should use.

1.7.4   Where a student believes their medical condition or personal circumstance to be of a particularly sensitive nature the Student Advice & Support Team can liaise with Schools on their behalf. See section 1.11.1.

1.8   How are extension requests processed by Schools?

1.8.1   School guidance will specify how extension requests are processed within the School and the timeframe for communicating the outcome to the student. Please note that requests will be processed during normal working hours.

1.8.2   The student will be informed of the outcome in writing. If approved, the new agreed date will be communicated to them at the same time. If rejected, the student will be reminded that penalties will apply for late submissions without permission/authorisation as outlined in Section 2 of this Policy.

1.9   When is the grade and feedback received?

1.9.1   Students should be aware that work submitted later than the original deadline as a result of an approved extension may not receive feedback at the same time as those who submitted by the original deadline. However, it will be marked in line with the Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment.

1.10   Repeated requests for extensions

1.10.1   If a School receives multiple requests for coursework extensions from a student this may indicate that the student is struggling across multiple courses and require some additional advice and support from the School and Student Support. In this situation, the student, School and Student Support may consider it beneficial to have further discussions in line with the Support for Study Policy.[8]

1.10.2   Receiving an extension for one course or assessment may impact on other assessments, but it cannot be used as reason for requesting other extensions.

1.11   What support is available?

1.11.1   The Student Advice & Support Team (student.support@abdn.ac.uk) can provide students with support in applying for an extension and, with the students' permission, can liaise with School(s) on their behalf[9]. Where a student believes their medical condition or personal circumstance to be of a particularly sensitive nature, or where the Team is already aware of a student's specific circumstances, students are encouraged to contact the Student Advice & Support Team directly. The University recognises that, for very personal or private

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[8] Students with adjustments already in place may be exempt.
[9] In certain circumstances, it may also be appropriate for a personal tutor (or equivalent) to liaise with a School on a students' behalf. Such circumstances can include instances where a student has been in regular contact with a personal tutor (or equivalent) over a period of time such that the students' personal circumstances are well-known to the personal tutor.

issues/events, students may be reluctant to disclose the information to their School. In some cases, it may be possible for the Student Advice & Support Team to confirm to School(s) that they have sight of the relevant personal information and that the evidence is satisfactory.

1.11.2 In addition, the University has a range of other support services available to support students, as detailed below:

- The Student Learning Service (sls@abdn.ac.uk) can provide academic and study support.
- The Toolkit provides a range of resources, including on time management (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/toolkit/skills/time-management/)
- Schools can provide academic guidance for their students and can also be contacted for advice on available support. Relevant school contacts include the School admin office, Course Coordinators, lecturers or tutors.
- The Counselling Service (counselling@abdn.ac.uk) is open to all students of the University.
- The Multi-faith Chaplaincy (chaplaincy@abdn.ac.uk) is a place of welcome for all and serves as a spiritual and social centre for students and staff.
- The Personal Tutor, PGT Pastoral Support Leads or Regents can help direct students to the appropriate support service, as needed.
- The Students' Union (AUSA) (ausa@abdn.ac.uk) represents and serves students' interests and works to make their time in Aberdeen as happy and enjoyable as possible.
- Students' Union Advice (SU Advice) (ausaadvice@abdn.ac.uk) offers independent and impartial advice, support, and advocacy for students going through academic appeals, complaints and misconduct allegations.
- Registry Officers can provide guidance to students who have concerns about their programme of study.
- The Student Immigration Compliance Team (immigration@abdn.ac.uk) can provide information and advice on Student visa responsibilities.
- A full list of Support and Wellbeing services offered at the University is available on the website (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/support/index.php).

2. PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED LATE SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK

2.1 Late submission refers to submission of work after the published deadline without an agreed extension, and in the absence of mitigating circumstances. Where a student has agreed extensions, either due to their inclusion adjustments or because of accepted mitigating circumstances, their work is deemed to be submitted late when it is submitted beyond that agreed extension.

2.2 Any assessed coursework that is submitted beyond the deadline, without an agreed extension, will be recorded as late and a penalty will be applied. For work submitted late, markers should grade the work as normal and award the CGS that is appropriate for the piece of work. The course coordinator will then exact a penalty according to the number of

calendar days the assignment is late (includes weekends and University and local/national holidays). The penalty exacted for unauthorised late submission of work will be as follows:

- Up to 24 hours late, the grade will be deducted by 2 CGS points;
- For each subsequent day, up to a maximum of seven calendar days total, the grade will be deducted by a further CGS point for each day, or part of a day, up to a maximum of seven days late;
- Over seven days late, a grade of G3 will be awarded.

2.3   For work that is up to seven calendar days late, if the assignment was graded above a passing grade but the penalty awarded takes the grade below the pass mark, the student will be awarded the minimum passing grade, i.e. D3.

2.4   If the assignment is submitted after feedback on that work has already been provided to the class, that assignment cannot be graded and so the assignment should be given G3. However, formative feedback should be given to such a student.

2.5   When applying penalties as detailed in 2.2, the normal maximum application of penalties up to seven calendar days may not apply to all types of assessment, and shorter deadlines may be more appropriate. For example, if there are time- sensitive marking and feedback requirements, such as weekly tests where feedback is required from one test before the next week's test, a maximum late submission deadline of seven days cannot apply. In these cases, there must be a clear indication in the course documentation of the maximum late submission deadline for those assessments.

2.6   Where an assignment is expected to be submitted in hard copy, rather than being submitted online, a student may encounter circumstances, such as travel disruption, that prevent them submitting the hard copy on time. Under these circumstances, the course coordinator will accept an emailed copy/scan of the assignment in lieu of the hard copy, along with an explanation for why the hard copy cannot be submitted on time. In such cases, where it is clear that the work would have been submitted on time were it not for these circumstances, no late penalty will be applied.

ANNEX 1: Putting the Policy into practice

The following scenarios illustrate how the Policy is put into practice and how penalties may be applied.

Scenario 1

Student A has a deadline for an assignment that is 12 noon on Monday. They submit their assignment at 5pm on Tuesday without having asked for any extension. The assignment is graded as normal and receives a grade of B2. However, as the assignment is considered to be two days late it is subject to a three CGS point deduction (two CGS points for the first 24 hours and one further CGS point for the subsequent 24 hours) and so the grade that is reported to the student and which contributes to the overall course grade is C2. Had student A submitted their assignment before noon on Tuesday they would only be one day late and subject to two CGS points deduction.

Scenario 2

Student B is doing a course where fortnightly lab tests are required to be submitted by Friday 5pm. Generic feedback on those tests is provided to the class on the following Monday at noon. Student B asked for an extension because they were unwell on Friday. The student was allowed a one-day extension and was required to submit their test by 5pm on Saturday. However, the test was not submitted until Monday at 3pm. As Student B has submitted after the generic feedback has been provided to the class, their test will receive a grade of zero (G3). Had the student submitted their test at 11 am on Monday they would have had the test graded and received a three GCS point deduction (being two days late from the extended deadline agreed).

Scenario 3

Student C is completing their PGT dissertation (worth 60 credits) which is meant to be submitted by 5pm on Monday. However, they do not submit until Wednesday at 11pm without having asked for any extension. The dissertation is graded as normal and receives a grade of D1. However, as the dissertation was submitted three days late (two full days and one part day, which counts as a full-day in terms of penalty applied), the grade for the dissertation should be reduced by four CGS points which would bring it down to E2. As this grade is below the passing grade, the grade returned to the student is D3, the minimum passing grade.

Scenario 4

Student D has an inclusion adjustment, which allows them to apply for an extension, if required, without needing to provide evidence or an explanation. The normal deadline for an in-course essay was 5 pm on Friday but the student requests an extension and is allowed to submit by 5 pm on the following Friday. Student D submitted their essay at 10 am on the Saturday after their extended deadline. The essay is marked as normal, receiving a grade of B1, but because it was submitted one day beyond the deadline, taking into account the extension provided, the grade is reduced by two CGS points and is therefore graded at B3.

Scenario 5

Student E has informed the course coordinator of a short-term health issue that has affected their ability to study in the lead-up to submission of their dissertation. They have provided medical certificates as proof of their condition and these have been accepted by the School mitigating circumstances committee who have given the student an extra seven calendar days to submit their dissertation. Student E submits their dissertation four days beyond the normal published deadline.

Because the student informed the School of their health issues in advance and submitted before the extended deadline, no penalty should be applied to their grade. Had the student submitted their dissertation eight days beyond the normal published deadline, i.e. one day beyond their authorised extended deadline, the grade awarded would have been reduced by two CGS points.

Scenario 6

Student F has submitted a lab report two days after the published deadline. After submitting it they contact the School's mitigating circumstances committee claiming to have been sick over the past week. Because this information was given after the deadline and there is no reason why the student could not have informed the School's mitigating circumstances committee in advance that they would not be able to submit on time, the grade for the lab report is reduced by three CGS points. Had the student been hospitalised or otherwise unable to access the internet to inform the School's mitigating circumstances committee of their difficulties it is likely that their grade would not have been reduced as the student's mitigating circumstances would have been accepted.

2. ~~POLICY ON THE~~ PENALT<u>IES</u>~~Y~~ FOR UNAUTHORISED LATE SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK

~~This policy introduces a consistent, institution-wide penalty to be applied to unauthorised late submission of coursework by students. This policy is to be applied for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students from Academic Year 2021-2022 onwards.~~

2.1 Late submission refers to submission of work after the published deadline without an agreed extension, and in the absence of ~~exceptional circumstances~~<u>mitigating circumstances</u>. Where a student has agreed extensions, either due to their ~~disability provision~~<u>inclusion adjustments</u> or because of accepted <u>mitigating circumstances</u>, their work is deemed to be submitted late when it is submitted beyond that agreed extension.

2.2 Any assessed coursework that is submitted beyond the deadline, without an agreed extension, will be recorded as late and a penalty will be applied. For work submitted late, markers should grade the work as normal and award the CGS that is appropriate for the piece of work. The course coordinator will then exact a penalty according to the number of <u>calendar</u> days the assignment is late (includes weekends and University and local/national holidays). The penalty exacted forunauthorised late submission of work will be as follows:
   - Up to 24 hours late, the grade will be deducted by 2 CGS points;
   - For each subsequent day, up to a maximum of seven <u>calendar</u> days total, the grade will bededucted by a further CGS point for each day, or part of a day, up to a maximumof seven days late;
   - Over seven days late, a grade of G3 will be awarded.

2.3 For work that is up to seven <u>calendar</u> days late, if the assignment was graded above a passing grade butthe penalty awarded takes the grade below the pass mark, the student will be awarded the minimum passing grade, i.e. D3.

2.4 If the assignment is submitted after feedback on that work has already been provided to the class, that assignment cannot be graded and so the assignment should be given G3. However, formative feedback should be given to such a student.

2.5 <u>When applying penalties as detailed in 2.2, T</u>t~~T~~he normal maximum ~~late submission deadline of seven days~~<u>application of penalties up to seven calendar days</u> may not apply to all types of assessment, and shorter deadlines may be more appropriate. For example, if there are time-sensitive marking and feedback requirements, such as weekly tests where feedback is required from one test before the next week's test, a maximum late submission deadline of seven days cannot apply. In these cases, there must be a clear indication in the course <u>documentation</u>~~manual~~ of the maximum late submission deadline for those assessments.

2.6 Where an assignment is expected to be submitted ~~as a~~<u>in</u> hard copy, rather than being submitted online, a student may encounter circumstances, such as travel disruption, that prevent them submitting the hard copy on time. Under these circumstances, the course coordinator will accept an emailed copy/scan of the assignment in lieu of the hard copy, along with an explanation for why the hard copy cannot be submitted on time. In such cases, where it is clear that the work would have been submitted on time were it not for these circumstances, no late penalty will be applied.

ANNEX 1 : Putting the policy into practice:

The following scenarios illustrate how the Policy is put into practice and how penalties may be applied.

Scenario 1
Student A has a deadline for an assignment that is 12 noon on Monday. They submit their assignment at 5pm on Tuesday without having asked for any extension. The assignment is graded as normal and receives a grade of B2. However, as the assignment is considered to be two days late it is subject to a three CGS point deduction (two CGS points for the first 24 hours and one further CGS point for the subsequent 24 hours) and so the grade that is reported to the student and which contributes to the overall course grade is C2. Had student A submitted their assignment before noon on Tuesday they would only be one day late and subject to two CGS points deduction.

Scenario 2
Student B is doing a course where fortnightly lab tests are required to be submitted by Friday 5pm. Generic feedback on those tests is provided to the class on the following Monday at noon. Student B asked for an extension because they were unwell on Friday. The student was allowed a one-day extension and was required to submit their test by 5pm on Saturday. However, the test was not submitted until Monday at 3pm. As Student B has submitted after the generic feedback has been provided to the class, their test will receive a grade of zero (G3). Had the student submitted their test at 11 am on Monday they would have had the test graded and received a three GCS point deduction (being two days late from the extended deadline agreed).

Scenario 3
Student C is completing their PGT dissertation (worth 60 credits) which is meant to be submitted by 5pm on Monday. However, they do not submit until Wednesday at 11pm without having asked for any extension. The dissertation is graded as normal and receives a grade of D1. However, as the dissertation was submitted three days late (two full days and one part day, which counts as a full-day in terms of penalty applied), the grade for the dissertation should be reduced by four CGS points which would bring it down to E2. As this grade is below the passing grade, the grade returned to the student is D3, the minimum passing grade.

Scenario 4

Student D has an ~~disability provisions~~inclusion adjustment, which allows them to apply for an extension, if required, without needing to provide evidence or an explanation. ~~that allow an extra five days beyond normal deadlines for essay- type~~assignments to enable proofreading. The normal deadline for an in-course essay was 5 pm on Friday but ~~because of their disability provision~~the student requests an extension and is allowed to submit by ~~the deadline for this student was~~ 5 pm on the following Friday~~Wednesday~~. Student D submitted their essay at 10 am on the ~~Thursday~~ Saturday after their extended ~~normal~~ deadline. The essay is marked as normal, receiving a grade of B1, but because it was submitted one day beyond the deadline, taking into account ~~their disability provision~~the extension provided, the grade is reduced by two CGS points and
is therefore graded at B3.

Scenario 5

Student E has informed the course coordinator of a short-term health issue that has affected their ability to study in the lead-up to submission of their dissertation. They have provided medical certificates as proof of their condition and these have been accepted by the School mitigating circumstances committee who have given the student an extra ~~five days~~seven calendar days to submit their dissertation. Student E submits their dissertation four days beyond the normal published deadline. Because the student informed the School of their health issues in advance and submitted before the extended deadline, no penalty should be applied to their grade. Had the student submitted their dissertation ~~six~~eight days beyond the normal published deadline, i.e. one day beyond their authorised extended deadline, the grade awarded would have been reduced by two CGS points.

Scenario 6

Student F has submitted a lab report two days after the published deadline. After submitting it they contact the School's mitigating circumstances committee claiming to have been sick over the past week. Because this information was given after the deadline and there is no reason why the student could not have informed the School's mitigating circumstances committee in advance that they would not be able to submit on time, the grade for the lab report is reduced by three CGS points. Had the student been hospitalised or otherwise unable to access the internet to inform the School's mitigating circumstances committee of their difficulties it is likely that their grade would not have been reduced as the student's mitigating circumstances would have been accepted.

Summary of Scottish sector extension policies

University	Extension Policy	Length of extension	Good cause list	Central/online form
Abertay	Yes	5	-	-
Dundee	Yes	5 +	No	No
Edinburgh	Yes	7	Yes	Yes
Glasgow	Yes	5 +	Yes	Yes
GCU	Yes	5 +	No	No
Heriot Watt	Yes	5	No	No
Napier	Yes	5 +	Yes	Yes
RGU	Yes	5 +	Yes	Yes
Stirling	Yes	7	Yes	No
Strathclyde	Yes	7	Yes	Yes
St Andrews	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
UHI	Yes	-	Yes	No
UWS	Yes	7	-	No

Extension policy working group membership

Name	Role
Jason Bohan	Dean for Student Support and Experience (Chair)
Bill Harrison	Director of Education, NCS
Donna Maccallum	UG Programme Lead, MMSN
David McCausland	Director of Education, Business School
Ross Macpherson	Discipline Director of UG Pathway (Physics), NCS
Susan Stokeld	Director of Education, Law
Amie Connolly	Senior School Administrator, Biological Sciences
Rhiannon Ledwell	VP for Education, Students' Union
Sai Shraddha S. Viswanathan	VP for Welfare, Students' Union
Ellie Dick	Academic Advisor, AUSA Advice
Lesley Muirhead	Student Support Manager, Student Advice & Support
Jemma Murdoch	Deputy Head of Student Support Services, Student Advice & Support
Isabella Fausti	CAD/Academic Services (Clerk)

Summary of current School extension policies and procedures

School	What information is provided to students about extensions?	Where can students find this information?	What is the process to apply for an extension? Time limit? Who in the School receives this request?	Who approves extensions? What is the timeline to respond to students?	When will an extension (not) be granted? Good cause list? Evidence?	How long are extensions usually for?	Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments?	Any other details
Biological Sciences	Extension request guidance document	Guidance is shared with students at the start of the academic year and is available on their MyAberdeen Organisation page- which is linked on all our course pages.	Requests are submitted through the absence reporting system and should be received 48 hours before the deadline. Admin team receives the request.	Admin team use workflow to see if they can approve the request or if it needs passed to CC. CCs provide admin team info at the start of term about any assessments on their course that CANNOT be approved by admin, otherwise the flowchart is used. Aim to respond within 3 days but most requests are dealt with the same day.	Good cause list included in the guidance to student, students are asked to provide evidence when they can, but we are not strict on this.	Up to 7 days	For some types of assignments, extensions are applied differently, such as group projects or presentations. Dissertation extensions can be provided for more than 7 days and are always discussed with the course coordinator (admin don't make the decision).	

School	What information is provided to students about extensions?	Where can students find this information?	What is the process to apply for an extension? Time limit? Who in the School receives this request?	Who approves extensions? What is the timeline to respond to students?	When will an extension (not) be granted? Good cause list? Evidence?	How long are extensions usually for?	Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments?	Any other details
Business	Extension policy – students are asked to submit an absence report to request an extension (via StudentHub)	Students are provided with information about extensions in the school policies section of the MyAberdeen programme organisation pages. This is also covered at induction, and by MyAberdeen announcement.	Students submit an absence report to request an extension. This is picked up by the Admin Assistants for each discipline and there is an MS Teams site where they tag the Team Leads to notify them that there is a form for them to review. Then the TLs review the form and make a decision, communicate that back to the AAs and CCs, and they reply to the student within the absence reporting system. Requests need to be made before due date of assessment.	TST give automatic extensions for minor non-recurrent problems up to 7 days maximum (more complex cases referred to Student Progression Officer who will liaise with DoSE and CCs and other agencies as appropriate). Response within 3 working days.	TST give automatic extensions for minor non-recurrent problems, up to 7 days maximum – TST have a SOP, but is essentially a judgement as to the minimum possible extension required to address the issue reported. No evidence is required at L1&2, but is required for L3-5, as it would be for absences.	We give all students up to a maximum possible extension of 7 days - the minimum possible extension required to address the issue reported.	Yes –extensions for dissertations are looked at individually by the senior exams officer. Extensions are not given for 'live' events like presentations or class tests/exams.	We were considering reviewing our procedures again, but this institutional review may negate the need for that. It would be good if the university had a standard policy, but this will be a substantial challenge given the variety of circumstances and assessments. We have concerns about how being too 'liberal' with extensions impacts relatively on those students who do strive to meet deadlines and who choose not to request extensions.

School	What information is provided to students about extensions?	Where can students find this information?	What is the process to apply for an extension? Time limit? Who in the School receives this request?	Who approves extensions? What is the timeline to respond to students?	When will an extension (not) be granted? Good cause list? Evidence?	How long are extensions usually for?	Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments?	Any other details
DHPA	Guidance provided on max length of extension and who can approve it. Information on who to contact (CC) using the Extension Request email template available on MyAberdeen. Extensions must be sought before the assessment deadline.	On MyAberdeen, Course guides, School student's handbook and from staff in teaching sessions	Students apply via application form available on MyAberdeen. It goes to the Course Coordinator in the first instance. Students cannot apply retrospectively.	Individual course coordinators approve request up to 1 week and Programme Coordinators for longer than a week	This is at the discretion of the staff member making the decision. Students are not asked to provide evidence	A few days/a week	no	no

School	What information is provided to students about extensions?	Where can students find this information?	What is the process to apply for an extension? Time limit? Who in the School receives this request?	Who approves extensions? What is the timeline to respond to students?	When will an extension (not) be granted? Good cause list? Evidence?	How long are extensions usually for?	Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments?	Any other details
Education	Guidance provided to students	Extension guidance is set out in programme handbooks and explained in the assessment lecture/information session.	Students email the relevant course coordinator. The course administrator will be informed. Depending on the programme structure, year leads, assessment coordinators or programme directors are also informed. A separate Turnitin link is generated for extensions. We ask students to get in touch in plenty of time to request an extension but there is no cut-off time.	CC	Extensions are not usually awarded where the issue is lack of organisation or time.	Typically 1 week	No	

School	What information is provided to students about extensions?	Where can students find this information?	What is the process to apply for an extension? Time limit? Who in the School receives this request?	Who approves extensions? What is the timeline to respond to students?	When will an extension (not) be granted? Good cause list? Evidence?	How long are extensions usually for?	Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments?	Any other details
Engineering	The detail of procedures on extensions, including the School's Mitigating Circumstances Committee, are provided to students in student handbooks (UG & PGT) and induction	Available on MyAberdeen in Student Resource Centres (UG & PGT) as well as student handbooks being linked to from all courses.	Extensions not related to provisions from Student Support are applied for using the Absence Reporting System. The School operates a Mitigating Circumstances Committee which turns around applications within one working day. Applications picked up by School Administration Team.	MCC which has a weekly rota to share the load. Each week the MCC has 3 members, one of whom is a member of the School's Special Circumstances Committee and two of whom are members of the School Education Committees. School Administration Team populate MCC spreadsheet and release to MCC at 3pm with decisions made by close of play. School Administration Team communicate outcome to student the next day.	Extensions typically not granted where request is a result of poor time management.	Linked to the reasoning for the request and made in consultation with the Course Coordinator's timeline.	Extensions are considered on a case by case basis.	Untangling provision-based extensions from others as well as individuals requesting extensions in group work can be challenging.

School	What information is provided to students about extensions?	Where can students find this information?	What is the process to apply for an extension? Time limit? Who in the School receives this request?	Who approves extensions? What is the timeline to respond to students?	When will an extension (not) be granted? Good cause list? Evidence?	How long are extensions usually for?	Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments?	Any other details
Geosciences	The students are told at the start of the semester how to apply for an extension. They are pointed to a standard form, made aware of the university late work policy and some of the key things for which (non-provision) extensions are not granted (work to be done of clarifying the wording for this)	Information is available in course guides (where those are still used) and on MyAberdeen through individual courses as well as through the general information organisations. The students should also be informed during the first lecture, and the extension request form is on MyAberdeen.	The students need to complete the Extension Request Form and send it to geosciences@abdn.ac.uk, so that the admin team can start the process. There is no limit. PGT students often go straight to course coordinator.	Each discipline has own system (either the CC or the exam officer). More layered approach in Geography – L1&2 CC, L3&4 EO. The request is usually dealt with within two days. In some cases there is a clear class outcome paths for the school office, allowing decisions to be made there (for example, bereavement or provisions).	The requests are usually approved unless they are about poor time management. For longer extensions, they are sometimes asked to provide evidence.	Between two days to a week.	No	For PGT we have relatively few extension requests (compared to UG) and it all differs as they are forwarded to course coordinators/programme directors for a decision, so there is no unified approach at PGT level – all is quite flexible. Everyone who is asked to make decisions in this system is uncomfortable with it and those on the front line often mention feeling like they are the only person supporting the students in difficult times.

School	What information is provided to students about extensions?	Where can students find this information?	What is the process to apply for an extension? Time limit? Who in the School receives this request?	Who approves extensions? What is the timeline to respond to students?	When will an extension (not) be granted? Good cause list? Evidence?	How long are extensions usually for?	Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments?	Any other details
LLMVC	Varies by discipline	MyAberdeen – Organisations > Student info for UGs > subject welcome materials > course handbooks (also in course guides)	Usually the course tutor for up to one week –then through the Absence reporting system / Mitigating Circumstances Form	Tutors for extension up to 7 days – beyond that in most cases it must have MC / evidence or sometimes by approval of programme coordinator.	Not granted without good reason with 7 days. Thereafter MCs must be submitted – and evidence should be provided.	Up to 7 days.	Generally, no. (although there are perhaps some discrepancies across disciplines.)	

Law	The students are provided with an extension policy, guidance and forms on MyAberdeen.	The information can be found on the organisations tab on MyAberdeen.	Students submit an extension request using a form that is available on the organisational sites on MyAberdeen and must submit a form for approval for each course that will be affected. The form is emailed to the UG or PG team/email account for the School. Students are asked to highlight that it is an extension request and submit as much detail as possible about the request and how long an assessment has been delayed by. The time limit has recently been updated and students may not submit a request for an extension more than five working days prior to the deadline for an assignment. Not considered if it's after assignment due date.	For PGTs, the PGT Co-ordinator approves requests for on-campus and online students. For dissertation extensions, the Dissertation Co-ordinator decides. With DPLP students, extensions are approved by DPLP Co-ordinator. For UG, the School monitoring team take decision on extensions. The Monitoring and Retention Coordinator will determine exceptional circumstances, in consultation with the LLB Coordinator, where necessary.	DPLP students do not have a good cause list as such, and cases are reviewed by the DPLP Coordinators. For UG and PGT, good cause list is provided.	Extensions, going forward, will be granted for no more than 3 days, unless there are exceptional circumstances.	No	Prolonged extenuating circumstances can be dealt with through the normal extension request procedure. If studies will be impaired for a prolonged period of time, students are asked to discuss this with their personal tutor and course coordinator.
MMSN	Responses are provided in a separate table below							
NCS	This is provided at course level, but probably inconsistently	Course guides, MyAberdeen announcements	Students should email the course coordinator. Retrospective (after the deadline) requests are strongly discouraged.	The course coordinator, who may consult with the discipline	Academic judgement from the course coordinator	Typically a couple of days, up to a week in exceptional circumstances.	Course coordinator discretion. This causes inconsistencies.	In NCS, assessments tend to be far more frequent and often with smaller weightings compared to a mid-term humanities

School	What information is provided to students about extensions?	Where can students find this information?	What is the process to apply for an extension? Time limit? Who in the School receives this request?	Who approves extensions? What is the timeline to respond to students?	When will an extension (not) be granted? Good cause list? Evidence?	How long are extensions usually for?	Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments?	Any other details
				teaching director if needed. In many cases the response is 'yes' by return e-mail.	including whether or not evidence is required. DPRs are considered where appropriate. No good-cause list.	Any longer will almost certainly delay feedback.		essay. There is the need to be agile and able to rapidly respond. The course coordinator is usually best-placed to do this. An 'extensions committee' would be too cumbersome for this School and would need to meet every day - impractical. Due to severe staff shortages, the School Office cannot provide much support. There is a tension between granting extensions and providing rapid feedback to tests. Good communication between the CC and School office is essential to avoid 'inadvertent' C6s.

School	What information is provided to students about extensions?	Where can students find this information?	What is the process to apply for an extension? Time limit? Who in the School receives this request?	Who approves extensions? What is the timeline to respond to students?	When will an extension (not) be granted? Good cause list? Evidence?	How long are extensions usually for?	Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments?	Any other details
Psychology	School extension policy and extension form		No earlier than 7 days before assessment deadline.	School of Psychology Extension Committee, which meets on Fridays. Applications need to be submitted by 12noon of Thursday that week in order to be considered. Students are notified by the Friday prior to submission deadline. In very serious circumstances, the admin office may authorise an extension, but this is not advertised to students.	Evidence required in line with Absence Policy.	No longer than 7 calendar days, but in line with duration of relevant circumstances.	No extensions for exams or on particular components of an assessment, for example on group assignments.	Students who are registered with the Student Disability Service and have learning adjustments for extra time on assessments are granted up to a maximum of 7 days extension if required (**unclear if this is in addition to the extension time that all students are already allowed?**). No reason for the request needs to be given.

School	What information is provided to students about extensions?	Where can students find this information?	What is the process to apply for an extension? Time limit? Who in the School receives this request?	Who approves extensions? What is the timeline to respond to students?	When will an extension (not) be granted? Good cause list? Evidence?	How long are extensions usually for?	Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments?	Any other details
Social Science	Schools guidelines on extensions, including rule on length, who can grant them, when and under what circumstances	Individual course guides and School's Student Handbook	Students request an extension directly from their tutor/course co-ordinator in advance of the deadline.	Extensions of up to 1 week may be granted by the tutor/course co-ordinator. Extensions exceeding 1 week may be granted only by the course co-ordinator.	Extensions are granted for exceptional or unforeseen difficulties, long-term episodic illnesses, or any relevant impairment, in the period during which they prepare the essay. Generally no evidence, but, for long-term episodic illnesses it is encouraged so it can be considered by Mitigating Circumstances Committee if appropriate (generally for Honours students).	One week in first instance.	Longer extension for dissertations are normally required. However, we start from the one week extension position and consider each case on individual merits. No extensions for take-home exams, particularly those with a set timed deadline i.e within 48 hours, or a week to complete	We are planning to use MyAberdeen to record extensions from Term 2 of this AY. We record and consider extensions at Mitigating Circumstances Committee ahead of exam boards to determine if concessions have been applied at course level i.e. to ensure students do not benefit more than once.

Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition				
Question	BDS UG programme	BSc UG programme	PGT	MBChB UG programme
Information provided to students about extensions	Extensions would only be possible / required for case reports (submitted at the end of BDS3 and BDS4) where a student did not have an appropriate case. However we would identify this (through monitoring of case work) early and then discuss with the student and support them to find a suitable patient. If a student could not submit a case report due to illness/bereavement or similar then they are advised to discuss this with their Year Lead and to submit extenuating circumstances through the usual channels and then support is provided	" Only in exceptional circumstances will extensions to hand in deadlines be permitted. All extension request must be submitted via MyAberdeen absence form. Please do not submit requests to course co-ordinators or other teaching staff as they will not be accepted. Except in very exceptional circumstances, students should submit the request for an extension before the submission date for the work." In practice, students although some students submit extension request when they absence report, many directly email course co-ordinators or the School UG Disability Co-ordinator to request extensions	The students are given a guidance document (attached) that provides all the necessary information about what counts as good cause, when they should apply, and the evidence that is required.	Extensions are only possible for Student Selected Components in the MBChB programme (summative assessment is predominantly exam based). The SSCs are mostly group projects. There can be extensions of a few hours / day for groups where there are e.g. technical problems or illness of a member of a team. This is usually dealt with informally and rapidly by the SSC lead. More complex issues where an alternative approach is required for a student who has not been able to engage for a significant period in the work with their group. The detail in the SSC and Year learning guides in relation to this is: "Students who fail, or cannot complete the Student Selected Component for good cause, will be required to submit an extended account (–approx. 3000 words) on a set topic. This must be submitted before xxxx (depends on the timing of the SSC but linked to the resit exam period for that year). All students are expected to engage equally with the SSC activities and

				students who do not engage without good cause may be subject to additional, alternative assessments."
Where students can find this information	Information in the Assessment Handbook and in each clinical subject Case Report handbook, all available on myBDS.	There is a UG Assessment handbook which can be found in the Assessment and Feedback Information in a folder labelled 'Useful Medical Sciences Resources' in the SMMSN UG BSc MyAberdeen organisation page (with a link to this on each course in the degree programme)	Students are given a guidance document that provides all the necessary information about what counts as good cause, when they should apply, and the evidence that is required. This document is uploaded on MyAberdeen for each course.	In relevant Learning Guide(s) on MyMBChB.
What is the process for students to apply for an extension? Is there a time limit? Who in the School receives this request.	Applications would go through the Year Lead or Assessment Team and be discussed at Extenuating Circumstances Committee. Usually we are already aware of issues early as case reports are worked on through the year with each student regularly checking in with their mentor. However, we do not have a specified time limit. We have treated extensions on a case-by-case basis.	Usually an email to apply – usually to the course co-ordinator (should be before the assessment submission deadline)	Along with the guidance there is a good cause request form (attached) which students fill in for any extension. The guidance document provides the email ID that they need to send this to, which goes to the School PGT admin team. They will then pass the information to the Good Cause Team (see below for further details of this team).	Students will apply to the Course Co-ordinator or Year lead team. This is sometimes done through project supervisor or through the Year admin team who then pass on the request.
Who makes the decision on whether or not to approve it (ie is there an individual/committee for the whole School or is the decision taken by individual course coordinators)? What is the timeline to provide a response to students?	The Extenuating Circumstances Committee would make the decision. We do not have a documented timeline for response - but meetings usually occur during the last week of the term ahead of the exam board.	Course Co-ordinator or Disability co-ordinator may approve requests – no firm timeline for responding to students but our practice if that this is usually within 24 – 48 hours. Students are considered on a case-by-case basis as there are a variety of circumstances that can	For all the in course / continuous assessments, we have a School-level 'Good Cause' committee where a group of 3 members of staff take turns (rota prepared by the PGT School Admin) to assess all the extensions that come in for the week. We recommend that a response is	The decision is made by the course coordinator in consultation with the project supervisor and Year lead. Difficult decisions can be escalated to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee (panel) There is no published timeline to respond to students but usually a

		affect students at different stages in their study.	provided to the student within 48 hours, unless we need more evidence.	response will be provided within 2 or 3 days.
When will an extension (not) be granted? Do you have a 'good cause' list? Are students required to provide any evidence?	As with other extenuating circumstances / 'good cause'. Not having a suitable patient to write the case would not be a 'good cause' as we would be identifying this issue earlier and putting a plan in place to access suitable patient for the student.	Unaware of any requests not being granted. Our Disability Co-ordinator has a list of Good Cause and is usually very aware of students with ongoing issues where there might be no need to provide evidence for a particular moment in time	The students are given a guidance document that provides all the necessary information about what counts as good cause and the evidence that is required and the evidence that is required.	We do not have a good cause list. Students are required to provide evidence although this can be verbal explanation of an issue. Extensions may not be granted when no reason is given for the issue and there are ongoing engagement issues across the year (generally this would already be being discussed with a student as a professionalism concern).
How long are extensions usually for?	Usually allowed the first submission by the time of resit (e.g.Aug 2024) - dates provided in each subject Case Report handbooks	This depends on the circumstances and would be in consultation with the Course Co-ordinator. It may depend on when feedback is due to be be released to the cohort.	If an extension is awarded, it is a standard 5 days for F/T students and 10 days for the P/T students. If the Good Cause team feel the reason the student has given is an ongoing issue (health or otherwise), then the student is referred back to the programme lead, who then meets with the student to decide on the steps going forward.	Students will normally be expected to submit the required assessment by the resit assessment period for the year in question.
Do extensions apply differently to different types of assignments (e.g. dissertation, essay, group project, presentation, etc.)?	We only have case reports in BDS which would require possible extensions.	Honours projects are such an important and sizeable piece of work that the extension will usually be longer.	The GC does not apply to exams. For exams, if there is a valid reason for the student not being able to attend the exams, then we follow the University's guidance for it. The student needs to submit an absence report within 3 days of not sitting the exam.	Not applicable in this programme

			Then the PGT team, liaise with the course leads to set another exam for them.	
Is there any other information on the extension processes in your School?	Not at this time.	We have recognised that course co-ordinators might not recognise if students are requesting extensions on other courses / on multiple occasions. We are liaising with our admin team to improve monitoring of this and consistency of communication in order to provide optimal support for students.	Not at this time.	Extension approaches has not been specifically documented for e.g. the Year 5 SSC (8 week elective project), although there are extensions for submission considered each year. As satisfactory completion of this project is required before degree award and graduation registration for graduation is the ultimate deadline but usually one or two weeks extention is provided for a valid reason (e.g. collapse of the project or unforeseen issues during the placement or ill health). We recognise that this needs to be clearly documented for students going forwards and will address this prior to the next academic year. Our documentation for SSCs in other years can also be improved and will be reviewed over the same period.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessment

Title of Policy, Procedure, or Function: **Extension Policy**	
School/Directorate: **Academic Services**	
Author/Position: **Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support and Experience**	**Date created:** **29/4/24**

1. Aims and purpose of Policy, Procedure, or Function:
This policy is to introduce an institutional extension policy, providing clarity for students and staff on the regulations and procedures surrounding extension requests for UG / PGT coursework.
2. Stakeholders:
- Students   - Academics   - Professional Services
3. Additional Consultation/Involvement

Organisation/person consulted or involved	Date, method, and by whom	Location of consultation records

Directors of Education	4 December 2023; 22 March 2024	All held by Dean for Student Support
SAMs	5 December 2023; 29 March 2024	
AUSA	29 November 2023; 3 April 2024	
Student Focus Groups	7 and 8 March 2024	
Student Support	5 December 2023; 29 March 2024	
Extension Policy Working Group	19 February 2024; 11 March 2024	
Online Education Forum	21 February 2024	
APRG	2 May 2024	
SSEC	7 May 2024	
QAC	9 May 2024	
UEC	13 May 2024	
Senate	5 June 2024	

a) **Brief summary of results of consultation indicating how this has affected the Policy, Procedure, or Function**

An initial discussion on an institutional extension policy was held at SSEC (March 7th 2023) and it was agreed to hold a consultation with key stakeholders. A survey of current School practices in relation to extension procedures was conducted at the end of 2023, followed by a series of meetings with School Directors of Education (DOEs), School Administration Managers (SAMs), AUSA, and Student Support in November/December 2023. Meetings were very positive towards developing a common institutional extension policy and an Extension Policy Working Group was established in February 2024 and included academics, administrative leads, student support and AUSA/Students' Union to develop a draft policy (see Appendix D for membership). The draft policy was then reviewed by DOEs, SAMs, AUSA, Student Support, 2 x student focus groups, and the Online Education Forum. The policy will be discussed at key committees, APRG, QAC, SSEC, UEC, and Senate for academic view and approval.

4. Monitoring

a) **Detail method of monitoring of the Policy, Procedure or Function and by whom**

The policy will be reviewed at the end of AY2024-25 by SSEC with feedback actively sought from key stakeholders.

b) **Detail how monitoring results will be utilised to develop the Policy, Procedure, or Function**

Ongoing feedback will be collated, analysed and discussed with appropriate committees, groups and networks.

c) **Timescale of monitoring including proposed dates**

Feedback will be sought on the implementation of the policy, impact on student experience and school workload, via relevant committees throughout AY 2024-2025.

5. Impact assessment

Select what impact there will be on each group:

Characteristic	Positive Impact	No Impact	Negative Impact	Not Applicable
Race	X			

Disability (impact may differ according to physical, cognitive, and mental health conditions and impairments):	X			
British Sign Language (BSL)	X			
Neurodivergent	X			
Gender	X			
Age	X			
Sexual Orientation	X			
Religion, Belief or No Belief	X			
Gender Reassignment	X			
Non-Binary	X			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	X			
Pregnancy and Maternity	X			
Parents and Carers	X			
Care Experienced or Estranged	X			

Socio-Economic Group	X			

a) For each negative impact identified above, please state your mitigating actions below with timescales.

We don't envisage this policy change to have any negative impact on student groups. This policy aims to clarify and standardise regulations and procedures for coursework extension requests at UG/PGT level.

b) How does this Policy, Procedure, or Function contribute to eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and advancing equality of opportunity?

The purpose of the policy is to provide clarity on the regulations and procedures on extension requests which will benefit and support all students. As discussed in the paper, current practices vary widely across the institution, which makes it challenging for a student to navigate these differing procedures if they study across schools.

There may be times on a student's academic journey when they need to request an assessment deadline extension. Requesting an extension can be very challenging to navigate for students who study subjects across Schools because Schools (and sometimes even disciplines within Schools) may have very different procedures relating to extension requests in terms of how to apply, understanding when extensions will/not be granted, and length of extensions granted.

Student Support services report that extension requests are a common cause of concern for students and encompass a significant part of their workload with students seeking advice and support in requesting an extension.

Prior work on the Student Mental Health Agreement identified that a common institutional approach to granting extensions would be more inclusive for all students for reasons related to mental health and the evidence requested in these circumstances.

Clearer regulations and guidance for Schools will promote equality of opportunity by ensuring that all requests are treated in a fair and consistent manner.

c) How is the Policy, Procedure, or Function likely to promote good relations between people with different protected characteristics?

All people with different protected characteristics are treated equally by this policy.

7. Publication
a) Provide details of arrangements to publish assessment: This Equality Impact Assessment will be published on the Policy and Governance webpage where other EIAs sit. It will be shared with the staff and student equality networks and through the staff and student's newsletter.

8. Review Date: The paper reviews all dates of the consultation. Feedback on the implementation of the policy will be sought from key stakeholders and discussed at SSEC over AY 2024-25.

Author (Name and Position): Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support

Authors signature:

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team member (name):

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team member signature:

9. Date of submission to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee: To be circulated to EDIC once comments/revisions of the paper have been made

Approval Yes ☐   **No** ☐

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON STUDENT ABSENCE

This Policy and Procedures on Student Absence was approved by Senate on 20 September 2023. It applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

The University places a high value on the health and wellbeing of its students. The University is keen to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to maximise the welfare of students but also to limit the consequences for students when genuine absences do occur.

1.   POLICY ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE

1.1   The University expects that students will normally attend all classes, whether these are on-campus or online[1], and, in cases of work placements, meet all attendance requirements. Some teaching sessions (e.g., tutorials, seminars, and laboratories) are compulsory. Course documentation will make clear attendance requirements.

1.2   Students are required to undertake all assessments (including examinations) and to submit all pieces of in-course assessment by the required deadline.

1.3   The University Senate may terminate the studies of any student who persistently fails to attend, or perform the required work of, the course for which they are registered without medical or other good cause for doing so. The University's student monitoring webpages provide more information on how attendance and the submission of coursework is monitored. Students should note that failure to report an absence (see 1.4) may trigger their School's monitoring procedures for student attendance.

1.4   Students must report an absence (defined as an inability to attend or perform required work) in the following instances:

(i)   They are absent for any period of more than seven consecutive days[2];
(ii)   They are absent for a period of less than seven consecutive days but during this time they:
   a. fail to undertake a piece of required assessment (including invigilated examinations or in-course assessment) or submit by the required deadline;
   b. are unable to attend a compulsory teaching session (e.g., tutorial, laboratory, or seminar).

1.5   If a student sits an exam or submits an assignment, it will be assumed that the student is fit to do so and there are no extenuating/mitigating circumstances (defined as exceptional, serious, acute and unforeseen problems, both medical and not). If a student believes that they are not fit to sit an exam or to submit an assignment due to an extenuating circumstance, or subsequently realises that they were not fit to do so, they should advise the School by completing the absence form at the first possible opportunity, in line with Section 2.1, and in any case before any results are published. Failure to follow this may undermine any future appeal.

1.6   Notwithstanding Section 1.5, this policy is distinct from ~~the Policy and Procedures on Extensions and Penalties for Unauthorised Late submissions of Coursework~~extension requests for assessment deadlines. Notifying an absence does not necessarily justify the absence and will not automatically authorise an extension. ~~School-specific information on extension rules can be found in the relevant course documentation. Failure to adhere to those rules will result in a penalty, as set out in the Policy on the penalty for unauthorised late submission of coursework.~~

1.7   Students should be aware that, although an absence may be considered justifiable, they must be able to demonstrate that they meet all the intended learning outcomes of a course before a pass can be awarded.

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[1] Students who are involved in High Performance Sports and are seeking to apply for academic flexibility should refer to the Policy and Procedures on Academic Flexibility.

[2] Seven consecutive days includes weekends (for example Thursday, Friday. Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

Students who fail to demonstrate they meet the intended learning outcomes of a course, even where evidence supporting the absence exists, will not be eligible to receive a class certificate. Details of the learning outcomes for each course will be provided in the relevant course documentation.

1.8   Student visa holders should be aware that periods of extended absence may have an impact on the University's ability to continue sponsoring their Student visa. The University is only permitted to continue sponsoring a student's visa during a period of absence if the student is still able to achieve their overall degree intention upon their return to study. Students should refer to the Immigration and Student Visas webpage, or contact the Student Immigration Compliance Team for advice.

2.   PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN ABSENCE

2.1   When should an absence be reported?

2.1.1   Absence should be reported as far as possible in advance where the absence is planned (e.g., funeral or representing the University in an official event). Where advance notification is not possible (e.g., in event of illness), it **is expected that students will inform the University on the first day of any period of absence.**

2.1.2   Where it is impossible for a student to report on the first day of absence, students should report at the first possible opportunity (normally no later than 3 days after the first day of any period of absence) and provide an explanation of the reasons which prevented them notifying their absence earlier. Late notification of absence without good cause will only be permissible in exceptional circumstances.

2.1.3   In cases in which a student becomes ill during an invigilated examination and is unable to continue, they must alert the invigilator, who will record this in line with the Rules for the Conduct of Prescribed Assessments and written Examinations for Degrees or Diplomas, Section 3.16. They should then advise the School by completing the absence form at the first possible opportunity, normally within three days. In cases in which a student becomes ill during a timed in-course assessment, the student should follow the procedure outlined in section 1.5.

2.2   How should an absence be reported?

2.2.1   A student should report an absence through the Absence Reporting and Extension Request Tool ~~absence reporting tool~~ in Student Hub or, where a student is unable to access the Student Hub, the absence should be reported directly to the School (or each of the Schools, when the absence impacts more than one course) concerned. In some instances, an alternative tool may be used. Where this is the case, students should follow the procedures outlined in the course documentation ~~Some programmes and campuses may use an alternative tool for absence reporting and students on these programmes should follow the procedures outlined in the course documentation~~[3]. When a student is on a clinical/work placement they should follow the procedures for reporting absence outlined in the course documentation. Any required supporting evidence should be included when reporting the absence.

2.3   When is supporting evidence required?

2.3.1   The requirement for submitting supporting evidence with an absence report varies depending on the period of absence, the nature of the absence, the nature of the events missed and the programme year of the student. Students should, however, note that notification of an absence will not necessarily justify the absence and a clear explanation of the reasons for the absence should be given.

2.3.2   Supporting evidence is required in the following scenarios:

   (a)   Where a student in UG programme years 1 and 2 has been absent for more than seven consecutive

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[3] Medical, dental and physician associate students should report absence via their VLEs (MyMBChB, MyBDS and MyPA). Students studying at the Qatar campus should follow the instructions on the course documentation.

days[4];

  (b) Where a student in UG programme years 3~~, 4 or~~ 5 and in PGT programmes:

    (i) has been absent for more than seven consecutive days;

    (ii) has been absent for less than seven consecutive days and has been unable:

      a. to undertake a piece of required assessment (including invigilated examinations or in-course assessment) or to submit by the required deadline;

      b. to attend a compulsory teaching session.

2.3.3 Supporting evidence is <u>not</u> usually required where a student in UG programme years 1 and 2 has been absent for less than seven consecutive days, even if they have been unable to undertake a required assessment, submit an assessment by the required deadline, or attend a compulsory teaching session.

2.3.4 Notwithstanding Section 2.3.3, monitoring procedures for student attendance and late submission of coursework penalties still apply, as well as external bodies' regulatory requirements, including Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), funding bodies, or the UK Visas and Immigration department (UKVI) of the Home Office (see Section 2.4.5).

2.3.5 Schools have discretion on whether or not evidence is required for specific cases. For example, in certain situations (such as, but not limited to, very sensitive or traumatic circumstances) it may be inappropriate or difficult to provide independent evidence for an absence. Students are advised to seek the appropriate support when needed (see Section 2.6 for details).

2.3.6 Students with ~~disability provisions/~~inclusion adjustments approved by Student Support or by Occupational Health may not need to provide evidence for absences that affect their attendance at compulsory teaching sessions. However, monitoring of student attendance and late submission of coursework penalties may still apply.

2.4 What is considered supporting evidence?

2.4.1 For medical absences, appropriate supporting evidence may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

  i. Written evidence from a clinical practitioner[5] (which may include pro-forma or a letter) who has been providing health assessment/care for the student which must be signed and clearly show the clinician's details, to enable verification. This can include written evidence from a secondary (e.g., hospital clinic, specialist doctor), tertiary (e.g., highly specialised national or regional centre) or community care service, or a private surgery/clinic, etc. In case of illness, students should refer to the [Know Who To Turn To](#) and [Pharmacy First](#) guidance for advice on which service they should use. If it is impossible for the clinician to verify subsequently that the student had been ill on the date of absence, a back-dated form of evidence will not normally be accepted.

  ii. A letter/email from a support service (including services within the University, e.g. Student Advice & Support Team or University Counselling Service, but also an external counsellor) if they have an ongoing relationship with the student and are already aware of the student's circumstances prior to the absence taking place or have had contact with the student while they were experiencing the illness (i.e. retrospective evidence will not normally be accepted). In these cases, the support service practitioner should provide a letter or email outlining the nature of the medical issue, how it has impacted on the ability of the student to attend a compulsory teaching session or submit an assessment (if relevant) and the nature/extent of the support being given.

  iii. A detailed explanation, included in the absence form, from the student describing the impact that the illness has had on their ability to attend a compulsory teaching session or prepare for an assessment and/or undertake the assessment, if relevant.

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[4] Seven consecutive days includes weekends (for example Thursday, Friday. Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.)

[5] Students should note that, in accordance with guidance from the Scottish Executive Health Department, clinical practitioners may charge a fee for the provision of medical certificates. Students should note that the University will not reimburse any costs incurred. Some clinical practitioners may not be able to supply medical certificates other than for employment reasons. In these cases, students may use an alternative form of evidence if needed.

2.4.2 For non-medical absences[6], appropriate supporting evidence may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

 i. A letter/email from a support service (including services within the University, e.g. Student Advice & Support Team or University Counselling Service, but also an external counsellor or other services) detailing how the student's circumstances affected their studies and the nature/extent of the support being given.

 ii. A full description of the cause including the impact that it has had on their ability to attend a compulsory teaching session or prepare for an assessment and/or undertake the assessment, if relevant.

 iii. Other evidence acknowledged by the University to be of a significant nature, such as a police report, notification of a death, etc.

2.4.3 The Student Advice & Support Team can provide students with support in reporting their absences and, with the students' permission, can liaise with School(s) on their behalf[7]. Where a student believes their medical condition or personal circumstance to be of a particularly sensitive nature, or where the Team is already aware of a student's specific circumstances, students are encouraged to contact the Student Advice & Support Team directly. The University recognises that, for very personal or private issues/events, students may be reluctant to disclose the information to their School. In some cases, it may be possible for the Student Advice & Support Team to confirm to School(s) that they have sight of the relevant personal information and that the evidence is satisfactory.

2.4.4 Where appropriate, documentation submitted as supporting evidence should ~~normally~~ be in English. Any documentation not in English must be translated into English and verified ~~or translated into English and verified~~.

2.4.5 Schools will decide on whether the evidence is satisfactory but may request additional information if required. In making this decision, Schools may refer to previous absences and School monitoring procedures for student attendance. Specific requirements by external bodies, including Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), funding bodies, or the UK Visas and Immigration department (UKVI) of the Home Office, will also need to be considered by the School. Students should note that, as per Section 1.6, submitting an absence report does not necessarily authorise an absence and this procedure is separate from an extension request.

2.5 What happens to reports of absence?

2.5.1 Reports of absence may be used:

- By Course Coordinators and/or Heads of School to suggest any remedial work the student should do on return to study. It is the responsibility of the student to ask the appropriate member of staff about any required remedial work. Students should note that, depending on the period of absence and work missed, it may not be possible for a student to make up the missed work and as such a student may not be eligible to receive their class certificate on account of their absence (see 1.7).
- By the Examiners in deciding whether to award an 'MC' (medical absence), 'GC' (good cause) or 'SC' (Self-certificate) for the course.

2.5.2 In cases of serious issues (e.g. when there is concern for a student's welfare) Schools may need to share reports of absence with the other University services, to ensure the student receives appropriate support. In cases where students are struggling with health issues, Schools and other staff should refer to the processes outlined in the Support for Study Policy.

2.5.3 Reports of absence are not the same as extension requests and do not provide by themselves a justification

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[6] Students should not request a medical certificate from a clinical practitioner to cover absences of a non-medical nature.

[7] In certain circumstances, it may also be appropriate for a personal tutor (or equivalent) to liaise with a School on a students' behalf. Such circumstances can include instances where a student has been in regular contact with a personal tutor (or equivalent) over a period of time such that the students' personal circumstances are well-known to the personal tutor.

for late submissions of coursework (see 1.6).

2.6   What support is available?

2.6.1 The University understands that students may need support and guidance as they deal with issues leading to periods of absence. The University has a range of support services available to support students, as detailed below:

- The Student Advice & Support Team (student.support@abdn.ac.uk) offers impartial and confidential advice and support on a range of issues, including finance, disability information and more.
- The Counselling Service (counselling@abdn.ac.uk) is open to all students of the University.
- The Multi-faith Chaplaincy (chaplaincy@abdn.ac.uk) is a place of welcome for all and serves as a spiritual and social centre for students and staff.
- Schools can provide academic guidance for their students and can also be contacted for advice on available support. Relevant school contacts include the School admin office, Course Coordinators, lecturers or tutors.
- The Students' Union (AUSA) (ausa@abdn.ac.uk) represents and serves students' interests and works to make their time in Aberdeen as happy and enjoyable as possible~~The Students' Association (AUSA) (ausaadvice@abdn.ac.uk) represents and serves student's interestsand works to make their time in Aberdeen as happy and enjoyable as possible~~.
- Students' Union Advice (SU Advice) (ausaadvice@abdn.ac.uk) offers independent and impartial advice, support, and advocacy for students going through academic appeals, complaints and misconduct allegations.
- The Personal Tutor, PGT Pastoral Support Leads or Regents can help direct students to the appropriate support service, as needed.
- Registry Officers can provide guidance to students who have concerns about their programme of study.
- The Student Immigration Compliance Team (immigration@abdn.ac.uk) can provide information and advice on Student visa responsibilities.
- A full list of Support and Wellbeing services offered at the University is available on the website (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/support/index.php).

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MARKING AND MODERATION PROCEDURES

1.   **PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

> This paper provides an overview of the proposed changes to the Marking and Moderation Procedures.

2.   **PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED**

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Academic Policy and Regulations Group	2 May 2024
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee	15 May 2024
	University Education Committee *(for information)*	13 May 2024
	Senate	5 June 2024

3.   **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

> Members of UEC are invited to consider and approve the changes to the Marking and Moderation Procedures, as detailed in *Annex A*.

4.   **BACKGROUND**

4.1   The Moderation Procedures were last reviewed in 2015/16 and approved by the Senate on 9 March 2016. The Moderation Procedures were published to provide a minimum requirement for Schools and/or Disciplines to assure that assessment outcomes are fair and reliable, and that assessment criteria have been applied consistently.

4.2   Further to the Academic Workload Engagement Exercise, part of the ongoing work in relation to Workload Planning, led by the Vice-Principals for Education and Research, a review of the Moderation Procedures has been undertaken taking account of feedback received from staff as part of the academic workload consultation. Specifically, the Report of the Exercise highlights "cultural issues which were suggested as meriting further consideration, particularly in relation to the concept of '**trust**' and the practices of **double marking** (specifically) and **double checking** (more broadly)" …[1] Section 21 of the Report specifically refers.

4.3   A review of the Procedures has been undertaken with consideration, in particular being given to a reduction in some of the requirements for double marking and moderation; and clarification of the process in relation to disparity in marking and moderation. The review aimed to reduce the burden of double marking for Schools, *(section 4.2 above refers)*, while maintaining the rigour of quality assurance practices. In taking this forward, the Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement and the Director of Academic Services and Online Education in conjunction with the Academic Services team developed proposals to be presented for consultation. The revised Marking and Moderation Procedures are appended as **Annex A**.

4.4   In considering the review of the Moderation Procedures, sectoral research was carried out with

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[1] Academic Workload Engagement Report, July 2023 (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/secure/Academic- Workload-Report-FINAL.pdf)

a number of UK Universities, including other Ancient Scottish Universities. The sectoral research is appended as **Annex B**. The sectoral analysis highlighted that the University's current Moderation Procedures appear to be more extensive than that of other Higher Education Institutions. Furthermore, while the [Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code Section on Assessment](#) sets out an expectation that "Assessment is reliable, consistent, fair and valid" and states that "Assessment criteria are sufficiently robust to ensure reasonable parity between the judgements of different assessors. Policies and procedures for marking assessments and moderating marks are clearly articulated, consistently operated and regularly reviewed. Where borderline marks are identified, policies for the consideration of grades to be awarded are consistent, fair and freely available to staff and students." As such, there is flexibility in how the University approaches marking and moderation so long as it is sufficiently robust.

4.5 A period of consultation was held which included a meeting with Schools, the Director of Studies (Qatar) and Lead School Administrative Manager with changes being made to the initial draft Procedures in the light of feedback received.

4.6 The proposed changes were also discussed at meetings of the Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG) and Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). The feedback received informed further amendments to the Procedures which were shared by circulation with members ahead of circulation to Senate. The table below summarises the feedback received from Senate at its meeting on 27 March 2024 where it was considered for an academic view. The table details the actions taken in response to this feedback.

Feedback from Senate	Action Taken
Request for a more detailed definition of moderation / clarification on the difference between moderation and double marking	Section 3.1.1 has been amended in this regard, to provide further clarification on the moderation process and its purpose
Request for more specific examples of moderation in practice	Provision of guidance and exemplars of how moderation should be carried out for different types of assessment now presented in Annex A
Request for clarification in regard to the moderation of smaller pieces of assessment	Confirmation that the intention of the procedures is that a sample of all assessments, which have not been double marked, are moderated, where they contribute at least 30% towards the overall course grade. Moreover, a minimum of 50% of the course assessments should be moderated.
Request for clarity in regard to the moderation of pieces of assessment which have a defined answer	Clarification that, where assessments have a clearly defined correct answer and are purely quantitative, moderation as defined in the procedures is not appropriate. In such instances, the Course Coordinator is instead responsible for the review of grade distribution to ensure accuracy and consistency of the grades awarded.
Concern raised in regard to functionality in MyAberdeen to enable anonymous marking	The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) will provide guidance and support to Schools, where required, in regard to anonymous marking within MyAberdeen. Specific guidance in this regard is being drafted by CAD and will be circulated in due course.
Confirmation sought regarding double marking at honours level	Confirmation was provided that, as a minimum, all Undergraduate Honours and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) dissertations, theses, and projects are to be double

Commented [ET1]: To note: Annex A (containing examples of moderation in practice) to follow and be finalised prior to the Senate.

	marked, with moderation procedures applying for all other assessments
Request for guidelines in regard to what should be recorded during the moderation process	Section 4 of the procedures have been amended in this regard, to provide clarification of the minimum recording requirements
Concern expressed in the context of a risk of grade inflation about the statement in regard to double marking that, where markers differ by one CGS, the higher mark should be awarded	Section 2.2.3 has been amended to remove this statement. Where a mark is agreed by markers, this can be confirmed, otherwise, the procedures in respect of disparity in marking apply
Concern raised in regard to the changes making the moderation process less robust	Reassurance was provided that the proposed changes were to align the University with the rest of the sector and not a lowering of standards below those expected across Scotland and beyond
Concern raised that the revised procedures would increase and not decrease workload	Section 6 of the cover paper below, provides more detailed information in this regard

5. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

5.1 The following summary, outlined in Table 1 below, details the key changes which are proposed to the Procedures, updated following feedback received at the meeting of the Senate. The full revised Marking and Moderation Procedures are provided in **Annex A**.

- The Procedures have been retitled as *Marking and Moderation Procedures*.

- Addition of reference to the need to support those new to the marking and moderation process *(section 1.5 refers)*.

- Addition of a statement that agreement should be reached with the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) regarding the extent to which double marking and moderation is required where marking has been undertaken by individuals external to the University *(section 1.4 refers)*. This will be agreed on a case-by-case basis and will take account of the maturity of the partnership and the experience of the staff involved.

Marking
- Reinforcement that all assessments should be marked anonymously, where possible. Clarification that where not possible to mark anonymously, should be agreed with the School Director of Education (or nominee) and a record kept of assessments where anonymous marking is not undertaken and why retained. This can be done on a course-by-course basis or an agreed list of assessment types where anonymity is not possible. Addition of a statement that the Centre for Academic Development can provide support for anonymous marking via the virtual learning environment (VLE) *(section 2.1.2 refers)*.

- Addition of a statement that, where required, double marking should be undertaken blind where possible *(section 2.2.1 refers)*.

- Significant reduction in the requirements for double marking, as a result of workload concerns (see 4.2 above) *(section 2.2.2 refers)*.

- Addition of a statement that, following completion of double marking, where there is agreement between markers the mark can be confirmed *(section 2.2.3 refers)*.

- Simplification of the process where a disparity occurs in marking *(section 2.3 refers)*.

Moderation

- Clarification of the definition of moderation and provision of guidance and exemplars of how this should be carried out for different types of assessment *(section 3.1.1 refers)*.

- Reduction in the requirements for moderation to require that only a sample of all assessments, which have not been double marked, to be moderated, where they contribute at least 30% towards the overall course grade. Moreover, a minimum of 50% of the course assessments should be moderated. *(section 3.1.3 refers)*.

- Relatedly, clarification regarding the definition of a sample *(section 3.1.4 refers)*.

- Addition of a statement that assessments that have been marked by an individual who is external to the University, including TNE partners, must be moderated internally by a University staff member *(section 3.1.4 refers)*.

- Addition of a statement to confirm that if the moderator is content, the marks can be confirmed
(section 3.1.7 refers).

- Simplification of the process for resolving concern identified in moderation *(section 3.2 refers)*.

Role of External Examiners
- Clarification that the outcome of moderation/double marking processes must be recorded and shared with the External Examiner *(section 4.1 refers)*.

6.   WORKLOAD IMPLICATIONS

6.1   As outlined in Sections 4.2 and 4.3 above, one of the central aims of the review of the Moderation Procedures is to reduce the workload associated with double marking and moderation whilst ensuring that sufficient rigour in the oversight of assessment is maintained in line with QAA requirements (see 4.4 above). In particular, the following key changes will bring about a reduction in workload requirements:

Moderation Procedures (current)	Marking & Moderation Procedures [2]
Double marking is required: - *At non-honours, a sample where marked by a single staff member and contributes more than 40% to the course grade* - *At level 3 and above, a sample of all exam scripts and coursework contributing 30% or more to overall course grade* - *At level 3 and above, all courses worth 30 credits or more, assessed by a single piece of course work (e.g. dissertation or project thesis) with all being double marked*	*Double marking is required:* - *As a minimum, all undergraduate Honours and postgraduate taught dissertations, thesis and projects to be double marked.*

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[2] The proposed, revised Procedures' title has been amended to reflect the broadened scope of the Procedures.

Commented [ET2]: To note: As above, Annex A (containing examples of moderation in practice) to follow and be finalised prior to the Senate.

Moderation is required for all non-Honours assessments with moderation being done through a sample of double marking at level 3 and above if contributing more than 30%, or if contributing less than 30% moderation is required.	*A sample of all assessments, which have not been double marked, require to be moderated, where they contribute at least 30% towards the overall course grade. Moreover, a minimum of 50% of the course assessments should be moderated.*
No clear definition of moderation and from feedback it is clear that in some areas moderation is being done through a double marking approach.	*Clarification that that moderation is a distinct check of accuracy and consistency in marking and a review of grade distribution and that it does not require full re-marking of the marked assessment.*
Guidance was given in regard to process for agreeing marks but this focused solely on double marking and did not address concerns identified through moderation.	*Simplification of the process for resolving disparity in double marking or concerns identified through moderation.*

7. ACTION REQUIRED

7.1 The University Education Committee, for its part, is asked to approve the proposed amendments to the Marking and Moderation Procedures as detailed in Annex A.

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 Subject to approval by Senate in June 2024, the new procedures will be used with effect from the resit diet in summer 2024 onwards.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

9.1 Further information is available from Steve Tucker (s.j.tucker@abdn.ac.uk), Gillian Mackintosh (g.mackintosh@abdn.ac.uk), Emma Tough (e.tough@abdn.ac.uk), or Liam Dyker (liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk).

6 May 2024

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

MARKING AND MODERATION PROCEDURES

1.   PROCEDURES

1.1   These procedures set out the University's *minimum* requirements for marking and moderation. It is an expectation of all Schools that the requirements detailed within these procedures are adhered to, and appropriate records are maintained, including details of how all decisions taken have been reached.

1.2   Schools may choose to operate more extensive procedures where appropriate (i.e. where Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements apply). Such procedures should be clearly outlined to all staff involved in marking and to the External Examiner.

1.3   These procedures are designed to be read in conjunction with the University's Codes of Practice on Assessment ([Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate Taught](#)). Further information on Assessment at the University is available in the [Academic Quality Handbook (AQH)](#).

1.4   Agreement will be reached with the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), regarding the extent of double marking and moderation required for assessments, if any, where marking has been undertaken by individuals external to the University (e.g., Transnational Education (TNE) partnerships, clinical or work-based placements). This will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis and will take account of the maturity of the partnership and the experience of the staff involved.

1.5   Support will be provided by experienced colleagues within Schools for anyone new to the marking and moderation process.

1.6   The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) can be consulted (*via* [Academic Services](#)) should a School wish to discuss marking and moderation arrangements in more detail, or modifications in approach to these procedures.

2.   MARKING AND DOUBLE MARKING

2.1   MARKING

2.1.1   All assessments should be marked by a qualified marker, as stipulated in the Codes of Practice on Assessment *(section 1.3 refers)*.

2.1.2   All assessments should, where possible, be marked anonymously (i.e. a student should only be identified by candidate number). Where it is not possible for marking to be undertaken anonymously (e.g. presentations), this should be agreed with the School Director of Education (or nominee) and a record of

assessments where anonymous marking is not undertaken and why, should be kept by the relevant Education Committee. This can be done on a course-by-course basis or an agreed list of assessment types where anonymity is not possible (e.g. presentations). The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) can be consulted for support around anonymous marking through the virtual learning environment.

2.1.3 Where several different markers are involved in marking the same question on an assessment, there should be discussion in advance of marking commencing, to outline the marking criteria to be used and to agree a marking scheme.

2.2 DOUBLE MARKING

2.2.1 Double marking is a process whereby a second marker assigns a mark to a piece of assessment. Although double marking can be undertaken by a second marker having access to the annotations and mark awarded by the first marker, where possible, double marking should be undertaken *blind* with the two markers each assigning a mark independently without conferring during the marking process.

2.2.2 The University requires, **as a minimum**, all Undergraduate Honours and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) dissertations, theses, and projects be double marked[1].

2.2.3 Following completion of double marking, if there is agreement between markers, then the mark should be confirmed. Section 2.3 provides further information where there is disparity in marking.

2.3 DISPARITY IN MARKING

2.3.1 Where disparity arises, this should be discussed with consideration given to whether the disparity appears to be isolated or occurs more widely. Once determined, if possible, an approach should be agreed with consideration given to whether any adjustments required should be applied to individual assessments, or the entire cohort.

2.3.2 In instances where agreement cannot be reached by the markers, a discussion should take place with the markers and the appropriate Head of School (or nominee) to agree a way forward and ensure marks can be confirmed. It may be appropriate for the assessments to be marked, normally blind, by a third marker. Exceptionally, the External Examiner may be asked to review the assessments if there is no third internal marker with the appropriate expertise available. Where this relates to TNE provision, the third marker must be a member of University staff.

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[1] Assessments which require to be double marked at honours or PGT level can *normally* be identified as 'theses, dissertations and projects'. For clarity in regard to which projects should be double marked, these would normally be 'a single substantive piece of assessment which contributes 75% or more to an overall course grade, where the overall course comprises 25 or more credits'. There is no requirement for projects, for example, which do not meet these requirements, to be double marked.

3. MODERATION

3.1 MODERATION PROCESS

3.1.1 Moderation is a process separate from the marking of individual assessments, where a marked sample is reviewed, to ensure that the marking of assessments is fair, valid and reliable, and that assessment criteria have been appropriately applied. The moderation process should not require the remarking of assessments. The moderation process must ensure consistency of marking, correct use of the grade descriptors in the CGS, and should assess grade distribution. Moderation will take different forms, depending on the type of assessment, the level of the assessment and its credit value. Guidance and exemplars are available in *Annex A*.

3.1.2 The UK Quality Code stipulates that **"**Processes for marking assessments and for moderating marks are clearly articulated and consistently operated by those involved in the assessment process."[2] Moderation involves reviewing assessments and grades across a course to ensure consistency of marking and correct use of the grade descriptors in the Common Grading Scale (CGS).

3.1.3 The University normally requires **a sample of all assessments, which have not been double marked, to be moderated, where they contribute at least 30% towards the overall course grade. Moreover, a minimum of 50% of the course assessments should be moderated.** For example, in a course with a 40% essay, and three 20% practical assessments, there would be a requirement to moderate the essay and at least one of the three practical assessments.

3.1.4 Normally, a sample should contain at least 10% of the cohort or 10 assessments, whichever is the greater. The sample should consist of examples from the full range of CGS marks awarded, including examples from each individual marker (where applicable). In addition to the identified sample, all borderline fails (i.e. those assessments marked at CGS E1) should be moderated. Where multiple markers are involved, the sample moderated can be adapted to contain assessments graded by all markers to allow comparability to be reviewed.

3.1.5 Where assessments have a clearly defined correct answer and are purely quantitative, moderation as outlined above is not appropriate. In such instances, the Course Coordinator is responsible for the review of grade distribution to ensure accuracy and consistency of the grades awarded.

3.1.6 Where a moderator is content following the review of the sample, marks should be confirmed. Where concerns are identified, they should be addressed according to section 3.2 below.

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[2] Quality Assurance Agency, UK Quality Code: Section 2 (Assessment); Assessment (qaa.ac.uk)

3.1.7 Assessments that have been marked by an individual who is external to the University, including TNE partners, <u>must</u> be moderated by a member of University staff.

3.2 RESOLVING CONCERN IDENTIFIED IN MODERATION

3.2.1 If concerns are identified by the moderator, these should be discussed with the marker with consideration given to whether it appears to be an isolated concern or one which applies more widely. It may be appropriate for the moderator to sample more widely, to ascertain the extent of the concern. Once determined, if possible, an approach should be agreed with consideration given to whether any adjustments required should be applied to individual assessments (i.e. in assessments marked by a particular marker), or the entire cohort.

3.2.2 In instances where agreement cannot be reached, a discussion should take place with the marker, moderator, and the appropriate Head of School (or nominee) to agree a way forward and ensure marks can be confirmed. It may be appropriate for affected assessments to be remarked (by an additional marker) to inform this process. Where this relates to Transnational Education (TNE) provision, the additional marker <u>must</u> be a member of University staff. Exceptionally, the External Examiner may be asked to review the assessments if there is no additional internal marker with the appropriate expertise available.

4. RECORDING OF DECISIONS TAKEN

4.1 Decisions taken in regard to sections 2.3 and 3.2 above must be recorded showing the rationale and the agreed outcome. The record should include details of the markers grades, the final agreed grade and the rationale for that decision. Emails between markers can be used as the record where agreement has been reached in this way.

5. ROLE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

5.1 External Examiners should have the opportunity to view samples of all assessed work. If the assessment cannot be easily viewed by the External Examiner the process and criteria by which the assessment has been graded should be made available to the External Examiner.

5.2 External Examiners should be asked to comment on the general standard of marking and assessment and may recommend an increase or decrease in *all* grades for a particular assessment. Any actual change to grades, however, needs the approval of the final Examiners' Meeting. External Examiners may not make isolated changes to any student's grades.

5.3 External Examiners are not normally expected to mark or re-mark assessments. Where double marking is required *(section 2.2 refers)* and the two markers cannot

agree on a final mark, the assessment should first be sent to a third, internal, marker rather than the External Examiner. The External Examiner should, however, have such disagreements brought to their attention.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

UPDATE ON THE PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION

1. **PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

> This paper provides the background to, and an overview of, the Principles of Education and the associated web pages. These Principles should apply to different modes of teaching, whether in person, online or hybrid.
>
> Members of the UEC are asked to **discuss** the paper.

2. **PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED**

	Board/Committee	**Date**
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by		

3. **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

> This paper is provided for **discussion** of the following:
>
> • Whether the updated Principles of Education are still relevant, appropriate and encompass all aspects and modes of delivery of teaching, learning and assessment.
>
> • What, if any, additional information would be valuable on the webpages, including relevant examples/case studies and possible approaches.

4. **INTRODUCTION**

4.1   The Principles for the Delivery of Education were first introduced as the Principles of Blended Learning at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, they have been updated and enhanced into the five Principles described in Section 6, which were launched in AY 2022/23.

4.2   The naming convention throughout this paper refers interchangeably to the full name of the Principles for the Delivery of Education, and the more informal title of the Principles for Education. Principles of Blended Learning refers to the version of these Principles that was originally developed in the second half of AY 2019/20 and which applied in AY 2020/21 and, with revisions, in 2021/22.

5. **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

5.1   The Principles of Blended Learning were originally developed in 2020, at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, by a workstream of the Blended Learning Implementation Task & Finish Group (BLITFG), as a toolkit to support staff in making the transition to a blended delivery model (see UCTL/210520/005).

5.2   A revised version for the Principles of Blended Learning for AY 2021/22 was approved at UEC in May 2021 (see UEC/250521/005b), which reflected the commitment of the University to deliver more on-campus teaching than in the previous AY as a result of the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

5.3   After BLITFG was dismantled, the Aberdeen 2040 Delivery of Education TFG was established in October 2021, with the purpose of building on the evaluation of blended learning to develop and evidence-based framework for the Delivery of Education which aimed to enhance the student learning experience (see UEC/170222/008, UEC/130422/007a, UEC/100522/004 and UEC/230622/007).

5.4   The Delivery of Education TFG published its final report in June 2022, setting out a new set of Principles for the Delivery of Education, for AY 2022/23.

5.5   During the AY 2023/24 and with the establishment of the Online Education Forum, the Principles of Education were revisited and revised to recognise all modes of delivery (online, in-person or hybrid) for teaching, learning and assessment. In particular, some wording referring specifically to in-person delivery was updated.

6.   UPDATED PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION 2023/24

6.1   The Principles of Education webpages list five Principles, which are detailed and described below. In addition, the web pages list one further element, titled Evaluation and Review. Along with each Principle, a set of possible approaches is also provided. The landing page for the Principles of Education gives a brief description of their purpose and stresses that they are equally applicable to in person, online or hybrid learning and teaching practices.

6.2   **Principle 1: Nurture active learning**
Active learning involves both guided and independent learning and should be designed with the achievement of learning outcomes as a focus. Provide active learning opportunities for students to encourage deeper learning, making effective use of in-person or live web conferencing sessions to engage and interact with your students. Try to complement live (synchronous) sessions with activities students can complete within their own schedule by a certain time/date (asynchronous).

6.3   **Principle 2: Design in opportunities for community building**
Provide opportunities for students to create connections with other students, with staff, and with others (e.g. employers, internationally) in person on-campus and online in the virtual learning environment.

6.4   **Principle 3: Assessment should be authentic, building in integrity, and be efficient**
Provide assessment that tests learning outcomes, where appropriate is 'authentic' (reflecting or recreating real-life situations and/or enabling students to demonstrate the applicability of their learning to various discipline contexts and scenarios), tests skills and thinking (rather than solely based on fact recall) and is streamlined to avoid over-assessment.

6.5   **Principle 4: Provide timely and meaningful feedback**
Provide feedback at an appropriate time for students to benefit from it, in accordance with the 3-week timeframe, focusing on developmental next steps that can be actioned by the student.

6.6   **Principle 5: Accessibility & inclusivity**
Provide teaching, learning and assessment that ensures that students are not disadvantaged or directly/indirectly discriminated against, with the aim of providing students with the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Alongside our inclusivity and accessibility in Education Framework the University is also committed to decolonising the curriculum.

6.7   **Evaluation & Review**
Wherever possible, ask colleagues to review your learning and teaching practices and participate in self-reflective review of your own practices as well. Likewise, consider feedback from your students and externals, to assist you with continually reviewing and updating your own practices.

7.   RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTINUED UPDATES

7.1   UEC is invited to discuss the current Principles of Education, consider whether they are still relevant and if they apply to all modes of delivery.

7.2   Our recommendation would be to maintain the current set of Principles of Education but, going forward, to ensure that the set of possible approaches listed within each Principles is kept up to date, providing a variety of methods and ideas that are equally applicable to in person or online delivery.

7.3   The next stage of development is to link these possible approaches to practical examples of good practice from our own community. If anyone has any suggestions, we encourage them to get in touch.

8.   FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean of Educational Innovation (k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk), Catherine Ogilvie, eLearning adviser (online) CAD (catherine.ogilvie@abdn.ac.uk), Isabella Fausti, eLearning adviser CAD (isabella.fausti@abdn.ac.uk).

27 February 2024

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

UPDATE ON THE USE OF GENAI IN EDUCATION

1. **PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

This paper provides an update regarding the University's approach to supporting staff and students with the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools in Education. This paper provides a summary of current and future work in this area.

The University Education Committee is invited to note this GenAI update paper for information.

2. **PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED**

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	N/A	
Further consideration/ approval required by	UEC	13 May 2024

3. **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Members of the UEC are provided with this paper for information only.

4. **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

We are continually refining our approach to supporting staff and students with the integration of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools in education, reflecting the evolving landscape. Our approach comprises the following four strands:

- Incorporating GenAI tools into applications designed to support learning, teaching, and assessment.
  By integrating these tools into our VLE and associated applications, we aim to enhance the overall educational experience and foster innovation and efficiencies in teaching approaches.
- Supporting staff and students in navigating the integration of GenAI in education.
  This support encompasses training, resources, collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and guidance to facilitate appropriate utilisation of GenAI tools within educational contexts.
- Conducting thorough investigations into the attitudes of both staff and students regarding the integration of GenAI in education.
  This research informs our strategies and ensures alignment with the needs and expectations of all stakeholders.
- Contributing to internal and external AI Groups
  By contributing to internal and external groups we will ensure that we have the appropriate mechanisms in place to lead the universities response to GenAI in education

We propose that over the next academic year we will provide an update to UEC on each of these four strands.

4.1. Incorporation of GenAI tools in applications that support Learning, Teaching & Assessment

Following extensive consultations with staff, the Blackboard Learn AI Design Assistant was implemented on the 21 December 2023, so that staff could explore their potential use from Term 2 onwards. All features were implemented except for the image generation feature. Continuous updates are made to the AI Design Assistant, incorporating it into existing workflows where it can potentially support staff by doing some of the "heavy lifting", based on the crafting of appropriate prompts by staff. These updates are made available to staff at opportune times, with the exception of image generation features which continue to be remain disabled until it is appropriate for this feature to be reviewed and discussed.

We are committed to evaluating their effectiveness following the conclusion of Term 2 to assess their impact and gather insights for further enhancement.

4.2. Supporting staff and students in navigating the integration of GenAI in Education

The latest update of the guidance for staff and students on the utilisation of GenAI in education was completed in January 2024 ahead of term 2 beginning, with an update provided to the UEC on the 16 of January. These guidelines will undergo a further review and revision process two weeks prior to the commencement of term 3. This periodic review ensures that the guidance remains current, relevant, and aligned with the latest evidence and developments in the field of GenAI in education.

We are working on updating the guidance for staff on the appropriate handling of student data including the onward sharing of students assessments. This guidance will make it very clear that any submission of student work to 3rd party external AI detection tools by staff is in breach of our regulations.

A series of discussions were facilitated by the Library Digital Skills team in November and early December on the topic of "Artificial Intelligence (AI) Conversations at the Library" which were targeted at different stakeholders (PGR students, UG and PGT students, Staff with a research focus and staff with teaching focus).

As part of our ongoing discussion panel series facilitated by CAD, we hosted our first joint discussion panel for research and teaching staff entitled "Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools: Impact on Academic's Educational and Research Practice", aiming to bring together the different aspects of academic staff work.

4.3. Research on the attitudes of staff and students to the integration of GenAI in Education

We continue to seek funding opportunities for carrying out research on the attitudes of staff and students to the integration of GenAI in Education in order to inform policy and practice. To date we have been successful in obtaining funding internally, and from the Advance HE Collaborative Development Fund 2023-24.

Study 1: Exploring Students' Attitudes towards Generative AI and Assessment Practices at University

Funding: Internally funded project

This research initially was designed to inform the ongoing work to enhance provision of support to enhance academic integrity by minimising the engagement of student with contract cheating by exploring the experiences views of university students on the barriers and facilitators to engaging with assignment writing services and their views on what approaches would be most effective in the prevention of engagement with such services. It is now being expanded to include an investigation into the attitudes of students towards generative AI and assessment practices within the university setting.

Progress: ethical approval granted, data collection is complete, transcription and analysis underway.

Study 2: Towards Inclusive Intelligence: A Comprehensive Examination of GenAI Attitudes Among Higher Education Stakeholders

Funding: Advanced HE Collaborative Development Fund 2023-24

This research explores the attitudes and perceptions of diverse higher-education (HE) stakeholders towards the integration of GenAI in academic settings. While the sector has primarily focused on the implications for academic integrity, this study proposes a broader examination of education, including instructional methodologies and delivery approaches. This work is being led by Aberdeen university in collaboration with Edinburgh Napier University, University of Dundee and Heriot-Watt University

Progress: Two student research interns appointed, ethics application submitted

Study 3: GenAI in Tertiary Education

Funding: Carnegie Trust

Progress: Awaiting formal confirmation of funding award, ethics application submitted

4.4. Contributing to Internal and External Groups

Internal Groups: AI@ABZ Working Group

The AI@ABZ Working Group, chaired by Brian Henderson, has been established. The remit of the group is as follows:
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive University AI strategy and related policies that aligns with the University's mission, 2040 strategy and values.
- Establish clear guidelines and policies for AI project initiation, implementation, and monitoring.
- Help inform the requirement for appropriate systems and data structure in support of AI deployment.
- Helps ensure that AI projects are ethically sound, transparent, lawful, secure and accountable.
- Champion the use of AI and foster a culture of collaboration and innovation among stakeholders.
- Within the oversight and agreement of DSC, provides funding for AI related projects and oversees resultant work.

- Provide training and support to academics, professional services staff, and students to enable responsible and meaningful use of AI for research, education and administration.
- Monitor and evaluate AI projects to ensure they meet the University's goals and objectives and meet legal/regulatory requirements.
- Regularly review and update the AI strategy, policy and guidelines to reflect new developments and best practices.
- Monitoring the AI regulatory landscape with respect to impacts on AI and ensuring the working group is kept up to date on developments to inform communications and the work above.

External Groups: Scottish Artificial Intelligence in Tertiary Education Network

The Scottish Artificial Intelligence in Tertiary Education Network (ScAITEN) is a Scotland-wide group for those leading on artificial intelligence in learning and teaching in their institutions. It was established by Heriot-Watt University. The network has representation from all Higher Education (HE) institutions in Scotland and is working to include Colleges. The group serves to co-ordinate and share practices around artificial intelligence (AI)in learning and teaching. It also undertakes collaborative research and events. The network's current objective is to position Scottish Tertiary Education as open, ethical and innovative in the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in learning and teaching.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Professor Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean for Educational Innovation (k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk) and Dr Sara Preston, Senior eLearning Adviser, (s.preston@abdn.ac.uk) Centre for Academic Development.

[28 February 2024]

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERISTY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ONLINE EDUCATION FORUM UPDATE

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> This paper provides an update on the Online Education Forum.
>
> Members of the UEC are asked to **note** the paper.

2.   PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	UEC	16 January 2024
Further consideration/ approval required by		

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

> Following the first meeting of the Online Education Forum, members of the UEC are invited to **note** the updates provided.

4.   DISCUSSION

4.1   Further to the approval of the establishment of the Online Education Forum by the UEC on 16 January 2024, membership was finalised (see Annex A) and the first meeting was held on 21 February 2024.

4.2   The first meeting started by discussing the revised Principles of Education from an online delivery perspective. It was agreed that collating examples of good practice and case studies within each of the five Principles would be helpful for those who are new to teaching online, and also to encourage more consistency within different courses. It was also suggested that, as part of Principle 5: Accessibility & inclusivity, it should be highlighted which practices are mandatory to ensure students are not being discriminated against.

4.3   The Forum then discussed what sort of support Schools would benefit from in order to expand and enhance their online offering. It was suggested that sub-groups of the Forum to carry out some of this work and then present it at a later meeting. Some suggestions included:
- Doing a sector review to see what is being done at other institutions and help drive standards up.
- Embedding more online-specific guidance and resources within the Programme Management Process.
- Setting up a peer review or buddy system for those who would like to get feedback on their online course from a trusted colleague.

4.4   An open session on "Developing and Delivering Online Education" took place on 8 February, with staff and students of online courses from across different disciplines presenting on their teaching and learning experiences, followed by an overview of the support available for those who are contemplating delivering an online course. Further events will be arranged for the future, with current topic suggestions being inclusivity and accessibility of online courses, making online courses more engaging and interactive for students and monitoring engagement aligned to on campus processes.

4.5 The Forum considered the first draft of a new institutional extension policy currently being developed, focusing particularly on how it would impact the online learning experience. This highlighted the importance of embedding the perspective of online education from the start when developing a new policy or guidance.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean of Educational Innovation (k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk), and Isabella Fausti, eLearning Adviser (isabella.fausti@abdn.ac.uk).

27 February *2024*

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

EXTERNAL QUALITY PROCESSES: ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (ELIR), QUALITY ENHANCEMENT & STANDARDS REVIEW (QESR) AND TERTIARY QUALITY PROJECT (TQP) UPDATE

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> This paper provides an update regarding the External Quality processes by QAA Scotland, including Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR), and Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR). The paper also provides an update on the Tertiary Quality Project.

2.   PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee	9 May 2024
	University Education Committee	13 May 2024

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

> The **University Education Committee (UEC(** is invited to **note** the updates provided in respect of the actions arising from the University's last Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) conducted in 2018, appended as **Appendix A**, and the actions arising from the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) undertaken in February 2023, appended as **Appendix B**. The QAC is further invited to **note** the update provided in respect of the Tertiary Quality Project.

4.   ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (ELIR)

4.1   The Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) review process, Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR), completed its fourth and final cycle in 2021/22. The University of Aberdeen ELIR 4 was undertaken in Autumn 2018. The ELIR Outcome Report confirms that the University has 'effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience' and notes that 'there can be public confidence in the University's awards and in the quality of the learning experience it provides for its students'.

4.2   The University was commended for several of areas of good practice: the support given proactively to an increasingly diverse student population; the focus on widening access and the pre- and post-entry support given to such students; the targeted communications policy; the University's engagement with Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) resulting in the development of the Student Partnership Agreement; and the University's quality processes and arrangements for self-evaluation and enhancement.

4.3   The ELIR Report asked the University to consider seven areas for development:
(i)   The balance between institutional and school responsibilities;
(ii)   Monitoring and expansion of personal tutoring;
(iii)   Relationship between Postgraduate Research School and Schools and training of PhD supervisors;
(iv)   Preparation for teaching;
(v)   Review of Professional Services;
(vi)   Monitoring, training and induction of External Examiners; and

(vii) Review processes for Collaborative Provision to ensure accuracy of Register of Partnerships.

4.4   All actions identified by the Review Panel and taken forward by the University have now been completed. Appendix A provides an update on the areas for development *(as identified in section 4.3 above)*.

5.   QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS REVIEW (QESR)

5.1   ELIR has been replaced by a new external institutional review methodology which will be a two-phase approach as follows:

- **Phase 1:** Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR)/Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM) (2022/23-2023/24)
- **Phase 2:** Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) (2024/25 onwards)

5.2   The Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) for the University took place on 14 February 2023, following a comprehensive submission of required documentation. On the day, a number of sessions took place with the Review panel:

- Session with HEI Key Contacts
- Session with Students
- Session with Quality Assurance-focused Staff
- Session with Quality Enhancement-focused Staff

5.3   The University was advised that the Review Panel had confidence that the institution is making effective progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision to enable effective arrangements to be in place for managing academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. In addition, the panel recognised the following areas as good practice: (i) effective implementation of University strategies; (ii) engagement with Enhancement Themes; (iii) an inclusive approach to blended education/learning and teaching; and (iv) student partnership.

5.4   The QESR findings asked the University to consider the following areas for development:
(i)   ensuring student access to External Examiner Reports; and
(ii)   continuing work to finalise the University's approach to personal tutoring arrangements.

5.5   All actions identified by the Review Panel and taken forward by the University have now been completed. Appendix B provides an update on the areas for development *(as identified in section 5.4 above)*.

5.6   Relatedly, the University underwent an Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM) with QAAS on 29 February 2024. The meeting was led by the University's Quality Enhancement Manager/Liaison Officer at QAAS and was attended by the following:
- Vice-Principal (Education)
- Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Dean for Educational Innovation
- Director of Academic Services and Online Education
- Assistant Registrar (Academic Services)
- Wellbeing and Engagement Manager
- Vice-President for Education (AUSA)
There is no formal outcome or categorisation of the University's performance in the ILM, just an official recording of the meeting notes, which are appended as Appendix C.

5.7   The ILM covered a range of topics including updates to ELIR 4 and QESR actions; the enhancement and management of quality and standards, and the student learning experience; institutional analysis of key data; current developments in student engagement; the University's mapping to the UK Quality Code; and engagement in, and activity related to, the current sector enhancement topic.

6.   UPDATE ON TERTIARY QUALITY PROJECT (TQP)

6.1   The Tertiary Quality Project (TQP) involves the development and delivery of a common approach to assuring and enhancing quality in Scotland's tertiary sector, both FE and HE, which will be implemented in academic year 2024-25. The project is being delivered by QAAS as commissioned by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The University of Aberdeen is actively feeding into this ongoing development and consultation process. The project currently includes several ongoing strands as detailed below:

- **Scottish Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF):** The TQEF is the proposed new quality assurance and enhancement framework, comprising a shared set of principles, delivery pillars, and outputs to give assurance on academic standards and the quality of the student experience, and ensure accountability for public investment in learning and teaching. The diagram in image A below outlines the principles of the TQEF.
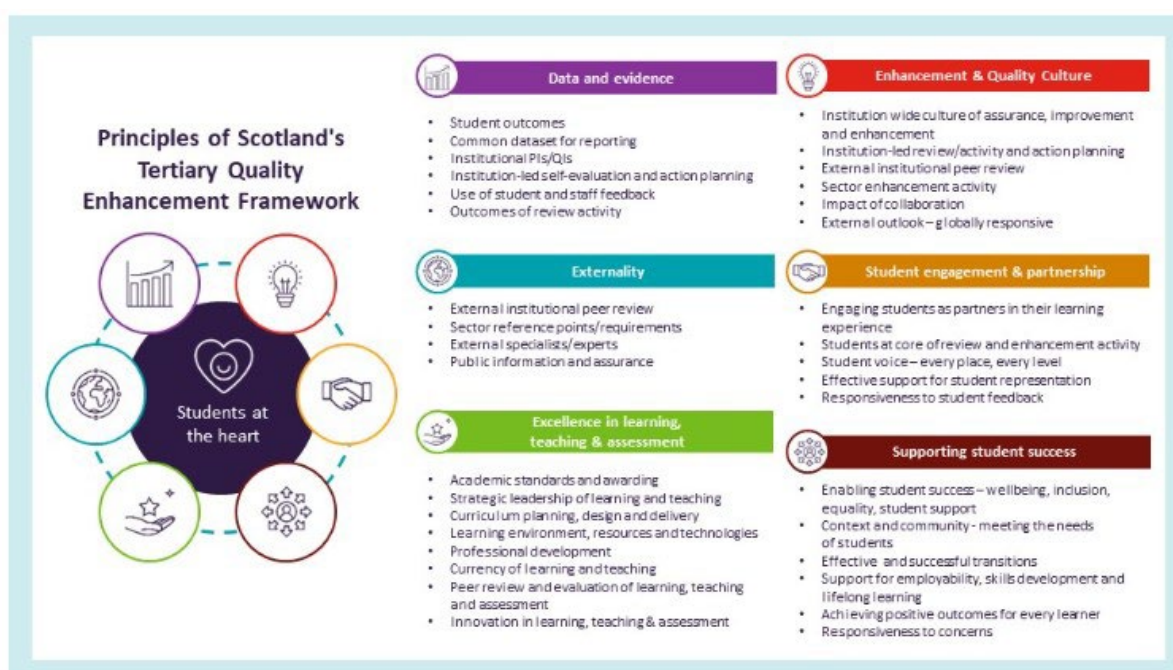
Image A: Principles of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (Source: Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland

- **External Enhancement-Led Peer Review:** A new external peer review methodology is being developed which will replace ELIR. The new review cycle which will apply to both colleges and universities will commence in academic year 2024-25 and will last 5 years, with each institution being reviewed within the first four years, leaving the last year to reflect on the review methodology. QAA is working closely with Education Scotland, in drafting the new methodology to ensure it meets the needs of both the FE and HE sectors. It is anticipated guidance will be made available in June 24.

- **Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP):** A central feature of TQEF methodology will be the submission of an annual report called the Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP), which will provide evidence-based reflection on institutional activities relating to the principles of TQEF. The SEAP will replace the annual Quality report which the University was required to submit to the SFC in the autumn each year. In addition, the SEAP will require preparation of an action plan, which will remain "live" throughout the year. Further guidance on the SEAP is expected in June with the first submission to the SFC being due in November 2024.

- **Student Learning Experience Model:** Another key aspect of the TQEF relates to the Student Learning Experience Model, developed by sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland) in close partnership with students. It is designed to place strong emphasis on the matters of most importance to students and contains 9 building blocks covering the learning experience underpinned by a set of reflective questions.

- **National Thematic Enhancement Activity:** The continuation of thematic enhancement activity remains a core strand of TQEF although is new for the FE sector. Work is ongoing to design and deliver an approach to national enhancement across Scotland's tertiary sector, drawing on the expertise of all stakeholders. The potential theme, its duration and the funding model to support this is being widely discussed and developed, with the University being represented in these discussions.

6.2   Further information and guidance regarding the new Scottish Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework is due to be released in June 2024 for implementation in 2024/25. Further information will be shared with QAC and UEC in due course.

7.   FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Steve Tucker (Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement), s.j.tucker@abdn.ac.uk.

18 April 2024

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UPDATE ON THE ELIR 2018 RECOMMENDATIONS (MARCH 2024)

Area for Development	Specific Recommendation	Update	Status
The balance between institutional and school responsibilities	Reflect on the balance between institutional and School responsibilities for establishing and implementing policy and practice to assure itself that all those studying for a University of Aberdeen (UoA) award have parity of experience.	In the one-year follow-up report we: • Specified the committee structure that enabled dissemination of policy changes and afforded a mechanism to monitor School-level compliance with such changes. • Described several policies relating to assessment and classification changes approved through Senate to be implemented in Academic Year 2019/2020. Due to some uncertainty over the communication of some of these changes with students, however, many of the changes had to be delayed. In our October 2022 updated we noted we had: • Refined the Education committee structure, ensuring increased School representation on Committees including the University Education Committee (UEC) (formally the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL)), and more clearly distinguishing the roles between the QAC and the UEC. • Ensured the effective rollout of the policies relating to assessment and classification changes referred to within the one-year follow up report. • Developed a suite of procedures (No Detriment Procedures and Comprehensive Measures refer) in consultation with Schools in respect of Assessment procedures to ensure students' classifications were not disadvantaged due to the Covid-19 pandemic. • Held several sessions for School Examination Officers and School administrative staff to ensure awareness and understanding of these procedures. Bespoke sessions were held on request. • Ensured the practice of providing this level of training and support remains in place, despite the transition from 'emergency' Covid measures to more standard means of degree classification and award. • Reviewed all policy documentation, in the context of Covid-19 and the transition to blended learning, to ensure each was up to date and remained fit for purpose. • Published a Policy Review Plan, providing a transparent approach to ensure education policies are reviewed on a regular basis and not solely on an 'ad-hoc' basis or as external factors (such as the publication of regulatory guidance) require.	COMPLETE

		• Published a '[Late Submission of Work Policy](#)' ensuring parity of experience for all students who, without good reason, submit assessment after the published deadline for doing so. • Considered a proposal regarding the attendance of a QAC member or Registry staff representative at Examiners Meetings. This remains under consideration. <u>Since October 2022 we have:</u> • Published an updated Policy Review Plan, providing a transparent approach to ensure education policies are reviewed on a regular basis and not solely on an 'ad-hoc' basis or as external factors (such as the publication of regulatory guidance) require. The plan responds to feedback from Schools regarding particular areas of concern, with a view to ensuring consistency across our policies, streamlining processes and reducing workloads.	
Monitoring and expansion of personal tutoring	Continue to monitor 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.	<u>In the one-year follow-up report we:</u> • Informed the QAA of the introduction of personal tutors for PGT students. The principles of which were supported by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL) and Senate. As a consequence of differing approaches withing Schools to assigning personal tutors, a review of the effectiveness of School-based personal tutor systems for PGT students would be undertaken. • Noted that the personal tutor system for undergraduate students was implemented in September 2013 and that a holistic review of the approach was timely, so that enhancements could be implemented as needed. <u>In our October 2022 update we noted we had:</u> • Engaged in initial informal discussions with Aberdeen University Students' Association, Heads of School and Senior Personal Tutors regarding the delivery of the undergraduate personal tutor system, including in respect of Qatar. • Widened the Senior Personal Tutor Forum to include all staff leading on delivery of pastoral support alongside the specialist services. This includes Postgraduate Taught programme leads, professional services colleagues from some schools and from on demand who have this responsibility and the Postgraduate Research Centre. • Developed a [website](#)to make the Pastoral and Guidance support that is provided for students clear to all staff and students and new training and resources have been developed for staff.	**COMPLETE**

		- In direct response to the recommendation in the ELIR report, established a 'Pastoral Support Review' Task and Finish Group (TFG) to review the pastoral support provided for PGT students, and the UG PT system.
		- The TFG, 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:
		    o who is to deliver it
		    o the nature of the support and information sharing needed to support this
		    o how to enhance staff and student engagement with the personal tutor and pastoral support systems
		    o identify priorities and prepare and deliver an implementation plan, including as appropriate requests for additional resource
		    o develop an internal benchmarking and evaluation plan.
		- Continued the work of the TFG, under the leadership of the Dean for Student Support and Experience, with future updates to follow to the Education Committee structure.
		
		In our October 2023 update, we noted we had:
		- Reviewed webpages for both staff and students, enhancing the purpose and clarity of the personal tutor and other pastoral guidance roles, and highlighting resources and sources of support as appropriate.
		- In-person staff training for pastoral support and guidance session delivered, with further workshops scheduled.
		- Senior Pastoral Support and Guidance forum oversees and reviews the consistency and equity of the student experience, reporting to the Student Support and Experience Committee.
		- Communications issued to staff and students with information pertinent to pastoral support arrangements to ensure each cohort have the most up-to-date information, including information in induction materials.
		
		Since the October 2023 update, we have:
		- Completed the work of the 'Pastoral Support Review' Task and Finish Group (TFG), including a review of pastoral support provided for PGT students, and the UG personal tutor system.
		- Providing PGT and online pastoral support by all schools via a mixture of personal tutoring and pastoral leads dependent on school resource.
		- Providing pastoral support to both Aberdeen and Qatar campuses with in-personal personal tutors assigned to Qatari students.	

		• Clarified information of UG personal tutoring/regent roles and updated on pastoral guidance webpages. • Undertaken a marketing campaign promoting engagement with personal tutors/regents and all support services so that regular reminders are placed on digital noticeboards, newsletters etc. • Staff and student pastoral support and personal tutoring webpages have been combined and clarity provided as to the role / purpose being one of sign-posting to the relevant professional support services available. • Created a separate staff resource page that includes advice, information, and updated online training resources. • Delivered an in-person staff workshop for pastoral support and guidance each semester. • Produced a Pastoral Support Training slide pack for School training which is delivered by Senior Personal Tutors. • Updated information as part of new staff induction session, which now includes pastoral support and guidance information and opportunity to meet key staff. • The Senior Pastoral Support Group (SPSG) meets five times a year and consists of senior pastoral UG and PGT leads from each School, PGR rep, and senior Professional Services representatives. The committee is responsible for overseeing and reviewing the delivery and strategic development of pastoral support, reporting to the Student Support and Experience Committee. • The Aberdeen Student Experience Survey which goes to all students includes questions relating to personal tutoring and pastoral support to allow institutional and school evaluation of pastoral support delivery and evaluated by SPSG.	
Relationship between Postgraduate Research School and Schools and training of PhD supervisors	Continue work defining the role of the Postgraduate Research School and its relationship to the academic Schools, enabling the University to ensure that all research students have an equivalent experience. The University is also asked to ensure that new postgraduate research supervisors undertake the training provided by the University.	This area for development was fully addressed in the one-year follow-up report (*the extract below refers*) and the processes as described continue as standard practice. In the 12 months following ELIR 2018, the Postgraduate Research (PGR) School made significant progress in harmonising processes across the University and in doing so made improvements to recruitment processes, induction and online training and the processes for reviewing progression of PGR students. Other improvements include: • rebuilding the PGR School website, • re-vamping *PGR Study Here* pages with streamlined research area information, and • developing a researcher roadmap to help researchers understand and plan their personal development journey with links to the researcher	**COMPLETE**

| | | development programme offered by the PGR School. These improvements are helping to ensure that all new PGR students have an equivalent experience.

A Doctoral Researchers Group (DRG) has been established to help improve communication within and across
Schools and to ensure that the needs and views of our PGR students are heard and can be addressed. This group comprises of a PGR student representative from each academic School, the elected PGR AUSA representative and the Manager of the PGR School. The DRG provides a forum for student-led discussion to raise important common needs and issues facing PGR students from across the University, to enable these to be raised at appropriate committees and to ensure PGRs are involved in decision making on matters directly related to them. Members of the DRG sit on the PGR committee and other institution-wide committees and working groups.

The DRG has led to the creation of a Doctoral Society or 'Doc Soc'. The Doctoral Society is the first completely PGR student-led society incorporated within AUSA. It brings together PGR students from all Schools to hold social, career development and wellbeing events throughout the year. The purpose of the society is to create a warm and inclusive environment for all PGR students at Aberdeen to socialise, network and share experiences. As many of our PGR students travel from across the world to study here these opportunities are vital to allow them to succeed during their time here.

Details of our comprehensive four-stage professional development programme for PGR supervisors, implemented in AY 2019/20 are detailed below. From October 2019, the PGR School keeps an active record of supervisors who have attended training courses (either new or refresher) and this will form the benchmark for ongoing reporting. Supervisors will be invited after 5 years to attend refresher sessions. The PGR School receives a monthly report from HR with information on new members of academic staff who have joined the University. New members of staff are contacted by email and invited to attend a training session. If individuals have not attended within 12 months, the PGR Coordinator and /or Head of School will be contacted to ensure attendance prior to PGR student supervision.

An interactive supervisor handbook has been developed to provide information about the Code of Practice, policies and processes encountered during PGR study from registration to assessment and submission. It also includes information about | |

the help and support that is available if students encounter difficulties during their studies, both within the PGR School and across the University.

All new supervisors (new to supervising and new to the University of Aberdeen) are required to attend an introduction to PGR supervision workshop. This workshop covers the philosophy of PhD study at Aberdeen and includes research culture and integrity, the role of supervisors as well as the processes/systems which guide and support supervisors to induct, supervise, develop and ensure progress for postgraduate researchers. It signposts policies, regulations, resources and guides that are required when working with
students.

Experienced supervisors are required to attend a regular update session to ensure they are kept up to date on policies/processes/activities related to supervising PGR students at the University of Aberdeen. These sessions also provide an opportunity to showcase best practice.

This series explores topics related to doctoral supervision, supervision relationships, tensions, worries, and pitfalls on PGR progression, development and career. Sessions provide a platform to discuss issues, share good practice and use case studies to inform practice. Example topics include:
- Improving communication with your PGR student
- Examining research doctorates
- Supporting distance/online doctorates
- PGR transitions – into and out of the PhD.

| **Preparation for teaching** | Ensure all new staff and postgraduate students who teach and assess complete, as a minimum, the University's 'Learning and Teaching in HE' course before taking up teaching responsibilities. | This area for development was fully addressed in the one-year follow-up report (*the extract below refers*) and the processes as described continue as standard practice.

Preparation for Teaching: Staff
In April 2019, the UCTL approved a proposal from the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) to enhance the current provision by providing all new teaching staff with support from their first day in post by:

(i) Ensuring that completion of the Learning and Teaching in Higher Education at the University of Aberdeen two-day course be compulsory *within the first year* of arrival at the University of Aberdeen. The Course runs every September and January however this has been enhanced with the addition of a run in April to provide further capacity and opportunity for engagement. CAD monitors and | **COMPLETE** |

records course attendance to ensure that all staff requiring to complete this training within their first year of appointment have done so.

(ii) Developing a *short welcome video* which will explain how the Centre can support new staff from the outset and encourage them get in touch directly if they have any specific academic development needs. The video was made available, along with a suite of online resources which address aspects of teaching practice such as course design and planning at the University of Aberdeen, from a 'New Staff' webpage on StaffNet at the end of January 2020. We will monitor use and seek feedback to ensure that it is a useful resource.

(iii) Through liaison with academic Schools and disciplines, an *email from the Centre is sent to new staff on arrival* with links to the video and the online resources and includes the Centre's contact details. The online induction pack provided by Human Resources to new staff includes links to the welcome video and staff development resources provided by CAD.

Preparation for Teaching: Postgraduate Research Students

A comprehensive four-stage professional development programme for learning and teaching for Postgraduate Research Students has been developed by CAD. This programme includes:

(i) *The development of an online introduction to teaching course:* A new, bespoke online course in MyAberdeen which covers basic principles of teaching and learning is available for all PGR students, with those engaged in teaching activities being required to take the course before doing any teaching. The course has been developed by CAD in collaboration with the Postgraduate Research School and was made available at the end of January 2020. The Postgraduate Research School will publicise the learning opportunity and monitor completion of the course which will include an assessment. Materials provided through this course will continue to be available to the student throughout the duration of their PhD.

(ii) *Mandatory training by Schools:* In the early part of the first half session 2019/20, ten out of twelve schools provided mandatory training for PGRs before they undertook any tutoring, demonstrating or field work supervision. CAD delivered the majority of this training and also provides guidance to Schools who wish to provide their own training so as to ensure an institution-wide consistency of approach. Work is ongoing, led by CAD, to ensure that there is comprehensive provision across all Schools. CAD is working with Schools and the Postgraduate Research School to ensure that all PGR students who are involved in teaching undertake this training. Discussions are also ongoing

		to explore how this monitoring process might be streamlined to provide a more efficient way to allow student engagement to be tracked.	
		(iii) *Peer observation:* The Schools of Psychology and Biological Sciences will pilot a peer observation process developed by the CAD in the second half-session of 2019/20. Ultimately, all Schools will be required to undertake one peer observation for each PGR student in the first year during which they have teaching responsibilities. Schools will be provided with a template developed by the CAD and will be required to keep a record of this information alongside training attendance. Schools are also required to provide students with a named contact for advice and support should it be required.	
		Principles of Learning & Teaching in HE: This popular course which has consistently high attendance, accredited by the Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE) since 2010, will continue to be offered to PGR students who are actively involved in teaching and have a role in supporting the learning of others through activities such as lecturing, running tutorials, demonstrating in laboratory sessions and supervising students. The course runs in November and May and is also offered online in August.	
Review of Professional Services	Continue with plans to develop processes for the routine review of student-facing professional services.	A separate review process for student-facing Professional Services has not been implemented. The processes that are already in place to review professional services, as part of School review processes, are a more meaningful way to review how well professional services function to support the student experience. As part of the annual planning process, Schools are asked to highlight areas requiring support from Professional Services and with effect from AY2019/20, the annual planning process was strengthened with the inclusion of meetings with senior staff from each Professional Services Directorate. As part of the University's mechanism for Institution Led-Review (ILR), termed Internal Teaching Review (ITR), representatives of the Professional Services, including the Registry, the Careers and Employability Service and Student Support are invited to attend and contribute to panel visits. A specific session during the ITR enables the ITR Panel to capture the strengths (and weaknesses, if any) of our Professional Services in education-related matters. All ITRs from AY2019/2020 onwards have had this bespoke session. Documentation associated with the ITR has been amended to clearly reflect the following aims: (i) to review the extent and quality of the interactions between relevant professional services and a School and its student and identify any areas for enhancement and (ii) to encourage and support engagement with relevant professional services.	**COMPLETE**

		These processes as described will continue as standard practice.	
Monitoring, training and induction of External Examiners	Reflect on the effectiveness of its current arrangements for monitoring the training and induction provided for external examiners at School level. In addition, it should ensure that all students have easy access to the external examiners' reports for their programme.	In the one-year follow-up report we: • Described the information all External Examiners (EEs) are provided with relating to their role in the University, including but not limited to: links to various teaching policies and regulations and advice on how to access the virtual learning environment, MyAberdeen. It was noted that Individual Schools also provide additional induction. • Confirmed that a review of the training and induction provided to EEs had been undertaken. The review identified a number of enhancements to improve the efficiency of delivery and user friendliness of the information provided to EEs. • Noted that making external examiner reports accessible to students is an action that is in progress. In our October 2022 update we noted we had: • Begun a review of the current External Examining process from beginning to end. To date, work undertaken has included: o a review of review of the appropriateness of all documentation pertaining to the nomination and recruitment of EEs was undertaken; o the creation of a QAC-owned MyAberdeen organisational area for EEs which houses policy, institutional information and a training package to cover information pertinent to all EEs. From this area, EEs gain access to School-specific areas which provide further information, training, School contacts and key dates as required throughout the year. • Established a small group, comprised of academic staff and key stakeholders, to continue this review work, more specifically in respect of policies governing the EE process. In terms of ensuring students have access to External Examiner reports, within the one-year follow-up report we proposed to modify the form to include a section that contained the EEs assurance of the quality of the course/programme that could be released to students, with the more detailed considerations of the EE kept more private. **This has subsequently been actioned as a recommendation from QESR.** Since October 2022 we have:	**COMPLETE**

		- Finalised the review of the External Examining process, in respect of policies governing the EE process. The review output was approved by Senate in April 2023. - Agreed, at a meeting of the University's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), a proposal to arrange for the publishing of all EE reports online with access restricted to staff and students of the University, and the relevant EEs. EE reports will be made available for a period of three years, updated annually on a rolling basis. This project was rolled out in September 2023.	
Review processes for Collaborative Provision to ensure accuracy of Register of Partnerships	Review processes for maintaining the Register of Partnerships and Collaborative Provision, to ensure its ongoing currency and completeness.	The Register of Partnerships is now managed by the Academic Services team who ensure actions for partnerships, such as renewals or terminations, are progressed as appropriate and liaise with QA contacts, the Contracts Coordinator in Research & Innovation and with the Lead International Governance Officer as necessary. A process for the approval and management of International Partnerships is in place and work remains ongoing to align the processes for other partnerships to this.	**COMPLETE**

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS REVIEW: ACTION PLAN
Updated: March 2024

This plan provides the actions to be taken in respect of (i) Student Access to External Examiner Reports; and (ii) Pastoral Support. These actions are continued from the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) 4 process.

As part of the Education Committee governance, all Education Committees have representation from all Schools, which allows a two-way flow of communication between the Schools and University.

Overarching Area for Action	Associated Actions	Timelines	Responsible Person(s)	Responsible Committee and Monitoring	Update on Progress	Review Date
Student Access to External Examiner Reports	Communication to External Examiners to advise that their reports will be published and made available to students.	July 2023	Dean for Quality Assurance & Enhancement	QAC. Reports back via Annual Monitoring exercise for 2022/23.	**Complete:** A communication to External Examiners was issued on 3 July 2023.	-
	Communication to Schools to ensure upload of External Examiner Reports to organisation page on MyAberdeen.	July 2023	Dean for Quality Assurance & Enhancement	QAC. Reports back via Annual Monitoring exercise for 2022/23.	**Complete:** A communication to Schools was issued on 3 July 2023.	Annually (Ensure reports have been uploaded)
	Guidance to be developed regarding the publication of External Examiner Reports to describe the location of publication, naming conventions and the relevant process.	August 2023	Dean for Quality Assurance & Enhancement	QAC. Reports back via Annual Monitoring exercise for 2022/23.	**Complete:** Guidance for the publication of reports was developed and issued to Schools on 14 September 2023.	Annually (Review guidance)
	Inclusion of transparent information pertinent to the Organisation Area in MyAberdeen to be added to the annual staff communication for the updating of course handbooks and for induction/ orientation events at School-level.	August 2023	Dean for Quality Assurance & Enhancement	QAC. Reports back via Annual Monitoring exercise for 2022/23.	**Complete:** The staff communication was issued on 24 August 2023.	Annually (Review communication)
	Communication to Students to advise of uploaded External Examiner Reports to MyAberdeen.	August 2023	Schools / Student Experience	QAC. Reports back via Annual Monitoring exercise for 2022/23.	**Complete:** communications were issued to students by the end of September 2023.	Annually (Ensure communications have been issued)
	Amendments to the External Examiner Annual Report form to advise that reports will be published.	April 2023	Dean for Quality	QAC. Reports back via Annual Monitoring exercise for 2022/23.	**Complete:** the amended report was approved by Senate on 19 April 2023.	September 2024 (Review of form)

						Assurance & Enhancement
Pastoral Support	Review and restructuring of public-facing pastoral UG and PGT support webpages to enhance the purpose and clarity of the personal tutor and pastoral guidance roles.	Sept 2023	Dean for Student Support and Experience	UEC, via SSEC. Updates provided to Committee via SSEC Report to UEC.	**Complete**: Webpages revised and published for September 2023	June 2024 ahead of next AY (Review of Webpages)
	Restructuring of staff pastoral guidance staff web resources to aid staff in locating appropriate information for UG and PGT pastoral support.	Sept 2023	Dean for Student Support and Experience	UEC, via SSEC. Updates provided to Committee via SSEC Report to UEC.	**Complete**: Webpages revised and published for September 2023	June 2024 ahead of next AY (Review of Webpages)
	Introduction of in-person staff training for pastoral support and guidance role.	Sept 2023	Dean for Student Support and Experience	UEC, via SSEC. Updates provided to Committee via SSEC Report to UEC.	**Complete**: training delivered in September 2023 with further sessions planned throughout the academic year.	June 2024 ahead of next AY (Review of feedback from previous sessions)
	Introduction of an annual pastoral support and guidance staff/student information event to be included as part of BeWell/Mental Health Awareness week.	Sept 2023	Dean for Student Support and Experience	UEC, via SSEC. Updates provided to Committee via SSEC Report to UEC.	**Complete**: BeWell/Mental Health Awareness week was delivered 9-13th October 2023 and is an annual event.	June 2024 ahead of next AY (Review of feedback and communications)
	The Senior Pastoral Support Group will oversee and review the consistency and equity of the student experience, reporting to the Student Support and Experience Committee.	Sept 2023	Dean for Student Support and Experience	UEC, via SSEC. Updates provided to Committee via SSEC Report to UEC.	**Complete**: forum currently exists and SSEC agenda will include pastoral support agenda item	June 2024 ahead of next AY (Review of SPS&GF Arrangements)
	Dissemination of information to staff pertinent to pastoral support to ensure they have the most up to date information about support available via Senior Personal Tutors within Schools.	Sept 2023	Dean for Student Support and Experience	UEC, via SSEC. Updates provided to Committee via SSEC Report to UEC.	**Complete**: Information disseminated via staff newsletter, school communication, and SPT training packs for in-house training.	June 2024 ahead of next AY (Review of SPT Forum Arrangements)
	Communications to be issued to students pertinent to the pastoral support arrangements in their School to ensure they have the most up to date information about support available, including specific information in orientation and induction materials. [1]	Sept 2023	Dean for Student Support and Experience	UEC, via SSEC. Updates provided to Committee via SSEC Report to UEC.	**Complete**: pastoral support information shared with students prior to the start of, and throughout, the academic year.	June 2024 ahead of next AY (Review of communications)

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[1] Information is disseminated to students via the Experience, Engagement and Wellbeing team, who coordinate student communications. Further information is disseminated via Senior Personal Tutors and the Senior Personal Tutor Forum.

| | Review of PGT pastoral support to enhance consistency of provision and enhance student understanding and access to appropriate support networks. | Sept 2023 | Dean for Student Support and Experience | UEC, via SSEC. Updates provided to Committee via SSEC Report to UEC. | **In Progress**: review will be overseen by SPSG and reported to relevant committees | June 2024 ahead of next AY[2] |

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[2] This action will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in order to ensure an equity of the student experience, and feedback will be captured as part of the ASES and PTES surveys. The data from these surveys inform discussions at SSEC and UEC. The SSEC has a standing item on pastoral support for discussion related to any pastoral support matters. All Schools are represented on both the SSEC and UEC, and thus the School representatives maintain a flow of communication between the Committee and Schools.

Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM): record of meeting

Institution	University of Aberdeen
QAA Attendees	Caroline Turnbull
Institution Attendees	Professor Jo-Anne Murray, Vice-Principal (Education) Professor Steve Tucker, Dean for Quality Assurance & Quality Enhancement Professor Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean for Educational Innovation Dr Gillian Mackintosh, Director of Academic Services & Online Education Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar (Academic Services) Karen Scaife, Wellbeing & Engagement Manager Rhiannon Ledwell, Vice-President for Education (AUSA Students' Union)
Date	**Meeting held on Thursday 29 February 2024**

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies:

The QAA Liaison Officer welcomed everyone to the meeting and colleagues introduced themselves. There were no apologies noted.

The QAA Liaison Officer thanked colleagues and particularly Liam Dyker, for supplying the paperwork for the meeting, recognising it takes time to collate these documents. She shared the following observations on the documents circulated:

a. In terms of quality process information, please don't keep sending on copies of the University processes being followed unless these have been specifically updated. If this should be the case then a summary of these changes added to document ILM001b would be an appropriate place to record this.

b. It is great to have copies of key papers that have gone to the academic governance committees throughout a session – to see how the University's work continues to evolve. However, there are also occasions when having a copy of the actual meeting minute would have been helpful, so the QAA Liaison Officer could check the subsequent actions. She went on to state that the inclusion of some meeting minutes would have resolved a number of questions that occurred as she read through the papers. University colleagues agreed to supply extracts or full copies of relevant committee papers for future meetings. Finally, the QAA Liaison Officer asked if in future she could also receive a copy of the minute from the annual meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) which considers all the annual monitoring and internal institutional review meetings.

Action: For future ILM meetings, the University will supply extracts or full copies of relevant committee papers, particularly those for QAC.

The QAA Liaison Officer went on to inform colleagues that she had very recently moved to a new role within the agency and was now working as a Quality Enhancement and

Engagement Manager with the Membership, Quality Enhancement and Standards team. This move means she will no longer be the University's liaison officer with this role now residing with Laura Porter (Quality Enhancement Manager, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). It was confirmed that Laura would be in touch with the University to introduce herself to colleagues.

2. Institutional approach to enhancement

The QAA Liaison Officer explained that before exploring the items on today's meeting agenda, she wanted to pick up on two additional matters that were of interest to QAA:

i) **Consultation on Modern Languages:** The QAA Liaison Officer asked colleagues if they could provide her with an update on the current consultation reviewing the University's Modern Languages provision. She outlined that from QAA's perspective the agency would be interested in how the University intends to continue to assure the quality and standards of that provision once any final decisions have been reached, and what arrangements would be developed to support any students impacted. University colleagues confirmed that the consultation had ended and the risk of redundancy had been lifted in part for some staff (and lifted for all staff in modern languages. University colleagues confirmed that work was ongoing to develop a series of plans which aimed to maximise student numbers and research outputs. It was confirmed that these plans had been considered by the University Court during the week beginning 19 February 2024. It was also confirmed that the University was considering options for reducing staff numbers through voluntary severance (VS) and early retirement in order to avoid the need for any kind of compulsory redundancies. The plans that had been considered by the University Court had received positive feedback particularly linked to options for attracting more students to apply to these programmes. The Dean for Quality Assurance & Quality Enhancement also confirmed that at this point in the consultation process he did not expect there to be any direct impact on the University's quality processes or approaches to enhancement. The Vice-President for Education (AUSA Students' Union) raised a number of concerns regarding the University's consultation approach. She stated that students were very concerned about the possibilities of staff redundancy, and expressed her disappointment that there had been no student representation on the steering group that was leading on the consultation process. She went on to express concerns regarding a lack of student representation and voice as part of the University's decision-making process. The Vice-Principal (Education) accepted that there had been limitations with student partnership working so far in the consultation process and confirmed the University's ongoing commitment to working with students and staff on this matter. She went on to reassure the QAA Liaison Officer that following on from the University Court meeting, an implementation group being established would have students as members and that this commitment had been emphasises to students in a letter from the Senior Vice-Principal to a group of students in response to an open letter.

ii) **AFG applying for International Membership with QAA:** The QAA Liaison Officer explained that one of her colleagues had informed her that one of the University's collaborative partners (AFG), was intending to submit a proposal to the University of Aberdeen's Board of Governance on 12 December to seek permission to apply for an international membership with QAA. The QAA Liaison Officer wondered if anyone present was able to provide an update on whether this proposal had been approved or not.

University colleagues confirmed that no decision had been made yet, with conversations still ongoing with the Qatar Academic Planning Group. Following a question from the Dean for Quality Assurance & Quality Enhancement, the QAA Liaison Officer outlined some of the merits and benefits of international membership to AFG as a separate and independent institution that it wouldn't get via the University of Aberdeen.

iii)   **Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes:** The QAA Liaison Officer noted from the University's Annual report on ILR for session 2022-23, that as part of the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy, a number of Task and Finish Groups (TFGs) have been established to achieve the strategic priorities linked to Education. With reference to the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes, she asked colleagues to provide her with an update on how the trialling of systems and approaches with students and other stakeholders is going and enquired whether everything remains on schedule to launch the Framework and associated attributes and skills in academic year 2024-2025? University colleagues and the Vice-President for Education (AUSA Students' Union) confirmed that a system being used by the University called 'MySkills' has already gone live with a 'soft launch' and colleagues reported that 815 skills evaluations had already taken place. The Vice-President for Education (AUSA Students' Union) confirmed that the system replaces a student's enhanced transcript. This system supports students who for example have been involved with the Students' Union as class reps etc, to appropriately record the skills they have developed. Students have access to a dashboard, which initially measures and then reassesses a student's confidence in a particular skill. It provides students with an initial snapshot at a period of time, which is then followed by exercises to develop a skill, after which the student reconsiders their confidence level in order to hopefully see growth. The output from the system is a passport which students can take away with them once they have finished their studies, supporting them in terms of future employability and further studies. The system will also allow the University to consider and further enhance the skills and support mechanisms that are available to students. Finally, it was confirmed that the University intends to formally launch the MySkills system next session.

In terms of the University's Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes, it was confirmed that following a re-fresh, a revised set had been approved by the University Senate. The revised Attributes had been developed in consultation with staff, students and employers, with this work being led by the Deam for Employability and the Careers team. Colleagues confirmed that in the revised Attributes there were no longer separate ones for Postgraduate students. Using the experiences and feedback associated with its original Graduate Attributes, the University had taken steps to ensure the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes are less abstract and support students to better evidence how they fulfil these. The Careers team is now developing a suite of employability courses which will be ready and available to students to coincide with the launch of the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes in 2024-25. These courses will be open to any students within their programme of study and means changes to programmes, course and programme learning outcomes, and approaches to assessments.

iv) Work-based learning: The QAA Liaison Officer also noted from the University's Annual report on ILR for session 2022-23 that work is being taken forward this session, by the Work Placements Task and Finish Group, to upscale the use of work-based learning (WBL) within

courses and programmes. University colleagues confirmed this is being led by two Deans (the Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship and the Dean for Enterprise and Innovation) who have completed a review to better understand what WBL means across the University community. The University is committed to ensuring that every student gets an opportunity to experience WBL as part of their programme of study. This review has considered a range of factors including:

- the credit size of these placements;
- how colleagues consider the 'step up' in credits associated with WBL so its not just about the length of any placement;
- building a common understanding amongst staff and students of the language associated with the design and delivery of WBL
- given the range of placements offered, what support needs to be in place across the University;
- how are WBL opportunities assessed;
- how to ensure WBL and placements are accessible to all students, perhaps through the use of remote placement.

The QAA officer understands that following this review, a range of work will continue to be taken forward. This includes the production of a handbook on the design and delivery of WBL and the establishment of an online database of placement opportunities.

Following on from this discussion the QAA Liaison Officer enquired as to the involvement of students in the Task and Finish Groups that have been established to take forward the Education priorities within the wider Aberdeen 2040 Strategy. University colleagues confirmed that students are indeed members on each of these groups.

v) Approach to evaluation: The QAA Liaison Officer noted from the University's Annual Outcome agreement report to SFC for session 2022-23, that a huge amount of activity is outlined as taking place across the Institution. She enquired as to how the University takes steps to evaluate the impact of it all, in order to ascertain if it is investing in the correct initiatives? Colleagues confirmed that evaluation was part of the remit of each of the different governance committees, with the University Education Committee (UEC) routinely reviewing school action plans – which require Schools to report on progress and actions. Colleagues went on to provide the example of the current Principles for Delivery of Education which were developed following a detailed evaluation of changes to policy and practice that had initially be necessary due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated pivot to online. Colleagues were content that the University's approach supports staff and students to benefit from its evaluation activities, with lessons learned used to support enhancement. Finally, it was confirmed that the University makes use of a range of data to help with its evaluation activities. For example, this session the data available has indicated an increase in the number of academic integrity cases, the reasons for this are currently being reviewed and evaluated.

vi) Assessment and Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI): The QAA Liaison Officer also noted from the University's Annual Outcome agreement report to SFC for session 2022-23, that a new set of support resources, guidance and information had been developed for use

by staff and students linked to assessment and Generative AI. She asked what the feedback had been from staff and students who have used the resources and what the institution's next steps will be given the current interest across HE in Generative AI? The Vice-President for Education (AUSA Students' Union) and colleagues from the University, all agreed that given how quickly this whole topic area is moving, students and staff still have questions and work needs to continue to increase awareness of these resources. Colleagues recognised that both staff and students will use Generative AI, and it was important to develop policy and practice which support them to do so, rather than trying in anyway to ban its use. University colleagues went on to describe a research project which is currently being undertaken by a student intern. A focus group approach will consider the challenges of Generative AI from a student perspective. The University plans to ensure that information is available to students within each course they study on the VLE, rather than this being sited more remotely on the University website. Colleagues confirmed that, in partnership with a number of other Scottish HEIs (the University of Dundee, Heriot-Watt University, and Edinburgh Napier University), Aberdeen had secured funding from the Advance HE Collaborative Development Fund to look at Generative AI, supporting conversations to take place across the sector. The project has already established the Scottish AI Tertiary Education Network, which all HEIs have joined. Plans are currently underway to invite colleges to join the network and ensure that every institution has both staff and student representation within the network.

The Dean for Quality Assurance & Quality Enhancement confirmed that in response to the advent of Generative AI, academic staff had already started making changes to their approach to, and methods of, assessment. This is resulting in lots of changes being reviewed by QAC. QAC is using this as an opportunity to identify good practice – so these examples can be shared across the Schools and also to flag with individual Schools should there be any issues with proposed changes. He went on to state that many of the changes proposed are also consistent with the University's wider drive to introduce more use of authentic assessment.

3. **Student partnership**

The QAA Liaison Officer confirmed that it was useful to have sight of the update paper on the Student Partnership Agreement which was in place between the University and the Students' Union. The document confirms that that three priority areas were currently being taken forward, mental health, inclusion, and employability. She also noted the approach of appointing a University lead and a SU staff lead for each area. Given the table provides examples of suggested reporting, the QAA Liaison Officer asked if it would be possible for colleagues to provide some examples of some of the actual activity that is being delivered under each priority. The Vice-President for Education (AUSA Students' Union) and the Wellbeing & Engagement Manager confirmed that the SPA is very much a working document which is reported on at each Student Wellbeing Committee meeting, as well as on a regular basis to the Mental Health Working Group, the Student Support and Experience Committee and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee. They confirmed that there are approximately 3 – 4 projects activity running under each of the priority areas. They provided some examples including, the running of black history month; the MySkills Project – linked to employability; a forthcoming Careers fair in March which was being developed to

include representatives from voluntary organisations and charities and the introduction of Rainbow rooms to support wellbeing. It was also noted that positive changes had been made to the class representative system leading to enhanced engagement by class reps. These changes include more in-person events, standardised feedback forms, mock SSLC training and better communication with student reps in Qatar.

Action: The Wellbeing & Engagement Manager agreed to supply the QAA Liaison Officer with a more up to date version of paper ILM025 which would which details all of the current initiatives. Post meeting note – This paper has now been received.

4. Actions taken since ELIR 4/QESR

The QAA Liaison Officer asked for clarification and an update on a number of the recommendations the University had received during its QESR in 2023.

- **Student Access to External Examiners reports:** Further to the information in paper ILM004a, colleagues confirmed that communications were issued to students at the start of this session, that explain both the role of External Examiners within a programme/course of study and how students can access External Examiners' reports. Colleagues confirmed that the University has decided to use VLE sites as the most effective means of providing easy access to these reports for students. Each of the academic schools was issued with information detailing the University's expectations on making External Examiner reports available to students. The QAA Liaison Officer asked how the University assured itself that the academic schools had indeed completed this work. Colleagues stated that part of this reassurance was provided through completed student course feedback forms, and from discussions with the Students' Union President. Also, the Administrative Officer (Academic Services) who curated the site information had completed a review of the content on school VLE sites.

- **Pastoral Support:** The QAA Liaison Officer noted the introduction of an in-person staff training offer on the pastoral support and guidance role, and asked if this training is being completed by all staff undertaking the role? She also asked what engagement levels have been like? University colleagues explained that a full-scale review had been undertaken, led by the Dean of Student Support and Experience. As part of this review, the decision had been taken to extend the use of the pastoral support role to also provide support to Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students. Colleagues went on to confirm that the training is offered to all staff in UG/PG teaching roles and generally uptake on the programme has been excellent. The training documentation has been updated and will be regularly reviewed by a forum that has been established in this area. Colleagues updated that an evaluation is currently underway to consider pastoral support for PGT and Online students to ensure what is offered continues to meet student needs and expectations. The QAA Liaison Officer asked colleagues to outline what the University's expectations are of pastoral support, and how does the institution assure itself that students get a comparable experience? University colleagues confirmed that the AUSA Students' Union is currently running a 'Borderless Campaign' focused on supporting international students. The campaign addresses all aspects of the student experience from academic, to pastoral and social life.

There was also a discussion on potentially using the data collected as part of the University's Excellence Awards, gathered in the 'best personal tutor' category, to identify examples of good practice that could be shared more widely across the institution. The QAA Liaison Officer suggested liaising with colleagues at the University of Stirling who had been successfully undertaking this type of analysis for a number of years now to see if they had any advice to offer.

- **ELIR 4 (2018) recommendations:** The QAA Liaison Officer noted from the paperwork submitted that it seems 3 of the 7 recommendations appear still to be outstanding. She asked when the University expects to be in a position to complete these outstanding actions? The three recommendations are:

  o Balance between institutional and school responsibilities
  o Preparations for teaching: specifically peer observation
  o Review of processes for collaborative provision

There was a discussion that in the context of these three recommendations, their nature is such that from the University's perspective, they remain ongoing. The example that was specifically discussed concerns the balance between institutional and school responsibilities. The current academic committee structures and current governance arrangements mean this is a matter which will importantly remain under review. With regards to reviewing its processes for Collaborative provision, University colleagues stated that given current plans to expand collaborative provision, it was important to ensure these processes were subject to regular review.

Reflecting on this update, the QAA Liaison Officer encourage the University to review the approach it has been taking to updating on these recommendations, so that the narrative that has been outlined in today's ILM is better reflected in its ELIR update reports. That way any future review team is clearer on the progress made since, and how the Institution plans to keep matters under review.

5. Sector-wide enhancement topic

The QAA Liaison Officer thanked colleagues for supplying the update paper on the institution's engagement with the current sector-wide enhancement topic. She noted the institutional piloting of TESTA, asking colleagues to confirm that as part of the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan to 2025 for Education related activities, two of the academic schools (Schools of Social Science and Natural and Computing Science) had been part of phase 1 of TESTA? With 3 new academic schools engaging as part of phase 2. University of Aberdeen colleagues confirmed that the QAA Liaison Officer's understanding was correct and the TESTA project was coming to the end of Phase 2. Currently work is underway to consider how TESTA might work for postgraduate programmes, so that ultimately a single process is developed to support both UG and PGT provision.

Colleagues explained that undertaking the training, programme/course redesign and quality approval processes is a very time and resource intensive activity. So, colleagues from the **Centre for Academic Development (CAD)** have designed materials that will allow Schools

to proactively take forward the process for themselves. Internally this is known as 'TESTA lite. This means that for each academic school, **CAD** colleagues work with school colleagues leading and training them on how to take a programme through the process. For the second programme involved in the TESTA process, the school is supplied with a support pack which is used to allow it to lead on the process – with support provided by the **academic development t**eam. With the third programme, the school leads on and is responsible for the TESTA change process, with QAC members from the school being part of TESTA at this stage. The University believes it's important for QAC members from the School, to be involved in the school level change processes, with this ultimately helping when TESTA driven changes to programme provision come to the Committee for approval. University colleagues spoke of the importance of building this protocol for TESTA in order to best support University wide implementation over the next two years.

The QAA Liaison Officer noted from the Annual Monitoring External Examiner Summary reports produced for its UG and PG provision, that some concerns had been raised by External Examiners related to the removal of innovative practices such as online discussion boards etc. She was interested to explore with the University how it undertakes to ensure the best balance is achieved between online and in-person learning and teaching in order to most effectively support students. Colleagues confirmed that QAC school representatives are responsible for ensuring the University policy and practice linked to innovations in L&T practice and the use of online tools is on the agenda with their School Teaching Executives. This approach should ensure that innovations introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic which have demonstrated to be effective for students are built upon. Colleagues stressed the importance of keeping discussions open here in terms of central university expectations and subject/discipline requirements. It was felt that course amendments/approvals associated with the implementation of TESTA and wider work on the design of assessment will help here. It was also felt that changes to the representation systems for students supported more regular feedback to course/programme leaders which should also help to ensure more innovative practices are maintained particularly when students comment positively on their experiences. Finally, colleagues explained that the University has an Excellence Award linked to the 'most creative assessment' which could be used to help support the sharing of good practice within the academic community.

6. Academic standards and quality processes:

The QAA Liaison Officer noted from the Annual ILR report submitted to SFC, that the ITR of the School of Language Literature, Music and Visual Cultures had been postponed to academic year 2023 - 2024 and enquired as to the nature of the extenuating circumstances that required this postponement. Colleagues stated that the School Director of Education was not available to support the review work as specified in the original ITR schedule. Colleagues confirmed that the ITR had been successfully completed at the end of December 2023.

The QAA Liaison officer noted that the University had not submitted full copies of the ITR reports for session 2022-23 as part of the paperwork it had produced for this ILM. Colleagues agreed to send these on.

Action: University colleagues to supply QAA with full copies of the ITR reports for reviews that took place in session 2022-23. Post meeting note: These reports have now been supplied.

The QAA officer noted that the University had provided QAA with copies of a number of Summary reports linked to Annual Monitoring for session 2021-22. She asked given this ILM meeting falls quite late in academic session 2023-24 and recognising the timelines that the University works to in terms of its review and approval processes (the reports don't go to QAC until end of March/April 2024) – would it be possible for QAA to have copies of the session 2022-23 Summary reports once these are available please? University of Aberdeen colleagues confirmed that following a change of process associated with annual monitoring, summary reports will no longer be produced. Instead School reports will be discussed at QAC with the minute of the meeting providing a summary of good practice and areas to be addressed. Colleagues stated they were happy to make arrangements to have these School reports and the minutes of the relevant QAC meeting (being held at end of June) sent to QAA for consideration.

Action: University colleagues to supply copies of the School reports and QAC minutes associated with the June meeting.

Across the various summary reports supplied by the University, the QAA Liaison Officer had identified a number of common themes which the University is aware of. She raised a number of questions linked to these themes.

- **Grade Inflation:** The QAA Liaison Officer noted the University's use of data to support it to measure the attainment of its students and recognised the University has measures in place to monitor student performance and instances of possible Grade Inflation. She was interested in how the Institution continues to re-assure itself that there aren't ongoing concerns? University colleagues explained that monitoring of this information was an ongoing matter and it was important, through its academic committee structures to keep performance under review. The role of External Examiners here was viewed as important, as was the relationship to student entry tariffs. Responsibility for monitoring student attainment and award data lies with the academic schools and the University is content that its graduate outcomes are broadly comparable to those of Russell Group institutions who have similar entry criteria to those of Aberdeen.

- **Academic Misconduct:** The QAA Liaison Officer asked if colleagues could provide her with an update on the University's work in this area. In particular she was interested in how its approach to assessment supports students to avoid being subject to potential academic misconduct, what the impact of Generative AI has been on case numbers and support offered for international students?

  Colleagues recognised that Generative AI, while rapidly emerging was still relatively new and on the whole staff are taking a cautious approach to its use as they develop their expertise and understanding of what these technologies might potentially offer in terms of approaches to assessment. Using examples, discussions are currently underway with both staff and students in order to better advise on whether an instance is truly a case of academic misconduct or actually something that has arisen as a result of inexperience in academic writing. Work is continuing to explore staff and students understanding of what is considered to be academic misconduct and identify where any differences exist. Colleagues also stressed the importance being placed on opportunities to share good practice recognising that currently the use of Generative AI is variable across schools. The University intends to use this

information to inform a larger piece of work on Generative AI, recognising that these technologies will in some instances fundamentally change L&T and assessment practice.

Colleagues outlined that a range of support is offered to all students on plagiarism, including a toolkit of new resources and a video on aspects of the student learning journey. The Students' Union also offers a really helpful advice service.

- **Delivery of Collaborative provision** – The QAA Liaison Officer noted that the University's partnership with Online Education Services (formerly the Interactive Design Institute) was not renewed and arrangements had been put in place to transfer programme content back to the University. She asked colleagues if they could outline the arrangements which were put in place to support students? University of Aberdeen colleagues qualified that the decision to terminate the contract was purely for financial reasons and had nothing to do with any concerns around the quality of the teaching being offered. The programme content and its delivery for students has been transitioned across to the University's VLE. The decision impacts continuing students with admission of new students only commencing from September 2024. All of the provision remains online and is now being delivered by University academic staff, who have used it as an opportunity to develop shared delivery across other programmes within the Business School. The University has established a Project Board to manage the transition and the eLearning team in the Centre for Academic Development work with the Business School to support the move of content from IDI over to the VLE. It was confirmed that the programmes affected reside within the University's Business School, with approximately 200 students currently enrolled.

Note: At this point, the 2 hour meeting time was complete. However the QAA Liaison Officer still had a small number of questions to explore with colleagues. It was agreed that she would submit these to the University, who would prepare a response to each of them. The remainder of these meeting notes capture the questions asked and shows the university response in blue font. .

The QAA officer noted that in the Annual Monitoring PGT Annual Programme Reviews Summary report for session 2021-22, concerns were flagged about the language skills of PG international students. I'm interested in what changes the university and its schools/departments have made in response?

- All Schools have a Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Pastoral Support Lead overseeing PGT School support which includes directing students to support services including language support. In addition, School Support leads are members of the Senior Pastoral Support Group which has oversight of institutional pastoral support provision. Leads are responsible for ensuring that there is clear and regular school messaging signposting students to relevant support, including language support, complementing central messaging through student ezines and campus digital noticeboards.
- School Education Action Plans identify areas for enhancement to PGT provision and has resulted in a number of Schools establishing compulsory PGT study skills courses which incorporate writing and language skill support for international students. These Action Plans are reviewed and monitored through the Education committees enabling oversight of activities and the sharing of practice.

- The Language Centre provides support specifically for international students in the form of seminars, drop-in sessions and one-to-one appointments. The Centre offers the following sessions: (i) academic writing; (ii) seminar skills; (iii) general fluency and communication skills; (iv) listening and note-taking; and (vi) presentation skills. In addition, the Language Centre works with Schools to design bespoke support and currently works with Engineering, Business, Law, Psychology, Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History (DHPA), Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition (MMSN) and Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture (LLMVC). In academic year 2022/23, more than 2000 students attended these bespoke sessions.
- For PGT students, complementary to the specific writing skills workshops delivered by staff from the Language Centre, the Student Learning Service (SLS) has an open programme of online and in-person writing workshops for PGT students, addressing various aspects/formats of academic writing, which are frequently attended by international students. SLS also offers one-to-one advice sessions on academic writing, which are available throughout the year. In preparation for the summer projects/dissertations SLS offer a range of writing and study strategies workshops for PGTs, which run in the May-June period. SLS also offers online resources for PGT students (in Achieve+ in the VLE) which include guides / videos on all aspects of academic writing and broader study strategies.
- For postgraduate research (PGR) students, SLS offers an online 3-part academic writing course for PGR students, which is run in the first and second terms, and is particularly popular with international students from across the university. One-to-one advice sessions (online and in-person) on academic writing are available to PGRs with the agreement of the supervisor.

In the same document the QAA officer also noted that in the same reports further concerns had been raised by some Schools on the achievements of these cohorts and their ability to engage with their dissertations. I'm curious as to what the university has done to address this concern? (This matter was also picked up in ILM024)

- The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) has seen an increase in new courses that precede dissertation courses in the programme, aimed at developing the skills necessary for project work and dissertation preparation. For example, AH5901 and AH5902 *Christianity and the Visual Arts Preparation,* run in the Art History department for both online and on campus students, are for part-time students and have been created to allow students to start work on their dissertation in their first year of study. Additionally, a suite of Academic Skills for Business courses were introduced in 2022/23 (BU50P1, BU50P2, BU50PB, BU50PL, BU55P1 and BU55P2).
- QAC has also reviewed and approved a number of programme proposals for integrated Masters degrees leading to PhD where there is a strong emphasis on research methods training.

7. **Use of external reference points in quality processes:**

Colleagues should note that the QAA Liaison Officer had no questions to raise regarding the University's mapping to the UK Quality Code. She is content that the mapping meets sector

expectations and she notes the changes to 3 sections and the University's approach to keeping the mapping under review and updating.

8. Use of data and evidence to inform self-evaluation and decision making:

PTES/PRES: The QAA Liaison Officer noted that the University participated in the PTES and PRES surveys in 2023 for the first time in recent years. Noting the satisfaction scores and response rates. Accepting it was the first engagement with these surveys, could the University confirm the actions it has taken forward to hear to improve response rates this session?

- The University piloted the PTES and PRES surveys in 2023. The surveys were opened for a short window (3 weeks) and data shared with relevant committees and Schools. PTES results were discussed at SSEC and PRES at PGR Committees where it was agreed to continue participation with the surveys. Relevant actions are decided at both Committee level to inform institutional actions and at School level to inform School action plans. To enhance participation both surveys have been launched in 2024 with a longer response window (Feb-May) and supported by a campus-wide promotional campaign 'Survey Season' encouraging community engagement with all surveys (NSS, PTES, PRES), as well as more targeted School and institutional messaging encouraging participation in NSS, PTES, PRES specifically.
- To close the feedback loop, Schools communicate relevant School-based actions in 'You Said, We Did' messaging directly to their students. Schools are encouraged to send their relevant School-based actions to the Experience, Engagement and Wellbeing team for promotion in the student's 'You Said, We Did' webpage where all actions on feedback are promoted.

The QAA Liaison Officer noted that from is analysis and reviewing of non-continuation rates across all years of study the University believes its internal data shows that non-continuation has been rising since the Covid-19 pandemic with overall non-continuation rising from 2.6% in 2019/20 to 3.2% in 2020/21 and 5.1% in 2021/22. Would it be possible for the University to confirm what strategies being adopted to tackle this rise?

- Institutional non-continuation data is reported annually and discussed at relevant University Committees (SSEC and UEC) as well as at School Education Committees. All Schools are required to produce a School Education Action Plan which must include School-based activities aimed at improving non-continuation rates. Schools are supported in developing relevant action plans by the Dean for Student Support and Experience and the VP for Education. School action plans are submitted to and discussed at SSEC and shared to promote good practices.
- Non-continuation data informs institutional mental health and wellbeing strategies with the goal of enhancing retention. The wellbeing strategy has a strong focus on promoting positive mental health as well as awareness of support mechanisms for students, particularly during periods when student withdrawal rates have been identified as at their highest. Work is guided by the student pressure point matrix and Mental Health and Wellbeing Group. Activities include regular "take a break" opportunities (particularly during assessment periods), BeWell week and Wellbeing Wednesdays.

- School monitoring leads are responsible for tracking non-continuation/student withdrawal rates and ensure that effective monitoring procedures are in place to identify students at risk, and to ensure that supportive interventions are quickly administered. Activities are supported by a School Monitoring Leads Group which is responsible for over-seeing and developing monitoring procedures, as well as being a forum for sharing good practice.

Data for oversight of: Appeals and Complaints (2021-22): This paper provides a summary of the number and nature of academic appeals and complaints that were received by the University. The QAA officer notes a large jump in the number of Academic Appeals during this session. Given where we find ourselves in session 2023-24, the QAA officer was hoping that figures for 2022-23 might just about be being considered by the University. Is someone able to provide me with an update on these please and how they compare with the 2021-22 figures (464 up from 274)?

- The Appeals and Complaints Data Summary 2022/23 was recently considered by the Quality Assurance Committee at its meeting on 6 March 2024. In this regard, the paper is attached.

Data for oversight of: Student Discipline (Academic) (2021-22): Academic Misconduct Update: This paper provides an update on the volume of academic misconduct cases investigated during each academic year over the last 6 years. The University's code covering different categories of misconduct was updated and approved in 2021-22 with revised codes being used for new cases in 2022-23. The paper shows there has been a significant increase in the total number of academic misconduct cases up to 409 in 2021-22 from 210 in 2020/21. The biggest contributing category is plagiarism where figures increased to 356 from 187 (2020-21). The figures also indicate that this is a bigger issue for international students as a student group (almost doubling). Again, given where we find ourselves in session 2023-24, the QAA officer was hoping that figures for 2022-23 might just about be being considered by the University. Is someone able to provide me with an update on these please and how they compare with the 2021-22 figures?

- The Academic Discipline Data Summary 2022/23 was recently considered by the Quality Assurance Committee at its meeting on 6 March 2024. In this regard, the paper is attached.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATE NON-CONTINUATION INTERNAL DATA

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> The purpose of the paper is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the 2022/23 full-time undergraduate non-continuation data as produced internally by the University.
>
> This differs from the HESA non-continuation performance indicator, which is restricted to first year undergraduate entrants only, and is used as a metric in the Guardian University Guide and the Complete University Guide. The HESA non-continuation performance indicator is under review as part of a wider review of HESA performance indicators and has not been produced for 2024 as a result.

2.   PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	**Date**
Previously considered/approved by	N/A	N/A
Further consideration/ approval required by	SSEC UEC	tbc tbc

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

> This paper is for information, discussion, and appropriate action planning at the relevant University committees.

4.   DISCUSSION

This paper details and analyses the internal data for non-continuation throughout the full-time undergraduate student population at the University. The data is considered at University level and at School level for 2022/23 with reference to historical data where appropriate.

In addition to the overall position at University and School level, the non-continuation rate is considered for the following categories:

- by year of programme
- by domicile
- by gender
- by ethnicity
- by disability status

5.   FURTHER INFORMATION

- Further information is available from Jo-Anne Murray (Vice-Principal Education), jo-anne.murray@abdn.ac.uk, Chris Souter (Head of Data & Business Intelligence), chris.souter@abdn.ac.uk and Lisa Gove (Planning Analyst), lisa.gove@abdn.ac.uk.

27 March 2024

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Full-Time Undergraduate Non-Continuation (internal data) 2024 Report
Analysis by the Directorate of Planning

27th March 2024

Background & Summary Methodology

Non-continuation is a retention measure used in higher education to monitor whether or not an undergraduate student qualifies or remains active in HE in the following academic year.

The data in this report is internal data that covers the full-time undergraduate population across all years of programmes and includes students from all domiciles – but excludes offshore provision and non-graduating / access pathways. A low non-continuation rate is the overall aim for the University.

Specifically, "non-continuation" in this report refers to the actual percentage of undergraduate students registered in any academic year not:

1) successfully completing their studies; or
2) transferring to another institution; or
3) registering in the next academic year.

The approach in this report differs from the non-continuation ("T3") measure as utilised by HESA as a performance indicator, which only considers UK-domiciled first-degree entrants. A further difference from HESA-generated data is that HESA data has the capability to include all students who have enrolled at another UK HE institution in the following year whereas internal data on non-continuation is restricted to those who have formally transferred and notified the University. HESA data is used as the basis (in aggregated form) for the Continuation metrics in the Guardian University Guide and the Complete University Guide, which is also used for the School data files.

Please note that the academic year refers to the earlier academic year of comparison (e.g. 2022/23 data measures the proportion of 2022/23 undergraduates who are flagged as non-continuing for 2023/24).

University of Aberdeen: Headline Full-Time Undergraduate Non-Continuation

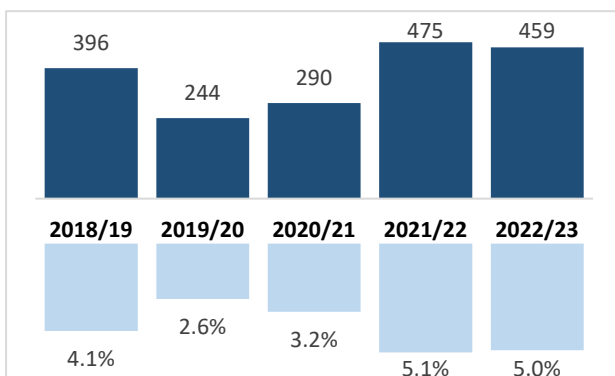## Undergraduate Non-Continuation 2022/23
5.0% ▼ (down 0.1%)

Chart 1: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2018/19 to 2022/23

Chart 1 shows the University of Aberdeen's non-continuation rate for 2022/23 is 5.0% (459 students), which represents a decrease of 0.1% students from 2021/22's position of 5.1%.

This non-continuation rate is the second highest observed between 2018/19 and 2022/23.

University of Aberdeen overall performance by School

Chart 2: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2022/23 by School

|	BUS	DHPA	EDU	ENG	GEOSCI	LAW	LLMVC	MMSN	NCS	PSY	SBS	SOC SCI
Count	70	28	22	55	21	26	48	54	33	37	30	36
Rate	6.4%	5.5%	4.9%	8.6%	8.1%	2.3%	7.0%	2.7%	6.4%	5.2%	5.8%	5.0%
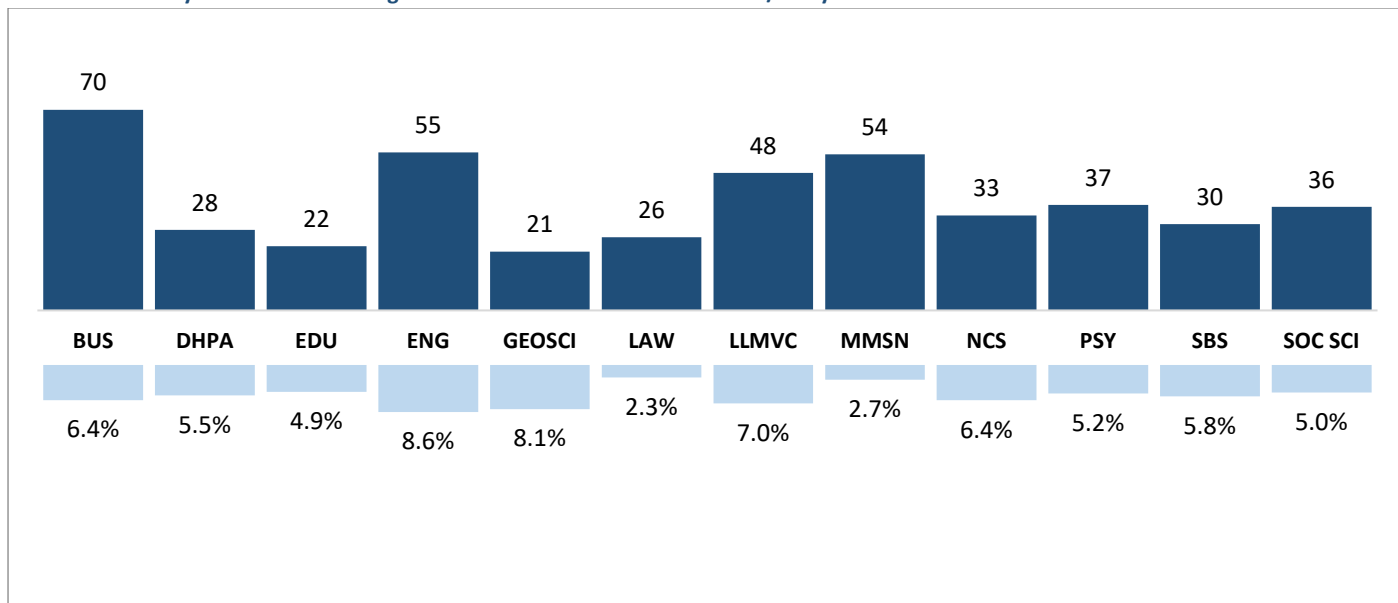
Chart 2 shows at a School level the highest undergraduate non-continuation rate for 2022/23 is observed to be in Engineering at 8.6% (55 students), followed by Geosciences at 8.1% (21 students). Law (2.3%) and MMSN (2.7%) have the lowest non-continuation rates for 2022/23.

When considering patterns across the previous four-year period as per Chart 3 below we can observe that the lowest non-continuation rates are to be found in MMSN, followed by Law.

Chart 3: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2018/19 to 2022/23 by School
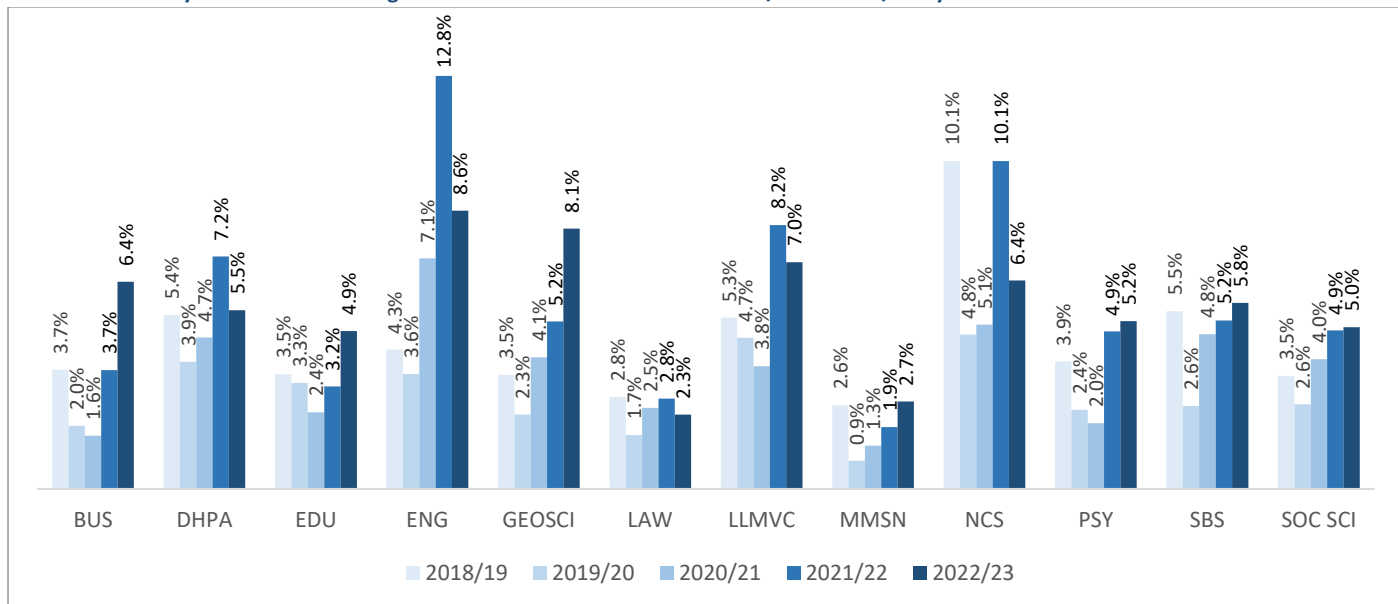
We can additionally observe that Geosciences current rate of 8.1% is juxtaposed against what had previously been a much lower non-continuation rate. In addition to the rise in Geosciences, there have also been rises for 2022/23 across five other schools. The second largest rise to Geosciences was seen in the Business school at an increase of 2.7% from the previous year.

University of Aberdeen: by year of undergraduate study

Chart 4: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2018/19 to 2022/23 by year of undergraduate study #1
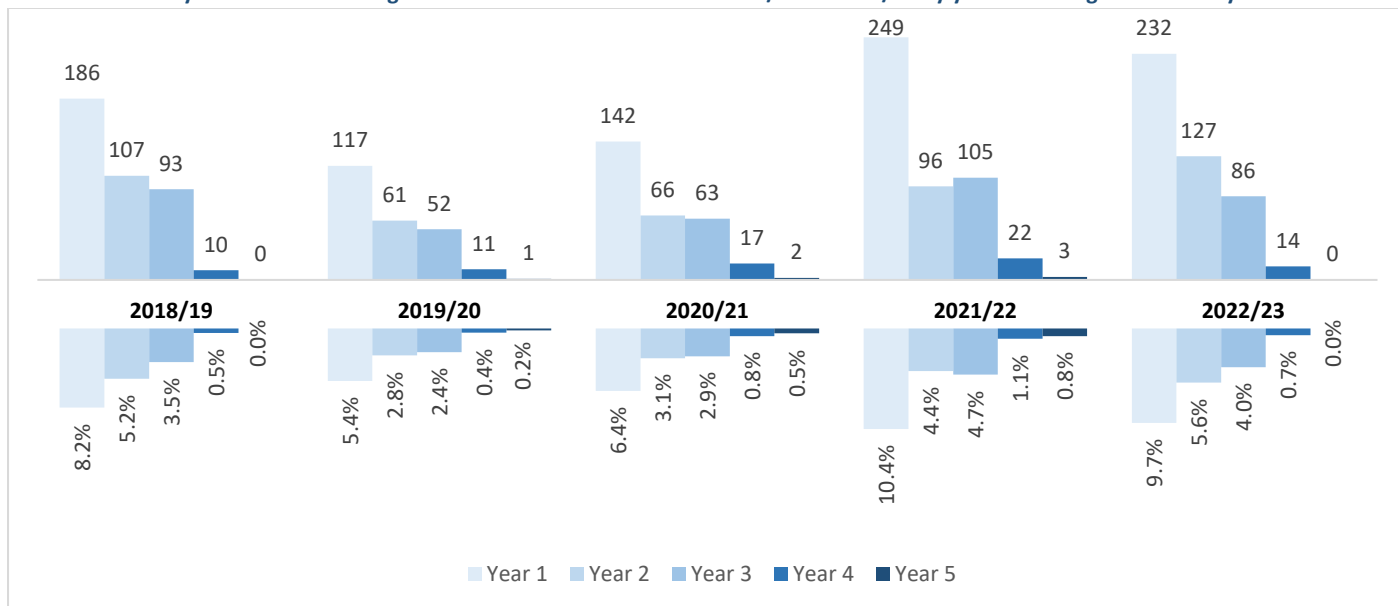

Chart 4 demonstrates the difference in non-continuation rates by year of programme for undergraduate study, with demonstrating that non-continuation rates generally improve with each subsequent programme year. For 2022/23 the undergraduate non-continuation rate for Year 1 was 9.7% for the institution and that contrasts sharply with a non-continuation rate of 0.7% for Year 4.

Chart 5: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2022/23 by year of undergraduate study by School
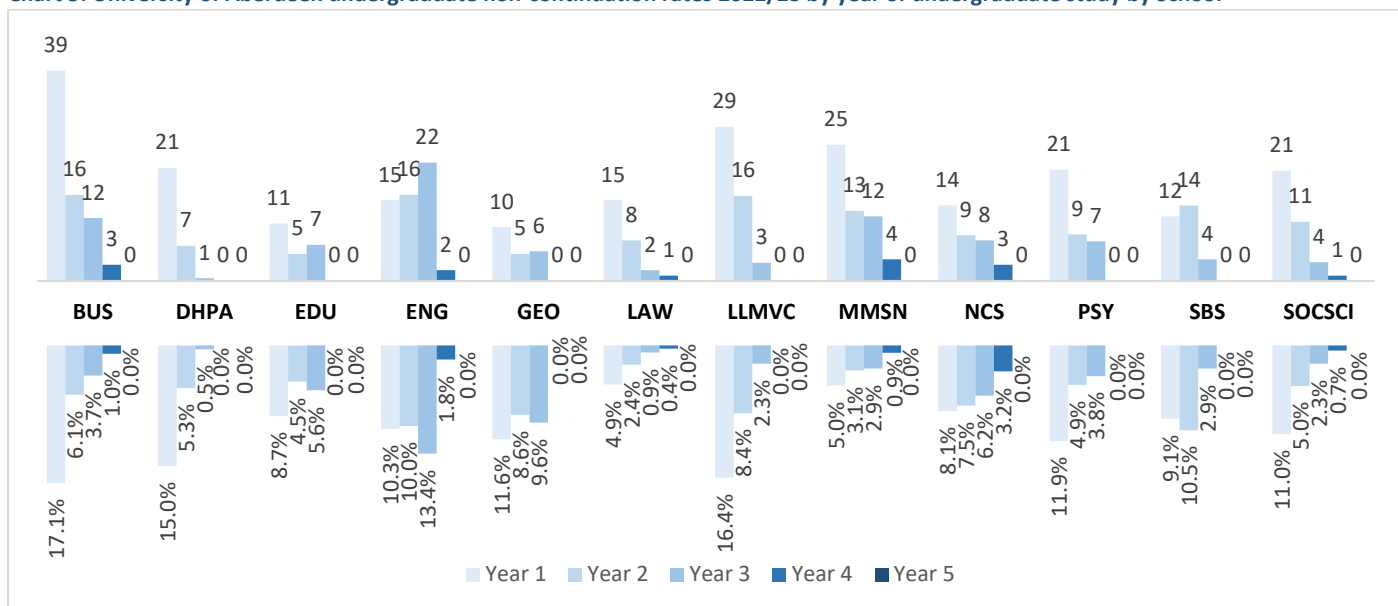

Chart 5 breaks down the 2022/23 non-continuation rates for year of undergraduate programme by School. The highest non-continuation rates for Year 1 students are found in Business, LLMVC, DHPA, Psychology, Geosciences, Social Science and Engineering – where the non-continuation rates exceed 10%. The highest non-continuation rate is in Business for Year 1 at 17.1%.

In contrast, the lowest Year 1 non-continuation rates can be found in Law at 4.9%, followed by MMSN at 5%.

University of Aberdeen: by domicile

Chart 6: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2018/19 to 2022/23 by student domicile
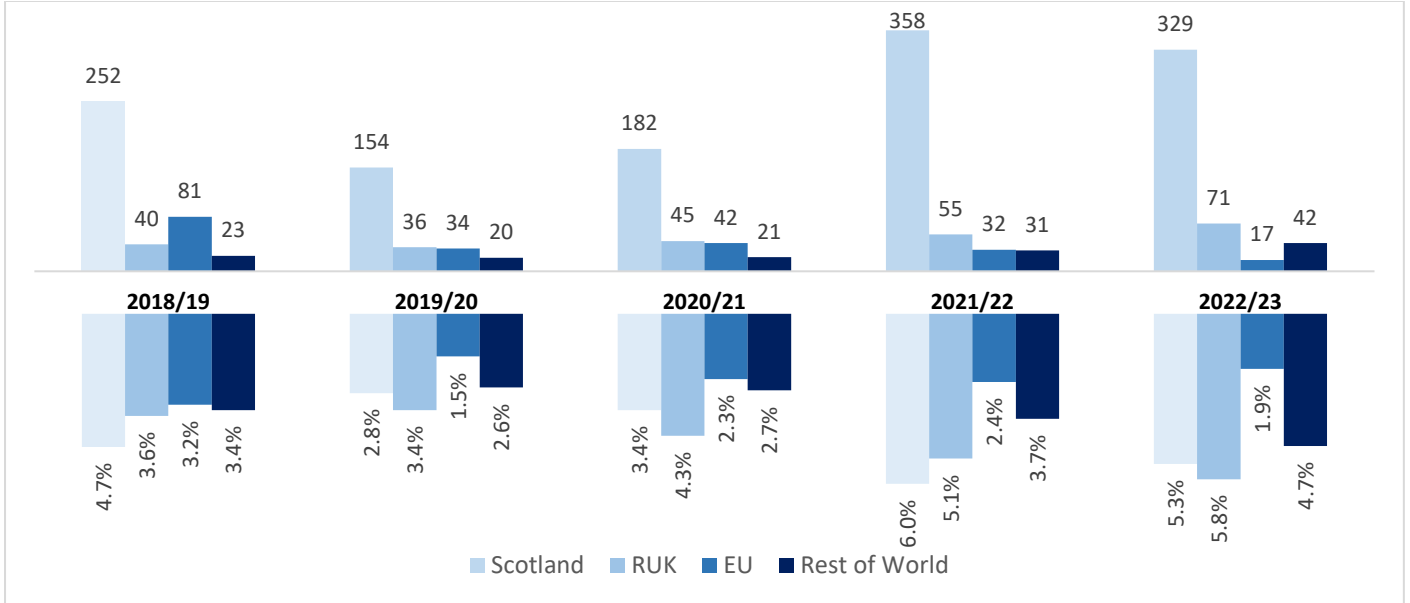
As can be seen in Chart 6, the non-continuation rates by domicile present a mixed picture, although for more recent years the non-continuation rate for students outwith the UK have generally lower non-continuation rates than their UK counterparts.

For 2022/23, Scottish domiciled and rest of the UK (RUK) students have a higher non-continuation rate among the four categories of students. RUK domiciled students had a non-continuation rate of 5.8%, followed by Scottish domiciled students with a non-continuation rate of 5.3%.

Chart 7: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2022/23 by student domicile by School
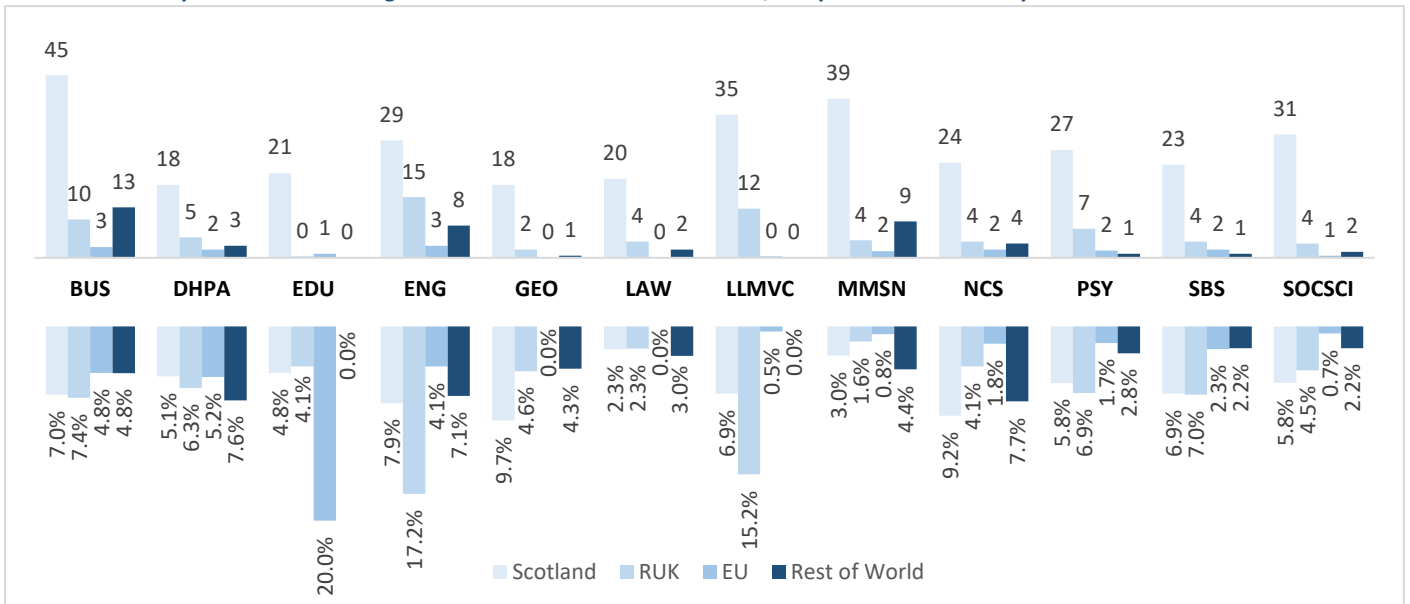

Chart 7 shows the variation between non-continuation rates with the highest non-continuation rates for Scottish-domiciled students in NCS (9.2%) and Engineering (7.9%). The highest non-continuation rates for RUK students are in Engineering at 17.2%, followed by LLMVC at 15.2%.

The highest non-continuation rates for rest of the world students are in NCS at 7.7%, followed by DHPA at 7.6%.

University of Aberdeen: by gender

Chart 8: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2018/19 to 2022/23 by student gender
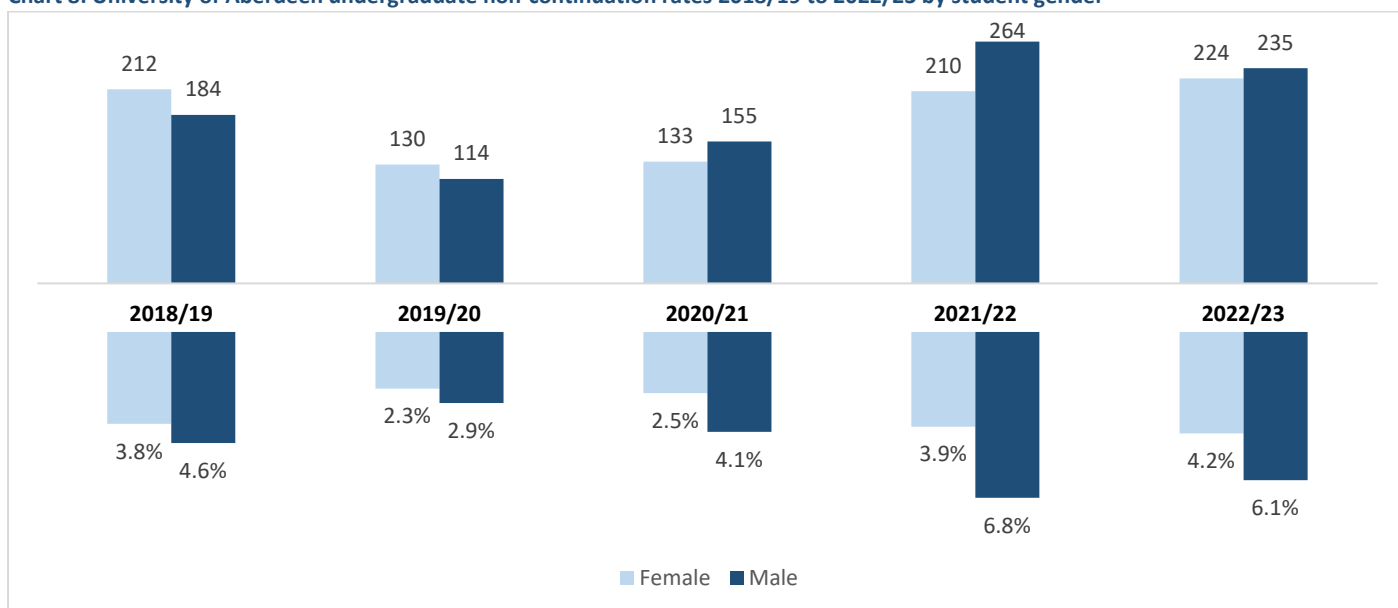

Chart 8 shows that there is a consistently higher rate of non-continuation among male undergraduates than their female counterparts, with the 2022/23 gap of 1.9% being the second largest gap observed over the five years considered.

Chart 9: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2022/23 by student gender by School
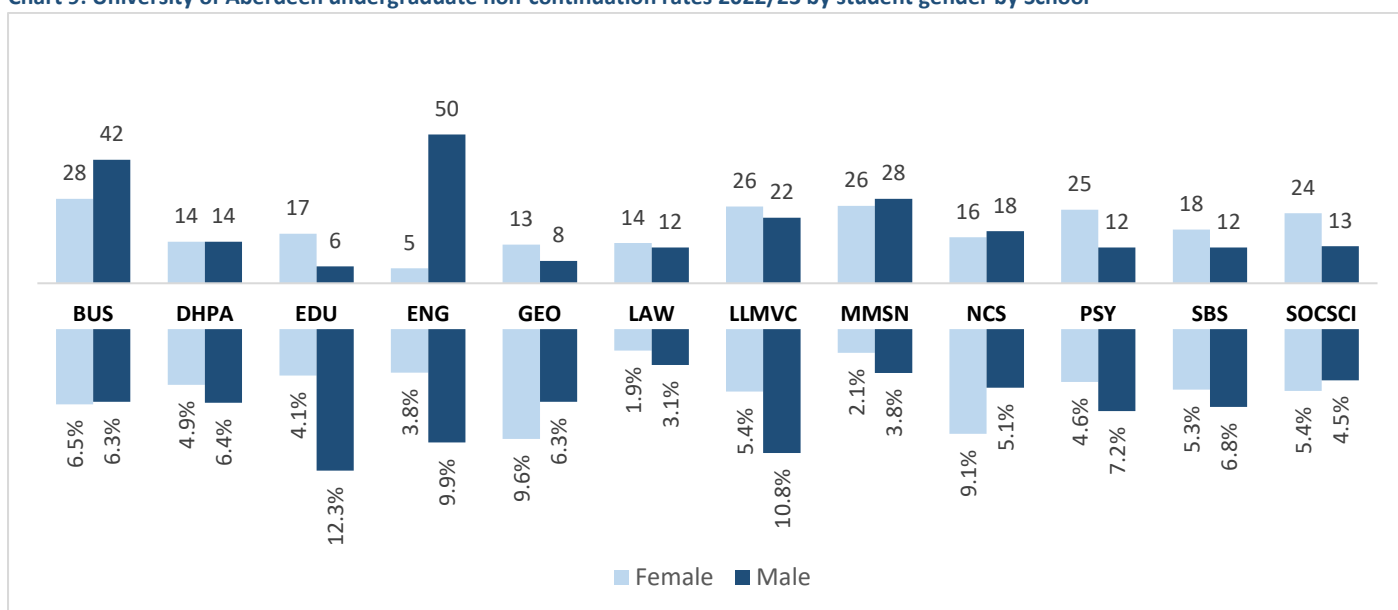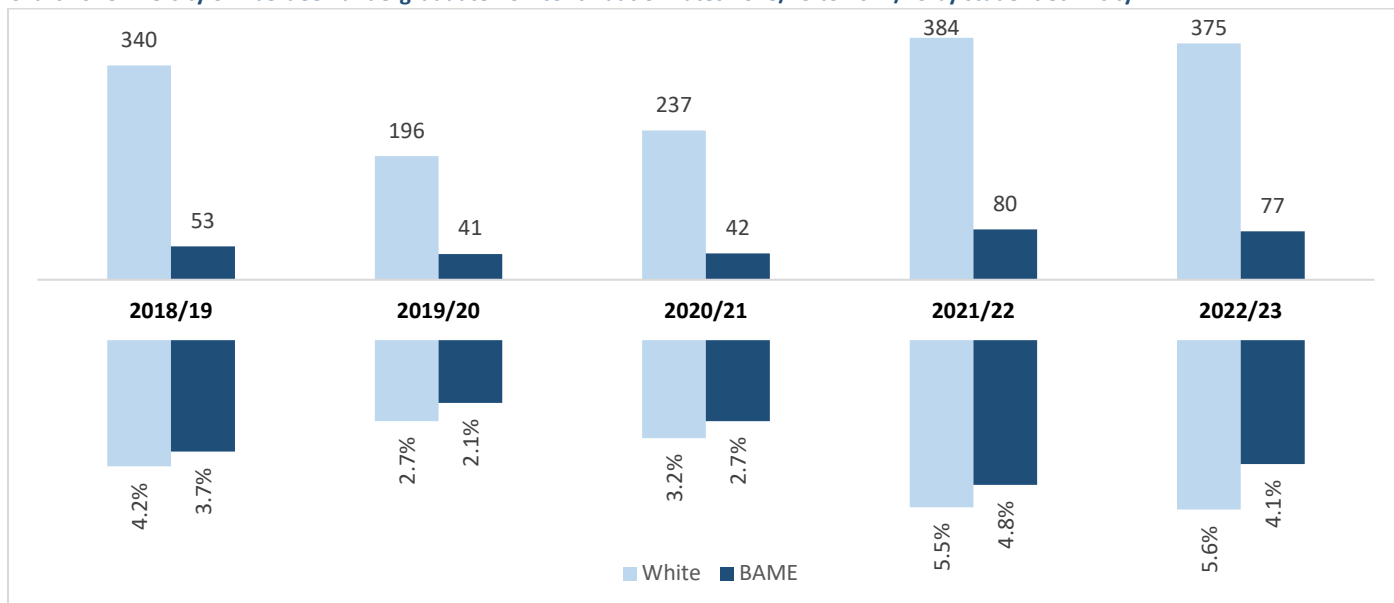

Chart 9 shows that the institutional pattern of female undergraduates having lower non-continuation rates than male students is repeated across eight of the twelve Schools at the University, with the largest gap evident in Education where female undergraduates had a non-continuation rate of 4.1% compared with a non-continuation rate of 12.3% for males – although it should be noted that the population of male undergraduates is much lower than female undergraduates in Education.

Four Schools reverse the institutional picture with a higher non-continuation rate for female students – Business, Geosciences, NCS and Social Science.

Historical checking of this data suggests that this relative performance in individual Schools can be mixed over several years and not indicative of any defined pattern where a School shows the same pattern year on year.

Chart 10: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2018/19 to 2022/23 by student ethnicity #1

Charts 13 (above) and 14 (below) show that there is a consistently higher rate of non-continuation among White undergraduates than their Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) counterparts with the 2022/23 gap of 1.5% being the largest gap observed over the five years considered.

Chart 11: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2022/23 by student ethnicity

Chart 15 shows that the institutional pattern of BAME undergraduates having lower non-continuation rates than White students is repeated across ten of the twelve Schools at the University, with the largest gap evident in Education where BAME undergraduates had a non-continuation rate of 0.0% compared with a non-continuation rate of 5.2% for White undergraduates. It should be noted that the population of BAME undergraduates is much lower than White undergraduates in Education.

DHPA reversed the institutional picture showing higher rates of BAME non-continuation. The high non-continuation rate in DHPA is due to a small population in the BAME category in that School (four students from 32). MMSN had an equal non-continuation rate of White and BAME students with 2.7%.

However, historical checking of this data suggests that this relative performance in individual Schools can be mixed over several years and not indicative of any defined pattern where a School shows the same pattern year on year.

Chart 12: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2018/19 to 2022/23 by student disability status #1

Chart 12 shows that there is a consistently higher rate of non-continuation among undergraduates who indicate that they have a disability than their counterparts who do not declare any known disability, with the 2022/23 gap of 2.5% being the second largest gap observed over the five years considered.

Chart 13: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates 2022/23 by student disability status
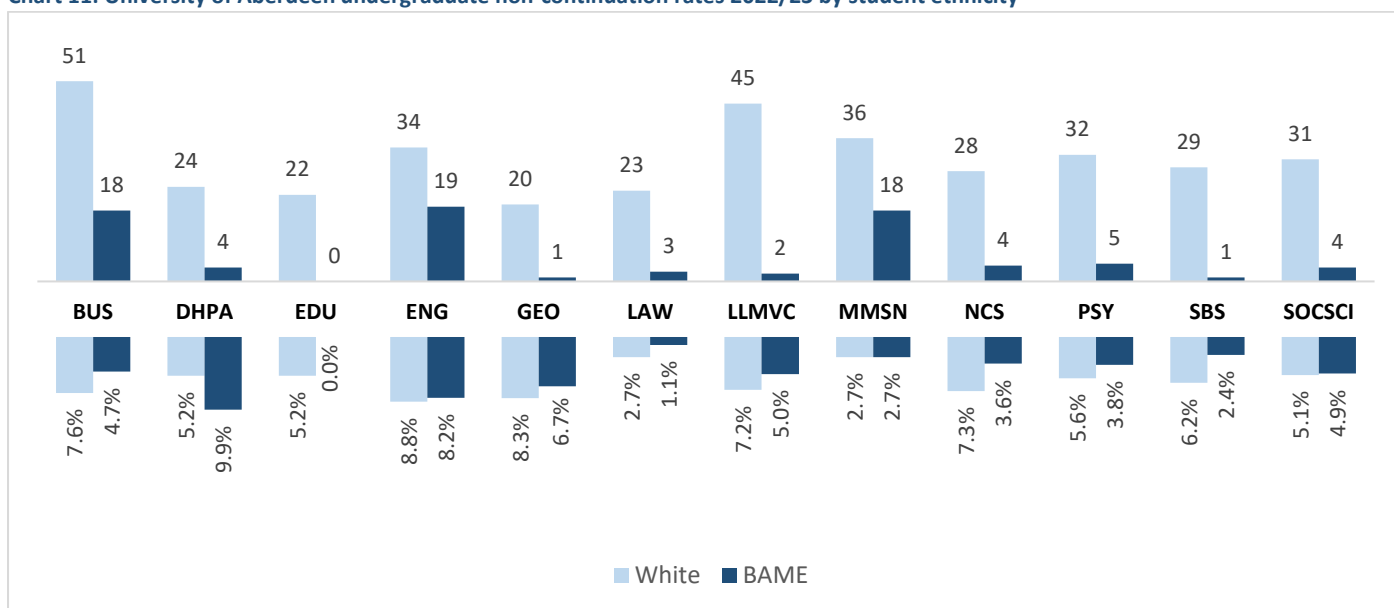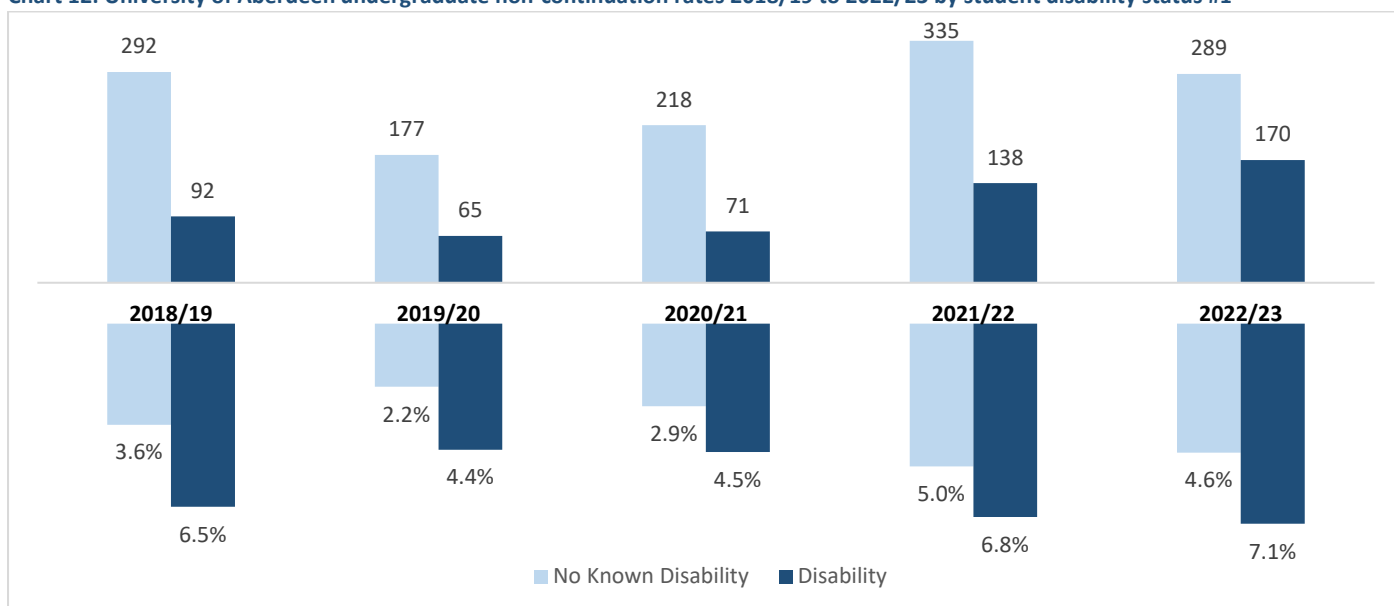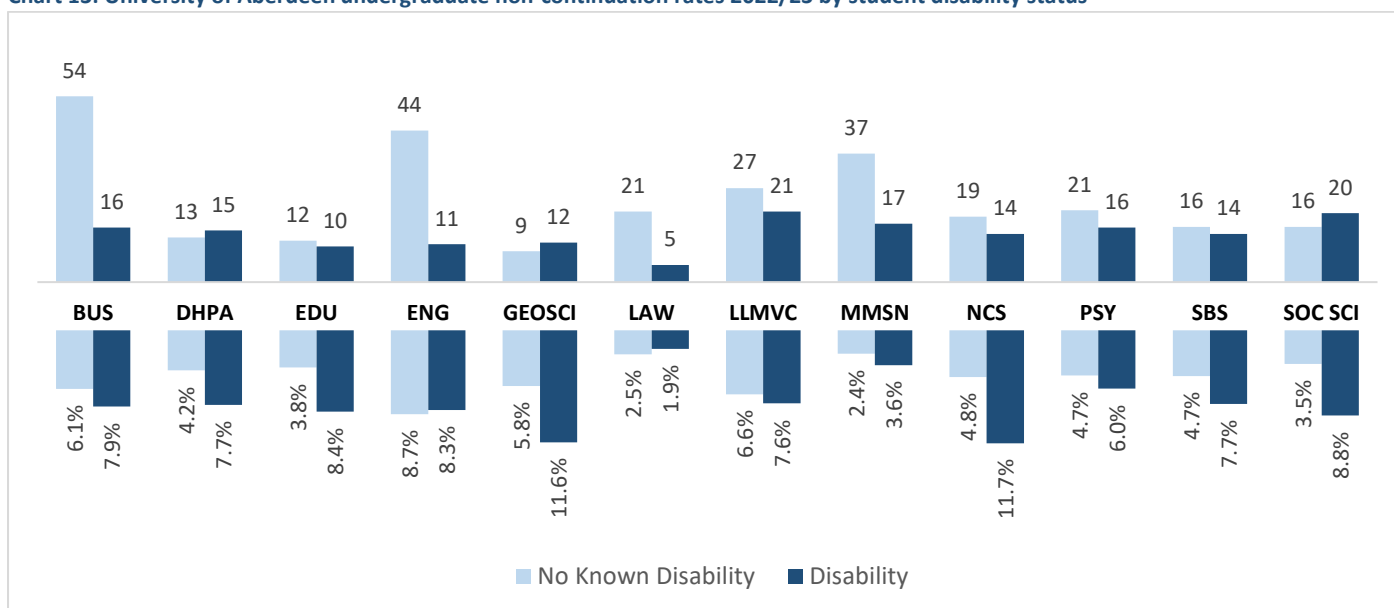

Chart 13 shows undergraduates who have no known disability having lower non-continuation rates than students with disability is repeated across ten of the twelve Schools at the University, with the largest gap evident in NCS where non-disabled undergraduates had a non-continuation rate of 4.8% compared with a non-continuation rate of 11.7% for disabled undergraduates. This is followed by the School of Geosciences where non-disabled undergraduates had a non-continuation rate of 5.8% compared with a non-continuation rate of 11.6% for disabled undergraduates.

Two Schools (Engineering and Law) show disabled undergraduates having lower non-continuation rates than non-disabled students, with gaps around 0.5% in each School.

However, historical checking of this data suggests that this relative performance in individual Schools can be mixed over several years and not indicative of any defined pattern where a School shows the same pattern year on year.

Chart 14: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates by reason for non-continuation
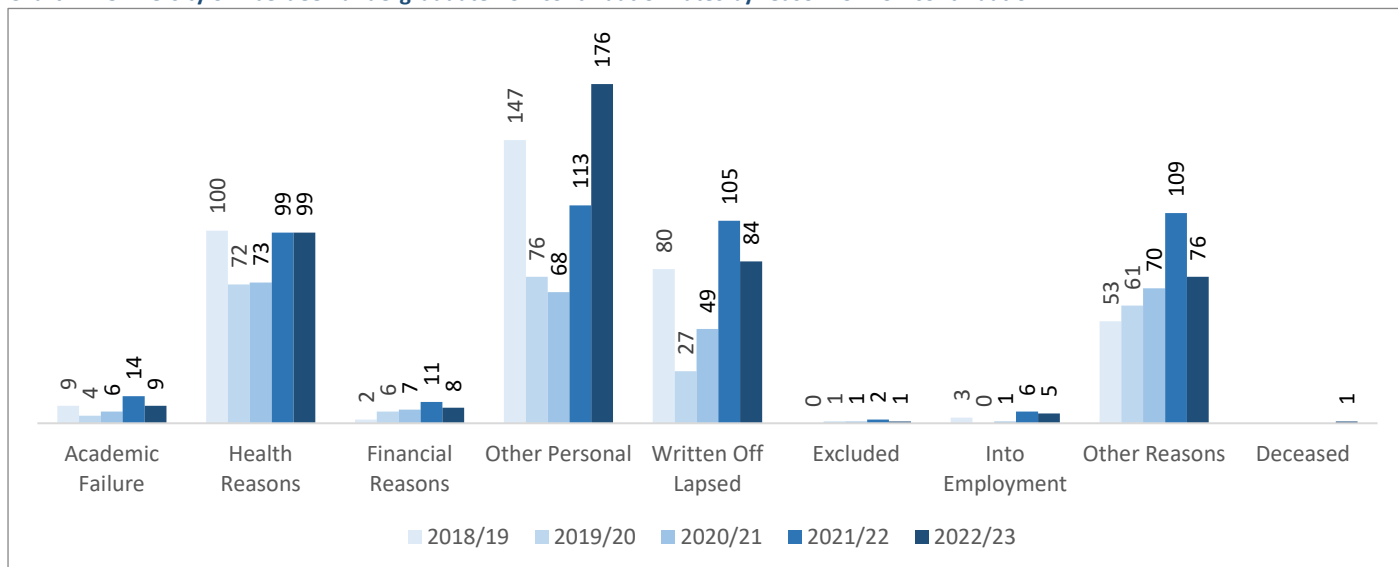
Chart 14 shows that generally, the most common reason for non-continuation is, in terms of magnitude, 'Other Personal', followed by 'Health Reasons' and 'Written Off Lapsed.

It is noted that numbers may not be identical as reported at the time due to changes against the individual student records in respect of the reason provided for non-continuation, although the number of changes will be small and make no material difference to any patterns.

Chart 15: University of Aberdeen undergraduate non-continuation rates by reason for non-continuation (%)
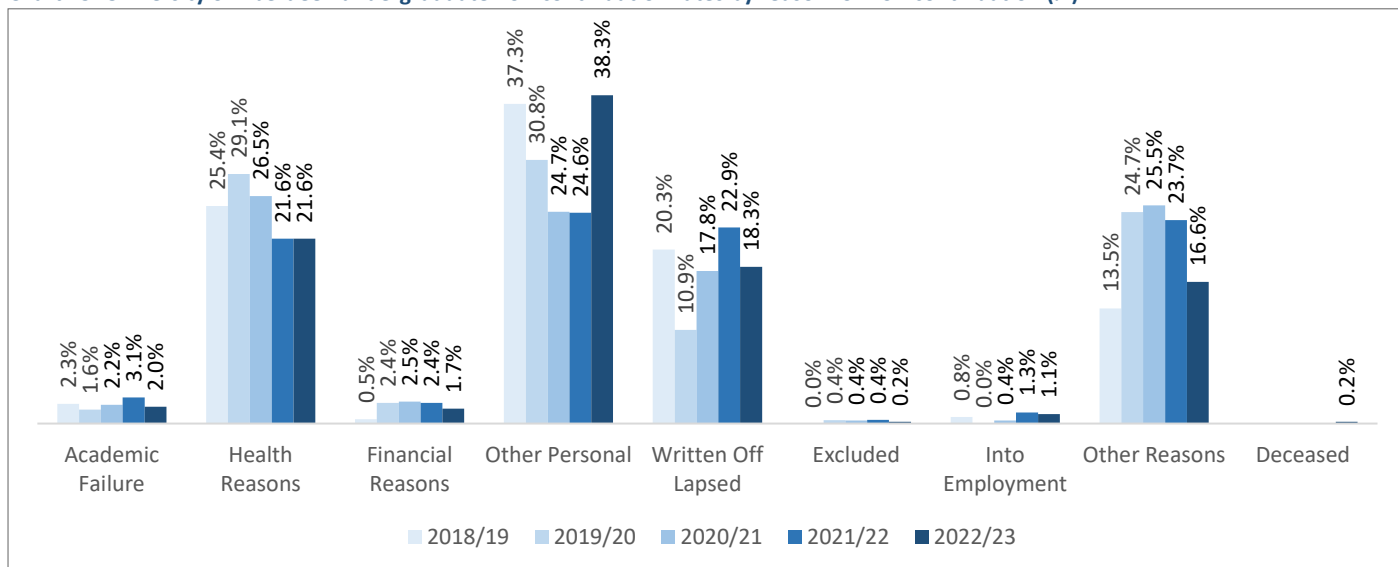
Chart 15 shows that 2022/23 had lower non-continuation rates than the previous year for six out of eight reasons for non-continuing students. There was an increase of 13.7% in the non-continuation rate for 'Other Personal' compared to the previous year. The non-continuation rate for 'Financial Reasons' remained the same as the previous year.

It is noted 'Health Reasons', 'Other Reasons', and 'Other Personal' could potentially cover numerous individual circumstances, and from this data it isn't possible to identify systematic reasons for non-continuation across the institution. Further insight may, however, be possible with more detailed qualitative analysis of individual cases.

Lisa Gove, Planning Analyst
Directorate of Planning & Governance

Full-time Undergraduate Retention 2022/23
data supplied by Student Records

		TOTAL	Year of Programme					Domicile				Gender			Ethnicity			Disability Status	
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Scotland	RUK	EU	Rest of World	Female	Male	Other	White	BAME	Unknown	Disability	No Known Disability
UoA	Continuing or Qualifying	8751	2149	2151	2073	2035	343	5889	1146	857	859	5129	3610	12	6698	1878	175	2405	6346
	Non-continuing	459	232	127	86	14	0	329	71	17	42	224	235	0	375	77	7	170	289
	% NC	5.0%	9.7%	5.6%	4.0%	0.7%	0.0%	5.3%	5.8%	1.9%	4.7%	4.2%	6.1%	0.0%	5.6%	4.1%	4.0%	7.1%	4.6%
BUS	Continuing or Qualifying	1020	191	245	301	284	0	599	120	53	248	405	616	0	619	367	34	185	836
	Non-continuing	70	39	16	12	3	0	45	10	3	13	28	42	0	51	18	1	16	54
	% NC	6.4%	17.1%	6.1%	3.7%	1.0%	-	7.0%	7.4%	4.8%	4.8%	6.5%	6.3%	-	7.6%	4.7%	2.9%	7.9%	6.1%
DHP	Continuing or Qualifying	479	119	117	107	133	3	332	74	37	37	274	204	1	434	32	12	179	300
	Non-continuing	28	21	7	1	0	0	18	5	2	3	14	14	0	24	4	1	15	13
	% NC	5.5%	15.0%	5.3%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	6.3%	5.2%	7.6%	4.9%	6.4%	0.0%	5.2%	9.9%	3.9%	7.7%	4.2%
EDU	Continuing or Qualifying	435	112	106	113	103	1	420	8	4	3	395	40	0	420	14	1	123	312
	Non-continuing	22	11	5	7	0	0	21	0	1	0	17	6	0	22	0	0	10	12
	% NC	4.9%	8.7%	4.5%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	4.1%	20.0%	0.0%	4.1%	12.3%	-	5.2%	0.0%	24.8%	8.4%	3.8%
ENG	Continuing or Qualifying	584	130	144	142	112	56	338	72	70	104	127	456	1	354	212	18	122	462
	Non-continuing	55	15	16	22	2	0	29	15	3	8	5	50	0	34	19	2	11	44
	% NC	8.6%	10.3%	10.0%	13.4%	1.8%	0.0%	7.9%	17.2%	4.1%	7.1%	3.8%	9.9%	0.0%	8.8%	8.2%	10.0%	8.3%	8.7%
GEOSCI	Continuing or Qualifying	234	76	53	52	53	0	168	42	14	11	123	111	0	216	14	4	88	147
	Non-continuing	21	10	5	6	0	0	18	2	0	1	13	8	0	20	1	0	12	9
	% NC	8.1%	11.6%	8.6%	9.6%	0.0%	-	9.7%	4.6%	0.0%	4.3%	9.6%	6.3%	-	8.3%	6.7%	0.0%	11.6%	5.8%
LAW	Continuing or Qualifying	1086	293	310	223	247	13	815	172	34	64	712	374	0	843	232	10	259	827
	Non-continuing	26	15	8	2	1	0	20	4	0	2	14	12	0	23	3	0	5	21
	% NC	2.3%	4.9%	2.4%	0.9%	0.4%	0.0%	2.3%	2.3%	0.0%	3.0%	1.9%	3.1%	-	2.7%	1.1%	0.0%	1.9%	2.5%
LLMVC	Continuing or Qualifying	635	146	172	143	147	26	475	68	62	31	450	182	3	586	38	12	250	385
	Non-continuing	48	29	16	3	0	0	35	12	0	0	26	22	0	45	2	1	21	27
	% NC	7.0%	16.4%	8.4%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%	15.2%	0.5%	0.0%	5.4%	10.8%	0.0%	7.2%	5.0%	5.5%	7.6%	6.6%
MMSN	Continuing or Qualifying	1956	485	404	409	442	216	1274	274	213	195	1241	714	1	1290	637	28	454	1502
	Non-continuing	54	25	13	12	4	0	39	4	2	9	26	28	0	36	18	0	17	37
	% NC	2.7%	5.0%	3.1%	2.9%	0.9%	0.0%	3.0%	1.6%	0.8%	4.4%	2.1%	3.8%	0.0%	2.7%	2.7%	0.0%	3.6%	2.4%
NCS	Continuing or Qualifying	479	158	105	113	90	13	232	93	112	42	154	325	0	353	106	20	106	374
	Non-continuing	33	14	9	8	3	0	24	4	2	4	16	18	0	28	4	1	14	19
	% NC	6.4%	8.1%	7.5%	6.2%	3.2%	0.0%	9.2%	4.1%	1.8%	7.7%	9.1%	5.1%	-	7.3%	3.6%	4.8%	11.7%	4.8%
PSY	Continuing or Qualifying	670	154	168	185	160	3	432	97	106	35	512	156	2	542	114	13	247	423
	Non-continuing	37	21	9	7	0	0	27	7	2	1	25	12	0	32	5	0	16	21
	% NC	5.2%	11.9%	4.9%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	5.8%	6.9%	1.7%	2.8%	4.6%	7.2%	0.0%	5.6%	3.8%	0.0%	6.0%	4.7%
SBS	Continuing or Qualifying	491	120	119	135	111	6	310	53	84	44	323	165	3	439	40	12	169	322
	Non-continuing	30	12	14	4	0	0	23	4	2	1	18	12	0	29	1	0	14	16
	% NC	5.8%	9.1%	10.5%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%	7.0%	2.3%	2.2%	5.3%	6.8%	0.0%	6.2%	2.4%	0.0%	7.7%	4.7%
SOC SCI	Continuing or Qualifying	683.5	166	208	151	153	7	496	74	69	45	414	268	2	602	71	11	226	458
	Non-continuing	36	21	11	4	1	0	31	4	1	2	24	13	0	31	4	2	20	16
	% NC	5.0%	11.0%	5.0%	2.3%	0.7%	0.0%	5.8%	4.5%	0.7%	3.2%	5.4%	4.5%	0.0%	5.1%	4.9%	14.3%	8.8%	3.5%

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW: REVIEW CHAIRS

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to seek the approval of the University Education Committee (UEC) for an amendment, on a temporary basis, to the Process and Procedures for Internal Teaching Review (ITR) to allow members of the UEC, in addition to members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), to undertake the role of Panel Chair of an ITR panel.

2.   PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	**Date**
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)	9 May 2024
	University Education Committee (UEC)	13 May 2024

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

The University Education Committee is invited to **approve** the proposed action.

4.   DISCUSSION

4.1   Each year, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in conjunction with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), requires the University to undertake a comprehensive institution-led review of its Schools. This is carried out on a six-year rolling cycle. The Internal Teaching Review (ITR) process is the University's method of satisfying this condition, which is required for funding purposes.

4.2   The ITRs scheduled for academic year 2024/25 are:

Date of review	**School**	**Period under review**
Autumn (Oct 2024)	School of Engineering	2019/20 – 2023/24
Autumn (Nov 2024)	School of Education	2018/19 – 2023/24
Spring (Mar 2025)	School of Natural and Computing Science	2019/20 – 2023/24

4.3   The University's Process and Procedures on ITR state in regard to the composition of an ITR panel (section 4.3 refers) that 'The Panel Chair will normally be an independent member of the QAC'. While this model works well, with members of the QAC having taken responsibility for

ITRs for several years, the composition of the QAC at the beginning of the 2023/24 academic year was significantly changed, resulting in a loss of experience in the chairing of ITRs.

4.4   It is recognised, however, that as a consequence of previous engagement in both QAC and ITR activities, several members of the UEC have such expertise. On this basis, it is proposed that a temporary change to established ITR procedures is granted by the QAC, to permit members of the UEC with experience in chairing an ITR to facilitate the chairing of reviews, as required, until such time as members of the QAC are appropriately trained. This would ensure the Chair is appropriately trained in the workings of ITR, while allowing members of the panel to ask pertinent questions. In the short-term future, this will allow members of the QAC to act as panellists and thereby gain experience of the review mechanism, prior to being asked to Chair a review themselves.

4.4   It is the intention that this temporary change to established procedures will come to an end and revert to current practice, whereby members of the QAC will chair the ITRs, and only in exceptional circumstances would other members of the University community be required to undertake this role.

5.   FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Prof Steve Tucker (s.j.tucker@abdn.ac.uk) or Morag MacRae (morag.macrae@abdn.ac.uk)

24 April 2024

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open