UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)** will be held on **9 May 2024** at **14:05 at Meeting Room 1, Floor 7, Sir Duncan Rice Library** and via **Microsoft Teams.**

Mr Liam Dyker
Administrative Officer (Academic Services)
(e-mail liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk)

AGENDA

FOR DISCUSSION

1. **Approval of the Minute of the Meetings Held on**
    (i) 6 March 2024   *(QAC/090524/001a)*
    (ii) 27 March 2024   *(QAC/090524/001b)*

2. **Matters Arising and Action Log**   *(QAC/090524/002)*

3. **Articulation Pathways Policy 2025/26**   *(QAC/090524/003)*
    The Committee is invited to **approve** the paper detailing entry requirements for college students.

4. **Education Policy and Regulations**

    (i)   Extensions Policy   *(QAC/090524/004)*
    The Committee is invited to **approve** the Extensions Policy.

    (ii) Marking and Moderation Procedures   *(QAC/090524/005)*
    The Committee is invited to **approve** the revised Marking and Moderation Procedures.

    (iii) Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals   *(QAC/090524/006)*
    The Committee is invited to **approve** the revised Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals.

    (iv) Regulatory Changes for Introduction in 2024/2025   *(QAC/090524/007)*
    The Committee is invited to **approve** the Resolution for Changes to Regulations for Various Degrees.

5. **Postgraduate Research**

    (i)   Code of Practice (Postgraduate Research)   *(QAC/090524/008)*
    The Committee is invited to **approve** the revised Code of Practice (Postgraduate Research).

    (ii) Postgraduate Research Absence Policy   *(QAC/090524/009)*
    The Committee is invited to **approve** the Postgraduate Research Absence Policy.

6. **Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR), Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) and Tertiary Quality Project (TQP) Update** *(QAC/090524/010)*
The Committee is invited to **discuss** and **approve** the updates to the ELIR and QESR Action Plans, and note the minute of the ILM.

7. **Deadlines for the Return of Results (2024/25)** *(QAC/090524/011)*
The Committee is invited to **approve** the deadlines for the return of results for 2024/25.

8. **Internal Teaching Review**
(i) **Review Chairs** *(QAC/090524/012)*
The Committee is invited to **approve** the proposed action in the paper in respect of Internal Teaching Review Chairs.

(ii) **School of Biological Sciences Internal Teaching Review Report**
(QAC/090524/013)
The Committee is invited to **approve** the ITR Report for the School of Biological Sciences.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**
The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 25 September 2024 at 14:05 in Court Room, University Office or via Microsoft Teams.

10. **Items for Routine Approval – see below/overleaf**
11. **Items for Information – see below/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 after item 1.

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.

10. FOR ROUTINE APPROVAL

10.1 **Term Dates for 2025/26** *(QAC/090524/014)*
The Committee is invited to **approve**, by routine approval, the Term Dates for 2025/26.

10.2 **Dates of Terms to 2032** *(QAC/090524/015)*
The Committee is invited to **approve,** by routine approval, the Dates of Terms to 2032.

10.3 **Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic)** *(QAC/090524/016)*
The Committee is invited to **approve**, by routine approval, the amendments to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic).

10.4 **Quality Code Mapping**
(i) Section 2: Assessment *(QAC/090524/017)*
(ii) Section 7: Learning and Teaching *(QAC/090524/018 and QAC/090524/018b*

Please note that QAC/090524/018b is to compliment the main paper as it contains Kirsty's feedback.

(iii) Section 12: Work-based Learning *(QAC/090524/019)*

The Committee is invited to **approve**, by routine approval, the Quality Code Mapping, pertaining to sections 2, 7 and 12.

11. FOR INFORMATION

11.1 Updates from Reporting and Sub-Committees
(i) Academic Policy and Regulations Group *(QAC/090524/020, to follow)*
(ii) Students' Progress Committee *(QAC/090524/021, to follow)*

11.2 Matters Approved by Circulation / Convenor's Action
(i) Qatar Admissions Protocol *(QAC/090524/022)*
(ii) DEd Start Date Amendment *(QAC/090524/023)*

The QAC is invited to **note** the (i) Qatar Admissions Protocol, which was approved by circulation, and (ii) the Doctor of Education Start Date Amendment, which was approved by Convenor's Action.

(iii) Admittance to DSc Degree

Arash Sahraie from the School of Psychology was formally recommended by the Head of School of Psychology that he be admitted to the Doctor of Science (DSc). This recommendation was approved by the QAC, by way of Convenor's Action, to allow the School to identify a list of potential examiners and for the submission requirements to be fulfilled.

11.3 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
(i) AdvanceHE Reaccreditation (School of Education / CAD) *(QAC/090524/024)*
(ii) General Dental Council (School of MMSN) *(QAC/090524/025)*
(iii) Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (Business School)
(QAC/090524/026)

11.4 Guidance for the Appointment of Examiners for Postgraduate Research Degrees
(QAC/090524/027)

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Minute of the Meeting held on 6 March 2024

Present: Steve Tucker **(Chair)**, Will Barras, Qiang Cai, Selma Carson, Isabel Crane, Nadia DeGama, Lois Gall, Faye Hendry, Jacqui Hutchison, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Rhiannon Ledwell (from Item 4), Laura McCann, Gareth Norton, Fiona Stoddard, and Jo Vergunst, with Lucy Leiper (from Item 4), Gillian Mackintosh, Morag MacRae, Ann Simpson and Liam Dyker **(Clerk)** in attendance.

Apologies: Sanaa Al-Asawi, Scott Carle, Darren Comber, Isa Ehrenschwendtner, and Mark Grant.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
(copy filed as QAC/060324/001)

1.1   The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Committee was content to approve the minute of the previous meeting.

MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LOG

2.1   <u>Action Log</u>   *(copy filed as QAC/060324/002)*

2.1.1   <u>Vacancies on Senate and APRG:</u> The Committee was advised that there remained 3 vacancies on the Senate.   **Action: All**

2.1.2   <u>MRes and MSc by Research Degrees:</u> The Committee was advised that this action will be included as part of the review of the Postgraduate Regulations, which is forthcoming.

2.1.3   <u>Decolonising the Curriculum (DtC):</u> It was noted that an update will be provided in respect of the Annual Monitoring documentation at the next meeting. Further, it was noted that a representative was sought from Qatar to join the DtC Community of Practice.   **Action: KK**

2.2   <u>AFG College Annual Report Addendum (2021/22)</u>   *(copy filed as QAC/060324/003)*

2.2.1   The Committee noted the addendum provided to the AFG College Annual Report for 2021/22. It was advised that the addendum clarified the position with respect of student monitoring data. Clarity was sought regarding the training provided to staff in light of the data. In response, it was suggested that there remain some processing delays due to resource challenges, however, generally the process has improved. The process will remain under review as new annual data become available.   **Action: Chair**

2.3   <u>Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM) with QAA Scotland</u>

2.3.1   The Chair provided an update on the Institutional Liaison Meeting with the QAA Scotland. It was noted that the ILM was a follow up to the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) which took place in February 2023. The Committee noted that the ILM covered: (i) work-based learning, (ii) self-evaluation of the Outcome Agreement, (iii) generative artificial intelligence, (iv) student partnership, (v) ELIR and QESR action plans, (vi) Tertiary Enhancement Topic on blended learning, and (vii) student involvement and representation. It was noted that the discussion was positive, with some follow-up received further to the meeting. It was agreed that the meeting note will be shared QAC when received. Further, the Committee noted that the University's QAA Liaison Officer had changed from Caroline Turnbull to Laura Porter.
                                                                              Action: Clerk

CONTEXTUAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

(copy filed as QAC/060324/004)

3.1   The Committee heard a summary of the proposed changes to the contextual admissions requirements, noting the changes follow approved changes to the undergraduate entry requirements, previously approved by QAC. As a result of these changes, it was noted that the gap between the standard offer and the contextual offer had been narrowed. In order to reach the widening access target, it was proposed that the contextual admissions requirements be reviewed.

3.2   Clarity was sought regarding whether the proposed changes might impact the number of students admitted from SIMD backgrounds. In response, it was advised that sector intelligence does not provide clarity in this regard. It was noted that it is hoped that the proposals will increase numbers. Further, it was asked whether the change in admission requirements might impact workloads. It was noted that the workloads will likely remain as present, however, the messaging will be clearer to applicants.

3.3   Relatedly, clarity was sought regarding alignment with other institutions in the sector. It was suggested that, in terms of Ancient Universities in Scotland, the University would be below others. In terms of other Universities, it was noted that publication of their entry requirements is forthcoming.

3.4   Clarity was sought regarding the impact of these proposed changes on the Qatar campus. It was highlighted that the Qatar campus operate a separate admissions protocol and as such, this proposal did not alter the protocol.

3.5   The Committee was content to approve the proposed changes, in line with the delegated authority schedule, on behalf of Senate.

MARKING AND MODERATION PROCEDURES

(copy filed as QAC/060324/005)

4.1   The Committee heard a summary of the proposed changes in respect of the Marking and Moderation Procedures, noting the proposed changes in order to simplify the marking and moderation process and in light of workload pressures.

4.2   Discussion ensued regarding the proposed amendments to the Procedures. The tenets of which were:
   - Clarity was sought regarding the definition of 'broad agreement' and whether it should be determined in terms of CGS grade points or grade boundaries. A variety of views were expressed in this regard. Some members sought the flexibility for markers to allow a discussion to come to agreement. However, other members noted the workload associated with a discussion would be cumbersome. Concerns were expressed that discussions may not take place and markers may revert to seeking the middle grade, rather than seeking agreement. Further, it was suggested that this stage might take place via email, as opposed to a meeting. Some members advised that it was important a rationale was noted as to why a grade was agreed. On the contrary, other members noted the workload concerns in this regard. It was noted that there was an opportunity for training of staff in this regard. Following discussion, the Committee agreed that, should double marking result in markers providing CGS grades one mark apart (i.e. one marker awarding a CGS B1, and one marker awarding a CGS B2), the higher would stand. Where there is more than one CGS mark between the two markers, agreement should be reached.
   - In relation to postgraduate taught dissertations/projects, a suggestion was made in respect of a discussion between markers to agree the mark given the dissertation/project is

weighted at a third of the programme. It was suggested that there might be variation for PGT dissertations/projects. It was noted that at PGT-level, the dissertation/project is a determinant for the final classification.

- In relation to the double marking of dissertations/projects, it was noted that blind marking is only possible if a marker has had no prior involvement with the assessment in question. It was further noted that provided one marker has had no prior involvement with the assessment, this would provide the necessary assurance.
- Clarity was sought regarding what is meant by moderation as the process is interpreted differently by each individual, discipline and School. It was noted that the process for moderation need not be overly extensive.
- In relation to the definition of a sample, clarity was sought regarding the proposal that assessments weighted at 10% or more would be moderated. A suggestion was made that this was increased to 15% weighted assessments at levels 1 and 2. Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the assessment weighting should be increased at levels 1 and 2 to 15%, with 10% remaining at levels 3 and 4. A caveat should be added regarding any courses which contain multiple weighted assessments at 10% or 15%.
- Further, in respect of whether all borderline fails should be captured as part of a sample, the Committee agreed that all fails marked in as a CGS E-banded grade should be included. Additionally, the Committee agreed that there was no requirement for all borderline passes (i.e. those assessments marked at CGS D3) to be included in the sample.
- In relation to moderation with multiple markers, the Committee agreed that a caveat should be included with respect of the threshold required for the number of assessments to be moderated. Further, it was suggested that clarity was provided in respect of where a systematic error was identified, such as a marker missing a page in an assessment in marking, that all assessments should be checked. However, if there was an anomaly in marking, if the moderator deemed to be appropriate, a further sample should be sought.
- In relation to the release of grades prior to the moderation process, a variety of views were expressed. Some members suggested that it was important that grades were returned as early as possible in order to provide feedback to students in good time, particularly where there is further assessment for the course. It was noted the statement pertaining to release of marks currently exists in the Code of Practice on Assessment. Others noted that it would not be appropriate to release marks prior to the marking and moderation process taking place as a result of student expectations. It was suggested that a caveat be included to students that grades are provisional until all processes are completed, and that may result in changes. However, it was highlighted that this would not provide the best student experience.
- A suggestion was made to add a note on the appendices to highlight that, where a Head of School (or nominee) has required to be involved in resolving disagreements in marking, that the assessment should be reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

4.3 Following the meeting, it was agreed that the Procedures would be updated and amended in light of the Committee's discussion. Thereafter, it would be issued to the Committee for approval by circulation. Following Committee approval, it will be presented to Senate for approval on 27 March 2024.

EDUCATION DATA

(i) APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS DATA 2022/23
(copy filed as QAC/060324/006)

5.1 The Committee heard a summary of the Appeals and Complaints Data for Academic Year 2022/23. The Committee noted the ongoing work in relation to the review of the Policy on Student Appeals which aims to reduce workload associated with appeal cases, and reduce the

number of C7 appeals which account for a large proportion of cases. The Committee noted that there were only a very small number of appeals (5) related to the marking and assessment boycott. Additionally, it was highlighted that there are a growing number of cases which extended beyond the advertised timescales.

5.2   Clarity was sought in relation to frontline appeals/complaints and what this meant in practice. It was advised that frontline resolution refer to those which were handled informally by Schools directly.

5.3   Further, clarity was sought regarding the data for the Qatar campus and whether this could be provided. It was noted that this was not currently available for 2022/23, but going forward, the data would be presented to committee for TNE campuses.

5.4   In relation to training, it was asked whether training will continue to be rolled out. It was confirmed that this was the case.

(ii) ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE DATA 2022/23
(copy filed as QAC/060324/007)

6.1   The Committee heard a summary of the Academic Discipline Data for Academic Year 2022/23. The Committee noted that despite a peak in 2021/22, the volume of cases appears to be decreasing, which might be attributable to the ongoing work in this regard. It was noted that the majority of cases related to plagiarism, but a number of cases related to contract cheating and cheating in an exam. It was suggested that the increase in the number of contract cheating cases might be due to the better levels of detection of misconduct. Additionally, it was noted that training for international and postgraduate students in particular was important given the cultural differences pertaining to academic integrity. It was suggested that students would rather information is shared with them at the point of assessment as opposed to the start of the academic year.

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION 2024/25
(copy filed as QAC/060324/008)

7.1   The Committee heard a summary of the proposed changes to various degree regulations as part of the Omnibus Resolution 2024/25. The Committee noted the process by which changes to degree regulations are required to obtain approval.

7.2   In discussion, the Committee sought amendments to the regulations for the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery; the Bachelor of Dental Surgery; and the Master of Science in Physician Associate Studies (hereafter referred to as the "MMSN regulations"), in respect of a number of administrative errors which appear to have been retained. The Committee agreed that further work will be undertaken in respect of the MMSN regulations, and will return to the Committee for approval at a future point.

7.3   The Committee approved, for its part, the Omnibus Resolution, with the exception of the MMSN regulations, for onward consideration by Senate.

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, MUSIC AND VISUAL CULTURE INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW REPORT
(copy filed as QAC/060324/024)

8.1   The Committee heard a summary of the report for the Internal Teaching Review of the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture. In particular, the Committee noted the positive impressions of the panel for the review, in spite of the current context regarding

modern languages provision. The Committee was advised that the cluster structure was working well, and was still bedding in, and that there was excellent practice in light of assessment and feedback; in terms of Staff-Student Liaison Committees; and in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion, particularly Decolonising the Curriculum. The Committee noted the areas for enhancement as part of the action plan. It was suggested that all Schools should disseminate the good practice via School Education Committees.

8.2   The Committee was content to approve the report.

TERM DATES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/26
(copy filed as QAC/060324/009)

9.1   The Committee approved, by routine approval, the term dates for academic year 2025/26.

STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEE REMIT AND COMPOSITION
(copy filed as QAC/060324/010)

10.1   The Committee approved, by routine approval, the amendments made to the Students' Progress Committee Remit and Composition.

QAA QUALITY CODE MAPPING
(i) SECTION 1: ADMISSIONS, RECRUITMENT AND WIDENING ACCESS
(ii) SECTION 5: ENABLING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
(iii) SECTION 11: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
(copies filed as QAC/060324/011, 012 and 013)

11.1   The Committee approved, by routine approval, the amendments made to Sections 1, 5 and 11 of the UK Quality Code Mapping.

UPDATES FROM SUB-COMMITTEES AND GROUPS
(i) ACADEMIC POLICY AND REGULATIONS GROUP
(ii) STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEE
(copies filed as QAC/060324/014a and 014b)

12.1   The Committee noted the updates from the (i) Academic Policy and Regulations Group, and (ii) Students' Progress Committee.

MATTERS APPROVED BY CONVENOR'S ACTION / CIRCULATION

13.1   The Committee noted the following matters approved by Convenor's Action or Circulation:
(i) Changes to Undergraduate Entry Requirements   *(copy filed as QAC/060324/015)*
(ii) Summer Graduations 2024   *(copy filed as QAC/060324/016)*

GUIDANCE FOR DISABLED PGR STUDENTS AND FOR STAFF SUPPORTING PGRs
(copy filed as QAC/060324/017)

14.1   The Committee noted the Guidance for Disabled PGR Students and for Staff supporting PGR students.

PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES

15.1   The Committee noted the following matters pertaining to Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies:
(i) Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies Register   *(copy filed as QAC/060324/018)*

(ii) General Medical Council Annual Summary (MMSN)   *(copy filed as QAC/060324/019)*
(iii) Association for Project Management (Engineering)   *(copy filed as QAC/060324/020)*
(iv) Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (Business)
(copy filed as QAC/060324/021)
(v) Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (Business)
(copy filed as QAC/060324/022)
(vi) National Committee for Qualifications and Academic Accreditation (Qatar)
(copy filed as QAC/060324/025)

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS FROM QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS REVIEWS (QESR) CONDUCTED DURING SESSION 2022/23
(copy filed as QAC/060324/023)

16.1 The Committee noted the analysis provided by QAA Scotland related to the QESR Reviews conducted during session 2022/23.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 9 May 2024 at 2:05pm (UK Time) at Meeting Room 1, Floor 7, Sir Duncan Rice Library or via Microsoft Teams.

NIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Minute of the Meeting held on 27 March 2024

Present: Steve Tucker **(Chair)**, Will Barras, Qiang Cai, Selma Carson, Isabel Crane, Nadia DeGama, Isa Ehrenschwendtner, Lois Gall, Mark Grant, Faye Hendry, Jacqui Hutchison, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Rhiannon Ledwell, Laura McCann (from Item 3(iv)), Colin North, Gareth Norton, Thanga Thevar, Jo Vergunst (from Item 3(ix)) with Darren Comber, Lucy Leiper, Gillian Mackintosh, and Liam Dyker **(Clerk)** in attendance.

Apologies: Sanaa Al-Azawi, Scott Carle, Morag MacRae, Ann Simpson, Fiona Stoddard.

UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ENGLISH SKILLS (AES) PROGRESSION REQUIREMENTS (ABERDEEN INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTRE)
(copy filed as QAC/270324/025)

[Clerk's Note: Clare Watson was in attendance to present this item.]

1.1   The Committee heard a summary of the proposed changes in respect of Undergraduate Academic English Skills (AES) progression requirements for the Aberdeen International Study Centre, operated by Study Group. In summary, it was highlighted that previously agreed progression requirements were misaligned with the University and the proposed changes brought them back into line. It was noted that no students had been disadvantaged as a result of these proposals. Clarity was sought in relation to whether the proposed changes would make a difference for applicants and recruitment. It was confirmed that it would not, and that it was ensuring parity across programmes.

1.2   The Committee was content to approve the proposed changes.

OVERVIEW OF PARTNERSHIPS REPORTING

2.1   The Committee heard a summary of the annual partnerships reporting exercise, noting that reporting is required as part of the agreements to ensure that academic standards are being maintained. Additionally, the Committee noted that the Total UK report is not required as the course delivered by the partnership did not run in 2022/23.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIVE PROVISION ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2022/23

(i) AL FALEH GROUP FOR EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC SERVICES
(copy filed as QAC/270324/007)

[Clerk's Note: Lyn Batchelor and Steve Pearce were in attendance to present this item.]

3.1   The Committee heard a summary of the Al Faleh Group for Educational and Academic Services (AFG College) report. In summary, it was noted that there were mandatory changes requested by the Qatari Government in relation to the hosting of the World Cup in 2022. Additionally, it was noted that the partnership had been relicensed to deliver provision in Qatar, which was successful. The departure of two senior members of staff was highlighted, as was the requirement for University staff to travel to Qatar for Undergraduate teaching. It was noted that Postgraduate teaching will also commence in country. The student recruitment and admissions data was noted, noting a fall in student numbers.

3.2   Concerns were raised in respect of the lack of student engagement as part of the postgraduate SSLC process. It was clarified that the report related to 2022/23, while there had been work

undertaken in 2023/24 to further improve the engagement of postgraduate students. It was noted that many postgraduate students are also employed full-time which is challenging to arrange scheduled SSLC meetings. It was agreed that work would be undertaken with AUSA in this regard.

3.3   The Committee was content to approve the report.

(ii) UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

(copy filed as QAC/270324/001)

4.1   The Committee heard a summary of the University of the Highlands and Islands report. It was highlighted that the main actions centred quality assurance; and training and development support available for students and staff. The Committee noted the reapproval of the sustainability subject area. It was suggested that more work requires to be undertaken in respect of supervisor training, but noted the risks in relation to academic staff time to deliver the training. In discussion, it was noted that there remains only one student on the validated programme and the partnership will conclude when they complete their course of study. It was suggested that further information was sought in relation to deadlines for this, and clarification that the UHI are mapping against the recently introduced UKRI Core Offer.   **Action: Clerk**

4.2   The Committee was content to approve the report.

(iii) STUDY GROUP LTD.

(copy filed as QAC/270324/002)

5.1   The Committee heard a summary of the Study Group Ltd. report, noting the partnership agreement is currently in renegotiation. In summary, the Committee was advised that the key actions related to recruitment and registration, retention, and student success for onward study at the University. Issues pertaining to obtaining visas was noted. It was further noted that work is being undertaken regarding retention, with ongoing monitoring. In relation to retention, the Committee was advised that personal circumstances appear to be the primary reason for withdrawal. Attention was drawn to a particular issue with students who fail to meet the requirements for the Medical (MBChB) programme, with few students taking up the alternative degree opportunity in life sciences. It was noted that the Study Centre is affected by RAAC which has caused some disruption.

5.2   Clarity was sought regarding whether there were any plans to expand the programmes to cover humanities subject areas. It was agreed that clarification would be sought from the relevant party. Additionally, clarification was provided in respect of student numbers on the programmes.   **Action: Clerk**

5.3   The Committee was content to approve the report.

(iv) TRINITY COLLEGE BRISTOL

(copy filed as QAC/270324/003)

6.1   The Committee heard a summary of the Trinity College Bristol report. The Committee noted that the pattern of recruitment is improving, with the impression that the students are very active. The practical teaching experience provided to PhD students was highlighted, as was the funded conference attendance for students. In relation to student satisfaction, pastoral support was highlighted as positive. The Committee noted that the action plan details positive steps to address each action.

6.2   In discussion, it was noted that some students sought clarification of the mandatory training which is required by the PGR School. It was clarified that this issue would be raised at a

Partnership Board meeting by the PGR School. Additionally, supervisor training will be flagged to colleagues at Trinity College to ensure the full process is duly followed.

6.3   The Committee was content to approve the report.

(v) INTERACTIVE DESIGN INSTITUTE LTD.
(copy filed as QAC/270324/004)

7.1   The Committee heard a summary of the Interactive Design Institute (IDI) Ltd. report, noting that the agreement had terminated and as such, this report was the final. The transition from IDI to in-house provision was highlighted, noting MyAberdeen is used for delivery and overseen by a Project Board. It was noted that recruitment to the programmes was paused as a result of the transition and would recommence in September 2024. The Committee was advised that the Business School intends to amend the delivery model to include online face-to-face sessions and the move to a three-term framework.

7.2   Clarity was sought as to whether the transition to in-house delivery meant the Business School had more flexibility regarding the format, delivery and content of provision. To that end, it was confirmed that this was the case. The role of the Centre for Academic Development was noted in the transition.

7.3   The Committee was content to approve the report.

(vi) UNIVERSITIES OF GLASGOW AND STRATHCLYDE
(copy filed as QAC/270324/005)

8.1   The Committee heard a summary of the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde report. The Committee noted the partnership delivered a postgraduate programme with a small cohort of students. The pass rates were noted as high and students felt supported by all institutions. The Committee noted concerns in relation to project options and the ability to join lab-based projects. Further concerns were raised in relation to organisation and communication between centres. The high turnover of staff was noted. Additionally, the positive feedback from students was noted. However, timetabling clashes in particular were highlighted as a result of the structure of the programme.

8.2   The Committee discussed the potential discrepancies between the marketing of the programmes and the actual situation. It was agreed that clarification would be sought from the School to confirm this. Additionally, it was agreed that clarification would be sought in relation to project options.   **Action: Clerk**

8.3   The Committee was content to approve the report.

(vii) SOUTH CHINA NORMAL UNIVERSITY (SCNU) – ARTICULATIONS
(copy filed as QAC/270324/008)

9.1   The Committee heard a summary of the South China Normal University (SCNU) report, pertaining to articulation agreements. The student numbers were highlighted, noting the articulation agreements included a 2+2 and 2+2.5 programme. The combination of quota and non-quota students was highlighted, with the quota students appearing to perform better. The transition to a 2+2.5 programme was highlighted. Aspects of good practice, including a Q&A session with key staff and to meet peers, development of a student guide, and allocation of personal tutors were highlighted. Ongoing issues in relation to Online Registration and MyCurriculum were noted. The introduction of feedback surveys particularly in relation to orientation and induction was noted.

9.2   The Committee was content to approve the report.

(viii) SOUTH CHINA NORMAL UNIVERSITY (SCNU) – JOINT INSTITUTE
(copy filed as QAC/270324/009)

10.1   The Committee heard a summary of the South China Normal University (SCNU) report, pertaining to the Aberdeen Institute of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence. The student numbers were noted, noting increased recruitment with good performance by students. The challenge in relation to a lack of face-to-face teaching in Term 1 of 2022/23 was highlighted, but recognised that this is now rectified. The student exchange period to the Aberdeen campus was noted. The Committee noted the positive relationship between the University and SCNU. The plans for English Language Support and development of computing labs in China were highlighted as ongoing. In discussion, the Committee noted that discussions regarding English Language support were at an advanced stage with support of the Language Centre.

10.2   The Committee was content to approve the report.

(ix) CHONGQING INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN STUDIES (CFIS)
(copy filed as QAC/270324/010)

11.1   The Committee heard a summary of the Chongqing Institute of Foreign Studies (CFIS) report. The Committee noted that the articulation arrangement included a 3+1 model, with students completing a year of PGT study at the University. It was noted that student numbers were small. The student experience was highlighted as positive. The Committee noted the potential for growth with the partnership and the desire for CIFS to offer more programmes with the University. It was noted that students will meet twice a year with Aberdeen staff in order to provide necessary support and information.

11.2   The Committee discussed the content of the report and noted that the report was not too detailed. It was agreed that further clarity would be sought in terms of quality enhancement and future plans, before approval will be granted.   **Action: Clerk**

(x) SHANDONG NORMAL UNIVERSITY (SDNU)
(copy filed as QAC/270324/011)

12.1   The Committee heard a summary of the Shandong Normal University (SDNU) report. The Committee noted the articulation agreement with a 2+2 model at undergraduate level. The Committee noted the fall in student numbers, but that grade distribution and pass rates appeared to be in order. The pastoral support provided was highlighted, with administrative staff monitoring progress of students as part of this partnership. In discussion, it was highlighted that future plans included development of a 4+0 model which might offer an alternative means of delivering joint provision. It was noted that discussions were still ongoing.

12.2   The Committee discussed the content of the report and noted that the report was not too detailed. It was agreed that further clarity would be sought in terms of quality enhancement and future plans, before approval will be granted. Additionally, clarity was sought regarding a definitive response as to whether any appeals had been received.   **Action: Clerk**

(xi) HARBIN ENGINEERING UNIVERSITY
(copy filed as QAC/270324/012)

13.1   The Committee heard a summary of the Harbin Engineering University (HEU) report, noting the partnership consisted of a 3+1 agreement leading to a double degree in Civil Engineering. The student numbers were noted, in particular a concern regarding the number of students requiring a resit assessment. It was noted that plans are in place to support students including

extra English language provision. The induction programme was noted, as was the instances of academic misconduct. The provisions in place to support student learning, such as reducing the speed of delivery and providing a glossary of terminology was noted. Additionally, the Committee noted the ongoing programme changes to ensure better prerequisites for students. It was highlighted that the SSLC and engagement with students in terms of University processes would be enhanced. It was agreed that this should be included on the action plan.

13.2   The Committee noted the ongoing renewal of the agreement and agreed that the Partnership Group should continue to meet to ensure the new agreement is appropriate. Additionally, the Committee discussed the steps taken to address academic misconduct, and agreed that the wording in the report should be reconsidered in line with current academic integrity guidance.
Action: Clerk

13.3   The Committee was content to approve the report.

13.4   In general discussion, the Committee agreed that the report should be reviewed to include an Executive Summary and better guidance for authors of reports to ensure the information provided is relevant and appropriately covers all required areas. It was agreed that this would be taken away and an appropriate course of action sought.   **Action: Chair / Clerk**

OVERVIEW OF INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW FOLLOW-UP REPORTING

14.1   The Committee heard a summary of the annual follow-up reporting exercise for Internal Teaching Reviews. In particular, the Committee noted that all Schools are required to submit a follow-up report annually, unless a School has recently undergone or will undergo an Internal Teaching Review in the academic year in which the reports are considered. For 2023/24, the Schools of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture; and Biological Sciences do not require to submit a report due to having recently undergone an Internal Teaching Review. As such, the first report for these reviews will be submitted in January 2025.

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW FOLLOW-UP REPORTS

(i) BUSINESS SCHOOL
(copy filed as QAC/270324/013)

15.1   The Committee heard a summary of the annual Internal Teaching Review Follow-Up Report for the Business School. In summary, the Committee noted that many actions are complete, with others ongoing. It was highlighted that work was ongoing in relation to the enhancement of communication across the School and the student experience, and in relation to development of internships and placements. The Committee noted the move from block to linear taught provision. Additionally, the recently achieved EQUIS accreditation was highlighted.

15.2   The Committee was content to approve the follow-up report.

(ii) SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, MEDICAL SCIENCES AND NUTRITION (HEALTHCARE)
(copy filed as QAC/270324/020)

16.1   The Committee heard a summary of the annual Internal Teaching Review Follow-Up Report for the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition (Healthcare Programmes). In summary, the Committee noted that many of the actions are complete. In particular, focus was drawn to academic and student support, noting the support provided to students, particularly those on placements. The concerns regarding resources were noted. It was noted that the evaluation of effectiveness of the Regent system was yet to be formally evaluated. The Committee noted the new accommodation in Elgin as well as the investment in CPD opportunities. The streamlining of processes was also highlighted. Further, the Committee was advised that timetabling

challenges persist as a result of the presence of RAAC at the Foresterhill Campus. The presence of Medical students on the Old Aberdeen campus, however, has improved a sense of belonging and integration.

16.2   The Committee was content to approve the follow-up report.

(iii) SCHOOL OF NATURAL AND COMPUTING SCIENCE
(copy filed as QAC/270324/021)

17.1   The Committee heard a summary of the annual Internal Teaching Review Follow-Up Report for the School of Natural and Computing Science. The Committee noted progress in relation to the School-wide workload model, including succession planning. In relation to staff development, it was highlighted that a process for peer observation is underway. It was agreed that it would be useful for details of this process to be shared when available. An issue was identified for further training and support for students. The transition to Blackboard Ultra was noted, as was participation in the TESTA programme which feeds a wider programme review.

17.2   Discussion ensued regarding postgraduate research training, noting the range of support available via the Centre for Academic Development. It was agreed that this support would be highlighted to the School.   **Action: Clerk**

17.3   The Committee was content to approve the follow-up report.

(iv) SCHOOL OF DIVINITY, HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY AND ART HISTORY
(copy filed as QAC/270324/014)

18.1   The Committee heard a summary of the annual Internal Teaching Review Follow-Up Report for the School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History. In summary, the Committee noted that many actions are complete or underway. In particular, the recent grant funding provided by the Development Trust for student community building was highlighted. The Committee noted the ongoing support for personal tutors and the work related to graduate attributes. The opportunities in relation to employability were noted. Additionally, the Committee noted the ongoing discussions between the School and the PGR School in relation to training opportunities, and the related opportunities for PGR students. Engagement with TESTA was noted, as was the engagement with artificial intelligence.

18.2   In discussion, it was clarified that the PGR School communicate with students by way of newsletter, as per the Student Communications Policy.

18.3   The Committee was content to approve the follow-up report.

(v) SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
(copy filed as QAC/270324/015)

19.1   The Committee heard a summary of the annual Internal Teaching Review Follow-Up Report for the School of Education. In summary, the varying types of assessments used and any associated pressure points were noted, as was the support provided to students on placement. The communication between partnership schools and the University was highlighted. Further, the Committee highlighted the good practice in the development of fora for staff to share good practice. It was noted that many actions were complete or underway.

19.2   The Committee was content to approve the follow-up report.

(vi) SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

(copy filed as QAC/270324/016)

20.1   The Committee heard a summary of the annual Internal Teaching Review Follow-Up Report for the School of Engineering. In summary, the Committee noted that many of the actions are complete or underway. It was noted that programme changes have been made as a result of the review, including a review of course credit values. The final project was noted to have been relocated to Term 2 in response to feedback. Additionally, the improved mechanisms for feedback were noted. The Committee highlighted the seminar series to share good practice within the School.

20.2   In discussion, clarity was sought regarding the highly weighted examinations. It was noted that this might be due to accreditation requirements. Additionally, it was noted that examinations are required due to the types of skills assessed. Further, the Committee discussed students carrying additional credits in each term. It was advised that progression codes entered into the student record system will allow a student to take a specified number of credits if they have a shortfall.

20.3   The Committee was content to approve the report.

COLLABORATIVE PROVISION REGISTER

(copy filed as QAC/270324/024)

21.1   The Committee noted the Collaborative Provision Register.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22.1   The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 9 May 2024 (Thursday) at 14:05 at Meeting Room 1, Floor 7, Sir Duncan Rice Library or via Microsoft Teams.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

ACTION LOG

Meeting	Minute Point	Identified Action	Individual(s) Responsible	Action Status/Update
14 Mar 23	**7.2 and 7.6(i)**	Clarity to be sought regarding the differences between an MRes degree and an MSc by Research.	**Gillian Mackintosh**	**Complete:** This work has been included as part of postgraduate regulatory work, already included on the agenda.
6 Mar 24	**2.1.1**	To notify the Clerk of expressions of interest for the Senate vacancies (3 positions).	**All / Clerk**	**Pending**
	2.1.3	To obtain a representative from the Qatar campus for the Decolonising the Curriculum Community of Practice.	**Kirsty Kiezebrink**	**Pending**
	2.2.1	To review the AFG College Annual Report in light of the monitoring data presented in 2021/22 report, when reviewed by Committee on 27 March 2024.	**Chair**	**Complete:** The report was considered by the Committee on 27 March 2024.
	2.3.1	To circulate / note on the agenda the meeting note of the meeting of ILM with QAAS.	**Clerk**	**Complete:** Agenda Item 5(i) refers.
27 Mar 24	**4.1**	To obtain further information from UHI in relation to completion of the final student, and to remind regarding the mapping against the UKRI Core Offer.	**Clerk**	**Pending:** A follow-up will be issued to ensure this is available for the next meeting.
	5.2	To obtain clarification from Study Group/Partnerships team regarding any plans to expand provision to cover the humanities.	**Clerk**	**Complete:** Confirmed with International Partnerships & Mobility team that there are no current plans to expand the humanities provision. There currently exists a humanities programme for students.
	8.2	To obtain further information from the School of MMSN regarding potential disparities between marketing materials and actual practice for the Glasgow/ Strathclyde partnership, and in relation to project options.	**Clerk**	**Pending:** A follow-up will be issued to ensure this is available for the next meeting.
	11.2	To obtain further information from the Business School in relation to quality enhancement and future plans for the CIFS partnership.	**Clerk**	**Pending:** A follow-up will be issued to ensure this is available for the next meeting.

	12.2	To obtain further information from the Business School in relation to quality enhancement and future plans for the SDNU partnership.	**Clerk**	**Pending:** A follow-up will be issued to ensure this is available for the next meeting.
	13.2	To feedback to the School of Engineering regarding the importance of the Partnership Group continuing to meet, and to request an update to the report in respect of academic integrity.	**Clerk**	**Complete:** Feedback provided to the School on 29 March 2024.
	13.4	To discuss and review the partnership report template to ensure it meets all requirements. Include an Executive Summary and some guidance to accompany the report regarding what should be included.	**Chair / Clerk**	**Pending**
	17.2	To feedback to the School of NCS regarding the research training support offered by CAD.	**Clerk**	**Complete:** Feedback provided to the School on 29 March 2024.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

ARTICULATION PATHWAYS POLICY 25/26

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides details of the Articulation Pathways Policy for applicants studying SQA Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Diploma (HND) qualifications.

2.   PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	**Date**
Previously approved by	SRC	7 May 2024
Further consideration/ approval required by	QAC	8 May 2024
Further consideration required by	Senate	

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Committee is invited to approve the Articulation Pathways Policy as entry requirements to the University.

4   BACKGROUND

4.1   The university has made a commitment to encourage students from the widest possible range of backgrounds to participate in university studies. Not all students have the same opportunities at school or feel ready for university study straight from school so we have built a portfolio of articulation pathways which allow students to study for an Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Diploma (HND) and articulate into the University with advanced entry.

4.2   The University has revised its approach to entry requirements for 2025-26 and is aiming to be more transparent in its offer making. The articulation pathways have always been available on the University's web site but will now be added to the admissions policies section to increase visibility.

5   QUALIFICATION MAPPING

5.1   An HNC is credit rated at SCQF Level 7 and an HND is credit rated at SCQF Level 8. It is possible to study 120 credits in each qualification therefore universities are strongly encouraged where possible, by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), to create full credit pathways, HNC to Level 2 and HND to Level 3. Only full credit pathways are defined as articulation by the SFC.

5.2   Our SFC Outcome Agreement includes articulation and National Articulation Database data is used to define the number of students entering the University by Articulation. A notional 75% target has been discussed but is currently under review by the SFC.

5.2   Academic content is as valuable as credit points at the correct SQA level therefore HNC/D qualifications are mapped, by our academic schools, against the University's degree programmes and where sufficient compulsory content has been covered in an HNC/D a pathway is created.

5.3   Whilst all the pathways in Appendix 1 are not full credit pathways they do deliver routes to the highest possible level given the scale of overlap of the HNC/D and our degree programmes.

5   ANNUAL CYCLE FOR APPROVAL OF ARTICULATION PATHWAYS

5.1   This is the first year of a new system of approvals for the Articulation Pathways, formerly articulation agreements were approved by QAC with a list of pathways attached. These documents are typically 4 years in length and changes in both degrees and HNC/D programmes typically happened within this timeframe.

5.2   This year sets a new baseline for pathways. Every School in the University has been asked to reapprove the pathways for entry to degree programmes offered by the School, taking into account of any changes to the HNC/D programmes, degree programmes and student performance. The resulting Articulation Pathway Policy can be viewed in Appendix 1.

5.3   In future years this process will happen at the end of the first semester allowing time to build any changes into the new prospectus and update admissions policies prior to the start of the new recruitment cycle.

5.2   All new and renewed Articulation Agreements will refer to the Policy document on the University web site rather than detailing pathways within the agreements, meaning new/renewed agreements will be approved by the University Partnership Committee (UPC) every four years while pathways will be approved by QAC in advance of each new recruitment cycle.

6   NEXT STEPS

6.1   If the proposed changes are accepted by SRC and QAC then the Articulation Pathways Policy 2025/26 will be added to the University web pages. (Note: Schools have already signed off on the pathways.)

7   FURTHER INFORMATION

7.1   Further information is available from Sally Middleton, Access & Articulation Manager (sally.middleton@abdn.ac.uk) and Megan McFarlane, Deputy Director of Student Recruitment (megan.mcfarlane@abdn.ac.uk)

22 April 2024
FoI status: Closed – policy under development.

University of Aberdeen
1495

**The University of Aberdeen Articulation Pathway Policy
Entry in Academic Year 2025/2026**

The University of Aberdeen has a long-standing commitment to widening access to higher education. A key part of this commitment is the University's Articulation Pathway Policy.

The university has made a commitment to encourage students from the widest possible range of backgrounds to participate in university studies. Not all students have the same opportunities at school or feel ready for university study straight from school so we have built a portfolio of articulation pathways which allow students to study for a 120 credit, Higher National Certificate (HNC) or 240 credit, Higher National Diploma (HND) and articulate into the University with advanced entry. The information below refers to students sitting SQA Higher National Certificate and Diploma qualifications, for all other qualifications please contact ugadmissions@abdn.ac.uk

1. Pathway Creation
The Scottish Qualification Framework (SCQF) is a way of quantifying the level a programme of study is taught at. Both HNC and 1st Year at University are taught at SCQF Level 7 and both HND and 2nd year at University are taught at SCQF Level 8. Therefore, the University has mapped the academic content of the most common HNC/HND courses to our degree programmes and, where there is sufficient overlap, a pathway has been created which gives students advanced entry to our degree programmes.

We are advocates for student choice so even if a pathway exists students may still enter a lower year of study by selecting this on their UCAS form or contacting us during the UCAS cycle at ugadmissions@abdn.ac.uk

2. Next Gen HNC/HND Programmes
The University welcomes the Next Generation of HNC/HND programmes but recognises that these programmes are still in the pilot phase and therefore content and assessment may still be subject to change. Therefore, we encourage students sitting Next Gen qualifications to contact us directly for more information about pathways at accessaberdeen@abdn.ac.uk

3. Policy Documents
Information relating to all the University's Admissions Policies can be found at the following webpage: www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy

4. More information
For more information about Widening Access at the University of Aberdeen, please contact the Access and Articulation Team.

5. Pathways
The following pages detail the pathways which we currently offer, if the HNC/D you are studying is not listed we encourage you to contact us at accessabaerdeen@abdn.ac.uk to discuss your situation further.

APRIL 2024

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 25/26. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

HN qualification level and title	HNC Accountancy
Degree programme(s) and title	MA Accountancy (N400)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Accountancy
Degree programme(s) and title	MA Accountancy (N400)
Year of entry to University	**Year 3**

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points)
	
	A in all Graded Units
	
	Curriculum to include:
	    Research Skills (F60A34)
	    Company Law (DE5H35)

Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Animal Care
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Animal Behaviour (C349) BSc Biological Sciences (C901) BSc Biology (C100) BSc Conservation Biology (C161) BSc Ecology (D430) BSc Marine Biology (C350) BSc Plant and Soil Science (CD27) BSc Zoology (C300)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) B in Graded Units Curriculum to include: either Ecology unit (H39A 34)) or Aberdeen University Online Introductory Ecology Course
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Animal Care
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare (C345) BSc Biological Sciences (C901) BSc Biology (C100) BSc Ecology (D430) BSc Zoology (C300) MA Education (Biology)*
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) B in Graded unit 1 A in Grade unit 2 Curriculum to include: either Ecology unit (H39A 34)) or Aberdeen University Online Introductory Ecology Course and Statistics for Science (H8XT 33) or Aberdeen University Online Statistics Course (BI2021) *Satisfactory Completion: Interview, PVG Check, Higher English and Nat5 Maths (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Applied Sciences
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Animal Behaviour (C349) BSc Biochemistry (C700) BSc Biological Sciences (C901)* BSc Biology (C100)* BSc Biomedical Sciences BSc Chemistry (F100)** BSc Conservation Biology (C161)* BSc Ecology (D430)* BSc Genetics (C400) BSc Human Embryology and Developmental Biology (CC71) BSc Immunology (C552) BSc Marine Biology (C350)* BSc Microbiology (C500) BSc Molecular Biology (CC74) BSc Pharmacology (B210) BSc Physics (F300)*** BSc Physics with Astrophysics (F3F5)*** BSc Physiology (B120) BSc Plant and Soil Science (CD27)* BSc Zoology (C300)*
Year of entry to University	**Year 2**

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points)
	
	B in Graded Unit
	A in Graded Unit (for BSc Biomedical Sciences only)
	
	Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):
	      *Statistics for Science 1 (H8XT 33)
	      Ecology and Ecosystems (H93A 34) or University of Aberdeen online Introductory Ecology course
	
	      **Mathematics for Science (H8XP)
	      Inorganic Chemistry (B) (H92Y)
	      Physical Chemistry (B) (H936)
	
	      *** Mathematics for Science 1 (H8XP 33)
	      Mathematics for Science 2 (H8XR 34)
	      Physics for Life Sciences (H93F 34)
	      Physics Principles: Heat and Thermodynamics (H93G 34)
	      Physics Principles: Mechanics (H93H 34)
	      Electricity and Magnetism (H93L 34)
	      Physics: Light and Optics (H93J 35)

Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HND Applied Sciences
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare (C345)* BSc Biochemistry (C700)** BSc Biological Sciences (C901)** BSc Biology (C100)* BSc Biomedical Sciences** BSc Chemistry (F100)*** BSc Ecology (D430)* BSc Genetics (C400)** BSc Human Embryology and Developmental Biology (CC71)** BSc Immunology (C552)**** BSc Microbiology (C500) BSc Molecular Biology (CC74)** BSc Pharmacology (B210)**** BSc Physiology (B120)**** BSc Physics (F300)***** BSc Zoology (C300)* MA Education (Biology)****** MA Education (Chemistry)****** MA Education (Physics)******
Year of entry to University	**Year 3**

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points)
	
	B in Graded unit 1
	A in Grade unit 2
	AA in Graded Units for Biomedical Sciences only
	
	Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):
	    * either Ecology unit (H39A 34)) or Aberdeen University Online Introductory Ecology Course
	    either Statistics for Science (H8XT 33) or Aberdeen University Online Statistics Course (BI2021)
	
	    ** Human Metabolism (H92D 35)
	
	    *** Organic Stereochemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H934 35)
	    Instrumental Techniques 1 (H930 35)
	    Inorganic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H932 35)
	    Aromatic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H92N 35)
	
	    **** Human Metabolism (H92D 35) preferred but not essential
	
	    ***** Physics 2 (H93E 35)
	    Electronics (H93M 35)
	    Relativity and Quantum mechanics (H93K 35)
	    Dynamical Phenomena (J4C0)

	Linear Algebra 1 (J2RB 34) Linear Algebra 2 (J2RC 35) Programming Foundations (H17X 34) or Equivalent ****** provisions for standard degree programme (*, ***, *****) and Interview, Audition, PVG Check, Higher English and Nat5 Maths (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 25/26. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

HN qualification level and title	HND Applied Biological Sciences
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Biochemistry (C700) BSc Biological Sciences (C901) BSc Molecular Biology (CC74) BSc Pharmacology (B210) BSc Physiology (B120) MA Education*
Year of entry to University	**Year 3**
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) B in Graded unit 1 A in Graded unit 2 Curriculum to include: * either Ecology unit (H39A 34)) or Aberdeen University Online Introductory Ecology Course and Admission is subject to Interview, PVG Check, Higher English and Nat5 Maths (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Business
Degree programme(s) and title	MA Business Management (N200)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	**HND Business**
Degree programme(s) and title	MA Business Management (N200)
Year of entry to University	**Year 3**
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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25/26 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Chemical Process Technology
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Chemical Engineering (H813)* BSc Chemistry (F100)** BEng Petroleum Engineering (H851)**
Year of entry to University	Year 2

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points)
	
	A in all Graded Units
	
	Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):
	
	      * Engineering Maths 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent)
	      Physics Principles Mechanics (H93H 34)
	
	      *** Engineering Maths 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent)
	      Inorganic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H92Y 34)
	      Physical Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H936 34)

Additional conditions	Engineering students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 25/26. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

HN qualification level and title	HND Chemical Process Technology
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Chemical Engineering (H813)* BSc Chemistry (F100)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) AA in Graded Units Curriculum to include (see above degree titles): * Engineering Maths 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Engineering students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Coaching and Developing Sport
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Applied Sports Science (C605) BSc Sports & Exercise Science/Exercise & Sports Science (C600)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	Students must sit *Academic Skills for Sport Science Professionals* as part of their third year curriculum. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Electrical Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (140 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: * Engineering Maths 1, 2 & 3 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HND Electrical Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: * Engineering Maths 1, 2 , 3, 4 & 5 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Engineering Systems
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Chemical Engineering (H813) BEng Engineering (H100) BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220) BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221) BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200) BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620) BEng Engineering (Electronic and Software) (H6H4) BEng Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical) (HH36) BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8) BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300) BEng Petroleum Engineering (H851)
Year of entry to University	Year 2

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points)
	
	 A in all Graded Units
	
	 Curriculum to include:
	     Engineering Maths 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent)
	     Contact selector to discuss exact unit requirements

Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HND Engineering Systems
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Chemical Engineering (H813) BEng Engineering (H100) BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220) BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221) BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200) BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620) BEng Engineering (Electronic and Software) (H6H4) BEng Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical) (HH36) BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8) BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300) BEng Petroleum Engineering (H851)
Year of entry to University	Year 3

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points)
	
	 A in all Graded Units
	
	 Curriculum to include:
	     Engineering Maths 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (or equivalent)
	     Contact selector to discuss exact unit requirements

Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 25/26. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

HN qualification level and title	HNC Fitness Health and Exercise
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Exercise and Health Science (C603)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	Students must sit *Academic Skills for Sport Science Professionals* as part of their third year curriculum. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 25/26. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

HN qualification level and title	HND Fitness Health and Exercise
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Exercise and Health Science (C603)
Year of entry to University	**Year 3**
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	Students must sit *Academic Skills for Sport Science Professionals* as part of their third year curriculum. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 25/26. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

HN qualification level and title	**HND Legal Services**
Degree programme(s) and title	All LLB Degrees apart from accelerated pathways
Year of entry to University	**Year 1**
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) B in Graded Unit 1 A in Graded Unit 2 A in Graded Unit 3
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 25/26. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

HN qualification level and title	HNC Mechanical Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220) BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221) BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200) BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620) BEng Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical) (HH36) BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8) BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: Engineering Maths 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 25/26. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

HN qualification level and title	HND Mechanical Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220) BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221) BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200) BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620) BEng Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical) (HH36) BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8) BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: Engineering Maths 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 25/26. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

HN qualification level and title	**HNC Music**
Degree programme(s) and title	BMus Music (W300)* BMus Music Education (XW13)**
Year of entry to University	**Year 2**

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (120 SCQF credit points)
	
	Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):
	
	    *Satisfactory Completion, Interview, Audition
	
	    **Satisfactory Completion: Interview, Audition, PVG Check, Higher English and Nat5 Maths (or equivalent)
	
	Studying Music or Music Education at the University of Aberdeen requires an ability to read and write musical notation. Entry to these degrees is conditional on your academic achievements so far, as well as your performance at interview and audition.
	
	For the audition, you will be expected to play or sing a short piece of music of your choice. Choose something that enables you to demonstrate your technical ability on your instrument or voice, and be prepared to answer questions about the piece you have chosen. Your interview will focus on the breadth and depth of your knowledge of music and your interest in it. Be prepared to be asked about music in different genres to the one that you have performed, including classical music (which is an important ingredient of the Music and Music Education degrees at Aberdeen, amongst many other styles and genres).
	
	Please note that entry to Year 3 is not guaranteed, and in some cases entry to a lower year may be offered.

Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

25/26 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 25/26. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

HN qualification level and title	HND Music
Degree programme(s) and title	BMus Music (W300)* BMus Music Education (XW13)**
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) Curriculum to include (see above degree titles): *Satisfactory Completion, Interview, Audition **Satisfactory Completion: Interview, Audition, PVG Check, Higher English and Nat5 Maths (or equivalent) Auditions at the University of Aberdeen are centred around the classical music course. So, expect questions on classical music to pop-up in your interview. After the theory/ aural session you will be expected to play (or sing if you are a singer) on your main study. Then there will be a short interview. This interview will focus on classical music; so, be prepared for this. One example of a question which might be asked is, 'can you talk us through the main points of Sonata form'. Or, another, 'Talk to us about a work by Mozart or Beethoven'. Although we welcome all genres of music, the course is primarily classical focussed. Entry to these degrees are conditional on performance at interview and audition, entry at year three is not guaranteed by the academic requirements alone and in some cases entry to a lower year may be offered.
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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25/26 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	**HNC Petroleum Engineering**
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Chemical Engineering (H813)* BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220)** BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221)** BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200)** BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8)** BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300)** BEng Petroleum Engineering (H851)*
Year of entry to University	**Year 2**

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points)
	
	 A in all Graded Units
	
	 Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):
	       * Engineering Mathematics 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent)
	       Fundamental Chemistry: An Introduction (H92W33)
	       Fundamental Concepts of Organic Chemistry (DP2P34)
	
	       **Engineering Maths 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent)

Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Petroleum Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220)* BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221)* BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200)* BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8)* BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300)* BEng Petroleum Engineering (H851)**
Year of entry to University	Year 3

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points)
	
	 A in all Graded Units
	
	 Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):
	      * Engineering Mathematics 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (or equivalent)
	
	      ** Engineering Mathematics 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (or equivalent)
	      Fundamental Chemistry: An Introduction (H92W33)
	      Fundamental Concepts of Organic Chemistry (DP2P34)
	      Petroleum Geology and Geophysics: An Introduction (F53034)

Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Social Sciences
Degree programme(s) and title	**Single Honours** MA Anthropology (L600)* MA Criminology and Sociology (MLC5)** MA General Studies (Y001) MA Geography (L700) MA History (VI00) MA Philosophy (V500) MA Politics and International Relations (L240) MA Psychology (C802) MA Sociology (L300) **Joint Honours** MA Geography and International Relations (LL72) MA Geography and Sociology (LL73) MA History and International Relations (VLC2) MA History and Philosophy (VV15) MA History and Politics (VL12) MA History and Sociology (VL13) MA International Relations and Sociology (LLF3) MA Philosophy and Politics (VL52) MA Philosophy and Psychology (VC58) MA Philosophy and Sociology (VL53) MA Politics and Sociology (LL23) MA Psychology and Sociology (LC38) MA Psychology with Counselling (C8B9)
Year of entry to University	Year 2

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points)
	
	B in all Graded Units
	
	Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):
	    Students should take units A and B of the discipline/s they wish to study at university
	    e.g Psychology A (FK8D 34) & B (J030 34)
	    For joint honours programmes, students must take A and B for both disciplines.
	
	    *Where Anthropology units are not available students may still be permitted to enter the single honours degrees conditional on them taking both first and second year University compulsory courses

	consecutively in their second year. Entry to Joint honours will not be permitted under these circumstances. ** Students must take LS1020: Criminal Law as an extra course alongside the compulsory Level 2 courses.
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Social Sciences
Degree programme(s) and title	MA History (VI00)* MA Sociology (L300)** MA History & Sociology (VL13)***
Year of entry to University	Year 3

Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points)
	
	BBA in Graded Units, where A is the Graded Unit Project in the discipline/s you wish to continue to study
	
	Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):
	       * History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period (FK7V 34)
	       History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period (J02X 34)
	       History C: Evaluating Topics within a Historical Period (J0LS 34)
	       History D: Specialist Study (FK7T 35)
	
	       **Sociology A: Introduction to Sociology (FK8R 34)
	       Sociology B: Applying Sociological Theories and Studies to Sociological Topics (J038 35)
	       Social Science: Research Issues (J0NA 35)
	       Sociology C: Analysing and Evaluating Sociological Debates (J0NA 35)
	       FK8P 35 Sociology D: Specialist Study (FK8P 35)
	
	       *** A combination of as many of the above courses as is possible at your College.

Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE 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 QAC 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, QAC 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>

- [Late Submission of Work Policy](#) - 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.
- [Policy and procedures on student absence](#)- 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>

- [Support for Study Policy](#) – section 4 recommends that appropriate extensions may be arranged if required.
- [Provisions Guide](#) - page 7 details how the provision of 'agreed extensions to deadlines' works at the University.

<u>Student Progress</u>

- [Code of Practice: Postgraduate Taught](#) – 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 [undergraduate](#) 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 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 <u>calendar</u> 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 <u>calendar</u> 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 <u>When applying penalties as detailed in 2.2, T</u>~~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.

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

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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 the~~ir~~ extended ~~normal~~ deadline. The~~e~~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 <u>must</u> 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 documentationSome 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

QUALITY ASSURANCE 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 QAC 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.

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 Quality Assurance 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, must 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 must 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

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON STUDENT APPEALS

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> The purpose of this paper is to seek the **approval** of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) 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
	Senate	5 June 2024
	Court	19 June 2024

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

> The QAC 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 QAC 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 hearing~~s~~ *(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) 0̶1224 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

be given for the delay.

    (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 shethey 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/hertheir 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/hertheir representative).

4. The Head of School or Service will then invite any member of staff present (or his/hertheir 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/hertheir representative).

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

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

8. The Head of School or Service will invite the staff member (or his/hertheir representative) and the student (or his/hertheir 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 shethey considers 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
PART A: 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.

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[empty box]
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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.

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[empty box]
```

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~~:

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[empty box]
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Has a remedy been offered to you?
Yes ☐   No ☐

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

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[empty box]
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What remedy (or outcome) are you seeking?

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[empty box]
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What evidence do you have to support your case?
Please list the documentation you hold below and attach copies to this form.

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1.
2.
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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.

<div style="border:1px solid black; height:120px;"></div>

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

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

REGULATORY CHANGES FOR INTRODUCTION IN 2024/2025

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> The purpose of this paper is to seek the **approval** of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for the attached *appendices A, B and C* comprising Changes to Regulations for Various Degrees.

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
	Senate	5 June 2024
	Court	19 June 2024

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

> The QAC is asked to **approve** the regulatory changes in the attached *Appendices A, B and C*.

4.   DISCUSSION

4.1   The regulatory changes to be introduced with effect from 2024/25 are included in the attached *Appendices A, B and C* as follows:

Appendix A: Changes to the General Regulations for First Degrees
Appendix B: Changes to the Supplementary Regulations for Degrees in Medicine, Dentistry and Physician Associate Studies
Appendix C: Changes to the Supplementary Regulations for Postgraduate Study and the General Regulations for Research Degrees

4.2   Key changes included in the regulatory changes are noted as follows:

(i)   **Appendix A: General Regulations for First Degrees**
       The proposed addition of the regulations in respect of degrees undertaken under the Articulation Agreement with Harbin Engineering University (HEU) seeks to clarify the graduation, progression and award requirements. The model, approved by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), is a double degree, whereby students undertake some

Aberdeen courses while studying in Harbin and then can choose, if they meet the entry requirements, to complete their final year at Aberdeen to complete their studies towards the Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering.

(ii) **Appendix B: Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB), Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) and Degree of Master of Science (MSc) in Physician Associate Studies**
Revised versions of the Regulations for the Degrees of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB), Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) and Master of Science (MSc) in Physician Associate (PA) Studies are provided for approval. Each set of Regulations has been significantly revised and reordered, in order to make the documents more readable and to reduce duplication.

All regulations have also been amended, where applicable, to include use of 'normally'. Normally has been added to support the flexibility of decisions of the Students Progress Committee (SPC) and to allow each programme to adapt to accommodate unforeseen circumstances, as well as those more directly indicated in the wording.

Where changes to the regulations are more substantive in nature, further context is provided as follows:

Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB)

Regulation 6(ii) (formerly regulation 3): the amendment of the regulations to allow candidates, with the permission of the SPC to undertake assessments as external candidates, where exceptional circumstances are identified. Further, the regulation has been amended to reflect that where a student is, for example, sitting a repeat year 5 an elective can be swapped for a more fixed placement.
Regulation 8(v): the addition of a regulation to ensure students with a significant break in clinical practice to be safe, ensure clinical knowledge and training are up to date to meet regulatory requirements.
Regulation 9(i): the addition of a regulation to reflect the concept of 'fit to sit' in the regulations.
Regulation 10 (formerly regulation 4): the amendment of the regulations to reflect the multi-disciplinary nature of the programme teaching team.
Regulation 14(iii): the introduction of a regulation to reflect the fact that candidates are admitted to programme year 3 (such as those from the University of St Andrews).
Regulation 15(ii): the introduction of a regulation to provide clarity that Fitness to Practise processes can be progressed, and the outcomes reached be applied, where candidates intercalate or are taking time out of the programme.

Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)

Regulation 5(ii): the amendment of the regulations to allow candidates, with the permission of the SPC to undertake assessments as external candidates, where exceptional circumstances are identified. Further, the regulation has been amended to reflect that where a student is, for example, sitting a repeat year 5 an elective can be swapped for a more fixed placement.
Regulations 7(v) and 7(vi): the addition of regulations to ensure students with a significant break in clinical practice to be safe, ensure clinical knowledge and training are up to date to meet regulatory requirements.

Regulation 8(i): the addition of a regulation to reflect the concept of 'fit to sit' in the regulations.

Regulation 9 (formerly regulation 3): the amendment of the regulations to reflect the multi-disciplinary nature of the programme teaching team.

Regulation 12(i): the amendment of the existing regulations to provided clarity as to at which points in the programme, exit awards can be achieved.

Regulation 13(ii): the introduction of a regulation to provide clarity that Fitness to Practise processes can be progressed, and the outcomes reached be applied, where candidates intercalate or are taking time out of the programme.

Regulations for the Degree of Master of Science (MSc) in Physician Associate Studies

Regulation 3(i): the amendment of the regulations to allow candidates, with the permission of the SPC to undertake assessments as external candidates, where exceptional circumstances are identified.

Regulation 8: the addition of a regulation to reflect the concept of 'fit to sit' in the regulations, the addition of references to applicable University policies and to provide clarification that additional clinical exams will not be scheduled where candidates have been unable to attend one or both of the scheduled diets.

Regulations 10 and 11: the amendment of the existing regulations to provided clarity as to at which points in the programme, exit awards can be achieved.

Regulation 11(ii): the introduction of a regulation to provide clarity that Fitness to Practise processes can be progressed, and the outcomes reached be applied, where candidates are taking time out of the programme.

(iii) **Appendix C: Changes to the Supplementary Regulations for Postgraduate Study and the General Regulations for Research Degrees**
Revised versions of the Supplementary Regulations for Postgraduate Study and the General Regulations for Research Degrees are provided for approval. The majority of changes to these documents comprise updates to terminology and in ensuring clarity. Substantive changes can, however, be summarised as follows:

General Regulations for Research Degrees
Regulation 1: The renaming of the existing Degree of Masters by Research (MRes) to Degree of Master of Science *(or alternative)* (Research). This change reflects practice at other Institutions and seeks to provide transparency for students undertaking these programmes.

Regulation 4: The amendment of the existing regulation to reflect the fact that honorary staff can also undertake a PhD by Publication.

Regulation 24: The amendment of the existing regulation to provide clarity that a lead supervisor will normally be appointed, and that this individual will normally be an employee of the University. This regulation has been further amended to reflect the fact that for students undertaking their studies in the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, the lead supervisor must be an employee of the University.

Regulation 32: This regulation regarding the length of theses, which has been added to the General Regulations, has previously been listed within the Supplementary Regulations. It is proposed for addition at this level, to reflect its importance and application to all Research Degrees.

4.3 Members of the QAC are asked to approve, and forward to the Senate, the changes to degree regulations as provided in Appendices A, B and C.

5.   **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further information is available from Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar (e.tough@abdn.ac.uk).

18 April 2024

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

DRAFT RESOLUTION NO x OF 2024 [CHANGES IN REGULATIONS FOR VARIOUS DEGREES]

After consultation with the Senatus Academicus, the University Court, at its meeting on < > passed the following Resolution:

1. On the recommendation of the Senatus Academicus, the following changes to Degree Regulations are hereby approved.

2. This Resolution shall come into force on the fifteenth day of September, two thousand and twenty-four.

1. GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR FIRST DEGREES

Following the existing regulations, **insert** the following regulations, specific to 'Regulations for Degrees undertaken under the Articulation Agreement with Harbin Engineering University (HEU)'.

Regulations for Degrees undertaken under the Agreement with Harbin Engineering University (HEU)

The following Degree Regulations apply to the undergraduate degrees awarded by the University of Aberdeen and to students undertaking their studies under the Agreement with Harbin Engineering University (HEU).

1. Candidates for the award of a degree of the University, undertaken under the Agreement with Harbin Engineering University (HEU), must satisfy both the General Regulations for First Degrees and the Supplementary Regulations which govern their degree, unless superseded by the following.

2. The following awards are currently available: -

    Degree of Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) in Civil Engineering

    ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

3a. Studies for degrees awarded by the University of Aberdeen, under the Agreement with HEU, are arranged to extend over four programme years, the first three of which are undertaken at HEU. The final year, subject to the fulfilment of entry requirements, is undertaken at the University of Aberdeen.

3b. It is an expectation of candidates, during the first three programme years spent at HEU, that they will register for and achieve those University of Aberdeen courses prescribed in the appropriate programme prescription, appended to these regulations. Progression within a programme of study will be deemed to be 'not on track' where a candidate fails to achieve the University of Aberdeen courses prescribed within any programme year.

3c. For the purposes of the award of a University of Aberdeen Degree, except with the permission of the Senatus Academicus candidates may not enter programme year 4 of the University of Aberdeen honours degree programme, unless they have accumulated, by award or recognition, or been exempted from, at least 360 credits recognised for the degree, including those University of Aberdeen courses prescribed for programme years 1, 2 and 3 in the appropriate programme prescription, appended to these regulations and meeting English Language requirements as stipulated by the University of Aberdeen.

3d. Exceptionally, the Senatus Academicus, on the recommendation of the School of Engineering, may permit candidates entry to programme year 4, with less than the number of credit points stated, if it is satisfied (a) that they would have obtained the necessary credit points to progress save for medical or other good cause; (b) that they are capable of satisfying the requirements of the next programme year within two further half-sessions of full-time study.

FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME STUDY

4. Contrary to General Regulation 4.1, candidates will undertake their studies on a full-time basis only. Candidates are not permitted to undertake their studies part-time.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

5. Candidates must adhere to General Regulation 3.1 and 3.2 regarding requirements for Graduation. Candidates undertaking their studies under the Agreement with HEU, however, are exempt from satisfying General Regulations 3.1(d) and 9.2 in respect of Enhanced Study.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT NO x OF 2024 [SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREES OF MEDICINE, DENTISTRY AND PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDIES]

After consultation with the Senatus Academicus, the University Court, at its meeting on < > passed the following Resolution:

1.   On the recommendation of the Senatus Academicus, all prior Resolutions of the University Court concerning the Supplementary Regulations for the Degrees of Medicine and Dentistry, and any subsequent amendments thereto, are hereby revoked.

2.   The Supplementary Regulations for the Degrees of Medicine and Dentistry set out below are hereby approved in place of those formerly in force. The University of Aberdeen may confer the awards specified in those Regulations.

3.   Candidates for a first degree governed by the Regulations specified in Section 1 who, at the date on which this Resolution comes into force, have commenced their studies under the regulations previously in force may be permitted to complete the requirements for the degree under those previous Regulations, but if they have not done so within six years from that date, if a student by full-time study, or eight years from that date if a student by part-time study, shall be considered to have abandoned their candidature for the degree. Alternatively, such candidates may, after application to the Senatus, be permitted to complete the requirements under the Regulations contained in this Resolution.

4.   This Resolution shall come into force on the fifteenth day of September, two thousand and twenty-four.

1. Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB)

The degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) are conferred in accordance with Resolution No 148 of 1991, which was approved by the University Court on 14 May 1991. Amendments to these regulations shall come into force on the day on which they are passed by the University Court.

Candidates subject to UK immigration law may be subject to a regulatory framework implemented by the UK Borders Agency (UKBA). Where these regulations are more stringent than those stipulated within the University's own regulations, those of the UKBA will take priority.

1. The degrees of Bachelor of Medicine (MB) and Bachelor of Surgery (ChB), hereinafter called 'the degrees', may be conferred by the University of Aberdeen. The degree of Bachelor of Medicine shall not be conferred otherwise than with the degree of Bachelor of Surgery, and *vice versa*.

2. Every candidate for the degrees is required to comply with the requirements of admission to the degree programme. Possession of these qualifications does not of itself guarantee admission. In addition to satisfying any academic and Occupational Health requirements for admission, all candidates must satisfactorily complete a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check and, if they are not UK residents, receive police clearance from their home country, and attend for interview, if required. In the rare circumstance that an applicant/candidate has a notifiable health condition, relevant Occupational Health Service advice will be followed.

3. The curriculum for the degrees can be undertaken by full-time study only.

4. The courses for the degrees shall cover five years. The curriculum to be followed and the degree assessments shall be as prescribed in the Programme Specifications listed in the University Calendar..

5. A candidate for the award of the degrees shall complete, at a minimum, programme years 4 and 5 as prescribed in the programme specification listed in the University Calendar. The preceding period of the curriculum may be spent in any other University or Medical School, as approved for this purpose by the University Court after consultation with the Senate.

6. (i) Candidates shall not normally be permitted to present themselves for an end of course assessment unless they have appropriately undertaken all required instruction and activities in that academic year, and subsequently obtained a class certificate. The validity of a class certificate shall be limited to the academic year in which it is awarded. Any candidate who has been subject to attendance monitoring and warned of being 'at risk' of losing their class certificate) may lose their class certificate with no further warning if this behaviour is repeated for the course concerned.

   (ii) The Student Progress Committee (SPC), on behalf of the Senate, may exceptionally determine the conditions under which a candidate, who has previously achieved the attendance requirements for the award of a class certificate or successfully completed a course, may be exempted in whole or in part from instruction and/or assessment in any component for the degrees.

(iii)   The SPC, on behalf of the Senate, may terminate, at any time, the studies of a candidate who persistently fails to meet the minimum attendance requirements or perform the required work of the courses, for which they are registered.

7. (i)   In any academic year a candidate shall not normally be afforded, in any course, more than two opportunities of summative assessment, including continuous assessment, clinical and/or written examinations, as appropriate. This applies except where there is an exempting examination, for which there is a specific standard operating procedure in place. Only results obtained at the first available opportunity of assessment in any academic year shall contribute towards Distinctions, Honours and Commendations, and/or class grading.

    (ii)   Where a candidate successfully completes a course on more than one occasion, only the credit points obtained at first sitting may be counted toward the requirements necessary for progression and graduation.

    (iii)   Where a candidate is undertaking a repeat year, or undertaking assessment as an external candidate, a maximum of three opportunities of degree assessment for any course is permitted, including those taken in previous years.

8. (i)   Candidates shall not be permitted to progress to the next programme year unless they have successfully achieved all summative assessments in one academic year. Unless regulation 6(ii) applies, any student required to resit a programme year must achieve all degree assessments within that academic year.

    (ii)   Candidates who fail to achieve all summative assessments within one academic year, and/or have not met the level of performance required, shall normally be entitled to a maximum of one repeat year across the MBChB Programme. This applies to all programme years, with the exception of the final year where a candidate shall be entitled to an automatic repeat year, regardless of whether a repeat year has previously been undertaken.

    (iii)   Candidates must normally satisfy all requirements for the award of the degrees within a maximum of six calendar years of the date of their first registration This excludes any intercalating degree period, or instances where a candidate has been unable to complete a full academic year or has taken a full gap year, for health, personal or other reasons, and has had this absence approved by the University..

    (iv)   Candidates who are required to undertake a resit, must normally do so within the same academic year, unless otherwise approved by the University. ,. Candidates who fail to achieve the requirements of a repeat year, or any subsequent year shall be required to discontinue their studies for the degrees and be excluded from further assessment.

    (v)   Where a candidate (due to medical reasons or other proven good cause) has taken the resit examinations as a first diet, and/or for these same reasons been unable to take the resit examinations at the prescribed time, the candidate will be eligible to sit at the next available sitting, which is normally in the following academic year.

    (vi)   Where candidates withdraw from the programme for a period covering more than one academic year, the SPC on behalf of the Senate may require the candidate to repeat

any previously achieved year of study, including the requirement to pass any assessments on conclusion of that repeat year.

9. (i) The University's [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#) provides a framework through which a candidate can report absence and/or establish that their academic performance has been adversely affected by medical circumstances or other good cause.

   (ii) It is expected that a student who undertakes to sit an exam or submit an assignment, is fit to do so and there are no known extenuating/mitigating circumstances**.**

   (iii) Acute illness and/or other personal circumstances which affect a candidate's performance at examination must be notified in writing, along with supporting documentary evidence, to the Extenuating Circumstances for review. However, the decision to waive the regulation on discontinuation following failure of a repeat year shall lie with SPC on behalf of Senate.

10. The examiners for the degrees shall be the academic staff and health and social care professionals who are involved in the delivery of courses qualifying for the degrees, and such external examiners as may be appointed by the University Court.

11. The degrees shall not be conferred on candidates who have not passed all the degree assessments prescribed by Regulation 4, by the end of the period allowed.

12. Candidates for the degrees are required to undertake the Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA). Consisting of two elements (a) a clinical and professional skills assessment, undertaken as part of the final year OSCE and (b) an Applied Knowledge Test (AKT), the degrees will not be conferred on a candidate who fails to achieve a pass in both elements of the MLA. In regard to the AKT:

    (i) As an exception to Regulation 9, candidates will normally have a maximum of four opportunities, undertaken over the course of two academic years, to achieve a pass in the AKT.
    (ii) In accordance with Regulation 8(i), candidates shall not be permitted to progress to programme year 5 without successful completion of the AKT.
    (iii) Candidates must normally graduate with the degrees within two academic years of achieving a pass in the AKT. Failure to do so will result in a candidate being required to retake the AKT prior to graduation and a delay in conferral of the degrees.

13. The degrees may be awarded with Honours or with Commendation, according to candidates meeting the predetermined academic standards for these awards.

14. (i) Candidates for the degrees who *either:*
    a. have failed to complete the requirements for those degrees within six calendar years of the date of their first matriculation, or any extended time allowed by the SPCon behalf of Senate *or*:
    b. can no longer complete the requirements for the degrees, *or:*
    c. have indicated in writing to the SPC on behalf of Senate that they no longer wish to pursue the degrees;

But who (in each case) have obtained, while registered at the University of Aberdeen, not fewer than 480 credit points, including at least 180 at level 3 and 4 including at least 90 at level 4, be awarded the degree of Bachelor of Medical Science (B Med Sci) (Hon) Unclassified.

Candidates who are not qualified for the award of the Honours degree but who have obtained, while registered at the University of Aberdeen, not fewer than 360 credit points towards the degrees including at least 60 credit points at level 3 may, on application, be awarded the degree of Bachelor of Medical Science (B Med Sci). Candidates not qualified for the B Med Sci but who have obtained, while registered at the University of Aberdeen, not fewer than 240 credit points towards the degrees, including at least 90 credit points at level 2 and who elect not to proceed to further study in the University shall be awarded the Undergraduate Diploma in Higher Education (UG Dip HE) in Medical Science. Candidates who are not qualified for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Medical Science, but who have obtained, while registered at the University of Aberdeen, not fewer than 120 credit points towards the degree, and who elect not to proceed to further study in the University shall be awarded the Undergraduate Certificate in Higher Education (UG Cert HE) in Medical Science.

(ii) Where a candidate has articulated from another institution part way through the programme, the required University of Aberdeen credit points and levels will be individually assessed by SPC on behalf of Senate.

(iii) Where a candidate has attained an intercalated degree it should be noted that credit points from that degree cannot be counted towards awards listed in 14(i).

(iv) A candidate who receives the awards described in 14 (i) may not subsequently be a candidate for either of the degrees of MBChB.

(v) The Degree of Bachelor of Medical Science (Hon) Unclassified or the Degree of Bachelor of Medical Science shall not be recognised as a qualification which entitles the holder to be registered with the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom.

15.(i) Any health, conduct, behaviour or other issue that could give rise to the question of whether or not a candidate's fitness to practise is impaired will be considered and determined through the School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition's Fitness to Practise Processes. Senate, on the recommendation of the Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine & Dentistry), may suspend or terminate the studies of candidates for the degrees who, following Fitness to Practise Processes, are judged to have fitness to practise impairment. In exceptional circumstances only, the Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition or the Director of the Institute of Education in Healthcare and Medical Sciences may suspend the matriculation of, or exclude from specified programme activities, any candidate in respect of whom there is a question of whether or not their fitness to practise is impaired, pending further process. The Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine & Dentistry) also has the power to consider the cases of graduates of the University with the degrees who may be referred to it by the Foundation Programme Director during their pre-registration period of training. In this Regulation, any reference to impaired fitness to practise is to be taken as a reference to that concept as defined in s. 35C (2) of the Medical Act 1983, and as explained in the General Medical Council's current published guidance.

(ii) The above will apply during any time away from the MBChB programme if it is the candidate's intention to return to programme and ultimately seek graduation.

2. Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)

The degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) is conferred in accordance with Resolution No 258 of 2008, which was approved by the University Court on 24 June 2008. Amendments to these regulations shall come into force on the day on which they are passed by the University Court.

Candidates subject to UK immigration law may be subject to a regulatory framework implemented by the UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI). Where these regulations are more stringent than those stipulated within the University's own regulations, those of the UKVI will take priority.

1. The degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) may be conferred by the University of Aberdeen.

2. (i) Every candidate for the degree is required to comply with the requirements of admission to the graduate degree programme. Possession of these qualifications does not of itself guarantee admission. In addition to satisfying any academic and Occupational Health requirements for admission, all candidates must satisfactorily complete a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check and, if they are not UK residents, receive police clearance from their home country, and attend for interview if required. In the rare circumstance that an applicant has a notifiable health condition, relevant Occupational Health Service advice will be followed.

   (ii) Applicants must also meet the requirements of the General Dental Council for fitness to practise including screening for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV infection. Admission to the School will not be possible for those who may pose a risk of blood borne virus infection to patients.

3. The curriculum for the degree can be undertaken by full-time study only.

4. The courses for the degree shall cover four years. The curriculum to be followed and the degree assessments shall be as prescribed in the Programme Specifications listed in [the University Calendar](#).

5. (i) Candidates shall not normally be permitted to present themselves for an end of course assessment unless they have appropriately undertaken all required instruction and activities in that academic year, and subsequently obtained a class certificate. The validity of a class certificate shall be limited to the academic year in which it is awarded. Any candidate who has been subject to attendance monitoring and warned of being 'at risk' of losing their class certificate) may lose their class certificate with no further warning if this behaviour is repeated for the course concerned.

   (iv) The Student Progress Committee (SPC), on behalf of the Senate, may exceptionally determine the conditions under which a candidate, who has previously achieved the attendance requirements for the award of a class certificate or successfully completed a course, may be exempted in whole or in part from instruction and/or assessment in any component for the degrees.

   (v) The SPC, on behalf of the Senate, may terminate, at any time, the studies of a candidate who persistently fails to meet the minimum attendance requirements or perform the required work of the courses, for which they are registered.

6. (i)   In any academic year a candidate shall not normally be afforded, in any course, more than two opportunities of summative assessment, including continuous assessment, clinical and/or written examinations, as appropriate. This applies except where there is an exempting examination, for which there is a specific standard operating procedure in place. Only results obtained at the first available opportunity of assessment in any academic year shall contribute towards Distinctions, Honours and Commendations, and/or class grading.

   (ii)   Notwithstanding the provisions of University regulations which permit candidates to present themselves for assessment in the same subject at two diets of assessment in any one session, candidates may be required to undertake an additional period of clinical study or a repeat period of study, specified by the Examiners, before being permitted to present themselves at a second diet of assessment in that subject. Further notwithstanding the provisions of University regulations which permit candidates to present themselves for assessment in the same subject in total three times, candidates may be required to undertake an additional period of clinical study or a repeat period of study, specified by the Examiners, before being permitted to present themselves at a second diet of assessment in that subject. This would be subject to 7 (ii).

   (iii) Where a candidate successfully completes a course on more than one occasion, only the credit points obtained at first sitting may be counted toward the requirements necessary for progression and graduation.

   (iv)   Where a candidate is undertaking a repeat year, or undertaking assessment as an external candidate, a maximum of three opportunities of degree assessment for any course is permitted, including those taken in previous years.

7. (i)   Candidates shall not be permitted to progress to the next programme year unless they have successfully achieved all summative assessments in one academic year. Any student required to resit a programme year must achieve all degree assessments within that academic year.

   (ii)   Candidates who fail to achieve all summative assessments within one academic year, and/or have not met the level of performance required, shall normally be entitled to a maximum of one repeat year across the BDS Programme. The applies to all programme years, with the exception of the final year where a candidate shall be entitled to an automatic repeat year, regardless of whether a repeat year has previously been undertaken.

   (iii) Candidates must normally satisfy all requirements for the award of the degree within a maximum of five calendar years of the date of their first registration. This excludes where a candidate has been unable to complete a full academic year,s or has taken a full gap year, for health, personal or other reasons and has had this absence approved by the University.

   (iv)   Unless regulation 6(ii) applies, candidates who are required to undertake a resit, must do so within the same academic year. Candidates who fail to achieve the requirements of a repeat year, or any subsequent year shall be required to discontinue their studies for the degrees and be excluded from further assessment.

(v)   Where a candidate (due to medical reasons or other proven good cause) has taken the resit examinations as a first diet, and/or for these same reasons been unable to take the resit examinations at the prescribed time, the candidate will be eligible to sit at the next available sitting, which is normally in the following academic year.

(vi)   Where candidates withdraw from the programme for a period covering more than one academic year, the SPC on behalf of Senate may require the candidate to repeat any previously achieved year of study, including the requirement to pass any assessments on conclusion of that repeat year.

(vii)   If a student has approval for a period of withdrawal from the programme then the student will be required to rejoin the programme year from which they suspended at the start of the next academic year. The student will be required to complete agreed points of contact during the period of time that they are off from their studies. In exceptional circumstances a second withdrawal year could be allowed however in this circumstance it may be recommended / necessary that the student will be required to go back a year to allow for missed practical time with patients and for patient safety concerns. If the student requires more than two years suspension from studies, they will be required to re-start the BDS programme.

8. (i)   The University's [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#) provides a framework through which a candidate can report absence and/or establish that their academic performance has been adversely affected by medical circumstances or other good cause.

    (ii)   It is expected that a student who undertakes to sit an exam or submit an assignment, is fit to do so and there are no known extenuating/mitigating circumstances**.**

    (iii)   Acute illness and/or other personal circumstances which affect a candidate's performance at examination must be notified in writing, along with supporting documentary evidence, to the Extenuating Circumstances for review. However, the decision to waive the regulation on discontinuation following failure of a repeat year shall lie with SPC on behalf of Senate.

9. The examiners for the degrees shall be the academic staff and health and social care professionals who are involved in the delivery of courses qualifying for the degrees, and such external examiners as may be appointed by the University Court.

10. The degrees shall not be conferred on candidates who have not passed all the degree assessments prescribed by Regulation 4, by the end of the period allowed.

11. The degree may be awarded with Honours or with Commendation, according to candidates meeting the predetermined academic standards for these awards.

12. (i)   Candidates for the degree who *either:*
            a. have failed to complete the requirements for those degree within five calendar years of the date of their first matriculation, or any extended time allowed by SPC on behalf of the Senate *or*:
            b. can no longer complete the requirements for the degree, *or:*
            c. have indicated in writing to the SPC on behalf of the Senate that they no longer wish to pursue the degree.

But who (in each case) have obtained, while registered at the University of Aberdeen, not fewer than 120 credits at SCQF level 7 or above, 240 credits including 90 at SCQF level 8, or 360 credits including 60 at SCQF level 9, shall be eligible for the award of an Undergraduate Certificate in Higher Education (Dentistry), an Undergraduate Diploma in Higher Education (Dentistry), or the Degree of Bachelor of Dental Science (B Dent Sci), respectively.

(ii)   A candidate who receives the awards described in 12(i) may not subsequently be a candidate for the degree of BDS.

(iii)   The awards listed in 12 (i) do not entitle the candidate to register with the General Dental Council of the United Kingdom.

13. (i)   Any health, conduct, behaviour or other issue that could give rise to the question of whether or not a candidate's fitness to practise is impaired will be considered and determined through the School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition's Fitness to Practise Processes. Senate, on the recommendation of the Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine & Dentistry), may suspend or terminate the studies of candidates for the degree who, following Fitness to Practise Processes, are judged to have fitness to practise impairment. In exceptional circumstances only, the Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition or the Director of the Institute of Education in Healthcare and Medical Sciences may suspend the matriculation of, or exclude from specified programme activities, any candidate in respect of whom there is a question of whether or not their fitness to practise is impaired, pending further process. If candidates are pre-registered with GDC the University is obliged to inform it of any such process since it may impact on registration. In this Regulation, any reference to impaired fitness to practise is to be taken as a reference to that concept as defined in s.27 of the Dentists Act 1984, and as explained in the General Dental Council's current published guidance.

(ii)   The above will apply during any time away from the BDS programme if it is the candidate's intention to return to programme and ultimately seek graduation.

3. Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Master of Science (MSc) in Physician Associate Studies

Candidates subject to UK immigration law may be subject to a regulatory framework implemented by the UK Borders Agency (UKBA). Where these regulations are more stringent than those stipulated within the University's own regulations, those of the UKBA will take priority.

1. Every candidate for the degree of Master of Science (MSc) in Physician Associate Studies are required to comply with the requirements of admission to the degree programme. Possession of these qualifications does not of itself guarantee admission. In addition to satisfying any academic and Occupational Health requirements for admission, all candidates must satisfactorily complete a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check and, if they are not UK residents, receive police clearance from their home country, and attend for interview if required. In the rare circumstance that an applicant/candidate has a notifiable health condition, relevant Occupational Health Service advice will be followed.

2. The curriculum for the degree can be undertaken by full-time study only.

3. The courses for the degree shall cover 2 years. The curriculum to be followed and the degree assessments shall be prescribed in the Programme Specification listed in the University Calendar

4. (i) Candidates shall not normally be permitted to present themselves for an end of course assessment unless they have appropriately undertaken all required instruction and activities in that academic year, and subsequently obtained a class certificate. The validity of a class certificate shall be limited to the academic year in which it is awarded. Any candidate who has been subject to attendance monitoring and warned of being 'at risk' of losing their class certificate) may lose their class certificate with no further warning if this behaviour is repeated for the course concerned.

   (ii) The Student Progress Committee (SPC), on behalf of the Senate, may exceptionally determine the conditions under which a candidate, who has previously achieved the attendance requirements for the award of a class certificate or successfully completed a course, may be exempted in whole or in part from instruction and/or assessment in any component for the degrees.

   (iii) The SPC, on behalf of the Senate, may terminate, at any time, the studies of a candidate who persistently fails to meet the minimum attendance requirements or perform the required work of the courses, for which they are registered.

5. The assessment for each course within the MSc in Physician Associate Studies shall be determined by the Senate. In terms of Regulation 9 of the General Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards, the examiners for the degree shall be the academic staff and health and social care professionals who are involved in the delivery of courses qualifying for the degree, and such external examiners as may be appointed by the University Court.

6. (i) In each academic year candidates shall not normally be afforded in any course more than two opportunities of summative assessment, including continuous assessment, clinical and/or written examinations as appropriate. Only results obtained at first sitting shall contribute towards Distinctions, Honours and Commendations, and/or class grading.

(ii)   Where a candidate successfully completes a course on more than one occasion, only the credit points obtained on the first occasion may be counted toward the requirements necessary for progression and graduation.

(iii)   Candidates shall not be permitted to progress to the next programme year until they have successfully passed all summative assessments in one academic year. Candidates who fail to pass completely the summative assessments shall be required to discontinue their studies for the degree and be excluded from further assessment.

(iv)   Where a candidate (due to medical reasons or other proven good cause) has taken the resit examinations as a first diet, and/or for these same reasons been unable to take the resit examinations at the prescribed time, the candidate will be eligible to sit at the next available sitting, which is normally in the following academic year.

7.   (i)   The University's [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#) provides a framework through which a candidate can report absence and/or establish that their academic performance has been adversely affected by medical circumstances or other good cause.

    (ii)   It is expected that a student who undertakes to sit an exam or submit an assignment, is fit to do so and there are no known extenuating/mitigating circumstances.

    (iii)   Acute illness and/or other personal circumstances which affect a candidate's performance at examination must be notified in writing, along with supporting documentary evidence, to the Extenuating Circumstances for review. However, the decision to waive the regulation on discontinuation following failure of a repeat year shall lie with SPC on behalf of Senate.

8.   (i)   The degree shall not be conferred on candidates who have not passed all the degree assessments prescribed by Regulation 4, by the end of the period allowed.

    (ii)   The degree may be awarded with Commendation or Distinction, according to candidates meeting the predetermined academic standards for these awards.

    (iii)   Students who are unsuccessful in completing the MSc in Physician Associate Studies will have their completed courses and credits evaluated to determine if an exit award can be granted.

9.   (i)   Any health, conduct, behaviour or other issue that could give rise to the question of whether or not a candidate's fitness to practise is impaired will be considered and determined through the School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition's Fitness to Practise Processes. Senate, on the recommendation of the Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine & Dentistry), may suspend or terminate the studies of candidates for the degree who, following Fitness to Practise Processes, are judged to have fitness to practise impairment. In exceptional circumstances only, the Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition or the Director of the Institute of Education in Healthcare and Medical Sciences may suspend the matriculation of, or exclude from specified programme activities, any candidate in respect of whom there is a question of whether or not their fitness to practise is impaired, pending further process. In this Regulation, any reference to impaired fitness to practise is to be taken as a reference to that concept as defined in s. 35C (2) of the Medical Act 1983, and as explained in the General Medical Council's current published guidance.

(ii)   The above will apply during any time away from the MSc Physician Associate programme if it is the candidate's intention to return to programme and ultimately seek graduation.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

DRAFT RESOLUTION NO x OF 2024 [CHANGES IN REGULATIONS FOR VARIOUS DEGREES]

After consultation with the Senatus Academicus, the University Court, at its meeting on < > passed the following Resolution:

1. On the recommendation of the Senatus Academicus, the following changes to Degree Regulations are hereby approved.

2. This Resolution shall come into force on the fifteenth day of September, two thousand and twenty-four.

REGULATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDY

1. REGULATIONS FOR THE PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF POSTGRADUATE THESES FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

Regulation 2 (iii)

In the existing regulation, for 'him or herself' <u>substitute</u> 'themself'.

In the existing regulation, for 'provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998' <u>substitute</u> 'UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018'.

In the existing regulation, for 'workers, assistants or students' <u>substitute</u> 'others'.

Regulation 2(iv)

In the existing regulation, for 'limitation upon the inter library loan or the reprographic copying of' <u>substitute</u> 'restrictions to printed or electronic access of'.

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2. A thesis or other work submitted for higher degree must:

    (i)   contain either at the beginning or at the end a summary of its salient points;
    (ii) be accompanied by a separate abstract not exceeding 300 words in length. The abstract should show the author and title of the thesis in the form of a heading (the University reserves the right to publish this abstract and the title of the thesis and to authorise others to do so as it sees fit);
    (iii) be accompanied by a declaration signed by the candidate that the thesis has been composed by ~~him or herself~~<u>themself</u>, that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree, that the work of which it is a record has been done by themselves, that any personal data have been processed in accordance with the <u>UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018</u>~~provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998~~, and that all quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged. If any results were obtained partly in association with other<u>s</u> ~~workers, assistants or students~~, the nature and extent of this help, if substantial, must be specifically acknowledged in the declaration;
    (iv) be accompanied by the relevant forms, available from the Registry, stating any ~~limitation upon~~<u>restrictions to printed or electronic access of</u> ~~the inter library loan or the reprographic copying of~~ the thesis which the candidate wishes to impose, should the thesis be sustained. (No limitation shall be for a period greater than five years from the date the thesis is submitted to the University Library.)

Regulation 5

In the existing regulation, following 'statistical and computational compilations,' <u>delete</u> 'analogous'.

In the existing regulation, following 'illustrative material' <u>insert</u> 'necessary to an argument (diagrams'.
In the existing regulation, for 'facsimile documents' <u>substitute</u> 'tables'.

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5. Research students should note that, in the case of candidates examined by thesis only, unless the specific permission of the Senatus Academicus is obtained (such permission being granted only on the grounds of the exceptional nature of the subject matter or, in the case of candidates registered for a degree in Law, on grounds of exceptional circumstances) the normal maximum length of a PhD, EngD, MD or ChM is 100,000 words; the normal maximum length of an EdD thesis is 50,000, the normal maximum length of an MPhil thesis is 70,000 words; and the normal maximum length of a Master's degree thesis is 40,000 words.

For theses submitted in Gaelic language, the following normal maximum lengths apply: 120,000 words for a PhD, 84,000 words for an MPhil, and 48,000 words for a Masters by research.

In each case this includes appendices and footnotes but excludes bibliographies, statistical and computational compilations, ~~analogous~~ illustrative material <u>necessary to an argument</u> (diagrams, maps<u>, tables</u> ~~, facsimile documents,~~ etc.), and, where appropriate, other materials such as field notes and transcriptions of interviews. If in doubt, the student and supervisory team should consult, at the earliest opportunity, with the Senatus Academicus .

Any data compilation, or material such as field notes or transcriptions of interviews should not be included in a separate file to the final pdf thesis. This material must be anonymised, as appropriate, and then securely attached to the thesis prior to submission.

Regulation 6(a)

In the existing regulation, for 'Regulation 2(v)' <u>substitute</u> 'Regulation (2(iv)'.

In the existing regulation, <u>delete</u> 'regarding inter-library loan and reprographic copying'.

Regulation 6 (b) (ii)

In the existing regulation, following 'a limited period only,' <u>insert</u> 'in accordance with supplementary regulation 2(iv)'.

Regulation 6

In the regulation, following 'In the case of (i)' <u>delete</u> 'above'.

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6. very thesis sustained shall be deposited electronically, in non-editable pdf format, in the University Library and shall be the property of the University, but the copyright shall belong to the candidate.

    (a) The general conditions under which a thesis may be consulted, borrowed or copied shall be determined by the Librarian under authority of the Library Committee, but shall comply with any instructions given by the candidate under Regulation 2(<u>iv</u>)~~regarding inter-library loan and reprographic copying~~.
    (b) Theses are normally made available for consultation. The Librarian will however withhold a thesis from consultation if requested to do so by the Senatus Academicus, provided that
        (i)   The Senatus Academicus, upon the recommendation of the Head of School of the candidate, is satisfied (1) that the thesis contains material that is or could be the subject of a patent application, and (2) that before the thesis is deposited active steps have been or are being taken to secure a patent; or
        (ii) in the most exceptional circumstances, and for a limited period only, <u>in accordance with supplementary regulation 2(iv)</u> the Senatus Academicus is satisfied that the thesis contains material that is confidential for reasons other than of a patent application.

In the case of (i) ~~above~~, the period for which the thesis may be withheld from consultation will end when a provisional patent has been granted, and will not normally exceed twelve months. In the case of (ii), a written justification must be presented by the Head of School concerned to the Senatus Academicus, before the thesis is deposited in the University Library. A thesis will be withheld from consultation under this regulation only in the most exceptional circumstances.

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2. DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LETTERS (DLITT)
Regulation 6

In the existing regulation, for 'such sum as may' <u>substitute</u> 'determined'.

In the existing regulation, following 'time to time' <u>delete</u> 'to be determined'.

6. The fee to be paid for examination for the degree shall be ~~such sum as may~~determined from time to time ~~be determined~~ by the University Courts of the four Universities.

3. GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS

In the existing regulation, for 'Borders Agency (UKBA).' <u>Substitute</u> 'Visas and Immigration (UKVI)'.

In the existing regulation, for 'UKBA' <u>substitute</u> 'UKVI'.

Qualifications at postgraduate level (other than those degrees referred to above) are conferred in accordance with Resolution No. 210 of 1998, which was approved by the University Court, and came into force on 24 March 1998. This Resolution provides that candidates for a higher degree or other postgraduate award who, at the date when this Resolution came into force, had commenced their studies under the regulations previously in force shall be permitted to complete the requirements for that award under those previous regulations, but if they have not done so within six years from that date shall be considered to have abandoned their candidature. Alternatively, such candidates may, after application to Senatus Academicus, be permitted to complete the requirements under the Regulations contained in this Resolution.
Candidates subject to UK immigration law may be subject to a regulatory framework implemented by the UK <u>Visas and Immigration (UKVI)</u> ~~Borders Agency (UKBA)~~. Where these regulations are more stringent than those stipulated within the University's own regulations, those of the UK<u>VI</u>~~BA~~ will take priority.

4. SCHEDULE A: GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

Regulation 1

In the existing regulation, delete 'The degree of Master of Research (MRes)'.

In the existing regulation, following 'The degree of Master of Letters (MLitt)' <u>insert</u> '(Research).

In the existing regulation, following 'The degree of Master of Science (MSc)' <u>insert</u> '(Research).

In the existing regulation, following 'The degree of Master of Science (MSc)' <u>insert</u> '(Research).

In the existing regulation, following 'The degree of Master of Theology (MTh)' <u>insert</u> '(Research).

In the existing regulation, following 'The degree of Master of Laws (LLM)' <u>insert</u> '(Research).

In the existing regulation, following 'The degree of Master of Science (MSc)' <u>insert</u> 'Research Master of Surgery (ChM)'

1. Programmes of research study may lead, as appropriate, to the award of one of the following degrees, appropriately designated: -
<u>In all Subject Areas</u>
The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) The degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) ~~The degree of Master of Research (MRes)~~
<u>In Arts & Social Sciences</u>

> The degree of Master of Letters (MLitt) (Research)
> The degree of Master of Science (MSc) (Research)
>
> In Education
>
> The degree of Doctor of Education (EdD) In Science and in Engineering
> The degree of Doctor of Engineering (EngD) The degree of Master of Science (MSc) (Research)
>
> In Divinity
>
> The degree of Master of Theology (MTh) (Research)
>
> In Law
>
> The degree of Master of Laws (LLM) (Research)
>
> In Medicine
>
> The degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD) The degree of Master of Science (MSc) Research
> Master of Surgery (ChM)

Regulation 4

In the existing regulation, following 'members of academic' insert 'or honorary'.

In the existing regulation for 'named' substitute ', corresponding or senior'.

In the existing regulation, following 'a major contribution to' insert 'the conception, execution and writing of'.

In the existing regulation, following 'recommendation to the Senatus Academicus' insert 'via the Dean for PGR'.

> 4. Current members of academic or honorary staff of at least 5 years standing may apply to submit a thesis of published work for the degree of PhD. In order to be accepted for admission, candidates must submit a Curriculum Vitae, copies of the publications it intended will be assessed (a minimum of 5), and a 1500 word synopsis outlining the extent, range, quality and coherence of the proposed submission. Candidates will normally be expected to be the first, corresponding or senior named author on any publication they wish to be included in the submission for the degree, or to have made a major contribution to the conception, execution and writing of each paper. In cases of joint authorship, candidates must indicate the extent of their contribution. Only papers published in the 5 years immediately preceding registration may be included in the thesis for assessment. The published work must all be in the public domain.
>
> Applications must be submitted to the Head of the relevant School who will make a recommendation to the Senatus Academicus via the Dean for PGR as to whether the application should be accepted or not. Final approval must be given by the Senatus Academicus.
>
> Candidates will be required to register for a period of 12 months supervised study and will pay the appropriate tuition fee.
>
> The intellectual standing and quality of a PhD by publication is equal to that of a standard PhD. The requirements for assessment and award, and the normal maximum word limit, of a PhD by publication are the same as a standard PhD. Candidates will be subject to normal monitoring requirements.

Regulation 6

In the existing regulation, following 'Regulation 8(ii)' insert 'A programme of research may be in any field of study, provided that the programme: is capable of leading to scholarly research, which may include appropriate creative work, and can be assessed by the presentation of a dissertation and an oral examination.'.

In the existing regulation, for 'He or she' substitute 'They'

> 6. Every candidate admitted shall undertake a programme of supervised research and training for a period to be specified in accordance with Regulation 8(ii). A programme of research may be in any field of study, provided that the programme: is capable of leading to scholarly research, which may include appropriate creative work, and can be assessed by the presentation of a dissertation and an oral examination. Every candidate will have a minimum of one main supervisor, appointed under Regulation 8(iii) for the purpose. He or she They will be part of a supervisory team. There must always be one clearly identified point of contact for the student. All research students must complete the required programme of mandatory training and undertake regular skills and training audits throughout their prescribed period of study to determine research, transferable and generic skills requirements. Students in receipt of funding from any of the UK Research and Innovation funding bodies must, in addition, undertake a skills audit at the beginning of their programme of study which is to be completed by month six of study. Candidates admitted to European doctoral programmes must comply with additional requirements regarding overseas study, non-UK external examiners, an oral and submission of a thesis summary in a second language prescribed for the relevant doctoral degree, and on completion of their degree will be awarded the *European Doctorate* certificate in addition to their PhD of the University of Aberdeen. The Senatus Academicus will ensure that the requirements of both Aberdeen and European research degree regulations, as regards admission, supervision, progress and examination, are met.

Regulation 8

In the existing regulation, following '(iii) to appoint a supervisory team to supervise the research.' insert '(iv) To specify the location the research is being undertaken in accordance with regulations 21 and 22'.

> 8. It is the duty of the Senatus Academicus, if it decides that an application be accepted:
>
>   (i) to approve the subject of research to be pursued by the candidate, if admitted;
>   (ii) to specify the period of research (including study) required in each case;
>   (iii) to appoint a supervisory team to supervise the research.
>   (iii)(iv)   To specify the location the research is being undertaken in accordance with regulations 21 and 22

Regulation 13

In the existing regulation, for 'Normally the' substitute 'the'.

In the existing regulation, for 'require' substitute 'permit'.

In the existing regulation, following 'a full-time' insert 'or part-time'.

In the existing regulation, following 'course of research' delete 'but it will permit part- time research'.

> 13. Normally the the Senatus Academicus shall permit require a candidate to pursue a full-time or part-time course of research, but it will permit part- time research if it is satisfied that a candidate will have sufficient opportunities for research and that adequate supervision can be provided.

Regulation 14

In the existing regulation, delete the following 'The Senatus Academicus may permit persons admitted as full-time candidates to complete the requirements as part-time candidates for a specified period, or persons admitted as part-time candidates to complete the requirements as full-time candidates for a specified period.'.

> 14. The Senatus Academicus may permit persons admitted as full-time candidates to complete the requirements as part-time candidates for a specified period, or persons admitted as part-time candidates to complete the requirements as full-time candidates for a specified period. If candidates' duties and responsibilities change while they are working for the degree, they must report the new situation to the Senatus Academicus, which may decide to alter the period specified under Regulation 8(ii) or may recommend to the Senatus Academicus that their candidature for the degree be terminated.

Regulation 15 (ii)

In the existing regulation, following 'for current' <u>insert</u> 'and honorary'.

NORMAL MINIMUM PERIODS OF STUDY
15. The period specified under Regulation 8(ii) shall be as follows:

   (i)   For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy – not less than 36 months full-time or 72 months part-time
   (ii)   For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (by publication) – for current and honorary members of academic staff) – not less than 12 months part-time
   (iii) For the degree of Doctor of Education – not less than 72 months part-time

   (iv) For the degree of Doctor of Engineering – not less than 48 months full-time or 96 months part-time [36 months full- time or 72 months part-time for students admitted directly to the Project stage of the programme]
   (v)   For the degree of Master of Philosophy – not less than 24 months full-time or 48 months part-time
   (vi) For the degrees of Doctor of Medicine and Master of Surgery – not less than 24 months full-time or 48 months part- time
   (vii) For any other Master's degree – not less than 12 months full-time or 24 months part-time.

The Senatus Academicus shall have power to recognise as counting towards this period study undertaken elsewhere, provided that in no case shall the period of registration in the University of Aberdeen for any degree be less than 12 months (full-time) or 24 months (part-time).

Regulation 21

In the existing Regulation, for 'Marine Laboratory of the Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department' <u>substitute</u> 'Marine Directorate'.

In the existing regulation, for 'The Scottish Agricultural College' <u>substitute</u> 'Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)'.

LOCATION OF FULL-TIME RESEARCH STUDENTS
21. The research required by Regulation 8 shall, for full-time candidates, be conducted in the University of Aberdeen or in one of the following local institutions:

   A Unit within the University whose director is a member of the University
   ~~Marine Laboratory of the Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department~~ Marine Directorate
   ~~The Scottish Agricultural College~~ Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Aberdeen
   NERC Centre for Ecology and
   Hydrology Hospitals of the
   Grampian Health Board
   Hospitals of the Highland Health Board in Inverness
   Regional Centres of the Scottish National Blood
   Transfusion Service Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
   James Hutton Institute
   Trinity College Bristol with Bristol Baptist College

The project for the degree of Doctor of Engineering shall be undertaken in an approved industrial location.

Regulation 24

In the existing regulation, following 'Reader' <u>insert</u> 'Senior Lecturer'.

In the existing regulation, following 'of that institution' <u>insert</u> 'Of the persons appointed to supervise, normally, one will be appointed as lead supervisor. The lead supervisor will, normally, be an employee of the University. For candidates undertaking their studies within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition (MMSN), the lead supervisor appointed must be an employee of the University.'

SUPERVISORS
24. Of the persons appointed to supervise the candidate's research at least one shall be a Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer or Lecturer currently employed by the University, and if the candidate's research is conducted

in one of the local institutions named in Regulation 21, at least one shall be a member of the staff of that institution. Of the persons appointed to supervise, normally, one will be appointed as lead supervisor. The lead supervisor will, normally, be an employee of the University. For candidates undertaking their studies within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition (MMSN), the lead supervisor appointed must be an employee of the University. The supervisors for the degree of Doctor of Engineering shall include an industrial supervisor engaged in Engineering practice.

Regulation 30

In the existing regulation, for '8' substitute '11'.

In the existing regulation, following 'Regulation 8' insert new paragraph as follows:

'A person's candidature for the degree of Doctor of Education shall be terminated if they do not reach a pass standard in the courses prescribed under Regulation 10'.

> **TERMINATION**
>
> 30.   The Senatus Academicus shall have the power to terminate at any time a person's candidature, provided it is satisfied that there is sufficient reason for doing so. A person's candidature for the degree of Doctor of Engineering shall be terminated if they do not reach a pass standard in the courses prescribed under Regulation 11~~8~~.
>
> A person's candidature for the degree of Doctor of Education shall be terminated if they do not reach a pass standard in the courses prescribed under Regulation 10.

Regulation 32

Insert new regulation as follows:

'32.   Research students should note that, in the case of candidates examined by thesis only, unless the specific permission of the Senatus Academicus is obtained (such permission being granted only on the grounds of the exceptional nature of the subject matter or, in the case of candidates registered for a degree in Law, on grounds of exceptional circumstances) the normal maximum length of a PhD, EngD, MD or ChM is 100,000 words; the normal maximum length of an EdD thesis is 50,000, the normal maximum length of an Mphil thesis is 70,000 words; and the normal maximum length of a Master's degree thesis is 40,000 words.

For theses submitted in Gaelic language, the following normal maximum lengths apply: 120,000 words for a PhD, 84,000 words for an Mphil, and 48,000 words for a Masters by research.

In each case this includes figure legends, appendices and footnotes but excludes table of contents, bibliographies, statistical and computational compilations, illustrative material necessary to an argument (diagrams, maps, tables etc.), and, where appropriate, other materials such as field notes and transcriptions of interviews. If in doubt, the student and supervisory team should consult, at the earliest opportunity, with the Senatus Academicus .

Any data compilation, or material such as field notes or transcriptions of interviews should not be included in a separate file to the final pdf thesis. This material must be anonymized, as appropriate, and then securely attached to the thesis prior to submission.

Notes: The above prescriptions do not apply to editions.'

> Research students should note that, in the case of candidates examined by thesis only, unless the specific permission of the Senatus Academicus is obtained (such permission being granted only on the grounds of the exceptional nature of the subject matter or, in the case of candidates registered for a degree in Law, on grounds of exceptional circumstances) the normal maximum length of a PhD, EngD, MD or ChM is 100,000 words; the normal maximum

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>
> For theses submitted in Gaelic language, the following normal maximum lengths apply: 120,000 words for a PhD, 84,000 words for an Mphil, and 48,000 words for a Masters by research.
>
> In each case this includes figure legends, appendices and footnotes but excludes table of contents, bibliographies, statistical and computational compilations, illustrative material necessary to an argument (diagrams, maps, tables etc.), and, where appropriate, other materials such as field notes and transcriptions of interviews. If in doubt, the student and supervisory team should consult, at the earliest opportunity, with the Senatus Academicus.
>
> Any data compilation, or material such as field notes or transcriptions of interviews should not be included in a separate file to the final pdf thesis. This material must be anonymized, as appropriate, and then securely attached to the thesis prior to submission.
>
> Notes: The above prescriptions do not apply to editions.

Re-number the following regulations.

Regulation 31

In the existing regulation, for 'Mphil' substitute 'MPhil'.

> 34.   The thesis of a candidate for the ~~Mphil~~MPhil/PhD in Film and Visual Culture may take the form of a written dissertation (of approximately 50,000-70,000 words in length) accompanied by a practice-based film or other visual culture element.

Regulation 33

In the existing regulation, for 'oral' substitute '*viva voce*'.

> 36.   All candidates shall be required to submit to *viva voce*~~oral~~ examination unless there are exceptional reasons why the oral examination should be dispensed with. In such cases, the exceptional reasons for dispensing with the oral examination must be given in detail on the examiners' reports and be approved by the Senatus Academicus. The oral examination will normally take place only when a thesis is first submitted. Where a thesis has been re-submitted, a second oral examination will be held only if the Senatus Academicus approves a proposal to that effect, normally on the recommendation of the examiners.

Regulation 34

In the existing regulation, following 'appointment of an' insert 'internal'.

In the existing regulation, following 'may be dispensed with' insert 'however a moderator will be appointed to oversee the examination'.

> **EXAMINERS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES**
>
> ~~34.~~37   The Senatus Academicus shall appoint on the recommendation of the Head of School one or more persons, being Professors, Readers, Lecturers or academic staff of an equivalent employment grade in the University, to examine each thesis and report upon its merits, and, if the candidate's research has been conducted in one of the institutions named in Regulation 21, may in addition appoint as internal examiners one or more members of the staff of that institution. The University Court shall appoint at least one external examiner in accordance with the provisions of University Court Ordinance No. 404 (Aberdeen No. 80) to examine each thesis, provided (i) that if the candidate is a Lecturer in the University of Aberdeen or an academic member of staff undertaking a PhD by Publication two external examiners shall be appointed, and (ii) that if two external examiners are appointed the appointment of an internal examiner by the Senatus Academicus may be dispensed with however a moderator will be appointed to oversee the examination. The supervisor(s) of a candidate shall not be eligible to serve as an internal examiner of that candidate. Where the candidate is a Lecturer in the University of Aberdeen and it has therefore been necessary to appoint two external examiners, the Senatus Academicus shall appoint a Professor, Reader, Lecturer or academic staff of an equivalent employment grade who is currently employed by the University, and is not the candidate's supervisor, to oversee the examination arrangements.

Regulation 37

In the existing regulation, for '38' substitute '39'.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF THESIS EXAMINATION

~~37~~40.   The Senatus Academicus, having considered the reports of all the Examiners appointed, may on first examination: (i) decide that the thesis be sustained, if appropriate, subject to minor corrections which should be submitted within a stated period, normally 3 months, but no more than 6 months; (ii) decide that, though they are unable to recommend that the thesis be sustained, a candidate may re-submit the thesis in a revised form, for the same degree, within a stated period, which shall not exceed twelve months; (iii) decide that a candidate, whose thesis does not meet the standards for the degree as specified in Regulation ~~38~~39 but which does meet the standards specified for a lower degree appropriate to the discipline in which the candidate is registered, be awarded the latter degree without further examination; (iv) decide that they are unable to recommend that the thesis be sustained and that the candidate may re-submit the thesis in a revised form for a lower degree, within a stated period which shall not exceed twelve months; or (v) decide that the thesis be not sustained.

When the thesis is re-submitted (see (ii) and (iv) above), the Examiners, who shall normally be those appointed to examine the original submission, may: (vi) decide that the thesis be sustained, if appropriate subject to minor corrections (which should normally be completed within 3 months, but can be permitted up to 6 months on recommendation of the Examiners); (vii) decide that a candidate, whose thesis does not meet the standards for the degree as specified in Regulation 39~~38~~ but which does meet the standards specified in Regulation 39~~38~~ for a lower degree appropriate to the discipline in which the candidate is registered, be awarded the latter degree without further examination; or (viii) decide that the thesis be not sustained.

Only one re-submission of a thesis will be permitted, irrespective of the degree being considered.

Where a candidate has failed to meet the standards required for award of any degree but has produced work that, in the opinion of the Examiners, is of sufficient merit to warrant formal recognition, it shall be in the power of the Examiners to recommend the award of a Certificate of Postgraduate Research Studies in the discipline concerned.

Where the Examiners decide that, though they are unable to recommend that the thesis be sustained, a candidate may re-submit the thesis in a revised form, for the same degree, within a stated period which shall not exceed twelve months (see (ii) above), but where the candidate indicates that they do not wish to re-submit, the Examiners may decide that a candidate, whose thesis does not meet the standards for the degree as specified in Regulation 39~~38~~ but which does meet the standards specified for another degree appropriate to the discipline in which the candidate is registered, be awarded the latter degree without further examination (see (iii) above).

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

UPDATE TO THE PGR CODE OF PRACTICE

1   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> *This paper presents the updated PGR Code of Practice.*

2   PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	**Date**
Previously considered/approved by	PGR Committee	23 August 2023
Further consideration/ approval required by		

3   RECOMMENDED ACTION

> The Quality Assurance Committee is invited to **review and approve** the updated PGR Code of Practice

4   DISCUSSION

4.1 The Code of Practice sets out the University's expectations and responsibilities for institution-wide standards relating to all research degrees. It provides guidance and practical advice for postgraduate researchers, their supervisors and key people involved in the postgraduate research journey.

4.2 The Code was updated in 2023, and more recently in 2024, to ensure all information, links and guidance was up to date and reflective of current practice, terminologies and policies at the University of Aberdeen.

4.3 The following sections were added to the Code of Practice

Section 6: The Supervisory Relationship (The supervisory team, expectations of the supervisory team, supervisor training, supervisory meetings)

Section 8: Postgraduate Researcher Progression and Engagement (PGR Engagement, PGR monitoring process)

4.4 The Code can be accessed in the PGR Section of the academic quality handbook.

5.   FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Dr Lucy Leiper, PGR School Manager (l.leiper@abdn.ac.uk) and Dr Rhiannon Thompson, Postgraduate Research Engagement Manager (r.thompson@abdn.ac.uk),

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

PGR Code of Practice

Academic Year 2023/24

1. Introduction

At the University of Aberdeen, we recognise the vital contribution postgraduate researchers make to our University and our research excellence. We are committed to providing a research environment and culture in which our postgraduate researchers have the ability to thrive and reach their full potential. We are guided by the University's 2040 themes of 'Inclusive, Interdisciplinary, International and Sustainable' to provide the highest quality of provision and support for postgraduate researchers to develop into independent and leading researchers equipped and knowledgeable to navigate a successful career in a variety of sectors.

This Code of Practice sets out the University's expectations and responsibilities for institution-wide standards relating to all research degrees. It provides guidance and practical advice for postgraduate researchers, their supervisors and key people involved in the postgraduate research journey, with the aim of supporting postgraduate researchers to have a fulfilling and high-quality experience. This Code applies to all research degrees in all Schools, and across all modes and locations of study.

The Code aligns with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees (2018): and should be read in conjunction with the formal requirements set out in the University's Postgraduate Degree Regulations, and other relevant University policies. The Code of Practice is reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to align with the University of Aberdeen Postgraduate research regulations, reflects developments in the higher education sector nationally and internationally, and continues to comply with the terms of relevant legislation. Information outlined in this Code of Practice is accurate at the date of publication. It is the responsibility of the postgraduate researcher and supervisor to ensure they are familiar with the most recent version of the Code of Practice. Postgraduate researchers have a responsibility to make themselves aware of current and ongoing policy changes arising from funders at regional, national, and international level which affect the conduct of research and/or the commercialisation, dissemination or publication of research results or findings.

2. General degree information, admissions and registration

The postgraduate research (PGR) student population at the University of Aberdeen makes an important contribution to the realisation of the University's Strategy, which sets out the University's aim to be a world-class, world changing university. The University seeks to create an environment in which inspiring researchers create world-changing impact.

Relevant Regulations:

- Awards available: General Regulation 1 for Research Degrees

- Admission requirements: General Regulation 2 - 5 for Research Degrees

- Registration and academic year: General Regulations 12 for Research Degrees

- Class certificates: General Regulation 28, 29 for Research Degrees

- Criteria for research degree awards: General Regulation 38 for Research Degrees

2.1. Research Degree Regulations and Awards

The Regulations for Postgraduate Study are available within the University Degree Programme Calendar. The Regulations are reviewed annually. It is the postgraduate researcher and supervisor's responsibility to be aware of any changes that are applicable to their research degree.

The Regulations define the structure and requirements of the University's postgraduate research degrees, including requirements and information on:

- Awards available
- Admission requirements
- Modes of study
- Minimum and maximum periods of study
- Monitoring requirements
- Extensions to study
- Thesis requirements, submission and outcomes
- Examination of Research Degrees

Awards

The completion of a programme of research study may lead to the award of one of the following research degrees:

- PhD (Doctor of Philosophy)

- EdD (Doctor of Education)

- EngD (Doctor of Engineering)

- MPhil (Master of Philosophy)

- MD (Doctor of Medicine)

- ChM (Master of Surgery)

- MLE (Master of Land Economy)

- LLM (Master of Laws)

- MLitt (Master of Letters)

- MSc (Master of Science)

- MTh (Master of Theology)

- MRes (Master of Research)

The criteria for research degree awards requires that for the degree of:

i) **PhD, EdD, EngD or MD**, the thesis 'makes a distinct contribution to knowledge and affords evidence of originality as shown by the exercise of independent critical powers';

ii) For the degree of **MPhil** the thesis 'makes a contribution to knowledge and affords evidence of originality';

iii) For a **one-year Master of Research** degree the thesis 'displays evidence of originality or that it is a satisfactory, orderly and critical exposition of existing knowledge within the field concerned'.

2.2. Admissions and Registration

The University is committed to admitting students with the potential to achieve academic excellence and contribute to a positive research culture. Our inclusive recruitment policies and procedures takes account of all aspects of an application and not just an applicant's academic profile.

Admission to the University is in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy, the standard admissions requirements for research degrees set out in the General Regulations 2 – 5 for Research Degrees, and any entry requirements outlined for specific degrees.

2.2.1 Detailed practical admissions guidance is available for potential postgraduate researchers and should be referred to during the application process.

Current members of academic staff of at least 5 years, may apply to submit a thesis of published work for the degree of a PhD as outlined in General Regulation 4 for Research Degrees.

2.2.2 English language requirements for international students

To study successfully in Aberdeen students will need to speak and write English fluently, please refer to the full details of our English Language requirements.

2.2.3 Registration

At the start of their studies, and at the start of each subsequent academic year, postgraduate researchers are required to register.

As per General Regulations 12 for research degrees, postgraduate researchers are required to complete registration for every academic year in which they are studying, up until completion of their thesis, including any minor corrections required after examination. Failure to complete re-registration within one month of the start of an academic year, or within one month of resumption from a period of suspension, may result in the termination of a candidate's studies at the University. Detailed guidance is available for postgraduate researchers on the registration process, including activating their IT account, email and password.

The start of the academic year is defined as 1 October for postgraduate researchers. Postgraduate researchers taking taught course modules will start classes in September.

2.2.4 Student portals

A student's University username and password will give them access to their Student Hub Through their Portal, postgraduate researchers can view, update personal information and access relevant on-line learning resources.

2.2.5 Library Services

Library services and related support are available to all registered students.

2.2.6 Computing Services

[IT Services](#) provide central computing facilities and services, which can be accessed using student username and password. All communications to a postgraduate researcher should be through their University email account. It is the postgraduate researcher's responsibility to check e-mail on a regular basis**.**

2.2.7 Council Tax

During the period of supervised study full-time postgraduate researchers are exempt from paying Council Tax. The University routinely provides Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils with confirmation of its full-time postgraduate researchers' status. If a postgraduate researcher has registered, and requires confirmation of full time study for a Council Tax exemption claim, please contact [InfoHub](#).

It should be noted that all postgraduate researchers in an extension period are registered as part-time, regardless of whether they were fulltime or parttime during their supervised study and are liable to pay council tax. Aberdeen City Council exempt postgraduate researchers who were fulltime, and paid fees at the standard fulltime rate, throughout their period of supervised study - from paying Council Tax for up to 12 months into a period of an extension following supervised study. Aberdeenshire Council, so far, does not offer this concession.

If a postgraduate researcher submits before the completion of the 12 months period, the postgraduate researcher is regarded as being under examination and not engaged in writing up and the University cannot certify that they are engaged in fulltime study. Relevant postgraduate researchers must complete an [application form for Council Tax Exemption](#). Parttime postgraduate researchers and postgraduate researchers in an Extension Period (who are not exempt) are liable to pay Council Tax.

2.3. Attendance and Monitoring Procedures

In order to be eligible for examination, postgraduate researchers must have a Class Certificate ([General Regulation 28, 29 for Research Degrees)](#) for the course in question. A postgraduate researcher who has been validly registered for a research programme, and who has not withdrawn from that programme prior to their viva examination (or been deemed to have withdrawn, or to have had their class certificate refused), is regarded as having obtained a Class Certificate for that course automatically. It should be noted there is no physical certificate.

The University operates a [monitoring system](#) to identify postgraduate researchers who may be experiencing difficulties with their studies. Unless good cause is demonstrated, and

approved by Senate, postgraduate researchers who have not met the expected attendance and monitoring requirements will be refused a Class Certificate.

Student Visa Monitoring Requirements

The requirements of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) mean that the University is obliged to carry out regular visa checks for candidates on an international student visa. Failure to report for these checks could mean that students are de-registered from their studies and reported to the UKVI. This could lead to their Student Visa being curtailed or cancelled.

International students on a Student Visa should note that they may be subject to a regulatory framework implemented by UKVI. Where these regulations are more stringent than those stipulated within the University's own regulations, those of the UKVI will take priority.

Detailed guidance on immigration and student visas is available. The Student Immigration Compliance Team are the first point of contact for Visa advice on;

- Changing programme or degree
- Academic progress and impact on visa
- Questions on the visa check process
- Issues with attendance or absence from University
- Registration.

The International Student Advisers are the first point of contact for advice on:

- issues with student visas – loss, theft or damage
- changing student visa – needing an extension or new visa
- working in the UK, including internships
- bringing dependants to the UK
- police registration.

2.4. Intellectual Property Rights and Data Protection

Unless there is a sponsorship agreement stating otherwise, postgraduate researchers will assign Intellectual Property Rights to the University as a standard condition of registration. The option to opt out is offered where there are no joint ownership issues or sponsorship agreements in place. The Policy on Assignation of Intellectual Property Rights by students

provides the expectations on both University and postgraduate researchers as part of this agreement.

Data Protection

All personal information provided by postgraduate researchers will be treated strictly in terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. The data postgraduate researchers provide will be used for stated purposes only and postgraduate researchers will be advised about any further uses. Detail information on how the University handles personal information in all areas is provided on the <u>Privacy information webpages</u> and <u>Freedom of Information guide</u>. If a postgraduate researcher has any questions about the uses of personal data, the Data Protection Officer can be contacted by email at dpa@abdn.ac.uk.

3. PGR Governance

Central to creating a supportive environment for researchers to thrive are robust governance structures and policies that meet the needs of the individuals involved. The University is committed to ensuring governance structures and processes in place help foster a healthy, supportive and inclusive research environment that is reflective and adaptive to our increasingly diverse PGR Community.

3.1. Senate and the Quality Assurance Committee

Senate has ultimate responsibility for the assurance of the quality and academic standards of the programmes of study. The powers prescribed under the various higher degree regulations are exercised on its behalf by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).

In reference to Research Degrees, the Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for:-

- Recommending the appointment of examiners on the nomination of Heads of School

- Approving degree results in the light of examiners' reports and recommend to the Senate the conferral of awards as appropriate.

- Review proposals for

    I.   the introduction of new courses and programmes of study
    II.   amendments to existing courses and programmes, and
    III. the withdrawal of existing courses and programmes, and make appropriate recommendations;

- Recommend to Senate changes in the General and Supplementary Regulations

The QAC have delegated a number of responsibilities to the Postgraduate Officers (PGO).

PGO's are responsible for:-

• Monitoring the Postgraduate Assessment Forms in regard to postgraduate researchers' progress

• Considering changes of degree and/or subject

• Considering changes of status (e.g. registration from full-time to part-time and vice-versa or suspension or extension of study)

• Attending to queries, problems and complaints, either referred to them by Heads of School or Supervisors, or raised directly by postgraduate researchers

3.2. The Registry

The [Registry](#) is responsible for a range of postgraduate researcher academic administration. Responsibilities relevant to postgraduate researchers include:

- Registration of postgraduate taught and postgraduate researchers

- Management of the postgraduate researcher student record

- Tuition fees

- Interpretation and advice on postgraduate regulatory issues

- Postgraduate researchers: thesis submission, dispatch to Examiners and notification of exam outcome.

- Graduations

3.3. Dean for Postgraduate Research

The [Dean for Postgraduate Research](#) provides academic leadership for postgraduate research degrees and to the PGR School through:

- The development and implementation of a strategic vision for postgraduate research that aligns with the University's 2040 strategy implementation plan
- The promotion of excellence in postgraduate research programmes and facilitation of recruitment of high calibre postgraduate researchers
- Working with Schools to ensure the delivery of an outstanding postgraduate researcher experience and the delivery of a supportive and enabling research and learning environment for all postgraduate researchers and supervisors though effective training, development and induction
- The monitoring and evaluation of data for recruitment, retention and completion of postgraduate researchers – leading change where required
- The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of postgraduate research programmes, ensuring that they meet the highest standards of academic excellence and compliance.
- Monitoring the impact of processes on postgraduate researchers and staff with protected characteristics (Equalities Act 2010); encouraging access to postgraduate degrees for those with protected characteristics
- The effective and efficient resolution of appeals and complaints
- Representing the interests of postgraduate researchers in the senior committees of the University

3.4. Heads of School

The Head of School is responsible for the management and governance arrangements to support the achievement of the School's strategic and operational ambitions. The Head of School may delegate their powers in respect of postgraduate researchers, as appropriate. Responsibilities include:

- Receiving applications for admission and recommending acceptance or rejection and any conditions of entry
- Nominating supervisors in the light of postgraduate researchers' interests and the School expertise
- Applying the Postgraduate Structured Management Frameworks to meet the needs of their School and ensure that postgraduate researchers and their Supervisors are issued with the relevant Framework (i.e. for full-time or part-time study)
- Facilitating postgraduate researchers obtaining research training, language tuition, and necessary skills
- Approving facilities, support and materials as needed for postgraduate research
- Ensuring that Supervisors and postgraduate researchers are acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures, and that postgraduate researchers receive appropriate training and supervision when following any course of action or using any technique which might be deemed hazardous or dangerous
- Ensuring that the study environment and culture is inclusive
- Monitoring supervision and ensuring that supervisors perform their duties appropriately
- Addressing queries, problems and complaints either referred to them by Supervisors, or raised directly by postgraduate researchers
- Recommending changes of degree registration and/or subject
- Recommending changes of status (from full-time to part-time and vice-versa or suspension of study)
- Recommending changes of Supervisor and/or discipline
- Nominating internal and external examiners
- Recommending that a candidate's registration be terminated, where appropriate.

4. Academic Integrity

Promoting academic integrity is a shared responsibility among the academic community. By maintaining academic integrity, researchers contribute to the credibility and reputation of the academic community, foster a culture of trust and fairness and uphold the values of intellectual honesty and integrity.

4.1. Research Governance, Ethics and Research Misconduct

The University of Aberdeen is committed to ensuring the highest standards of integrity in all aspect of its research activities and expects that all those involved with research at the University maintain a similar commitment. Postgraduate researchers and supervisors should ensure they are familiar with the Research Governance Handbook. The Handbook provides detailed information on standards, expectations and general principles to ensure all researchers comply with all external regulatory and legislative requirements as well as the expectations of enteral funding bodies an those of any other key stakeholders.

Research Ethics and Ethical Approval

The Research Governance Handbook (section 3) provides details relevant to postgraduate researchers on how the ethical approval process, including how to determine if/ when it is required, how to apply for approval and details of mandatory training. All postgraduate researchers and staff must complete the University's online Research Ethics and Governance training course (see section 7) before submitting an ethics application.

Research Misconduct

The Research Governance Handbook (section 4) provides details of responsibilities, processes (including reporting and investigations) and definitions associated with allegations of unacceptable research conduct.

Academic Misconduct

The University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) outlines offences considered as academic misconduct and the procedures which may be taken in response, including disciplinary action (and the roles of the School and University). Plagiarism (including self-plagiarism) / collusion, Contract Cheating and other forms of cheating and Research Misconduct are covered under this policy.

Plagiarism also includes the use of Artificial Intelligence tools to generate content without appropriate acknowledgement of the source. Postgraduate Researchers should discuss with

their supervisor the use of AI in their work, and how to suitably acknowledge the use of AI tools.

It is recognised postgraduate researchers with learning differences may use a range of AI tools as part of their provisions.

5. PGR Support Services

The University of Aberdeen take a collaborative approach to provide support for a postgraduate researcher to ensure that their experience with us enables them to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to navigate a PhD and prepare for their future career. Although postgraduate researchers *will greatly benefit from the advice and direction of their supervisors, many other teams and key contacts are on hand to provide support and advice.*

5.1. Postgraduate Research School

The Postgraduate Research School (PGR School) provides strategic and operational leadership for research degrees, postgraduate researcher experience and training and development on areas related (but not limited) to:

- Recruitment and admissions (STEM)
- Governance and reporting
- Support, engagement and progression
- Postgraduate researcher and supervisor development
- Funding and studentships
- PGR strategy

The Postgraduate Research School are responsible for providing postgraduate researcher and supervisor training, six month reviews, answering postgraduate researcher or supervisor queries and can be contacted on all matters relating to PGR activity at pgrs@abdn.ac.uk.

Postgraduate Research School Officers and Directors

School [Postgraduate Officers (PGOs),](#)have been appointed to represent each area of study of the University. On behalf of Senate and the QAC, and through the Postgraduate Research School, they review requests for official amendments to individual PGR periods of study ([Change of Circumstances](#)).

School PGR Directors ([may also be referred to as postgraduate coordinators](#)) are experienced members of academic staff with extensive knowledge of their School, Discipline and/or Institute's research. School PGR Directors will support a postgraduate researcher and their supervisor through the following responsibilities:

- Induction of new postgraduate researchers
- Providing advice on School processes including the Annual Progression Exercise
- Nominating advisers or mentors where these are appointed

- Supporting with academic and pastoral PGR issues
- Supporting a breakdown in supervisory relationship
- Dealing with disciplinary issues concerning postgraduate researchers
- Ensuring provision of school/discipline level research training

5.2. Student Support & Advice Team

[The Student Support & Advice Team](#) offer impartial and confidential advice for all postgraduate researchers on a range of issues, including personal, academic, money matters, disabilities and specific learning differences, mental health and wellbeing. If a postgraduate researcher wishes to access support they can email a Student Adviser at student.support@abdn.ac.uk , attend a [drop in session](#) (Monday to Friday, 10am – 4pm, Student Union Building) or contact the [out of hours support](#).

5.3. Student Learning Services

All postgraduate researchers can access support with academic skills, including academic writing through the [Student Learning Service (SLS)](#) which offers workshops and one-to-one advice sessions (with the agreement of the supervisor to ensure topic support). SLS also offer support for postgraduate researchers with dyslexia and other specific learning differences.

5.4. Multi-faith Chaplaincy

The [Multi-faith chaplaincy](#) supports a wide variety of society meetings, including a [PG Café](#), lunchtime seminars, prayer and study groups and other events. They provide pastoral care, support and advice to all members of the University community, including postgraduate researchers.

5.5. Students' Association

The [Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA)](#) exists to promote the interests of all students, including postgraduate researchers, and to communicate on their behalf with the University authorities on matters affecting postgraduate researchers. As members, postgraduate researchers have access to a wide range of activities and services including student representation, student-led forums and access to [support and advice](#).

5.6. PGR Community Teams Channel

This is a dedicated [Teams space](#) for all postgraduate researchers from across the University to connect, interact and receive information on development opportunities and social events. Postgraduate researchers can sign up by requesting access to the [Teams page](#).

5.7. Equality Networks

The University recognises the value of Equality Networks in creating an environment that respects the diversity of its community and enables them to derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their involvement in the life of the University. Many of the staff equality networks are open to postgraduate researchers to provide a safe space to discuss equality, diversity and inclusion.

5.8. Research Support

The Research and Innovation directorate ensure all researchers have the skills, information and support they need to achieve maximum impact from their research.

- The Public Engagement with Research Unit support researchers to use a range of activities and methods to engage members of the public with the design, conduct and dissemination of their research.
- The Grants Academy offers expertise to all researchers to help develop ideas and craft competitive grant applications at all stages of the research cycle.
- Impact Toolkit for Research supports researchers to understand their potential impact, consider new and existing stakeholders and get the most out of engagement activities.

6. The Supervisory Relationship

The nature of the research project, the best interests of the postgraduate researcher and specific staff expertise will determine the makeup of the supervisory team. The roles and the key responsibilities of each supervisor must be agreed by the team at the beginning of the postgraduate researcher's programme. All supervisors have a responsibility towards the postgraduate researcher.

Relevant Regulations:

- Location of full-time postgraduate researchers: General Regulation 21 for Research Degrees

- Supervisors: General Regulations 24 to 26 for research degrees

  Postgraduate researcher's and supervisors should also refer to the Academic Quality Handbook Statement of Expectations for PGR Postgraduate researchers and Supervisors.

A good supervisory relationship will:

- Be open to adapting styles to ensure postgraduate researchers are supported as per their individual needs
- Discuss and agree expectations with the postgraduate researchers at the start of their degree and amend as appropriate during the remainder of the degree programme
- Being aware of changing needs of the postgraduate researcher over the degree timeline
- Meet regularly (at least monthly for full-time postgraduate researchers, pro-rata'd for part-time, unless otherwise mutually agreed)
- Recognise the increasing diversity of the **postgraduate researchers** population and demonstrate inclusive good practice
- Being aware of timelines for regulatory progression and review exercises
- Being aware of institutional policies and procedures in the event of difficulties faced by the postgraduate researcher and sources of support for both parties. Actively seek to signpost postgraduate researcher to appropriate support services for pastoral and/or academic issues
- Being aware of funder policies and procedures and sources of support for both parties.
- Attend mandatory supervisory training every five years and actively engage in appropriate training to enhance their supervisory practice

6.1. The Supervisory Team

Postgraduate researchers rely on contact with their supervisors for academic and pastoral guidance and input. The supervisory needs of postgraduate researchers will vary depending on the subject area, and the work patterns and personalities of the postgraduate researcher and supervisors.

A supervisory team will comprise more than one supervisor, working in co-supervision, always with one supervisor designated as lead. The lead supervisor will, normally, be an employee of the University. For candidates undertaking their studies within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition (MMSN), the lead supervisor appointed must be an employee of the University. The benefit of having a supervisory team is that the postgraduate researcher should always have an identified point of contact who they can approach.

The requirements for a supervisor, including external supervisors, are articulated in General Regulations 24 - 26 for Research Degrees. Supervisors are normally Professors, Readers or Lecturers of the University, or may be honorary members of staff, or members of staff of an approved research institution (as listed in General Regulation 21 for Research Degrees). Postgraduate researchers may have a supervisor appointed who is external to the University, i.e. not a paid employee of the University, an honorary member of staff (or indeed members of staff of an approved research institution, as listed.), but they must always have at least one paid academic member of staff at the University who is appointed to provide supervision of their research. In some Schools, such as the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, the supervisory team should normally include two University of Aberdeen tenured members of staff.

In addition to the supervisory team, a postgraduate researcher may also have an academic member of staff who has been appointed to provide additional pastoral support. The term of reference for this person will vary between Schools but are most often referred to as an Adviser. All postgraduate researchers can contact their School Director of PGR for additional pastoral support if required.

The percentage input of each supervisor will be recorded on the University's Student Record system. Where an adviser has been appointed, they will also be recorded on the postgraduate researcher's record, but not as a supervisor.

Where the lead supervisor is a probationary lecturer or a member of staff supervising a postgraduate researcher for the first time, a co-supervisor should be appointed who will normally be an experienced member of the academic staff of the University who has seen a postgraduate researcher through to successful completion of a research degree.

6.2. Expectations of the Supervisory Team
It is important expectations are discussed and agreed from the very start of the supervisory relationship to ensure there is clarity around roles, expectations and boundaries of all those in the supervisory team, and of the PGR. Both supervisors and postgraduate researchers should be aware of PGR milestones and timelines, Postgraduate Supplementary Regulations and General Regulations for Research Degrees.

Expectations and responsibilities may differ depending on the postgraduate researcher and the project, however general expectations for the roles and responsibilities of the supervisory team are as follows:

6.2.1 Joint Expectations and Responsibilities for Postgraduate Researchers and Supervisors
- Postgraduate researchers and supervisor(s) should work together to develop the research project, including clear timelines for the delivery of work, review points and preparation for assessments.
- Postgraduate researchers and supervisor(s) meet the timeline for assessments
- Postgraduate researchers and supervisor(s) should set clear timeframes for delivery of written and other work and discuss appropriate expectations for feedback.

6.2.2 Postgraduate Researcher Expectations and Responsibilities
- Postgraduate researchers should take responsibility for the development and completion of their project.
- Postgraduate researchers should be willing to have a professional openness with their supervisor(s) and keep them informed about any difficulties they are facing with the project.

- Postgraduate researchers should also inform their supervisor(s) or another appropriate person located in the School of any other difficulties they are facing that might affect their work.
- Postgraduate researchers should check with their supervisor(s) if there is anything discussed in supervision meetings that they do not understand.
- Postgraduate researchers should be aware that their supervisor(s) have many commitments and that they cannot always be available immediately for them.

6.2.3 Supervisor Expectations and Responsibilities

- Supervisors are expected to support their postgraduate researchers throughout their period of supervised research and for up to twelve months thereafter during any Extension Period. Supervisors are not expected to provide supervision after this period except when a thesis has been examined and referred, in which case the supervisor should provide advice until the specified date for resubmission.
- Supervisor(s) should respond to emails and questions from their postgraduate researcher within a reasonable and agreed timescale and should be available during advertised office hours. However, supervisors may be off campus when on research leave or for other good reason. In such instances, they should communicate how the postgraduate researcher will be supported in their absence.
- Supervisor(s) should provide advice to postgraduate researchers in applying for funding, conferences and other career development opportunities.
- Supervisor(s) should be aware to the general well-being of their postgraduate researchers and encourage them to work in a manner that is healthy and appropriate.

6.2.4   Lead Supervisor Responsibilities

Lead supervisors have primary responsibility for supervision arrangements and research guidance. Responsibilities of a lead supervisor include:

- The administrative aspects of supervision, for example reviewing monitoring forms, requests for Changes of Circumstances, ensuring expected frequency of supervisory meetings occur, nominating viva examiners.
- Someone who can give advice on the shape and development of the project and guide postgraduate researchers through the decision making process of the research project - but the responsibility for this is ultimately the postgraduate researchers.
- Ensuring the postgraduate researcher is aware of the responsibilities of individual supervisory team members
- Ensure that appropriate steps are taken to find alternative arrangements should other members of the supervisory team leave

- Set up initial meeting with the PGR, referring to the first meeting checklist
- Where conflicts and issues arise within the wider supervisory team or research group the lead supervisor should work to resolve them.

6.2.5 Co-Supervisors

Co-supervisors have an equal role and responsibility to the lead supervisor with respect to supervision of the postgraduate researcher's work, they should be present at the early meetings in which the initial scope of the project is established, and will be expected to review and provide feedback on assessment submitted by the postgraduate researcher for monitoring or progression purposes.

Responsibilities of a co-supervisor include:

•Equal responsibility as Lead to ensure regulations are adhered to

•Provide feedback on assessments

•Should normally be present at supervisory meetings with the postgraduate researcher, but, in the event that they are unable to attend in person, they must kept informed of the outcome of meetings.

•May act as a temporary lead supervisor in the event of the departure or long term absence of the lead supervisor, or in the event of a breakdown in supervisor relationship

6.3. Supervisor Training

Supervisor Training is **mandatory** for all new members of staff (new to the University and/or new to supervising). All new supervisors must attend a New Supervisor Training session within 12 months of joining the University or prior to supervising a postgraduate researcher for the first time.

As an existing supervisor, you are required to attend an update session every **five years.** The PGR School will contact you when it is time to attend. External supervisors are expected to undergo University of Aberdeen PGR Supervisor training and should contact the PGR School.

The PGR School host regular masterclasses, workshops and short 'supervisor surgery' sessions, covering a range of topics, to support the development of a PGR Supervisor. These can be booked on the University's coursebooking system.

6.4. Postgraduate researchers studying at local research institutions

Postgraduate researchers studying at one of the approved research institutions listed in General Regulation 21 for Research Degrees will have, as a minimum, a named University of Aberdeen supervisor and a supervisor at the research institution. The extent of University

of Aberdeen involvement in supervision will vary however as a minimum, the University of Aberdeen supervisor will ensure that all University of Aberdeen procedures are followed and that progress is monitored through standard University procedures.

6.5. Supervisory Meetings

It is the responsibility of the lead supervisor to make contact with the supervisee prior to their arrival in Aberdeen or commencement of studies, if the postgraduate researcher is undertaking a distance programme, and arrange a meeting between the supervisory team and the supervisee. The School PGR Administrator will advise of upcoming School events/induction sessions scheduled for postgraduate researchers.

A checklist has been created to help guide discussion points and information to cover during the first supervisory meeting . After the initial meeting, postgraduate researchers should take responsibility for arranging meetings. If a postgraduate researcher has not arranged a meeting, the supervisor should follow this up.

It is expected that frequency and means of communications should be agreed in the first meeting. However both parties should be flexible to requests out-with normal frequencies. Supervisors should maintain reasonable accessibility so that advice may be offered at other times, and the supervisor should establish with the postgraduate researcher mutually agreed means of communication and contact with one another. Communications should be through University channels (Teams, work e-mail address) and within normal working hours and days.

While the amount of contact between a supervisee and supervisor will vary depending on the subject area and stage of the candidate, it is expected that there should be as a minimum, one formal minuted supervisory meeting at least once a month (for full-time postgraduate researchers), or a frequency agreed mutually, with informal meetings held more frequently as and when required.

It is important both postgraduate researcher and supervisor ensure meetings are occurring as agreed. This will provide an opportunity to review the development of the project, prepare for upcoming assessments, review timelines for delivery of work and discuss any additional academic skills development or pastoral support required.

Supervisors should be aware of any disabilities or learning differences disclosed in the application or a meeting and contact their School Inclusion coordinator who will help to ensure relevant meetings (such as with Disability Services and Student Learning Services) are set up and inclusive adjustments are in place. Supervisors should ask whether a

postgraduate researcher requires disability-related adjustments at the initial meeting, and when preparing for [upcoming assessments](#) .

The postgraduate researcher should take brief written notes of formal meetings with the supervisor, and both postgraduate researcher and supervisor should agree that the notes are an accurate record of the meeting and should retain a copy of these notes.

6.6. Absence of supervisor

Schools must make arrangements for maintaining the supervision of postgraduate researchers whenever a lead supervisor is absent. The arrangements made will vary between Schools/disciplines and will depend on whether the supervisor who is absent is the sole supervisor or is part of a supervisory team. Where a sole supervisor is absent for a period of time, an acting supervisor should be appointed as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure that any such interim supervisory arrangements are made. Where a suitable supervisor cannot be identified in a timely manner, the PGR Director will act as a placeholder supervisor until more permanent arrangements can be put in place.

If a postgraduate researcher's research project is dependent on the supervision of a single, specialist member of academic staff and that member of staff leaves the University, or is otherwise unable to continue supervising the postgraduate researcher, then the School/Department must seek to make alternative, comparable arrangements to supervise the postgraduate researcher to complete their research degree.

6.7. If the supervisory relationship breaks down

If a postgraduate researcher or supervisor has concerns about the supervisory relationship, that cannot be addressed through discussion with the supervisee/ supervisor, they are encouraged to contact the [School PGR Directors,](#) or incidences where this may not be appropriate, the [Postgraduate Research School Engagement Team](#), confidentially who will limit disclosures to as few colleagues as necessary to resolve the problem. The University will always try to find a mutually acceptable way of resolving issues when handling complaints, more information on the University's policies and processes for appeals and complaints can be accessed here: [When things don't go to plan | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen (abdn.ac.uk)](#)

7. Postgraduate researcher Development

Investing in personal and professional development during a research degree will provide the postgraduate researcher with a range of skills to not only be an effective researcher, but to make meaningful contributions to their field and help shape and achieve their career aspirations.

7.1. Professional Development

A postgraduate researcher should be proactive in identifying skills and engaging with personal and professional development required to undertake their research degree. Postgraduate researchers should discuss their personal and professional development with their supervisor during the first months of their studies and on an ongoing basis throughout their studies. It is recommended that postgraduate researchers use the three month PGR School training and development email, and initial 6-month review to undertake a skills audit at the beginning of their programme of study and identify an appropriate development plan.

Postgraduate researchers are likely to encounter new challenges and opportunities as their research degree progresses and should use their regular supervisory meetings and 6-month review forms to reflect on their skillsets and identify areas for development.

The PGR School Training and Development team provide a range of online resources and toolkits, in addition to in-person learning, to help postgraduate researchers personalise their development plan throughout the different stages and requirements of a research degree and in preparation for a future career in a variety of fields and industries.

7.2. Mandatory Training

As a condition of being a postgraduate researcher at the University of Aberdeen, there are mandatory training courses that must be completed within the first six months of study (applicable to both full-time and part-time postgraduate researchers). Some courses will require annual refreshers, you will be notified of this by University email. Detail can be found on the PGR School website. Completion will be monitored by the Postgraduate Research School. Failure to complete mandatory training may result in formal monitoring.

Postgraduate researchers must also be aware of training requirements set from their funders and School. postgraduate researchers should contact their School PGR

Administrator to find out more on School -requirements and the [PGR School Studentships Team](#) for funder requirements.

7.3. Training for PGR Demonstrators, Tutors and Teaching Assistants

Academic Schools in collaboration with the Centre for Academic Development run introduction to teaching sessions for all new postgraduate researcher demonstrators and tutors. The introductory online session covers small group teaching, equality & diversity and assessment & feedback. To help the transition to online delivery, the session also explores the tools available for remote teaching and learning.

All postgraduate researchers involved in teaching or marking must complete this mandatory training. Training and support for teaching is part of the University Student teaching framework.

8. Postgraduate researcher Progression and Engagement

Although it is important to track progression to ensure postgraduate researchers are meeting the expectations, timeframes and standards for the award of a research degrees, progression reviews also act as a platform for postgraduate researchers and supervisors to raise academic and pastoral matters.

Relevant Regulations:

- Monitoring Postgraduate researcher Progress: [General Regulation 27 for research degrees](#)

As per [General Regulation 27 for Research Degrees](#), all postgraduate researchers will undertake a bi-annual review of their progress. Bi-annual reviews are performed through Annual Progression Exercises and Six Month reviews and in addition to assessing progress, provide a platform for postgraduate researchers and supervisors to raise academic and pastoral concerns, feedback on the supervisory relationship, monitor engagement and act as an early intervention to prevent issues.

8.1. Postgraduate Milestones and Timelines

[Postgraduate Milestones and timelines](#) have been established for the degrees of PhD, MPhil and the one-year research Master's degree (full-time and part-time). The Milestones and Timelines can be tailored to reflect School's expectations, while retaining a core element to ensure consistency of quality supervisory practice and postgraduate researcher and project progress.

8.2. Six month Reviews

All postgraduate researchers are subject to 'Six month' reviews to reflect on progress to date. The six month review process aims to encourage the postgraduate researcher and supervisor/s to reflect and discuss the postgraduate researcher's research development needs, what is working well and not so well in their research journey, the postgraduate researcher's wellbeing and set objectives for the next stage of the research. Completion of the six month reviews aim to help the postgraduate researcher prepare for their Annual Progression Exercise.

Postgraduate researchers and supervisors should refer to the six month review process flow chart (Appendix A: Six Month Review Process).

For example, full time PhD postgraduate researchers will be invited to complete reviews at 6, 18 and 30 months. Part-time postgraduate researchers will complete reviews around months 6, 36, 60, with email check ins in between. Supervisors and postgraduate researchers should refer to Postgraduate Milestones and timelines for details on when to expect the six month reviews.

Review forms will be circulated to postgraduate researchers and supervisors by the PGR School Engagement Team and should be completed within one month. As this is a regulatory requirement, not submitting can lead to formal monitoring by the School.

Six month Reviews Outcomes

1. Satisfactory; no major concerns around progression and/ or engagement and wellbeing.

2. Unsatisfactory; concerns around postgraduate researcher's progression. Supervisors and postgraduate researchers to meet with School PGR Director to determine work plan to support postgraduate researcher to meet expectations. An unsatisfactory outcome in a six month review does not prevent progression into the subsequent academic year.

8.3. Annual Progression Exercise

The **Annual Progression Exercise (APE)** is mandatory for all year 1 and year 2 postgraduate researchers and most Master of Research postgraduate researchers; in some disciplines, an assessment/check-point may also take place in year 3. It is designed to assess the postgraduate researcher's ability as a researcher, to confirm the suitability of the project and to ensure that the supervisory team is working well. It is a formal record of the postgraduate researcher's progress, requiring a satisfactory outcome for progression into the subsequent year.

The APE is determined by the School and the format and requirements may therefore vary between Schools and years, but would normally consist of a presentation and/or submission of written work to be assessed by a panel. Postgraduate researchers would be expected to demonstrate they have a thorough background knowledge of their project, be able to appraise key issues critically, be able to describe their research and understand what its

significance/contribution is and to have a plan of work for future milestones and skills training. The APE also provides a formal platform for supervisors and postgraduate researchers to feedback on progress and supervision.

Postgraduate researchers and supervisors are encouraged to contact their School PGR Administrator for details of their APE and refer to for APE process and outcomes (below) and should also refer to Appendix B: Annual Progression Exercise Process.

Postgraduate researchers registered for research training programmes such as the MRes in Psychology or the MLitt in Visual Culture are exempt from completing the assessment form as long as they are completing Student Course Evaluation Forms at the end of each course taken.

Annual Progression Exercise Outcomes

The APE outcomes are as below. In cases where a panel concludes work submitted for an APE is unsatisfactory, a postgraduate researcher will always be given the opportunity of a resubmission for assessment (Outcome 3). If the work assessed remains unsatisfactory, outcome 5 or 6 will be recommended as per General Regulation 27 for Research Degrees . Postgraduate researchers and supervisors should refer to Appendix B: Annual Progression Exercise Process and School APE policies.

1. Satisfactory: proceed to next academic year

2. Satisfactory with reservations: proceed to next academic year but actions will be recommended to address any identified weaknesses with which the PGR must comply by an agreed date

3. Resubmission: additional work required for further review before a final decision of satisfactory or unsatisfactory returned. This must be completed within two months of the original annual progression date

4. Amend the supervisory team to provide additional technical/academic expertise

5. Unsatisfactory, lower award: may not continue e.g. on the PhD pathway but may be eligible to register for a lower award (MPhil or Master's by Research)

6. Unsatisfactory, termination of studies: the PGR has neither reached the standard required for e.g. a PhD programme nor a lower award. This may occur immediately after a progression exercise or following resubmission (3) of work.

8.4. Progression exercises: Academic Integrity

All reports submitted as part of the Year 1 Annual Progression Exercise (for progression from year 1 to year 2) will be submitted by the postgraduate researcher via the School Turnitin (or other appropriate software) sites in order to ensure that there are no instances of Academic Misconduct. The Turnitin Similarity report will be reviewed by either the supervisory team or the progression review panel, as required. If it is identified that Academic Misconduct may have taken place, the case will be referred to Head of School for a Preliminary Investigation to be carried out. The procedures for dealing with Academic Misconduct will be followed as per the [Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic)](#).

8.5. Unsatisfactory PGR Progress

If a postgraduate researcher's progress is unsatisfactory, candidature for the degree may be terminated, or moved to a lower award, as appropriate. Where a postgraduate researcher's progress is flagged as "unsatisfactory" in the bi-annual monitoring exercises (6M review and Annual progression exercise), the School's [School PGR Director](#) will meet with the postgraduate researcher, and often with the supervisor, to discuss any underlying issues, areas of additional support and agree a work plan to support the postgraduate researcher to meet expectations.

It should be noted an unsatisfactory outcome is not always indicative of a postgraduate researcher's ability to complete a research degree, however may be indicative that additional support is required. Where possible, a postgraduate researcher will be given the opportunity to address issues raised and resubmit (for an Annual Progression Exercise). In these cases, postgraduate researchers will receive support from the [School's PGR Director](#) and supervisors, as described above.

8.6. PGR Engagement

All postgraduate researchers are expected to show reasonable engagement with their research studies. Lack of PGR engagement may be indicative of difficulties being faced by the postgraduate researcher, as such it is important that concerns around PGR engagement are raised and actioned promptly.

Unsatisfactory PGR Engagement

Concerns around a postgraduate researcher's engagement may be raised if:

- Postgraduate researcher does not attend 2 consecutive formal supervision meetings without good cause

- Postgraduate researcher does not meet 2 or more deadlines for submission of work (for assessment and/or formal supervisory meetings)
- Postgraduate researcher does not submit work for formal review and progression within the deadline/ time permitted.
- An unauthorised absence from research study is taken (please refer to absence policy)
- Postgraduate researcher does not attend or complete a compulsory training activity

If a postgraduate researcher has extenuating circumstances that are impeding their progress and/or level of engagement, it is the postgraduate researcher's responsibility to inform the Supervisor(s) or Postgraduate Research School Engagement Team accordingly at the earliest opportunity.

If a Supervisor has growing concerns about any postgraduate researcher's physical or mental health, the Supervisor should contact the Student Advice and Support Team

8.7. PGR Monitoring Process

If postgraduate researchers do not show a reasonable level of engagement with their research studies or fail to meet with their supervisors, the monitoring process can be initiated (please refer to Appendix C: PGR Non-Engagement Monitoring Process: Lack of Engagement). Concerns around unsatisfactory PGR engagement should initially be discussed informally between the supervisor and postgraduate researcher. Actions and timeline should be agreed to address lack of engagement. A postgraduate researcher should be advised that if concerns are not satisfactorily addressed following the initial discussion or agreed actions are not taken, the monitoring process will be initiated and an At Risk marker (C6) will be entered in the postgraduate researcher's record.

This will be communicated to the PGR by the School PGR Director, clearly articulating required actions to meet expected levels of engagement to remove the C6 and stop it from progressing further. The letter should also include a link to appropriate support, such as the Student Advice and Support Team, particularly where mental health and wellbeing are a concern.

A meeting should also be convened with the postgraduate researcher, School PGR Director and supervisory team. The meeting should be minuted and a clear plan of actions, timelines

and reviews, to support the postgraduate researcher to meet reasonable engagement expectations, should be agreed.

The Student Immigration Compliance Team have produced [guidance on monitoring engagement and attendance of Student](#) visa holders, at all levels of study, in Schools.

9. Annual leave, Absences and Changes to Terms of Study

Life continues while undertaking research, and even the best laid plans may hit an unexpected bump in the road. Postgraduate researchers may wish to apply to change any of the conditions listed in their admission letter to navigate unexpected life circumstances, or take a leave of absence.

Relevant Regulations:

- Full and part-time status : [General Regulations 13 and 14 for Research Degree](#)

- Minimum periods of study : [General Regulation 15 and 16 for Research Degree](#)

- Maximum periods of study : [General Regulation 17 for Research Degree](#)

- Extensions to periods of study : [General Regulations 18 and 19 for Research Degree](#)

Postgraduate researcher's and supervisors should also refer to the [Academic Quality Handbook Statement of Expectations for PGR Postgraduate researchers and Supervisors](#).

9.1. Leave of Absences

Authorised Holiday Absence (Annual leave)

Postgraduate research programmes run for the [full academic year](#). Postgraduate researchers can request an authorised holiday absence from their School. The maximum period permitted is 60 days in any rolling 12-month period. This absence must not impact on the postgraduate researcher's ability to complete their studies on time. Authorised absence should be spread across the year, 60 consecutive days will not normally be approved.

Leave of Absence (Sickness Absence)

The University places a high value on the health and wellbeing of its postgraduate researchers. The University is keen to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to maximise the welfare of postgraduate researchers but also to limit the consequences for postgraduate researchers when absences do occur. Postgraduate researchers and supervisors should refer to [PGR Leave of Absence Policy](#) for detailed information on the absence reporting procedure.

Postgraduate researchers must report all absences as follows:

(i)   For absences less than seven consecutive days postgraduate researchers should report an absence to their supervisory team or School PGR Admin officer.

(ii)   For absences of seven consecutive days, but less than one month, absences should be reported to the supervisor(s) and PGR Admin.

(iii)   For absences of one month or greater a [suspension of studies](#) must be requested and the supervisor(s) and school PGR administrators informed.

(iv)   Supervisors should flag to the PGR Director postgraduate researchers who are absent for less than seven consecutive days but during this time the postgraduate researcher :

       a. Fails to undertake or submit assessment by the required deadline (e.g. six monthly review, annual progression exercise, thesis submission, viva attendance);

       b. Are expected on campus

       c. They are unable to attend a meeting with their supervisor(s)

       d. Are unable to attend a conference or training session necessary for their research degree programme

Supporting evidence is required in the following scenarios:

(i) Where a PGR has been absent for more than seven consecutive days

(ii) has been absent for less than seven consecutive days and has been unable to engage with and progress their research.

The [Student Advice & Support Service](#) can provide postgraduate researchers with support in reporting their absences, where appropriate, and, with permission, can liaise with a supervisor(s) on a postgraduate researcher's behalf.

International postgraduate researchers holding a Student visa should contact the [International Student Advisers](#) for advice on absences.

Sick Leave

postgraduate researchers funded by a UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Research Council are eligible for paid sick leave for absences covered by a medical certificate for up to 13 weeks within a rolling 12-month period and should refer to UKRI Sick Leave Guidance and contact pgrs-studentships@abdn.ac.uk in the first instance. Non-UKRI funded postgraduate researchers should refer to their funder and/or sponsor guidelines for sick leave guidance.

9.2. Change to Terms of Study

A postgraduate researcher may [apply to change any of the conditions](#) listed in their admission letter however this must be discussed firstly with the supervisor. It is the responsibility of the postgraduate researcher to keep any sponsor informed of changes to study, for UKRI funded postgraduate researchers this can be done by contacting the [PGR School studentship Team](#). This is particularly important for postgraduate researchers funded by UKRI. UKRI funded postgraduate researchers must proactively seek advice from the [PGR School Studentship Team](#) before making any changes as retrospective changes may not be permitted. All International postgraduate researchers studying at the University on a visa should refer to the terms of their visa when requesting a change to terms of study and contact the [International Student Advisers](#) for advice.

9.3. Study Off-campus

For postgraduate researchers studying on campus, periods of off campus study may be approved for academic reason directly related to their research e.g. the completion of fieldwork, work/industrial placements associated with the postgraduate researcher's research or as part of collaborative venture with another institution, i.e. a dual or joint degree. Off-campus is defined as out-with reasonable commuting distance. Candidates must agree a structure of regular contact with their supervisor and must be able to demonstrate that the facilities and infrastructure that are available to them off-campus are sufficient to enable their research to be completed at a distance.

Postgraduate researchers should not travel prior to off-campus approval being granted. If ethical approval is required for planned activities but is not granted at time of receipt of the application, the form cannot be processed.

An [application form to request off-campus](#) study must be submitted at least 6 weeks in advance of the study off-campus. If required, an ethical approval must be completed prior to the off-campus form submission and risk assessment must be conducted and approved by the supervisor.

If the postgraduate researcher is an international student holding a Student visa, the University must be satisfied that the request to study off-campus complies with the law regarding attendance requirements, before approval can be given. For advice, please contact the [International Student Advisers](#).

If full time postgraduate researchers wish to conduct their entire research elsewhere then this must be agreed with the supervisor at the point of admission, subject to any visa restrictions and funder terms and conditions (if applicable).

9.4. Suspension of Studies

If a postgraduate researcher can't work on their research (e.g. for medical reasons or other good cause), it may be that they would benefit from an authorised break from studies. This is called a 'suspension'. Periods of suspension do not count towards the postgraduate researcher's period of study, and the research degree end date will be amended accordingly. If the suspension is requested on medical grounds, medical certificates may be required.

A request for suspension of studies can be made for up to a 12 month period. These must be supported by the supervisor and approved by a School PGR Director. Should an extension to a suspension beyond 12 months be required, a new application must be made. Multiple suspensions may not be granted if it is deemed not to be in the postgraduate researcher's best interest or there is an impact on the validity of the research. In such cases, the PGR School Engagement Team can meet with the postgraduate researcher to discuss their options and depending on the circumstances, a member of Student Advice & Support may also attend the meeting and/or provide support and advice prior to the meeting.

In cases where postgraduate researchers are returning to study following a prolonged period of absence, support to return should be discussed with the postgraduate researcher and supervisors, and where appropriate the PGR School Engagement Team and the Student Advice & Support Team. Support may include a phased return or regular meetings with a Student Support adviser, depending on the individual circumstances.

An application for suspension should be completed prior to the period for which suspension is to commence, or as soon as possible in unexpected circumstances. Suspensions will not normally be approved retrospectively. Postgraduate researchers should refer to 'Appendix D: Examples of good cause for an 'exceptional extension' or suspension of studies.

Tuition fees are not payable for postgraduate researchers on suspension however postgraduate researchers should continue to complete online registration at the start of each academic year. Postgraduate researchers who suspend their studies are eligible to apply for Associate Student status , which will continue to permit the postgraduate researcher to have an ID card, access to the Library, an e-mail account and access to postgraduate researcher welfare/support facilities on suspension. There are fees for registering as an associate student and postgraduate researchers will become liable for

council tax. If all fees have already been paid to the University (including tuition, accommodation and library), postgraduate researchers, or their sponsors where appropriate, will receive a refund for any periods of suspension in that academic year.

It is the responsibility of the postgraduate researcher to keep any sponsor informed of a suspension of studies and seek their approval. This requirement holds particular significance for postgraduate researchers who are funded by UKRI who expect doctoral postgraduate researchers to fulfil their obligations in accordance with the specific terms and conditions outlined by awarding Council. Before requesting any periods of suspension, UKRI funded postgraduate researchers must seek advice from the PGR School Studentship Team . This step ensures that the postgraduate researcher is aware of the implications and receives appropriate guidance.

All International postgraduate researchers studying at the University on a visa should refer to the terms of their visa when requesting a suspension of studies and contact the International Student Advisers for advice.

9.5. Reduction to Study Period

A postgraduate researcher may apply to reduce the period of study specified under General Regulations 15 and 16 for Research Degree, provided that:

(ii) for full-time candidates the period shall not be reduced to less than 24 months (PhD) or 12 months (MPhil);
(iii) for part-time candidates the period shall not be reduced to less than 36 months (PhD) or 24 months (MPhil).

No application to reduce the period of study may be submitted until a thesis is submitted for examination.

The period specified for those part-time candidates who are currently employed as members of the teaching and/or research staff of the University may be reduced similarly, allowing such candidates to submit after not less than 36 months (PhD), 24 months (MPhil) or 12 months (in the case of any other Master of Research degree), as appropriate.

The application to reduce terms of study must be supported by the supervisors and Head of School, and approved by a Postgraduate Research School Officer on behalf of senate.

9.6. Extension to Study Period

It is expected that postgraduate researchers will submit their theses by the end of their period of registered supervised study. If a postgraduate researcher requires more time to

complete their thesis, they may apply for an extension taking in to account [General Regulations 18 and 19 for Research Degree](). An extension can be granted up to a maximum of 12 months in the first instance. Postgraduate researchers who do not have an approved extension or who are beyond the maximum period of study for their research degree, will not be permitted to register.

Supervisors are expected to support their postgraduate researchers throughout their period of supervised research and for up to twelve months thereafter during any Extension Period. Supervisors are not expected to provide supervision after this period except when a thesis has been examined and referred, in which case the supervisor should provide advice until the specified date for resubmission

9.6.1 Extension to supervised study: A postgraduate researcher may find they need to extend their supervised study period to complete their research. Full [tuition fees]() are payable during extended periods of **supervised** study and it is the postgraduate researcher's responsibility to ensure that financial support is available to meet these costs.

9.6.2 Extension to thesis submission date

Postgraduate researchers who have completed their supervised period of study and require additional time to complete and submit their thesis, must [apply for an extension]() three months prior to their thesis submission date. The application must be supported by the supervisors and will be reviewed by a Postgraduate Officer. The postgraduate researcher must make clear the feasibility of submitting their thesis within the period of extension being sought and provide a detailed thesis plan giving target dates for completion of each chapter. Postgraduate researchers should refer to '

Appendix D: Examples of good cause for an 'exceptional extension' or suspension of studies' when making an extension application.

Postgraduate researchers will be required to pay a continuation fee in each academic year in which they are not liable for a tuition fee to continue their candidature for the degree (£120 in 2023/24). All postgraduate researchers, regardless of whether they were fulltime or parttime during their supervised study will be registered as part-time during an extension period.

Postgraduate researchers on an extension will be liable for council tax payments. If a postgraduate researcher was fulltime during supervised study and lives in Aberdeen City, they can apply for council tax exemption for up to a maximum of 12 months during an extension.

9.6.3 Duration of extension

Extensions may be applied for a maximum of 12 months in the first instance. Extension applications must be within the normal periods of extension times stated in General Regulation 18 for Research Degrees, which are as follow:

The combined period of supervised study and extension period will not normally exceed the following:

(i) **PhD, EdD** (part time only) 48 months (for previously full-time postgraduate researchers) or 84 months (for previously part-time postgraduate researchers)

(ii) **EngD** 60 months (for previously full-time postgraduate researchers) or 96 months (for previously part-time postgraduate researchers)

MPhil, MD or ChM 36 months (for previously full-time postgraduate researchers) or 60 months (for previously part-time postgraduate researchers). **Other Master's** 24 months (for previously full-time postgraduate researchers) or 36 months (for previously part-time postgraduate researchers)

The PGO on behalf of Senate may consider an application to extend the duration of study beyond the above normal period of study, and grant an "exceptional extension", but will not do so without good cause (See 'Appendix D')

Extensions will not be approved beyond the following maximum periods of study General Regulations 19 for Research Degree), which include the supervised period of study:

PhD, EdD,   60 months (for previously full-time postgraduate researchers) or 96 months (for previously part-time postgraduate researchers)

EngD   60 months (for previously full-time postgraduate researchers) or 96 months (for previously part-time postgraduate researchers)

MPhil, MD or ChM   48 months (for previously full-time postgraduate researchers) or 72 months (for previously part-time postgraduate researchers)

Other Master's   36 months (for previously full-time postgraduate researchers) or 48 months (for previously part-time postgraduate researchers)

Funding bodies may have their own stipulations on the permitted maximum length of period of study, to which all funded postgraduate researchers must comply with. For postgraduate researchers funded by UKRI it is expected that their doctoral projects are designed and supervised to enable them to submit their thesis by the end of their funding period and within any specific parameters set by the awarding Council. If an extension is required beyond the funding period, it must be approved by both the relevant Research Council and the University. Keeping the Research Council informed about any potential delays is the joint responsibility of the postgraduate researcher and the supervisor who should communicate this information through the PGR School Studentships Team.

All International postgraduate researchers studying at the University on a visa should refer to the terms of their visa when requesting an extension and should contact the International Postgraduate Student Advisers for advice.

9.7. Changes to Mode of Study (full and part time)

Normally a postgraduate researcher will be admitted to study on a fulltime basis, as per General Regulation 13 for Research Degrees, unless it is demonstrated a postgraduate researcher will have sufficient opportunities for research and adequate supervision can be provided.

A postgraduate researcher may apply for a change of mode of study providing they meet the requirements as part-time/ full-time candidates for the specified period, as per General Regulation 14 for Research Degrees.

UKRI funded postgraduate researchers should seek advice from the PGR School Postgraduate Studentships Team to enable them to make informed decisions and ensure compliance with their funding requirements.

International postgraduate researchers holding a visa are unable to undertake their research studies on a part-time basis in the UK and should contact the International Student Advisers for advice.

9.8. Withdrawal from study

Postgraduate researchers who fail to submit a thesis or equivalent piece of examinable work (e.g. exhibit or portfolio) by the deadline specified in the Regulations will be deemed to have withdrawn and will have their registration recorded as lapsed.

Where possible postgraduate researchers should discuss their intention to withdraw with their Supervisor, the School Postgraduate Director , the Postgraduate Research School and/or Student Advice and Support. Postgraduate researchers withdrawing prematurely from study may be entitled to a partial rebate of tuition fees paid, the Registry will assess whether any refund of fees is due.

Postgraduate researchers must submit a withdrawal form to the Registry shortly after the decision has been made to withdraw from study. The date of withdrawal will normally be the date the form is received by the Registry and will not normally be applied retrospectively. Tuition fees will be charged up until the date of withdrawal.

The University is obliged to report International students */ postgraduate researcher*s who are studying on a Student Visa to the UKVI as no longer being in attendance if they have withdrawn from study. Postgraduate researchers should refer to terms of their visa.

Withdrawn postgraduate researchers will not normally be permitted to submit a thesis for examination. Under extenuating circumstances, permission may be given by the Dean for Postgraduate Research and Head of School for a withdrawn postgraduate researcher to submit a thesis for examination (See Section 10.2.3)

10. Preparation and Submission of a Thesis

The thesis is a significant and essential component of the research degree programme. It represents the postgraduate researcher's original contribution to knowledge in the field, demonstrates personal and professional development and contributes positively to society.

Relevant Regulations:

- Preparation and submission of theses: Postgraduate Supplementary Regulations 1 to 5 and General Regulations 31 - 34 for Research Degrees
- Thesis by Publication (Staff): General Regulation 4 for Research Degrees
- Extensions to periods of study : General Regulations 18 and 19 for Research Degree
- Failure to Submit: General Regulation 20 for Research Degrees
- Qualities of a successful thesis : General Regulation 38 for Research Degrees
- Submission of theses : General Regulations 31 to 35 for Research Degree

Postgraduate researchers and supervisors should also refer to: Library's guidance on the presentation of a thesis

10.1.   The Thesis

All postgraduate researchers must submit an original thesis representing their research and findings (General Regulation 31 – 34) for Research Degrees). The standards to be attained for each degree are formulated in General Regulation 38 for Research Degrees, which require that:

i)   **PhD, EdD, EngD, MD or ChM**, the thesis 'makes a distinct contribution to knowledge and affords evidence of originality as shown by the exercise of independent critical powers';

ii)   For the degree of **MPhil** the thesis 'makes a contribution to knowledge and affords evidence of originality';

iii)   For a **one-year Master's** degree the thesis 'displays evidence of originality or that it is a satisfactory, orderly and critical exposition of existing knowledge within the field concerned'.

As per General Regulation 20 for Research Degrees, postgraduate researchers who fail to submit a thesis or, equivalent, by the deadline specified in General Regulation 18 and 19 for Research Degrees will be deemed to have withdrawn and will have their registration recorded as lapsed.

Candidates will not be permitted to submit a thesis to the University of Aberdeen that has been examined, or is intended to be examined, at another Higher Education Institution, unless there is a collaborative agreement between the two institutions General Regulation 35 for Research Degrees.

10.2. Thesis Preparation

In preparation for thesis submission, a postgraduate researcher and supervisor should agree an attainable timetable for completing the thesis. The thesis should be written and submitted within the period of supervised study however, if required, a postgraduate researcher may apply for an extension of up to 12 months (see section 9).

Postgraduate researchers and supervisors should refer to the Postgraduate Supplementary Regulations 1 to 5 and General Regulations 31 - 35 for Research Degrees for thesis regulations, on intention to submit deadlines, abstract requirements, and normal maximum lengths of theses.

10.3 Thesis Format

The thesis is expected to form a coherent whole, with a consistent argument or series of arguments running through it, which must be accompanied by a declaration signed by the candidates that it has been composed by themselves, unless submitted as part of an approved programme designed specifically to lead to the award of conjoint but separate degrees of the University of Aberdeen and of another institution If any results were obtained partly in association with others, the nature and extent of this help, if substantial, must be specifically acknowledged in the declaration (General Regulations 31 for Research Degrees).

Research students should note that, unless the specific permission of a Graduate School Officer is obtained (such permission being granted only on the grounds of the exceptional nature of the subject matter or, in the case of candidates registered for a degree in Law, on grounds of exceptional circumstances) the normal maximum length of a PhD, EngD, MD or ChM is 100,000 words; the normal maximum length of an EdD thesis is 50,000, the normal maximum length of an MPhil thesis is 70,000 words; and the normal maximum length of a Master's degree thesis is 40,000 words.

For theses submitted in Gaelic language, the following normal maximum lengths apply: 120,000 words for a PhD, 84,000 words for an MPhil, and 48,000 words for a Masters by research.

In each case this includes figure legends, appendices and footnotes but excludes table of contents, bibliographies, statistical and computational compilations, illustrative material necessary to an argument (diagrams, maps, tables etc.), and, where appropriate, other materials such as field notes and transcriptions of interviews ([General Regulations 32 for Research Degrees](#)).

Any data compilation, or material such as field notes or transcriptions of interviews should not be included in a separate file to the final pdf thesis. This material must be anonymised, as appropriate, and then securely attached to the thesis prior to submission.

The thesis of a candidate for the PhD in Musical Composition may take the form of a portfolio or original composition, accompanied by a written commentary of 20,000 – 40,000 words on the work submitted. The thesis of a candidate for the PhD in Musical Performance may take the form of a portfolio of practice-based elements, accompanied by a written commentary of 50, 000 words on the work submitted. If written in this form, the thesis can, where appropriate, be submitted electronically with a web link to the online commentary; a local, stand-alone version of the online commentary, including links to stereo "listening/review" versions of audio works; and audio files of works for downloading in original format (which may include multichannel works and ambisonics).

The thesis of a candidate for the MPhil/PhD in Film and Visual Culture may take the form of a written dissertation (of approximately 50,000-70,000 words in length) accompanied by a practice-based film or other visual culture element

Additional guidance on accepted thesis formats, page layout and general guidance on how to submit a thesis and the viva process can be viewed in the Library's [guidance on the presentation of a thesis](#). Schools may have additional guidance on thesis expectations, which supervisors should advise on.

10.3.1 Proof Reading Guidance

The University strongly discourages the use of third party proof-readers or commercial proof-reading services. If a postgraduate researcher feels they need assistance with their writing they should first consult the [University's guidance on the use of proof-readers](#) and are advised to discuss assistance with writing with the [Student Advice & Support Team](#) and/ or [Student Learning Service](#).

It is recognised postgraduate researchers with learning differences may use a range of artificial intelligence tools as part of their provisions. Postgraduate researchers and supervisors should refer to Section 11.1 for guidance on using AI.

A postgraduate researcher may request to submit a thesis formed from published work. This must meet the following criteria, which differs depending on whether the PGR is staff (Thesis by publication) or postgraduate researcher (thesis with publications):

Thesis by Publication (Staff)

Guidance for this type of scenario can be found in [General Regulation 4 for Research Degrees](). The PGR in this case must:

1. Be a member of academic staff at the University of Aberdeen.
2. Have been employed at the UoA for a minimum of five years.
3. State at the point of admission that they intend to submit a thesis by publication. The admissions process will include the member of staff being able to provide a minimum of five publications at the point of entry and a 1500-word synopsis. Each School/discipline will determine the expectations for publications including appropriate quality of peer review.
4. The candidate should normally be the first named or lead author on any publication included or to have made a demonstrable major contribution. In cases of joint authorship, candidates must indicate the extent of their contribution (this may for example be evidenced through contributor statements within the manuscript or through confirmation by the corresponding author of the manuscript).
5. Register for a minimum of 12 months supervised study and pay the appropriate tuition fee.
6. Must include written commentary on each publication included so that the thesis is a coherent whole and the thesis must include an overall general introduction and general discussion/conclusion section. Foot/endnoting must make clear which sections of the thesis are based on published material and how much individual responsibility the candidate has for any jointly authored work. Such material must be properly and stylistically incorporated into the thesis.
7. Understand that in all other aspects, they abide by the same regulations and processes in place for PhD candidates including examination. The final thesis will be examined in the same way as a traditional thesis and all aspects of the work, even if published, can be required to be amended if the examiners deem appropriate during *viva voce.*

Thesis with publications (postgraduate researcher)

The PGR in this case:

1. May not be a member of academic staff at the University of Aberdeen (exceptions may include for example Scottish Clinical Research Excellence Development Scheme (SCREDS)).

3. Will be registered for the usual 36, 42 or 48 full-time months supervised study or part-time equivalent. Will be, in cases where publications are included in the standard PhD, required to write the papers included in the thesis during the supervised study period. The papers must have been accepted for publication at the point of submission. Each School/discipline will determine the expectations for publication including appropriate quality of peer review.

4. Must include only research undertaken during the period of supervised study or while registered for a research degree.

5. Must be the first named or lead author on any publication included or to have made a demonstrable major contribution. In cases of joint authorship, candidates must indicate the extent of their contribution (this may for example be evidenced through contributor statements within the manuscript or through confirmation by the corresponding author of the manuscript).

6. Must include written commentary on each publication included so that the thesis is a coherent whole and the thesis must include an overall general introduction and general discussion/conclusion section. Foot/endnoting must make clear which sections of the thesis are based on published material and how much individual responsibility the candidate has for any jointly authored work. Such material must be properly and stylistically incorporated into the thesis.

7. Is not required to submit a thesis comprised entirely of publications. That is, a minimum of one publication may be included but there is no maximum number stipulated up to the maximum permitted word limit of 100,000 words. Any publications included in the final thesis must be formatted in line with the [guidance](#) set out for the submission of research thesis, thus meaning that the longform Word document (including references) be incorporated rather than a PDF print copy. References for each publication should be included within the chapter, any other references within the body of the thesis should be included in a separate refences section as normal.

8. Must understand that in all other aspects, they abide by the same regulations and processes in place for PhD candidates.

10.3.3 Submitting a thesis as a withdrawn postgraduate researcher

If a withdrawn postgraduate researcher wishes to submit their finished thesis they must first contact their supervisors. Supervisors must confirm the research presented in the thesis is viable and the thesis must meet quality and regulations expected for a research degree

thesis, as outlined in the [Postgraduate Supplementary Regulations](#) and [General Regulation for Research Degrees.](#)

For more information on this process, postgraduate researchers and supervisors are advised to contact the [PGR School Engagement Team](#). For postgraduate researchers who commenced study after 1 August 2010, [a reinstatement fee](#) will be payable on submission of the thesis.

10.3.4 Use of Turnitin in review of work for assessment (final thesis)

Once the thesis is submitted to Registry for examination, it will be uploaded by the Registry to Turnitin to ensure that no instances of Academic Misconduct have taken place. Guidance on the Turnitin process can [be viewed here](#). The Turnitin Similarity report will be sent to the lead Supervisor for review within 2 weeks. If the Supervisor identifies that Academic Misconduct may have taken place, then they will be asked to refer the case to the Head of School for a Preliminary Investigation to be carried out. The procedures for dealing with Academic Misconduct will be followed as per the [Code of Practice on Postgraduate researcher Discipline (Academic](#)).

11. The Examination Procedure

The viva is the final stage of the Research Degree. The purpose of the viva is to assess the quality, originality and contribution of the postgraduate researcher's research and provides an opportunity for the postgraduate researcher to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of their work and contribution to the field.

Relevant Regulations:

- Viva examination : General Regulation 36 for Research Degrees
- Examination of Research Degrees : General Regulation 37 and 38 for Research Degrees
- Qualities of a successful thesis : General Regulation 39 for Research Degrees
- Outcomes of a thesis examination : General Regulation 40 for Research Degrees
- Requirements for Graduation : General Regulation 42 for Research Degrees

Examination is by submission of a thesis and by oral examination (*Viva Voce)*. Examiners should refer to General Regulation 39 for Research Degrees for the standards to be attained for each degree and should be familiar with the Examining Research Degree Guidance.

11.1. Viva Voce

The oral examination or *viva voce* is an integral part of the assessment for the degree, the primary function of the viva examination is to allow the candidate to explain, expand, and justify their thesis, in response to the examiners' questions. Examiners must be able to evaluate the candidate's *role* in the work, the *process* of the experimentation and the resulting *understanding* of the research involved.

All candidates for the award of a higher degree by research are required to attend a viva examination unless there are exceptional reasons General Regulation 36 for Research Degrees. In such cases, the exceptional reasons must be given in detail on the Joint Report Form and be approved by the Quality Assurance Committee; dispensing with a viva for a research degree is seldom approved. If the examiners disagree in their initial assessment of the thesis, or if they are likely to recommend re-submission, a viva *must* always be held.

11.1.1 Nomination and Appointment of Examiners

Once the Registry have received a Postgraduate researcher's intention to submit form, they will request the Head of School to nominate internal and external examiners by sending a

[Nomination of Examiners form for completion](#). Heads of School should refer to [General Regulation 37 and 38 for Research Degrees](#) when nominating examiners.

Heads of School, internal and external examiners should familiarise themselves with the [Examining Research Degree Guidance](#). This guidance provides information on arranging the examination process, expectations for standards, outcomes, the resubmission process and roles within the examination procedure.

11.1.2 Arrangements of the Viva Examination

The internal examiner is responsible for arranging the viva examination and should refer to [Examining Research Degrees](#) for guidance on arranging, conducting and reporting of outcomes of the viva. The viva should normally be within two months of the receipt of the thesis by the examiners. The viva would normally be held in Aberdeen, on agreement of all parties it may be permissible for the external to be at a distance. In this case, the candidate and internal examiner would normally be in the same room.   Exceptions may be made for cases with good cause on agreement of all parties, exceptions may include students unable to travel to Aberdeen due to visas or personal circumstances. Proposed changes to viva examinations should be arranged with the internal examiner/Moderator. The internal examiner should keep the supervisor(s) updated with arrangements.

The room in which the examination is held should be in a University building. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the examination is free from external interruptions and takes into account inclusive adjustments.

11.1.3 Inclusive Adjustments to the Viva Examination Processes

Some students may require adjustments to the processes and procedures associated with the viva. If a candidate considers there should be new inclusive adjustments in place, or there are changes required to current individual student adjustments ahead of a viva, it is the candidate's responsibility to make their supervisory team and Student Advice & Support aware, so that a review of the adjustments can be completed in a timely manner. With the PGR's consent, the examiners can be made aware of the nature of the PGR's disability and associated adjustments, for question formation/structure within the viva. The same academic standards/core competencies for the progression through, and the award of the research degree, must be upheld. Please refer to [Guidelines for disabled postgraduate researchers](#) for further information.

11.1.4 Roles, conduct and outcomes of the Viva Examination

The candidate, the examiners, the moderator if appointed, and the supervisor(s) *if invited*, are normally the only persons who may be present at the viva. The supervisor(s) should be available at the time of the viva examination but may attend only at the specific invitation of the examiners, and after consultation with the candidate; the internal examiner (or moderator) is responsible for ensuring that the supervisor(s) will be available.

The [Examining Research Degrees guidance o](#)utlines the roles and responsibilities of the persons present at the viva.

The internal and external examiners are equal as examiners, but, whilst the internal will convene the meeting, the internal will normally consider it courteous to defer to the external in the conduct of the examination. When two externals have been appointed, they too are equal as examiners. The supervisor(s) if present may participate only at the invitation of the external(s), and only for points of clarification on specific matters.

If an internal moderator is appointed, they are responsible for ensuring that the University's procedures are followed. The moderator will <u>not examine the thesis</u> and is not permitted to sign off a candidate's minor corrections but instead ensure that one external is designated to check and sign off the minor corrections.

The viva should not normally be less than one and a half hours. When an examination lasts longer than two hours appropriate breaks must be agreed and formally recorded. If the viva is longer than 2 hours, then details of the breaks provided must be stated on the Examiners' Joint Report form, under the account of the viva. When it is envisaged that the examination will last more than 2 hours, breaks should be agreed at the very outset. If the examination runs longer than 1.5 hours, it should be stopped at that point and appropriate breaks agreed. Candidates can be given the option to decline a break if they wish to do so, but this must also be recorded on the Examiners' Joint Report form.

If, owing to illness or other urgent and unforeseen reason, an examiner is unable to attend the viva examination, it may be postponed to a later date. If it seems likely, however, that postponement would be a serious hardship to the candidate, the Head of School should consider whether it is appropriate to appoint an alternative examiner.

Candidates should be told, by the examiners, of the recommendation of outcome to be made on the day of the viva examination. The outcome will be put for the approval of the Quality Assurance Committee and the Registry will issue an outcome letter to the candidate once approval has been given. Approval is normally obtained within 2-3 weeks of receipt of reports from the Examiners, although this will be delayed when the University is closed for public holidays, i.e. over the Christmas break.

As formulated in [General Regulation 40 for Research Degrees](), the outcomes of a viva are:

(a)   the thesis be sustained for the degree being examined

(b)   the thesis be sustained for the degree being examined subject to minor corrections being made by the candidate and approved by one of the examiners (usually the internal), normally within three months (up to 6 months is permissible upon the recommendation of the Examiners). This recommendation should be made where minor corrections are either (a) factual, typographic, limited in extent and can be achieved immediately after the viva, or (b) where there is no doubt that the thesis is of a standard for the degree sought but corrections are needed which should not require major re-working nor re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis.

(c)   the thesis be not sustained in its present form but that the candidate be given the opportunity to re-submit in a revised form for the same degree within a stated period which should not exceed 12 months

(d)   the thesis does not meet the standards for the degree being examined but does meet the standards for the award of a lower degree and the candidate be awarded the latter degree without further examination

(e)   the candidate may re-submit the thesis in a revised form for a lower degree within a stated period which shall not exceed twelve months

(f)   the thesis be not sustained

The one year Master of Research degree can also be awarded with Distinction on the unanimous recommendation of the examiners.

Examination Procedures for Joint Degrees with Curtin University

Postgraduate research postgraduate researchers registered for a joint degree with Curtin University shall present a single thesis, the length and format of the thesis must comply with the regulations of both Institutions. A copy of the thesis should be sent to the home institution, who shall provide a copy to the host institution.

The Viva examination is expected to proceed according to the normal procedures for examination of research degrees at the University of Aberdeen, with the possible outcomes from the examination remaining as they are for all research degrees. Examiners are required to refer to the [Examining Research Degrees Guidance](). Two external examiners shall be appointed (one for Curtin and one for Aberdeen who shall be from the discipline in which

the research degree has been undertaken) along with one Moderator internal to the Home institution, who shall not be one of the Supervisors and whose sole role is to uphold the correct conduct of the examination.

Thesis Corrections

Following QAC approval, the Registry will issue confirmation of the outcome of the viva within 2-3 working days. If there are corrections to be made to the thesis, the time for completing these will start from the date the letter is sent from the Registry.

Along with the outcome of a viva, information will be provided on corrections required, including details of the corrections, how to submit revisions and deadlines and whether a resubmission of the thesis is required. Postgraduate researchers are strongly encouraged to contact their supervisor(s) for guidance on modifications required.

Resubmission of a Thesis

Resubmission of a Thesis

In cases where a thesis resubmission is required, the resubmitted thesis is submitted to the Registry. The resubmitted thesis will be re-examined by the same examiners. These examiners will review the corrections specified during the first submission. No further criticism of other material or aspects of the thesis, which were initially considered satisfactory, can be introduced at a later stage. However, there are exceptions:

- If a second viva examination is being held
- If the revisions to the thesis have affected the validity of any data output or argument made.

Resubmission of a Thesis where a re-viva is required

There is not normally a viva for a resubmission unless explicitly requested by the examiners in their first Joint Report and approval is given by the Quality Assurance Committee on behalf of Senate.

The resubmitted thesis is submitted to the Registry and will be re-examined by the same examiners who will review the specified corrections from the first submission. However, the thesis as a whole, and not just the parts that were corrected, will be the subject of the viva. Candidates should be prepared to discuss and answer questions on any part of their thesis. For the avoidance of any doubt, in the event of a second viva examination, discussion may cover the entire thesis, but new criticisms or revision requests of the original work cannot

be introduced unless the new content affects the validity of any original data output or argument made.

Following re-submission the examiners may recommend that (General Regulation 40 for Research Degrees):

(a) the thesis be sustained

(b) the thesis be sustained with minor corrections

(c) the thesis does not meet the requirements for the degree being examined, but that it does have merits which satisfy the standards required for the award of a lower degree appropriate to the discipline in which the candidate is registered

or

(d) that the thesis be not sustained.

The examiners cannot recommend that the candidate be given another opportunity to resubmit in a revised or modified form as only one resubmission of a thesis will be permitted (General Regulation 40 for Research Degrees).

In cases where the postgraduate researcher indicates that they do not wish to re-submit, the Examiners may decide that if the thesis does not meet the standards for the degree as specified in General Regulation 39 for Research Degrees, but does meet the standards specified for another degree appropriate to the discipline in which the postgraduate researcher is registered, be awarded the latter degree without further examination.

11.2. Final Thesis Submission

Requirements for the submission of the final thesis are detailed in the Thesis Deposit and Declaration Checklist , which must be completed when submitting the Thesis. If access to the thesis is to be restricted, for a period that does not exceed 5 years, please ensure that the checklist has been completed along with a case justifying why the thesis should be restricted. This must be signed by your supervisor and Head of School.

Associate Student Status

A registered postgraduate researcher will be given Associate Student status for a maximum of six months following submission of their thesis. This will allow the postgraduate researcher to have an ID card and access to the library. Following completion of the degree, Associate Student status will remain for a maximum of three months or until graduation,

whichever occurs first. After this time the computer account will be closed and ID card invalidated.

11.3. Graduation

All information relating to graduation, including the schedule of Graduation Ceremonies, in-person and *in absentia* dates, procedures on the day of in-person Graduation Ceremonies, gown hire and Graduation photographs, can be found on the graduation website .

It is the responsibility of each postgraduate researcher to apply to graduate and be aware of deadlines. Postgraduate researchers should not wait until they have been examined to apply to graduate.

The degree will not be awarded until the postgraduate researcher formally graduates, i.e. if a postgraduate researcher completes the requirements of their degree programme in October but does not graduate until the following July, the degree certificate will state the latter date.

If a postgraduate researcher owes the University money for any reason (i.e. fees, General Regulation 42 for Research Degrees) the postgraduate researcher will not be permitted to graduate. There is no fee to apply to graduate. There are fees relating to guest tickets, gown hire, and if any photographs are purchased.

11.4. Appeals and Complaints

The University's *Policy on Appeals* and *Complaints Handling Procedure* can be accessed at When things don't go to plan | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen (abdn.ac.uk)s:

Complaints

If a postgraduate researcher is dissatisfied with a University service, in the first instance any problems/difficulties should be raised with the Supervisor or relevant member of staff within the School. If this is not appropriate, postgraduate researchers should contact their School PGR Director or refer to the *Complaints Handling Procedure*. The University anticipates that by ensuring that all matters are considered informally at an early stage, problems can and will be resolved quickly and effectively at a local level.

The University's *Complaints Handling Procedure* provides details of the University's Complaints procedures, timeframes and support available. A complaint may relate to:

- Failure or refusal to provide a service
- Inadequate quality or standard of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service
- The quality of facilities or learning resources
- Dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact on the individual (although it is recognised that policy is set at the discretion of the institution)
- Failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
- Failure to follow the appropriate administrative process
- Conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor (except where there are arrangements in place for the contractor to handle the complaint themselves); or
- Disagreement with a decision, (except where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision, or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector).

Academic Appeals

Those involved in investigating academic appeals will not pursue an appeal that does nothing more than question academic judgement. For example, a postgraduate researcher cannot appeal simply because they are unhappy or disagree with an assessment outcome. 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;
> ii) it is believed that the person or body making the decision did not have the authority to do so;
> iii) it is believed that the person or body making the decision did not act impartially;
> iv) a student considers that they have suffered, or could suffer, material disadvantage

The policy and procedure on student appeals (Section 3) should be referred to if a postgraduate researcher believes that extenuating or mitigating circumstances has affected their performances in assessments or prevented them from taking an examination or meeting a deadline for submission of coursework. Ultimately, a postgraduate researcher must notify the Head of the relevant School(s) immediately, in writing, not more than three days after the date of submission. Where a postgraduate researcher has not given notice of such extenuating or mitigating circumstances (see Glossary of Terms) within the permitted
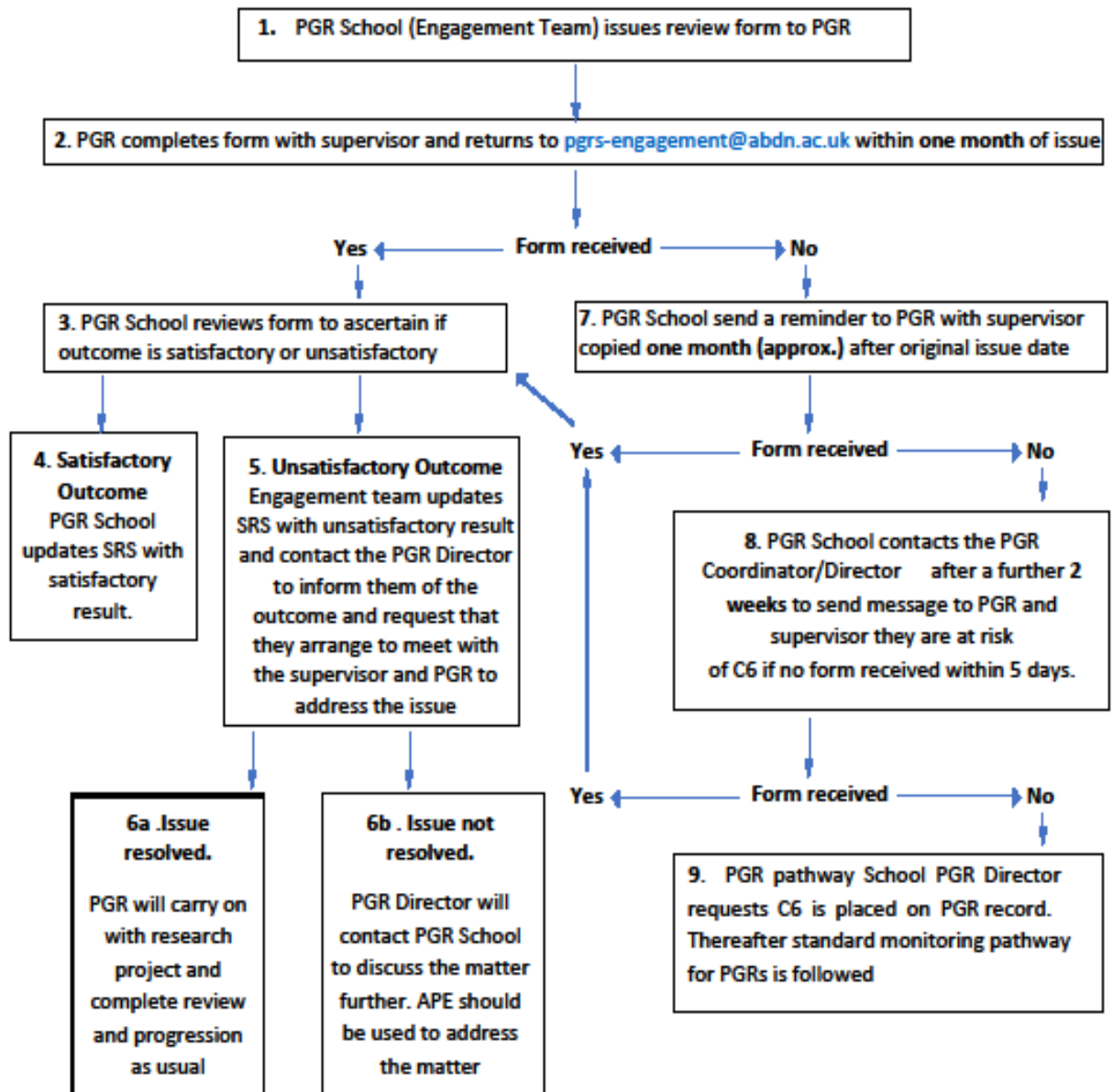
timescale, they cannot be accepted as evidence in support of an appeal unless a satisfactory explanation for the delay in providing the information can be given.

11.5.   Postgraduate researcher Feedback and Representation

The University conducts an annual Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (ASES) and the Advance HE Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) that postgraduate researchers are strongly encouraged to complete and use as platforms to provide feedback on their research degree experience. Information gathered from the questionnaires are considered by Senate, and discussed with individual Schools.

Postgraduate researchers can also feedback any issues that arise to their PGR School Student Representative or AUSA PGR Representative.

Appendix A: Six Month Review Process

1. PGR School (Engagement Team) issues review form to PGR

2. PGR completes form with supervisor and returns to pgrs-engagement@abdn.ac.uk within **one month** of issue

Yes ← **Form received** → No

3. PGR School reviews form to ascertain if outcome is satisfactory or unsatisfactory

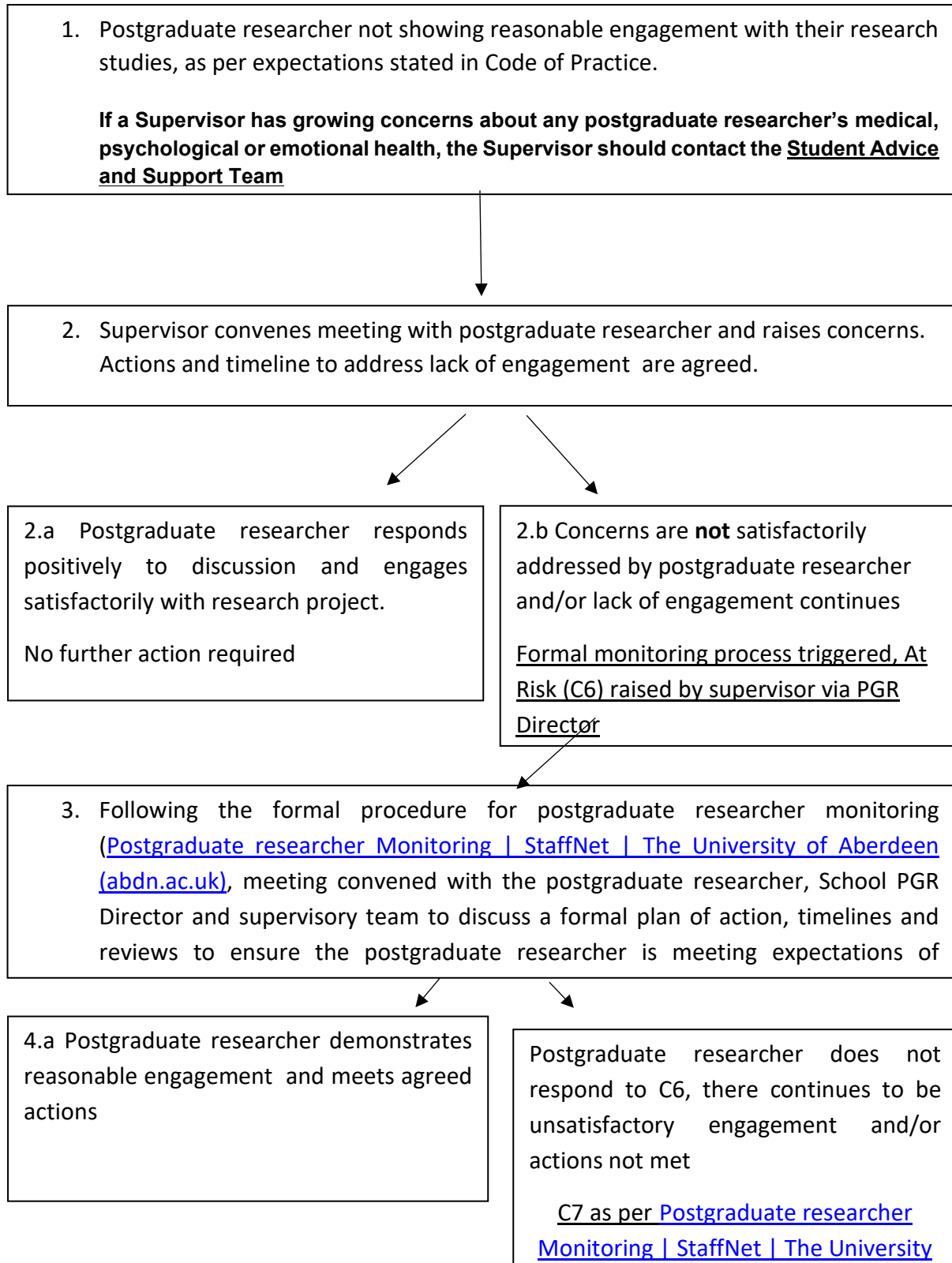7. PGR School send a reminder to PGR with supervisor copied **one month (approx.)** after original issue date

Yes ← **Form received** → No

4. Satisfactory Outcome PGR School updates SRS with satisfactory result.

5. Unsatisfactory Outcome Engagement team updates SRS with unsatisfactory result and contact the PGR Director to inform them of the outcome and request that they arrange to meet with the supervisor and PGR to address the issue

8. PGR School contacts the PGR Coordinator/Director after a further **2 weeks** to send message to PGR and supervisor they are at risk of C6 if no form received within 5 days.

Yes ← **Form received** → No

6a. Issue resolved. PGR will carry on with research project and complete review and progression as usual

6b. Issue not resolved. PGR Director will contact PGR School to discuss the matter further. APE should be used to address the matter

9. PGR pathway School PGR Director requests C6 is placed on PGR record. Thereafter standard monitoring pathway for PGRs is followed

Appendix B: Annual Progression Exercise Process

1. School contacts postgraduate researcher at beginning of relevant Annual Progression (AP) month to outline process and dates.

2. The postgraduate researcher completes and returns the AP form and submits any required work for progression exercise as instructed.

3. The School will follow internal procedures for recording the returned form and distributes form and any additional work requested to lead and second panel member for assessment, in line with School processes.

4. **Satisfactory Outcome**
School contacts postgraduate researcher (& supervisor) advising successful progression, and records form according to School's retention policy and a copy sent to the PGR School Engagement team for records. The School updates the SRS with progress information.

5. **Unsatisfactory Outcome**
A resubmission deadline and exercise is agreed with panel and postgraduate researcher, in line with School Policy. Appropriate academic and pastoral Support is discussed and offered to the postgraduate researcher to support resubmission. The School PGR Director

Satisfactory Outcome ◄

6. Postgraduate researcher resubmits work as per agreement and in line with School policy, for reassessment

7. **Unsatisfactory Outcome**
Panel recommends that the postgraduate researcher completes with a lower award, where appropriate, or that their studies should be terminated under General Regulation 27 for Research Degrees.

Appendix C: PGR Non-Engagement Monitoring Process: Lack of Engagement

1. Postgraduate researcher not showing reasonable engagement with their research studies, as per expectations stated in Code of Practice.

   If a Supervisor has growing concerns about any postgraduate researcher's medical, psychological or emotional health, the Supervisor should contact the Student Advice and Support Team

2. Supervisor convenes meeting with postgraduate researcher and raises concerns. Actions and timeline to address lack of engagement are agreed.

2.a Postgraduate researcher responds positively to discussion and engages satisfactorily with research project.

No further action required

2.b Concerns are **not** satisfactorily addressed by postgraduate researcher and/or lack of engagement continues

Formal monitoring process triggered, At Risk (C6) raised by supervisor via PGR Director

3. Following the formal procedure for postgraduate researcher monitoring (Postgraduate researcher Monitoring | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen (abdn.ac.uk), meeting convened with the postgraduate researcher, School PGR Director and supervisory team to discuss a formal plan of action, timelines and reviews to ensure the postgraduate researcher is meeting expectations of

4.a Postgraduate researcher demonstrates reasonable engagement and meets agreed actions

Postgraduate researcher does not respond to C6, there continues to be unsatisfactory engagement and/or actions not met

C7 as per Postgraduate researcher Monitoring | StaffNet | The University

Appendix D: Examples of good cause for an 'exceptional extension' or suspension of studies

Examples of good cause for an 'exceptional extension' or suspension of studies

a. Serious physical or mental illness of the postgraduate researcher;

b. Death/serious illness of a partner, close family member or close friend;

c. Unforeseeable or unpreventable events such as distress or injury caused by a serious accident; the effects of being a victim of a criminal act or the distress or serious disruption caused by fire, flood or other natural catastrophe;

d. Serious personal problems such as relationship problems, family crises;

e. Unexpected changes to the postgraduate researcher's source of funding (NB: postgraduate researchers must ensure that they have the necessary funds before embarking on their degree);

f. Breakdown of *essential* equipment where a postgraduate researcher is unable to continue research and the use of alternative equipment is not possible;

g. Delays in obtaining ethical approval where approval has been sought in good time;

h. Jury service; military service;

i. Maternity, paternity or adoption leave;

j. Delays in progress due to unforeseen problems with the degree programme and/or working environment (e.g. moving of offices/buildings, supervisor(s) changes and unavailability etc.) which are outside of the postgraduate researcher's control. (NB: the problem **must** be reported to the appropriate School at the time it occurs);

k. Study leave necessary for the degree programme (other than official leave of absence for study at an approved institution or fieldwork – see Section 9.3);

l. Internship/work placement necessary for the degree programme.

The following circumstances will not be regarded as grounds for applying for any extension or a suspension of studies:

m. The postgraduate researcher or supervisor was unaware of policy and application procedures for interruptions and/or extensions for postgraduate degrees. It is ultimately the postgraduate researcher's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of all policies and procedures relevant to their degree;

n.   Further primary research and/or laboratory work;

o.   Long-term holidays/vacations;

p.   Inadequate planning and time management;

q.   Normal pregnancy (excluding statutory maternity leave entitlement);

r.   Difficulties with English language (including delays as a result of proof reading);

s.   Computer or other equipment failure or theft where use of an alternative is possible or any loss of work was avoidable, except where the work is lost through the failure of University of Aberdeen systems as confirmed by School or University of Aberdeen IT department;

t.   Change in employment conditions: requests from part-time postgraduate researchers who are working while studying may exceptionally be considered where a change in employment conditions was unforeseen. This will not normally be an acceptable reason for postgraduate researchers in the submission pending or resubmission periods.

In addition to the above, the following circumstance *will* not be regarded as grounds for applying for an extension or suspension:

u.   Circumstances encountered during supervised study, which should have been dealt with at the time.

The final decision on whether a suspension or an extension is granted or not is at the discretion of the Postgraduate Research Officer on behalf of the Senate.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

UPDATE TO POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON STUDENT ABSENCE (PGR)

1   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper presents the updates made to the policy and procedures on student absence (PGR).

2   PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	**Date**
Previously considered/approved by	PGR Committee	12th March 2024
Further consideration/ approval required by		

3   RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Quality Assurance Committee is invited to **review and approve** the updates to the policy and procedures on student absence

4   DISCUSSION

4.1 The University has policy and procedures to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to maximise the welfare of students but also limit the consequences for students when absences do occur.

4.2 The Policy and Procedures to Student Absence (PGR) has been updated to reflect recent changes made to the UG and PGT policy and procedures on student absence and provides additional information on the UKRI studentship absences processes.

4.3 Changes are:

Section 1.3 added to provide details of permitted authorised absence
Sections 1.9 and 1.10 details on action taken if work is submitted or assessments undertaken during a period of illness
Section 1.11 overview of the impact absence may have on a student visa.
Section 1.12 and 1.13 overview absence processes and impact for students on a UKRI studentship.

5.   FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Dr Lucy Leiper, PGR School Manager (l.leiper@abdn.ac.uk) and Dr Rhiannon Thompson, Postgraduate Research Engagement Manager (r.thompson@abdn.ac.uk),

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES
ON STUDENT ABSENCE**

This Policy and Procedures on PGR Student Absence was approved by Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) on [insert date] and applies to all PGR students. For undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, please refer to **Policy and Procedures on Student Absence (Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught)**.

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 PGR STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

1.1 Formal supervisory meetings between the PGR student and the supervisor are expected to be conducted no less than monthly (pro-rata'd for part time PGR students and those in extension time), unless by mutual agreement.

1.2 PGR students are expected to undertake the required hours of study as stated in their admissions contract and, where applicable, their studentship agreement.

1.3 PGR students can request authorised holiday absence from their School. The maximum period permitted is 60 calendar days in any rolling 12-month period. PGR students funded by a UKRI Research Council can request a minimum of 30 days and a maximum of 40 days (8 weeks) authorised holiday absence from their School, this includes public holidays.

1.4 PGR students are required to undertake all formal review and progression exercises (including Six Monthly Reviews and Annual Progression Exercises) by the required deadlines.

1.5 PGR students are required to submit a final thesis and attend a PhD Viva as per the required deadline.

1.6 The University Senate may terminate the studies of any PGR student who persistently fails to submit formal review and progression exercises, fails to progress as expected and/or fails to engage with their studies and supervisors, without medical or other good cause for doing so. The University's Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students and student monitoring webpages provide more information on how attendance / engagement and the submission of expected work is monitored. PGR students should note that failure to report an absence may initiate their School's monitoring procedures for PGR student attendance.

1.7 PGR students must report periods of absence (defined as an inability to attend or perform required work). This is of particular importance in the following instances:

(i)   They are absent for any period of more than **seven consecutive**[1] days

(ii)   They are absent for a period of less than seven consecutive days but during this time they:

        a. Fail to undertake or submit assessment by the required deadline (e.g. six monthly review, annual progression exercise, thesis submission, viva attendance);

        b. Are expected on campus

        c. They are unable to attend a meeting with their supervisor(s)

        d. Are unable to attend a conference or training session necessary for their research degree programme

1.8 Where PGR students will be absent for a consecutive period longer than one month a suspension application must be submitted together with relevant supporting evidence.

1.9 If a PGR student sits an assessment (e.g. annual progression exercise or viva) or submits expected work (e.g. annual progression exercise report or thesis), it will be assumed that the PGR 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 PGR student believes that they are not fit to sit an assessment 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 at the first possible opportunity, in line with Section 2.1, and in any case before any outcomes are published. Failure to follow this may undermine any future appeal.

1.10   Notifying an absence does not necessarily justify the absence and will not automatically authorise an extension to an assessment deadline nor period of study. Unless a suspension is applied for and approved (section 1.7), notifying an absence will not pause or extend the period of registered study.

1.11   PGR 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. PGR students should refer to the Immigration and Student Visas webpage, and / or contact the Student Immigration Compliance Team immigration@abdn.ac.uk for advice.

1.12   PGR students funded by a UKRI Research Council are eligible for sick leave for a period of up to 13 weeks (in a 12 month rolling period), additionally the studentship may be extended by a commensurate period. Any UKRI funded PGR student who requires formal sick leave must contact pgrs-studentships@abdn.ac.uk in the first instance. Retrospective claims can only be approved in exceptional circumstances (e.g., inability to submit a request due to incapacitation).

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

1.13   PGR students funded by a UKRI Research Council may be eligible for paid or unpaid leave for unexpected life events, like bereavement. Requests for such leave will be considered on a case by case basis and should be requested by contacting pgrs-studentships@abdn.ac.uk.

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 PGR students will inform their supervisor(s) on the first day of any period of absence.**

2.1.2   Where it is impossible for a PGR student to report on the first day of absence, PGR 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 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. Suspensions will not normally be approved retrospectively.

2.1.3   In cases in which a PGR student becomes ill during an assessment (e.g. annual progression exercise panel, the viva) and is unable to continue, they must alert the examiner. They should then advise their supervisor(s) and School PGR admin officer at the first possible opportunity.

2.2   How should an absence be reported?

2.2.1   PGR students should report an absence to their supervisory team and/or School PGR Admin officer. PGR students funded by a UKRI Research Council should report an absence to their supervisory team and/or School PGR Admin officer and pgrs-studentships@abdn.ac.uk.

2.2.2   For absences of **one month or greater** a suspension of studies must be requested via normal processes (see section 2.7). It is expected that the supervisor(s) and school PGR administrators are also kept informed.

2.3   When is supporting evidence required?

2.3.1   The requirement for submitting supporting evidence when reporting an absence varies depending on the period of absence, the nature of the absence and the nature of the events missed. PGR 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 shouldbe given.

2.3.2 Funded PGR students should refer to their funders guidance on the requirements for supporting evidence for absences. PGR students funded by a UKRI Research Council should contact pgrs-studentships@abdn.ac.uk for guidance.

2.3.3 Supporting evidence is required in the following scenarios:

(i) Where a PGR student has been absent for more than seven consecutive days[1]

(ii) They are absent for a period of less than seven consecutive days[1] but during this time they:

        a. Fail to undertake or submit assessment by the required deadline (e.g. six monthly review, annual progression exercise, thesis submission, viva attendance);
        b. Are expected on campus
        c. They are unable to attend a meeting with their supervisor(s)
        d. Are unable to attend a conference or training session necessary for their research degree programme

2.3.4 The Postgraduate Research Officers 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 or justification for an absence. Students are advised to seek the appropriate support when needed (see Section 2.9 for details). Upon the student's consent, in certain circumstances, Student Advice and Support may confirm their support of an absence request, without providing further details.

2.4 What is considered support evidence?

2.4.1 Funded PGR students should refer to their funders guidance on the requirements for supporting evidence for absences. PGR students funded by a UKRI Research Council should contact pgrs-studentships@abdn.ac.uk for guidance.

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

(a) Written evidence from a clinical practitioner[2] (which may include pro-forma or a letter) who has been providing health assessment/care for the PGR 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, PGR 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

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[2] 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.

impossible for the clinician to verify subsequently that the PGR student had been ill on the date of absence, a back-dated form of evidence will not normally be accepted.

(b) 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 PGR student and are already aware of the PGR student's circumstances prior to the absence taking place or have had contact with the PGR 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.

(c) A detailed explanation, included in the suspension application form, from the PGR student describing the impact that the illness has had on their ability to engage or progress their research.

2.4.3   For non-medical absences[3], appropriate supporting evidence may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

(a) 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 PGR student's circumstances affected their studies and the nature/extent of the support being given.

(b) A full description of the cause including the impact it has had on their ability to engage or progress their research.

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

2.4.4   The Student Advice & Support Team can provide PGR students with support in reporting their absences and, with the PGR students' permission, can liaise with School(s) including the Postgraduate Research School, on their behalf[4]. Where a PGR student believes their medical condition or personal circumstance to be of a particularly sensitive nature, or where the Team is already aware of a PGR student's specific circumstances, PGR students are encouraged to contact the Student Advice & Support Team directly. The University recognises that, for very personal or private issues/events, PGR 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) or the Postgraduate Research School that they have sight of the relevant personal information and that the evidence is satisfactory.

Where appropriate, documentation submitted as supporting evidence should normally be in English or translated into English and verified and where appropriate, should be recently issued.

2.4.5   Postgraduate research officers will decide on whether the evidence is satisfactory in cases of suspensions but may request additional information if required. In making this decision,

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

[4] 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.

Postgraduate research officers may refer to monitoring procedures for PGR student attendance. Specific requirements by funding bodies, or the UK Visas and Immigration department (UKVI) of the Home Office, will also need to be considered as part of the process. PGR students should note that, as per Section 1.9, reporting an absence or applying for a suspension does not necessarily authorise an absence.

2.5   What happens to reports of absence?

2.5.1   Reports of absence may be used:

(a) By supervisors and supporting teams to suggest pathways to return to study. It is the responsibility of the PGR student to contact the Student Advice & Support Service.

(b) By School to rearrange an Annual Progression Exercise

(c) By Registry in support to rearrange a viva

2.6   Funded/ sponsored PGR students

2.6.1.   Funded / sponsored PGR students may be entitled to sickness absence, it is the PGR student's responsibility to check their sponsors/ funding provider's absence policy/ guidelines. If a funded / sponsored PGR student is requesting a suspension (see section 2.7), it is the PGR student's reasonability to keep the funder/ sponsor informed. A UKRI funded student should contact pgrs-studentships@abdn.ac.uk for guidance.

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

2.6.3   Reports of absence are not the same as extension requests and do not provide by themselves a justification for late submissions of agreed work (see 1.9).

2.7   Suspensions

2.7.1   Where PGR students will be absent for a period longer than one month a suspension application must be submitted together with relevant supporting evidence.

An application for suspension should be completed prior to the period for which suspension is to commence, or as soon as possible in unexpected circumstances. Suspensions will not normally be approved retrospectively.

It should be noted that PGR Students on suspension are not liable for tuition fees however should continue to complete online registration at the start of each academic year.

It is the responsibility of the postgraduate researcher to keep any sponsor informed of a suspension of studies and seek their approval. The PGRS will keep UKRI Research Councils informed of any suspension of studies.

Before requesting any periods of suspension, UKRI funded postgraduate researchers must seek advice from the PGR School Studentship Team: pgrs-studentships@abdn.ac.uk .

All International postgraduate researchers studying at the University on a visa should refer to the terms of their visa when requesting a suspension of studies and contact the Student Immigration Compliance Team at immigration@abdn.ac.uk for advice on any visa implications of a period of suspension of study prior to submitting the formal paperwork.

Postgraduate researchers should refer to the [Code of Practice: Postgraduate Research Students](#) for detailed information on suspensions to research degrees.

2.8   Impact on Visa

2.8.1   PGR students should contact the Student Immigration Compliance Team at immigration@abdn.ac.uk to receive advice in the impact of absence on their visa status.

2.9   What support is available?

2.9.1   The University understands that PGR students may need support and guidance as they deal with issues leading to periods of absence. PGR students are always encouraged to contact their Supervisory Team for advice and signposting to available support. The University has a range of support services available to support PGR students as detailed below:

 i) The Multi-faith Chaplaincy is a place of welcome for all and serves as a spiritual and social centre for all students and staff.

 (ii)The University Counselling Service is open to all students of the University.

 (iii) Registry Officers can provide a source of support to students who have concerns about their programme of study.

 (iv) The Student Advice & Support Team offers impartial and confidential advice and support on a range of issues, including finance, disability information and more.

 (v) The Students' Association (AUSA) represents and serves all student's interests and works to make their time in Aberdeen as happy and enjoyable as possible.

 (vi) The Postgraduate Research School Engagement team offer support and advice on all aspects of the PhD journey

 (vii) Your Schools Postgraduate Research Coordinator is an experienced member of staff with extensive knowledge of your School, who can offer advice.

 (viii) The [International Advice and Compliance Team](#) provide visa advice to students. They offer support to students and staff to navigate and adhere to immigration rules and regulations

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE 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 **Quality Assurance Committee** 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.
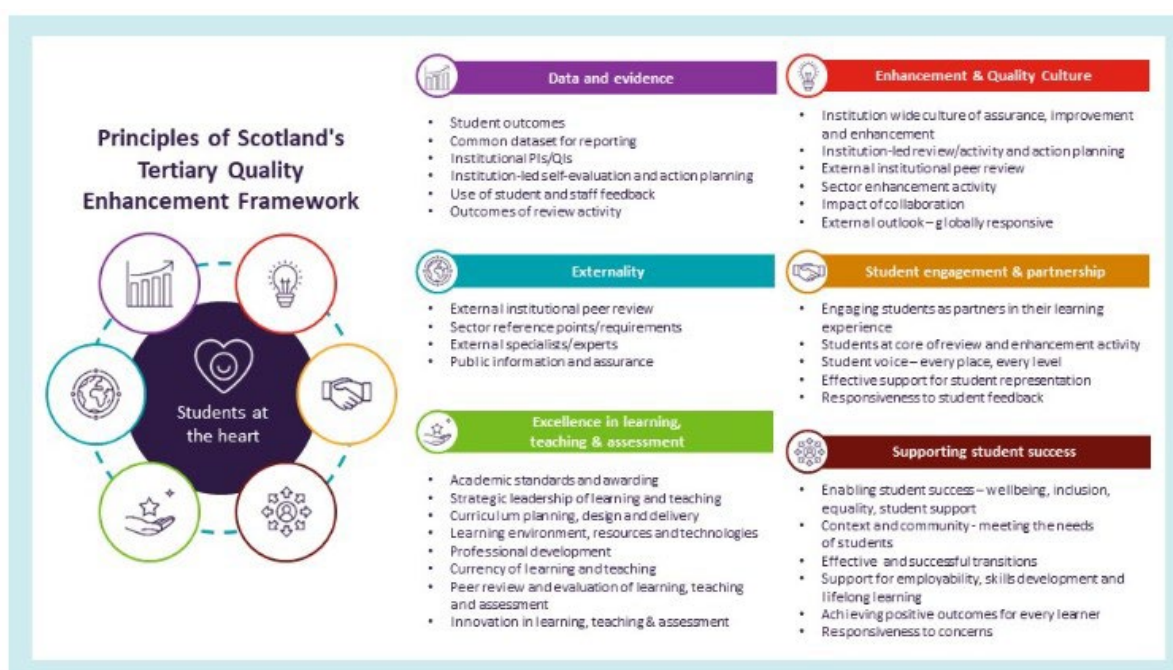
Image A: Principles of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (Source: Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland

- **[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 '<u>Late Submission of Work Policy</u>' 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 <u>website</u> 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: - who is to deliver it - the nature of the support and information sharing needed to support this - how to enhance staff and student engagement with the personal tutor and pastoral support systems - identify priorities and prepare and deliver an implementation plan, including as appropriate requests for additional resource - 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)

[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

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

DEADLINES FOR THE RETURN OF RESULTS & THE TIMING OF RESITS IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/25

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> The purpose of this paper is to seek the **approval** of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for:
>
> (i)   the deadlines for the return of results in academic year 2024/25;
> (ii)   the timing of the summer resit diet in academic year 2024/25.

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

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

> Members of the QAC are asked to **approve** (i) the proposed deadlines for the return of results and (ii) the timing of the summer resit diet, both for academic year 2024/25.

4.   DISCUSSION: RETURN OF RESULTS ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/25

4.1   Members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) are asked to consider and, if appropriate, approve proposed dates for the return of results for academic year 2024/25. The dates are provided in *section 4.3* below.

4.2   *Appendix A* provides a more detailed analysis of the proposed dates for 2024/25 alongside those approved in 2023/24 and 2022/23.

4.2   The deadlines provided are proposed following the Senate approval of a revised academic year structure *(SEN23:06 refers)* and with consideration given to student progression, and both staff and student wellbeing. Results deadlines have been extended, as far as possible, to enable staff to undertake marking while seeking to ensure the University can return results to students in as timely a manner as possible and, where appropriate, to allow results to inform course choice.

4.3   The Committee is asked to **approve** the deadlines for the return of results for academic year 2024/25 as follows:

       4.3.1   Term 1 Assessments

Level	Deadline
Undergraduate Courses	**Friday 24 January 2025**
Postgraduate Taught Courses	**Friday 31 January 2025**

January Start Postgraduate Taught Programmes *(for candidates commencing January 2024)*	**Friday 31 January 2025**

4.3.2   Term 2 Assessments

Level	Deadline
Undergraduate Courses and Programmes	**Friday 13 June 2025**
Postgraduate Taught Courses and Programmes *(those eligible to graduate in June 2025)*	**Friday 13 June 2025**
Postgraduate Taught Courses and Programmes *(non-graduating students)*	**Friday 13 June 2025**

4.3.3   Term 3 Assessments

Level	Deadline
Postgraduate Taught Courses and Programmes *(those eligible to graduate in November 2025)*	**Friday 31 October 2025**

4.3.4   Resit Assessments*

Level	Deadline
Postgraduate Taught Courses and Programmes *(those eligible to graduate in November 2025)*	**Friday 18 October 2025**

*Section 5 below provides further information on the resit assessment diet and associated results deadline

5.   DISCUSSION: TIMING OF RESITS ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/25 AND BEYOND

5.1   Further to the approval of the revised academic year structure, members of the QAC are also asked to approve the timing of the resit assessment diet and associated results deadlines, as provided in *section 5.3* below.

5.2   The timing of resits is proposed taking into account practice in previous years, the availability of suitable accommodation and timing of graduations, the availability of staff to support resit diet and student progression, registration and preparation for upcoming academic year.

5.3.1   The Committee is therefore asked to **approve**:

   (i)   In academic year 2024/25, that the resit assessment diet will take place during weeks commencing **7 and 14 July 2025**;
   (ii)   That, in future years, this model be replicated and that the resit diet be scheduled during **weeks 50 and 51**;
   (iii) That the deadline for the return of results for all resits is **15 August 2025**.

5.   FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Steve Tucker, Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement (s.tucker@abdn.ac.uk), Gillian Mackintosh, Director of Academic Services and Online Education (g.mackintosh@abdn.ac.uk) or Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar (e.tough@abdn.ac.uk).

18 April 2024
Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

Deadlines for the Return of Results

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Points of Note
Term 1: Teaching Starts	12 Sep 2022	11 Sep 2023	23 Sep 2024	
Term 1: UG Results *(course)*	20 Jan 2023	19 Jan 2024	24 Jan 2025	UG results are due <u>3 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 1. Teaching for Term 2 begins on 27 January and results should be returned in as timely a manner as possible to ensure students can be aware of their results prior to this. A deadline of 24 January provides a short window of opportunity for students to change their Term 2 courses (they may do so, for the majority of courses, within the first 2 weeks of teaching). This deadline cannot be extended without the potential for significant detrimental impact on UG students and their course choices.
Term 1: PGT Results *(course)*	27 Jan 2023	19 Jan 2024	31 Jan 2025	PGT results are due <u>4 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 1. Teaching for Term 2 begins on 27 January and therefore prior to this deadline. Results should therefore be returned in as timely a manner as possible (and where possible, in advance of the published deadline). PGTs results are unlikely to impact course change given the prescribed nature of PGT programmes.
January Start PGT Results *(programme)*	27 Jan 2023	19 Jan 2024	31 Jan 2025	As above. PGT results are due <u>4 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 1.
Term 2: Teaching Starts	23 Jan 2023	22 Jan 2024	27 Jan 2025	
Term 2: UG results *(course & programme)*	9 Jun 2023	7 June 2024	13 Jun 2025	UG results are due <u>4 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 2. University Graduations will take place during w/c 30 June 2025 and, therefore, this deadline cannot be extended. This is also the latest deadline by which results can be returned to enable students required to undertake resit assessments to apply to do so.
Term 2: PGT results *(course & programme)*	9 Jun 2023	7 June 2024	13 Jun 2025	PGT results are due <u>4 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 2. University Graduations will take place during w/c 30 June 2025 and, therefore, this deadline cannot be extended. This is also the latest

				deadline by which results can be returned to enable students required to undertake resit assessments to apply to do so.
Term 2: PGT results *(non-graduating)*	16 Jun 2023	7 June 2024	13 Jun 2025	As above. PGT results are due <u>4 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 1. Priority, however, must always be given to results which impact upon graduating students to ensure their completion.
Summer Graduation Ceremonies (w/c)	26 Jun 2023	17 Jun 2024	30 Jun 2025	
Resit Assessments (w/c)	3 Jul and 10 Jul 2023	1 Jul and 8 Jul 2024	7 Jul and 14 Jul 2025	
Resit Results *(all levels)*	11 Aug 2023	2 Aug 2024	15 Aug 2025	
PGT Results Deadline	3 Nov 2023	1 Nov 2024	18 Oct 2025	

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW: REVIEW CHAIRS

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> The purpose of this paper is to seek the approval of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for an amendment, on a temporary basis, to the Process and Procedures for Internal Teaching Review (ITR) to allow members of the University Education Committee (UEC), in addition to members of the 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 Quality Assurance Committee is invited to **discuss and 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

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW (ITR)

SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
Panel Visit: 13 and 14 March 2024

INTRODUCTION

1.1   The Internal Teaching Review (ITR) of the School of Biological Sciences was carried out under the University's published process and procedures for ITR which are available here: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/internal-teaching-review-6112.php. This ITR took place in person and was held over the course of two days.

1.2   The School was asked to submit a streamlined Critical Analysis document which addressed the following key areas:

(i) <u>School context</u>: to include student numbers, demographics and outcomes; highlight any areas of teaching and learning practices that are specific to the School and a summary of the School's response to the previous ITR;

(ii) <u>Positive aspects of the School's teaching and learning</u>: to include examples of positive practice and particular strengths of the School as well as how this good practice is shared both within the School and beyond;

(iii) <u>Challenges that have been encountered in the School's teaching and learning provision</u>: to include potential areas identified for improvement and an action plan for how they might be addressed – or whether these were issues for discussion at the ITR; and,

(iv) <u>Future plans</u>: to include areas for development in the next few years, e.g. new course/programme developments, partnerships proposed.

1.3   The ITR Panel was comprised of:

Faye Hendry	Chair School of Education Quality Assurance Committee
Mark Grant	School of Natural and Computing Sciences Quality Assurance Committee
Euan Bain	School of Engineering University Education Committee
Rhiannon Ledwell	Vice-President for Education, AUSA Quality Assurance Committee
Andrew McGowan	External Subject Specialist, University of Exeter
Sarah Greenwood	External Subject Specialist, University of Stirling
Christopher Miller	Clerk, Academic Services

1.4   The Panel considered the documentation provided by the School, by way of an evidence-based Critical Analysis (CA) as detailed in 1.2 above. In addition, prior to the virtual visit to the School, members of the Panel were provided with access to the School's Quality Assurance (QA) repository, containing the School's annual monitoring materials (Annual Course and Annual Programme Reviews (ACR and APR)), Course Feedback Forms, minutes from meetings of Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLC), and External Examiner Reports (EERs), as well as the minutes from various School Committees. Consideration of this documentation, along with the School's submitted CA, enabled the Panel to identify key themes for further exploration.

1.5   The Panel conducted a visit to the School, where they met with a range of staff and students.

1.6   The themes for focused discussion agreed with the School prior to and during the visit were:

(i)   **Staffing and Development**, particularly in terms of opportunities for staff development and the impacts of staffing on course and programme provision, as well as what the School is currently doing in relation to marketing and recruitment.

(ii)   **UG and PGT Learning and Teaching**, including the facilities available to the School, the impact of block teaching on both staff and students, how the School manages project supervision and what impact this has on students, and how the School helps facilitate the integration of skills into courses.

(iii) **Assessment and Feedback**, particularly focusing on the School's marking, moderation and feedback processes, the School's assessment range and how they support the students in this regard, the impact of AI upon assessment design and formative assessment opportunities.

(iv)   **Student Experience, Student Feedback and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)** encapsulating the capturing and closing off of student feedback and how the School supports EDI.

(v)   **Work-based Learning, Employability and Careers**, including the use of fieldwork courses within the School, the value they hold to the School and how the School works with the Careers Service and Employability Colleagues to build skills and employment opportunities.

(vi)   **PGR Training and Support**, focusing on how the School aims to build its PGR community, what pastoral support is in place for PGR students and what the School is doing in response to the identified disparity in training for those funded through DPTs and those who are not.

1.7   This report is split into three sections:

(i) Part A gives the overall impressions of the teaching provision within the School, formed from the whole ITR process;
(ii) Part B covers the outcome of various meetings with staff and students, focusing on a small number of themes as outlined above. It also details the Pedagogic Partnership Session, which involved more free-form discussion; and
(iii) Part C details the School action plan which will form the basis of the annual follow-up reports.

PART A: OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

2.1   The panel was impressed by the School's dedication to its students. It was evident throughout the review that staff have a fantastic working relationship with their students, ensuring they are seen as an approachable means of support for a range of both academic and non-academic issues that their students face. Students feel empowered to provide feedback and have been provided with multiple avenues to do so. Relationships between students and personal tutors appear to be very productive and staff clearly care about education.

2.2   Assessments were another area of strength identified by the panel. There were a diverse range of assessments across all levels and programmes, challenging students to apply their subject knowledge through robust problem-solving approaches. The Staff took pride in their ability to design assessments that took student provisions into consideration whilst tackling the challenge of Artificial Intelligence (AI) without compromising high academic standards and fairness.

2.3   Administrative and technical staff were praised by students and staff alike. Institutional and School administration processes appear to have been followed rigorously whilst ensuring minimal impacts to student learning experiences. Technicians were described as always on-hand, consistent and knowledgeable; allowing for students to feel supported during practical sessions.

2.4   Employability and field-based learning is of great importance to the School. The value of such opportunities was understood by staff at all levels and had been clearly relayed to the students. Despite the ongoing financial difficulties faced by the institution, the School continues to provide a diverse array of field-based courses. Whilst it is understood that changes are being made to the careers advisory staff due to retirement, it is hoped that the School will continue to work alongside the careers service to promote employability to their students.

2.5   Block teaching (five to six week taught courses) continues to provide mixed results in terms of student performance and experience. The School should continue the good practice of considering the impact of block teaching on students and how to balance this. The School currently offers different learning opportunities to students, ensuring that courses that do not adapt well to the block-teaching method are delivered via an alternative teaching structure. The School should also continue to consider how to assist students who miss classes, as the block-taught courses create a much more challenging learning environment to catch up in such instances.

PART B: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT; OUTCOMES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH STAFF AND THE PEDAGOGIC PARTNERSHIP SESSION

3.1   Staffing and Development

3.1.1   The School clearly values its staff and highlighted that it adopts a positive and encouraging approach to staff development. The School explained that they enabled staff development through a number of methods, including: (i) encouraging staff to make full use of the Centre for Academic Development (CAD)'s training courses; (ii) small discretionary loans were provided to support some work; (iii) away days are used with targeted themes, such as having a speaker on AI; (iv) internal workshops, such as a taught student project discussion session. The School also noted that PGR supervisor training was done in-house and in conjunction with

the Postgraduate Research School (PGRS) for experiential sharing. The School also encourages academic line managers whilst ensuring that no one oversees more than six people at one time. The School also encourages membership of higher education committees amongst their staff. This approach clearly produced positive results amongst staff members, who praised the School as being well structured, supportive of them within their roles, good at collaborating with other Schools and directorates and is clear in their communications to staff.

3.1.2   Staff noted that, due to both financial and time constraints, much of the development offered to them was in the form of free in-house courses. Support staff did acknowledge that time off was granted on occasions for development but that this was more difficult during term time. Staff noted that they were always encouraged to undertake funded training and that the School was positive towards their continued development. When asked if there was any training that the research technicians felt they required access to, staff explained that training for specific equipment was catered for when essential. They would also use visits to their labs from external experts as opportunities for learning and development, where possible.

3.1.3   The School highlighted growing concerns over shrinking staffing numbers hindering their ability to successfully deliver programmes. The School noted that they have lost a third of their staff, both academic and support, over a period of 18 months and that current staff were dealing with heavy workloads as a result of this. It was noted that, despite a diverse range of courses available for levels three and four, the School is now in a position where it is not able to appoint staff to teach specialisations unless it fits within their set curriculum. Support staff detailed that many junior graded professional staff would leave due to promotion opportunities becoming available elsewhere but acknowledged that the academic staff were understanding and would help them where possible. The School also acknowledged the struggle to retain junior graded professional staff, noting that they ensured that their team was always well trained regardless, as they recognised the importance of an effective administration team.

3.1.4   It was noted that the School had become increasingly reliant on post-doctoral staff for the successful delivery of teaching. PhD students were also recruited from research grants. Whilst the School acknowledged that many of these individuals were excellent teachers, it was highlighted that this would not be sustainable for the School. The School indicated that, for their School size, there are a large number of scholarship staff.

3.2   UG and PGT Learning and Teaching

3.2.1   The School emphasised that they had a lack of suitable teaching facilities, particularly in relation to large computing classrooms. Staff explained that they had hoped to use more group work within their classes but could not get access to appropriate rooms regularly enough to facilitate this on a more consistent basis. Assessments for larger cohorts would often have to be split over several smaller computer classrooms which in turn would strain staff resources. It was noted by the School that the teaching of statistics was far easier during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown than on campus because of inadequate facilities. Staff argued that whilst there was room for flexible teaching within a two-hour block, student and staff interaction was often limited and constrained by the quality of (and access to) suitable teaching spaces. Even in instances where rooms were provided, they often contained faults. Zoology G9-G11 was highlighted as containing many broken computers as well as a faulty projector. It was also noted that the PGR students lacked a comfortable community space.

The post graduate students confirmed that their space within the Cruickshank building was often too cold and contained little private space for meetings.

3.2.2   Many academic and technician staff held the Science Teaching Hub (STH) in very high regard as an effective learning tool at the School's disposal, describing the facility as a wonderful teaching space and a positive experience. It was also noted that the Science Teaching Hub operated separately in terms of timetabling at no detriment to technical and admin teams. Staff felt that the facilities within STH were accommodating of students due to having wheelchair access, disability lifts and an assistance dog. Despite this, students felt that the learning environment of STH was not always suitable, particularly for neurodivergent students. The spaces often contained two or three classes running alongside simultaneously, with a clip-on earpiece provided to students so that they could listen to the appropriate lecturer. This created a learning environment whereby students felt over stimulated and often easily distracted. Some courses mentioned were BI1009 and BI1511. It was suggested that some form of visual separation between different classrooms would assist with this. Students did admit that these concerns are often shared anecdotally, and it would be beneficial if students used formal feedback mechanisms to raise issues. The students did, however, generally agree that the facilities, particularly the technologies, within STH were superior to those used previously in the Zoology labs. Academic staff agreed that the transition to STH has not enhanced student experience in the way that they would have liked. It was noted that in some extreme instances students have had panic attacks during the multi-class sessions in STH.

3.2.3   Staff held a neutral view with regards to block teaching, recognising that it was beneficial for many subjects but not all. The structured nature of these courses mean that staff can tailor research around the demands of teaching time. It was also noted that field work often needed to be blocked due to its nature. Staff considered that block teaching was more beneficial for students as students could use block teaching to build their own study paths, as well as build the necessary skills that students felt they needed individually. Staff also notified students ahead of time regarding assessments and pinch times within these courses.

3.2.4   Students generally preferred block teaching as a means of learning. On the one hand, students noted that block teaching courses could be intense. On the other hand, students claimed to enjoy the focused learning provided by block teaching. Students also echoed staff in praising block teaching, for it helped enable them to choose topics related to courses in which they had greater interest. One negative that was highlighted by both staff and students was that, due to the shorter and more intense nature of block teaching, absences caused greater stress regarding catch-up and meeting course learning outcomes. It was also agreed amongst students and staff that block teaching created complications in relation to interdisciplinary study options, but that staff try to accommodate the small number of requests for timetabled courses from outwith the School as far as possible. Students also mentioned that they would like to see more of a throughline in subsequent blocks, with opportunities to carry the skills they have learned forward.

3.2.5   Staff noted the use of prerecorded lectures only as a subsidy for in-person lectures due to staff absence except within online/blended courses. All lectures are still recorded and uploaded for students to access. Students explained that they appreciated the flexibility of this approach as they all had different preferred learning methods.

3.2.6   With regards to Honours projects, students agreed that the projects list was extensive, but were informed by academic staff that some of the projects listed were unavailable as they had been left on the list from the previous year, and others were perceived as being outwith student's preferred areas of study. In general, students felt that some subject specialisms were not realistic options due to a lack of available supervisors for the topics on offer but were grateful to be able to propose their own topic. Students also noted a discrepancy in the level of supervision being received during their projects and that many students failed to get projects that interested them due to a lack of engagement on the part of potential supervisors. Staff acknowledged that the current system is reliant on academic staff being proactive in reaching out to students to set up project meetings to help determine supervision. However, they wanted to allow for this system so that both supervisor and student had the opportunity to discuss with one another before locking in a project. Block teaching also presents a conflict within this system as some supervisors are overseas during project selection. It was clarified to the panel that this system is currently under review.

3.3   Assessment and Feedback

3.3.1   With regards to marking and moderation processes, the School noted that all student assessments were submitted online. Administration staff confirmed that the School was following institutional procedures. The School praised the virtual learning environment (VLE), claiming that it removed paperwork, allowed for greater tracking of student progression and allowed exam grading to be more easily uniformed and centralised. However, it was noted that the VLE, in its current form, does not always allow for anonymous marking. It was also noted that Turnitin was sometimes inefficient for use with large cohorts due to the way that it presents information.

3.3.2   Support staff were asked how they handle submissions and how they interact with academic staff to ensure that the correct processes are being followed. Staff noted that they set deadlines on their calendar which are confirmed by all course coordinators. All staff are active in their use of MyAberdeen and set submission links. These submissions are checked on deadline days and, after one day has passed, course coordinators will be informed of late submissions. C6s may be issued after seven days of no submission where no extensions have been agreed upon. Staff appear to be content with the systems being used in VLE.

3.3.3   Students were extremely positive regarding the range and diversity of assessments being provided to them within their programmes. Assessment types could vary from course to course, but the topical diversity was helpful for students as they found that they were engaging more because of the diverse assessment types, such as infographics, videos, panels, essays, slideshows, and problem-solving exercises. Students commented that course coordinators within the School should be applauded for their creativity in engagement with scientific writing. Students also mentioned that they preferred having courses contain smaller, more frequent assessment as it somewhat alleviated the stress of having a major final exam. It was also discussed if students felt they were being over-assessed within their block courses, however students felt that this was generally a non-issue. The students' only area of concern related to some smaller assessments that they felt appeared too early into the block courses, as they argued that they had not yet had an adequate amount of time to settle into their new courses. It was admitted, however, that usually these assessments were not designed to be too difficult.

3.3.4   The School noted that despite previously attempting a shift away from traditional assessment types, including many online assessments, the aim moving forward was to revert to more in-class assessments to combat the rising challenges of AI use. Staff explained that many of the highly diverse assessments arose in response to AI. Staff generally agreed that invigilated open-book exams were a potentially successful method in this regard, however, indicated that clearer instructions would need to be provided in future, as students often spent too long searching for information rather than attempting to answer the questions given to them. It was also mentioned that staff had some success in deterring the use of AI by designing assessments to focus more on the application of their knowledge rather than its recollection. Staff generally felt that School policy on AI was clear. Students, on the other hand, felt that they were generally left with uncertainty regarding the extent to which AI could be used within their learning and asked if the School could make this clearer to them at the beginning of their courses.

3.3.5   Regarding feedback, students felt that there were discrepancies both in the timeliness of feedback return and feedback content. Students highlighted that in one instance feedback was copied and pasted from the rubric, which in turn did not provide meaningful individualised feedback. In instances where feedback was delayed, students would often find themselves attempting to complete new assessments, or even new courses, without a further understanding of how they could have improved from previous assessments. Staff acknowledged that this was an issue for some block-taught courses. Students also acknowledged that it was difficult for staff to meet the three-week turnaround times for marking and feedback due to their individual workloads but that generally this three-week turnaround time was met.

3.3.6   Formative assessments were mentioned by staff as an invaluable tool to help provide students with feedback at the earliest possible opportunities. Students praised the way in which tutors explained assessment processes all the way through courses and provided formative opportunities to engage with modes of assessment before the summative assignments. However, staff noted difficulties in getting all students to engage with formative assessments. Staff noted that making formative assessments compulsory could cause a rise in C6s and, as a result, a heavier workload for both academic and support staff. When asked what was being done to help encourage students to understand the value in formative assessments, staff argued that while they explained their importance at the beginning of courses, many students would still not take up the opportunities provided. Field-work opportunities were praised by staff and students alike, as being able to provide constant feedback during these trips meant that formative feedback could happen almost daily.

3.4   Student Experience, Student Feedback and EDI

3.4.1   The School clarified that they have several processes in place to allow for the submission of student feedback. As well as the end of course review forms, students are encouraged to provide feedback to their course coordinators or tutors throughout the academic year. The School also mentioned that class representatives are used to help channel feedback to coordinators and that the representatives for the School were numerous and generally proactive. Students agreed that there were multiple opportunities to provide feedback on their courses. In terms of closing the feedback loop, the School provides students with a "You said, we did" style document at the beginning of each academic year, where the School attempts to show students the value of their feedback contributions and how the School has actioned them.

3.4.2   The School reported that there was a timing issue of feedback within fieldwork courses, claiming that their currently adopted institutional systems were not suitable for these courses. Lastly, feedback forms were a growing concern to the School as not only were the number of forms being submitted consistently low, but that the content and wording of some of the feedback on these forms from a small number of students were becoming increasingly aggressive and nasty in nature. The School explained that it was having to vet feedback forms due to the vulgar language and unprofessional nature of the contents prior to issuing them to staff.

3.4.3   The School emphasized that in both Undergraduate and Postgraduate Research programmes there were more female students than male students. The School also noted that it had few of its 170 Postgraduate Researcher positions filled by people from overseas countries and that it was looking to innovate in terms of engaging potential candidates from overseas, especially within Marine Biology, where representation from people of colour is extremely low. The School has also received several grants to enhance the diversity of its PhD candidates. It was reported by the School that some of its PhD candidates were engaging in what they believed to be destructive behaviour (towards the School) on social media and that they were now tackling an issue of perceived transphobia within the School.

3.4.4   The School also noted that it had been proactive in ensuring that students' provisional needs were met, particularly during exams. The School expressed that while it was doing all it could to ensure that these needs were met, it was struggling to continue to provide the necessary resources (such as invigilators for separate exam rooms) as it found that there is an increasing number of students who now required additional support during exams. Staff explained that they enjoyed being innovative in the way in which they had to respond to the diverse needs of their students but noted that, at times, they were informed by the student or by student support too late to make a huge impact upon their learning. It was noted that international students were not as forthcoming about any learning disabilities they may have or provisions that they may require.

3.4.5   Support staff discussed the monitoring processes in the School. The PGR staff noted that PGR students were subject to monitoring every six months, aside from their non-recorded catch-ups with supervisors, workshops, and training events. The only exception to this was for international students, who would be required by visa regulations to check-in monthly. For undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses, the School indicated that QR codes were used a means for students to register attendance. This system was described to be working reasonably well. Staff highlighted that they would provide an overview of attendance to course coordinators each week and that students who were not engaging would be flagged via the C6 and C7 system. Issues raised by staff included lots of manual input time due to MyTimetable and the Absence Reporting System not working in-sync, as well as students still being able to sign-in for labs due to the sharing of QR codes. However, staff praised the system for its ability to flag students who may not be engaging at an early stage, to ensure that the appropriate support could reach individuals sooner.

3.4.6   Students were extremely positive regarding the support they had received from the School as a whole. Personal tutors were noted to play a key role in supporting students through several means both emotionally and in their ability to signpost struggling students. Where there were some instances of a lack of engagement, students admitted that the lack of engagement may have been from their side. Regardless, it was clear that staff at all levels cared about the wellbeing of students. However, students did raise small concerns regarding areas for

potential improvement, including support in navigating MyTimetable and MyAberdeen, particularly for part-time students. It was also noted that despite receiving counselling support initially, there was a lack of system in place for following up with students.

3.4.7 Academic staff raised concerns regarding a lack of support processes in place for students during field trips, particularly on residential field trips. Whilst it was acknowledged that in some instances student support is informing them of any provisions that are required, there are no support mechanisms in place for instances which were unknown that may arise suddenly. Staff unanimously agreed that this was becoming a more frequent occurrence, and they were left to deal with situations that they were not professionally equipped to handle. Inclusion provisions are stated in a way that staff can implement but do not detail an account of what students may be experiencing. Residential trips may raise hitherto unknown issues related to protected characteristics. Staff expressed concerns that there is nothing in place to deal with any form of mental health issues. Staff indicated that they feel some students do not raise concerns prior to trips due to fear of not being included. Staff requested that the School work alongside student support in an attempt to establish a process which would help enable them to handle such instances.

3.4.8 Postgraduate students expressed a feeling of a lack of community since the COVID-19 pandemic. Students requested more post-graduate aimed events that were less academic in nature. They felt that many of the events were work-focused and as such students whose work did not align with those events were often left with limited social opportunities. Similarly, undergraduate students mentioned that there were little interactions initially with direct entrant students as they were not introduced officially to their new classmates and that many of the PG students did not take part in student-led societies. Students at all levels agreed that more social opportunities that were School-led or involved staff participation would be beneficial.

3.5   Work-based Learning, Employability and Careers

3.5.1 The School demonstrated that it valued work-based learning and employability opportunities highly. The School is working closely with careers to put on events for voluntary placements and the School believes that it is doing well regarding internships. The School also brings in many guest speakers to continue to provide their students with different career role models. This was affirmed by students. The School admits, however, that it would like to be more engaged with local businesses and development projects. One issue identified with this was a need for more staff involvement, which appears difficult given current staffing issues. The School aims to make their students aware of career options as early into their studies as possible. The Careers Service alluded that this approach is somewhat successful, as students appeared to be more knowledgeable of their potential jobs market.

3.5.2 The Careers Service spoke highly of the School, highlighting that more students from the School now use the service and that this is a result of the hard work of the School's Employability Champion, as well as a strong commitment from the Head of School on employability. The Careers Service noted that the School makes excellent use of job fairs, volunteering opportunities, drop-in sessions and employability boards, in an attempt to promote employability within the School. It was also noted that the School was recently awarded twenty seven-week funded placements. Despite all of this hard work, the Careers Service representative for the School drew attention to concerns over a lack of job opportunities within the North-East of Scotland, leading to unemployment rates being

presented as higher than average (forty percent of graduates remain unemployed for fifteen months after graduation).

3.5.3   When asked to report on the success of their work opportunities, the School explained that their accreditation to the Royal Society of Biology was very important for them. Staff explained that the School's number of hours for practical courses are governed by the Royal Society of Biology and that their programmes contained a good number of hours when compared to competitors. Field trips were built into several of the courses. The School emphasised the need to protect this moving forward, despite the financial difficulties being faced by the institution, as the School identified this as one of their key areas of strengths. Students agreed that this was a fantastic element of their studies, proclaiming that there were plenty of excellent opportunities for field-based work and other practical teaching opportunities made available to them.

3.6   PGR Training and Support

3.6.1   The School has a large number of PhD students currently. While this is a positive generally, it presents staffing challenges for the School. The School noted that as many as ten percent of PhD students now required additional support and that mental health related issues have increased drastically. In particular, self-funded international students were identified as having higher expectations for the levels of support provided by the School, which has created a few strained relationships between supervisor and student.

3.6.2   When asked to explain how postgraduate research students are trained, the School noted that all students have training programmes at School level as well as university level. This was equal for both Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) and non-DTP students. The School holds PGR conferences, research conferences, weekly training for PGR students and regular engagement activities. Student-led initiatives such as mathematical biology, reading groups and decolonising groups, were also noted.

3.6.3   When asked if PGR students received regular support, it was noted by staff that meetings with supervisors were not mandated. Some meet students every week, others meet them less depending on what the students preferred. Research groups also meet once a month. If there is an instance where a student complains about a lack of a meeting, it is immediately logged and flagged to academic staff. The School also highlighted that they did not generally want PhD supervision to be conducted online. PGR students who attended the review praised the School for the support that they had received from their supervisors and noted no issues with PGR supervision relating to their own studies. It was, however, flagged that PGR students could benefit from receiving more support in relation to teaching undergraduate students. However, the School did note that some training opportunities were only available to PGR students on DTP partnerships, such as access to the chartered management leadership course, with no alternative provided to non-DTP PGR students.

3.7   Pedagogic Partnership Session

3.7.1   The Pedagogic Partnership Session backed up many of the points mentioned during the focused meetings. In addition, those in attendance highlighted several additional points for consideration, which can be found in Appendix A. The School are invited to consider this appendix to help inform future practice. Staff comments are highlighted in yellow and student

comments in other colours, with related responses given in corresponding boxes on each side of the table.

3.5.2   There was agreement between staff and students on many of the issues discussed. It was agreed that staff, at all levels, showed support and care for students. The students explained that they felt that staff were approachable when they needed guidance or signposting. There was also agreement that field courses were generally done very well within the School and that students were grateful for the opportunities that were being made available to them. It was also agreed that the School required greater guidance around the use of AI. Staff acknowledged that students were using it and wanted to continue to do so but did not have the appropriate levels of training to fully utilise AI tools for positive learning experiences. Students argued that they had received mixed signals from staff regarding AI usage, with some going so far as prohibiting it altogether. It became clear through discussions with the students that they wished to use AI ethically to help improve upon their work, which staff agreed could be useful should they receive the appropriate training.

3.5.3   Staff and students had different experiences in relation to viewing the importance of mandatory lectures. Whilst it was agreed that practical, field and lab-based work should remain mandatory, some students felt that in-person lectures should be made optional. Staff argued that the monitoring system was used for lectures as it would allow them to ensure students were engaging with the courses and could be used as a tool to identify students who needed support. Students noted that the School should stop hosting practical sessions with large numbers of students however staff responded by explaining that this was in place to account for staff numbers and availability of rooms.

PART C: SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

4.1   Continue to enhance the learning and teaching experience by:

(i)   considering the processes for selection and allocation of Honours projects to ensure clarity, transparency and parity for students.

(ii)   ensuring that any new process is clearly communicated to students.

(iii)   providing greater clarity for both staff and students regarding the use of artificial intelligence within their teaching and/or assessments.

(iv)   enabling staff to take part in any available training in the use of artificial intelligence as an effective learning tool.

(v)   continuing to review and evaluate the use of block teaching (i.e. 5/6-week courses) and how this is executed.

(vi)   continuing to gather staff and student feedback regarding any impacts of block teaching on: student experience; student attendance/engagement; timeliness of feedback; opportunities for interdisciplinarity; and staff workload.

(vii)   reviewing and making any adjustments and improvements in line with any target areas highlighted.

4.2   Enhance the experience in teaching spaces by:

(i)   consulting with students to gather formal feedback around learning experiences in the Science Teaching Hub (STH), particularly in relation to accessibility and potential sensory overload.

(ii)   in line with feedback, considering possible ways to improve student learning and teaching experiences in the STH as needed.

4.3   Enhance the support offered to students by:

(i)   liaising with Student Support and, as appropriate, the Dean for Student Support and Experience, to consult on and develop processes for helping staff to effectively support student wellbeing during residential fieldwork (particularly in relation to support for disabilities including mental ill health).

(ii)   in line with these discussions, creating guidance for staff to enable them to support students on fieldwork.

4.4   Aim to enhance the student experience by:

(i)   continuing to seek ways to promote social opportunities for staff and students, to build community across the School and across different levels of study.

(ii)   developing strategies for effectively communicating social opportunities to students.

Appendix A – Pedagogic Partnership Session feedback
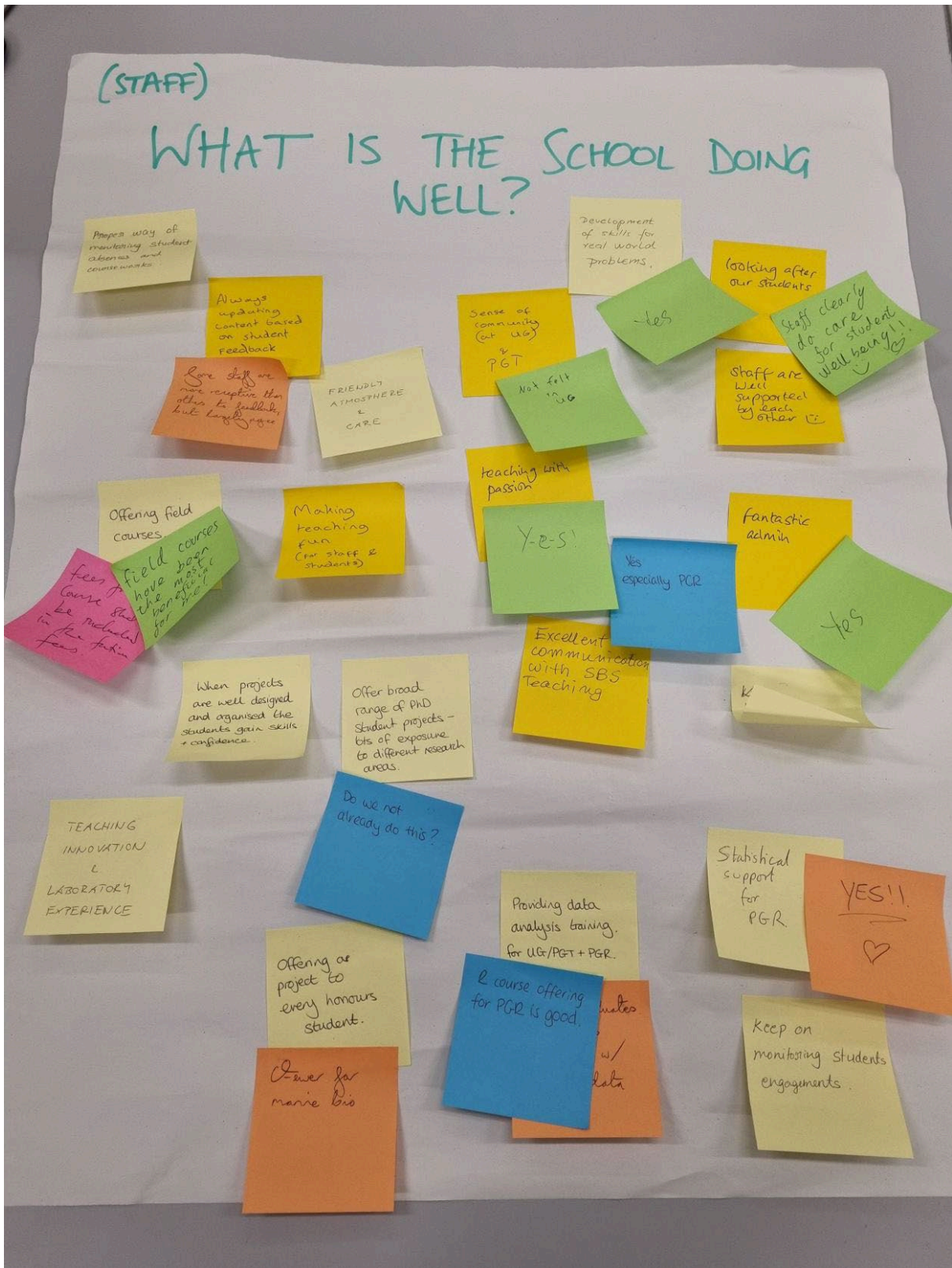
(STUDENTS)

WHAT IS THE SCHOOL DOING WELL?

- Opportunities for demonstrating experiences
- Assessments home on the whole encouraged further develop... for employment
- Personalized Career Services
- Supportive Staff + supportive technical staff
- Transition to the Science teaching hub
- Teaching + Knowledge & Skills VERY RELEVANT TO EMPLOYMENT
- Consistent Communication From Lecturers
- Signposting additional support
- Research opportunities + sharing + speakers
- Collaborative research within + between schools (as a PGR not as a UG)
- Field Trips & Courses
- Disability support has been fantastic. Always feel supported by staff
- Always feel like we can talk to staff about anything ♡
- Training for PGR demonstrators is good. PGR
- Postgraduate feedback is consistently good. (PhD)
- Personal tutor system works well overall.
- Laper Learning - New built upon old
- Pastoral support is fantastic (especially for financial issues/hardship fund)
- PhD supervision is great

(STAFF)

WHAT COULD THE SCHOOL IMPROVE ON?

MORE FIELD COURSES (esp. marine)

Refresh/update/ modernise student practicals
Yes

WORK PLACEMENTS UG & PGT
YES! I massively benefit... (...allowed...)
and PGR

PROJECT BASED COURSEWORK

Also an alternative assessment for disabled students in the field...

More Staff Esp. Marine

YES!! ... have had students as named for current staff.

MORE STAFF = smaller classes
Yes

More opportunities for small group teaching

deadlines

Dealing with artif... inte...
YES

Yes

Preparing PGT for projects

Engagement with online material (both UG & PGT)

ALLOW INTERDISCIPLI- NARY EXPERIENCE
Yes

Yes
... courseloads...

Provide support to students who have limited english language...

Basic lab skills for PGT + PGR.
YES

CLEAR DELINEATION OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PGR ADMIN CONVEYED TO STUDENTS (incl disability support)

BETTER INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS THAT DON'T START IN FIRST YEAR.

...RER ...LINES IN HOW DISABILITY SUPPORT FOR PGR IS SUPPOSED TO WORK

PGR room in Cruickshanks unsuitable
YES!!! YES YES

(STUDENTS)

WHAT COULD THE SCHOOL IMPROVE ON?

UoA is not visible through the British Council Education programme around the globe. Issue for international students

More plant fungi & biochemistry stuff

Honours Project – Does single semester work? for undergrad

Pre-sorted thoughts on honours projects earlier in degree

- AI is ultimately here to stay - maybe finding ways to incorporate it so such as long actually analysing (more middle) so honest that is good as it is

Ethical use of A.I.

No demonstrating opportunities for undergraduates.

Stats course could it be then thread. Difficult when skill is not used prior or after

Community w/in Degree Programme

Training for international students (Skills development during PhD)

More regular assessments/ monitoring for PhD students

Meeting facilities, for small groups & for virtual meetings

Student awareness of wider facilities i.e. room bookings

More practicals feel a little shoe horned to use a single piece of equipment – done same

International engagement is good. Feels like they're treated like a paycheck. Charged for housing/international

Interactions / community across UG - PGT - PGR + STAFF and the buildings!

Undergraduate feedback is inconsistent. Course coordinators grade differently i.e.

Communication between Course Co-ordinators Especially when running concurrently

Transparency about Rules for STH

Internship opportunities are limited for SBS students - very biology-related ones.

Marketing for MSc Programmes

Improve on collaboration between PhD and MSC students.

Making interdisciplinary course taking more viable

Implementing plant sciences in other general bio courses

PGR Research Bites idea is great but most sessions I can learn in more detail elsewhere. Focus on feedback e.g. on presentations, on networking, rather than learning per se.

QA of Lab Materials

Smaller demonstrator to student ratios in practical classes

Concern for lack of marine biology staff

Rooms in Cruikshank! PhD office are very cold!

More accessible labs - e.g smaller for neurodivergent students having paper reduce barriers for help

Use the advisors for PGRs

facilities ↳ PGR office SO COLD

Inclusion of Higher-Level Information in Lecture

(STAFF)

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL STOP DOING?

Stop sending so many emails

STOP CHECKING LECTURE ATTENDANCE

YES!!
♡

PhD/ Honours/Masters that are too ambitious or can't be achieved

Group work - students often feel it is unfair.

Peer review system needs improvement/ overhaul.

Group work for assessments is difficult... but life skill of group work is important...

However, controversial for most students

Old fashioned exams requiring simple recall.

YES!
♡

FEWER ASSESSMENTS PER COURSE √√

...but Appropriate number of assessments

(STUDENTS)

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL STOP DOING?

Closed-book
exams:
- Don't take into
account readings
contents.
- More prepares for to
memorize facts, rather
than learning the topic.

Students
generally do
better on closed
book exams.
Closed-book
doesn't have to
be a memory test.

Exams Held
in STH
under lab
Conditions

Some students
have mentioned
transphobia concerns.

4 hr Lectures

W

Agree!
Who does
this??!

Practicals
with 100+
Students

Not enough
staff,
timetabling
issues.
Not enough
lab space

Short-lived
5 week
courses
especially for
technical
teaching

IT WORKS FOR
SOME COURSES

Using pre-recorded
lectures as
main delivery
rather than
as support

Noted!

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

TERM DATES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026

Students for all First Degrees (except MBChB, BDS and BSc Med Sci) and for Taught Postgraduate Programmes (unless otherwise specified)

TERM 1		**TERM 2**	
Term Opens	Monday 15 September 2025	Term opens	Monday 19 January 2026
Teaching commences	Monday 22 September 2025	Teaching commences	Monday 26 January 2026
Term Closes	Friday 19 December 2025	Spring break commences	Monday 23 March 2026
		Spring break ends*	Friday 10 April 2026
		Term Closes	Friday 15 May 2026

TERM 3 (PGT)

Term Opens	Monday 8 June 2026
Teaching commences	Monday 8 June 2026
Term Closes	Friday 28 August 2026

Students studying at the University's Campus in Qatar

TERM 1		**TERM 2**	
Term Opens	Sunday 14 September 2025	Term opens	Sunday 18 January 2026
Teaching commences	Sunday 21 September 2025	Teaching commences	Sunday 25 January 2026
Term Closes	Thursday 18 December 2025	Spring break commences	Sunday 22 March 2026
		Spring break ends*	Thursday 9 April 2026
		Term Closes	Thursday 14 May 2026

TERM 3 (PGT)

Term Opens	Sunday 7 June 2026
Teaching commences	Sunday 7 June 2026
Term Closes	Thursday 27 August 2026

Students for the Degrees of MBChB

	FIRST YEAR	SECOND YEAR	THIRD YEAR
Term 1 Opens	Monday 15 September 2025	Monday 8 September 2025	Monday 8 September 2025
Term 1 Closes	Friday 19 December 2025	Friday 12 December 2025	Friday 12 December 2025
Term 2 Opens	Monday 5 January 2026	Monday 5 January 2026	Monday 5 January 2026
Term 2 Closes	Friday 27 March 2026	Friday 27 March 2026	Friday 20 March 2026
Term 3 Opens	Monday 20 April 2026	Monday 13 April 2026	Monday 4 May 2026
Term 3 Closes	Friday 8 May 2026	Friday 5 June 2026	Friday 17 July 2026

	FOURTH YEAR	FIFTH YEAR
Term 1 Opens	Monday 4 August 2025	Monday 18 August 2025
Term 1 Closes	Friday 19 December 2025	Friday 19 December 2025
Term 2 Opens	Monday 5 January 2026	Monday 5 January 2026
Term 2 Closes	Friday 27 March 2026	Friday 1 May 2026
Term 3 Opens	Monday 20 April 2026	Monday 4 May 2026
Term 3 Closes	Friday 26 June 2026	Friday 29 May 2026

Students for the Degree of BDS

	FIRST YEAR	SECOND YEAR	THIRD YEAR	FOURTH YEAR
Term 1 Opens	Monday 1 September 2025	Monday 25 August 2025	Monday 25 August 2025	Monday 25 August 2025
Term 1 Closes	Friday 12 December 2025	Friday 12 December 2025	Friday 12 December 2025	Friday 12 December 2025
Term 2 Opens	Monday 5 January 2026	Monday 5 January 2026	Monday 5 January 2026	Monday 5 January 2026
Term 2 Closes	Friday 27 March 2026	Friday 27 March 2026	Friday 27 March 2026	Friday 27 March 2026
Term 3 Opens	Monday 6 April 2026	Monday 6 April 2026	Monday 6 April 2026	Monday 6 April 2026
Term 3 Closes	Friday 3 July 2026	Friday 3 July 2026	Friday 3 July 2026	Friday 29 May 2026

Students for the MSc in Physician Associate Studies
N.B. This programme is a January Start

	FIRST YEAR		SECOND YEAR
Term 1 Opens	Monday 6 January 2025	Term 1 Opens	Monday 18 November 2024
Term 1 Closes	Friday 28 March 2025	Term 1 Closes	Friday 28 March 2025
Term 2 Opens	Monday 7 April 2025	Term 2 Opens	Monday 7 April 2025
Term 2 Closes	Friday 4 July 2025	Term 2 Closes	Friday 1 August 2025
Term 3 Opens	Monday 21 July 2025	Term 3 Opens	Monday 18 August 2025
Term 3 Closes	Friday 24 October 2025	Term 3 Closes	Friday 28 November 2025

Students for the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) (Primary and Secondary)

Term 1 Opens	Monday 18 August 2025
Term 1 Closes	Friday 19 December 2025
Term 2 Opens	Monday 5 January 2026
Spring break commences	Monday 23 March 2026
Spring break ends	Friday 10 April 2026
Term 2 Closes	Friday 29 May 2026

Students for the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Childhood Practice

Term 1 Opens	Monday 25 August 2025
Term 1 Closes	Friday 9 January 2026
Term 2 Opens	Monday 12 January 2026
Term 2 Closes	Friday 26 June 2026

Graduation Ceremonies

Winter Graduation Ceremonies	w/c Monday 25 November 2025
Summer Graduation Ceremonies	Monday 29 June – Friday 3 July 2026

QAC/090524/015

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

PROVISIONALLY, DATES OF TERMS FROM 2024-2025 to 2032-2033
(PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SENATE PAPER **SEN23:05**)

SESSION	TERM 1 OPENS (Mon)	WINTER GRADUATION CEREMONIES (Wed/Thu)	TERM 1 CLOSES (Fri)	TERM 2 OPENS (Mon)	SPRING BREAK BEGINS (Mon)	SPRING BREAK ENDS (Mon)	TERM 2 CLOSES (Fri)	TERM 3 OPENS (Mon)	LAST SUMMER GRADUATION CEREMONY (Fri)	TERM 3 CLOSES (Fri)
2024-2025	16 Sep	27/28 Nov	20 Dec	20 Jan	24 Mar	11 Apr	16 May	9 Jun	4 Jul	29 Aug
2025-2026	15 Sep	26/27 Nov	19 Dec	19 Jan	23 Mar	10 Apr	15 May	8 Jun	3 Jul	28 Aug
2026-2027	14 Sep	25/26 Nov	18 Dec	18 Jan	22 Mar	9 Apr	14 May	7 Jun	2 Jul	27 Aug
2027-2028	13 Sep	24/25 Nov	17 Dec	17 Jan	20 Mar	7 Apr	12 May	5 Jun	30 Jun	25 Aug
2028-2029	18 Sep	29/30 Nov	22 Dec	22 Jan	26 Mar	13 Apr	18 May	11 Jun	6 Jul	31 Aug
2029-2030	17 Sep	28/29 Nov	21 Dec	21 Jan	25 Mar	12 Apr	17 May	10 Jun	5 Jul	30 Aug
2030-2031	16 Sep	27/28 Nov	20 Dec	20 Jan	24 Mar	11 Apr	16 May	9 Jun	4 Jul	29 Aug
2031-2032	15 Sep	26/27 Nov	19 Dec	19 Jan	22 Mar	9 Apr	14 May	7 Jun	2 Jul	27 Aug
2032-2033	13 Sep	24/25 Nov	17 Dec	17 Jan	21 Mar	8 Apr	13 May	6 Jun	1 Jul	26 Aug

Notes - (a) Dates for MBChB, BDS, and MSc Physician's Associate students and for students on PGDE, BA Childhood Practice or who are in years 3 and 4 of Joint/Combined degrees with Education programmes are subject to special recommendation of the Quality Assurance Committee.

(b) The above dates of term also apply, unless otherwise specified, to students registered on taught postgraduate programmes.

(c) The academic year for postgraduate research students commences on 1 October. Registration is on the first working-day thereafter.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (ACADEMIC)

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to seek the **approval** of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for an amendment to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic).

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
	Senate	5 June 2024
	Court	19 June 2024

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members of the QAC are asked to **approve** the amendment to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) as outlined in section 4.4.

4.   **DISCUSSION**

4.1   The Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) sets out the University's approach to the handling of Academic Misconduct by students. The Code, approved by the University's Senate and Court, provides information on the types of offences which may occur (e.g., plagiarism or contract cheating), the processes for handling alleged instances of Academic Misconduct (within Schools and, where appropriate, centrally) and the penalties to be imposed where an allegation is proven. The Code applies to all students undertaking their studies with the University.

4.2   On occasion, however, a Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body (PSRB) may regulate a course, programme or element of assessment and, in so doing, impose more stringent regulations in regard to Academic Misconduct and / or provide more detailed information in regard to what may constitute Academic Misconduct.

4.3   One such example is the UK Medical Licensing Assessment regulated by the General Medical Council (GMC). In this scenario the requirements are evidenced by a Policy Framework, the final version of which is expected to be published shortly, drafted by the General Medical Council (GMC) in respect of the Applied Knowledge Test (AKT), an element of assessment comprising

part of the Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA), required to be undertaken by students registered for the Degree of MBChB. The draft framework provides guidance in respect of Academic Misconduct as outlined in *Appendix A*. While this document is predominantly aligned with the University's own definitions in regard to misconduct, it sets out specific expectations of students undertaking the AKT, the detail of which would not be appropriately reflected the Code of Practice governing all students.

4.4   On this basis, therefore, members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) are asked to consider and, if appropriate, **approve** an amendment to the University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline as detailed below, to reflect the fact that, in some instances, there may be more stringent regulations / expectations placed on students, as a consequence of PSRB requirements. In addition, an Annex will be appended to the Code, detailing the instances in which such more stringent regulations apply.

Within Section 1, 'Purpose of Code' <u>insert</u>:

Students undertaking courses, programmes and / or elements of assessment subject to the requirements of a Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body (PSRB), may be subject to an additional regulatory framework in respect of Academic Misconduct. Where these regulations are more stringent than those stipulated within the University's own regulations, those of the PSRB will take priority. Frameworks which exist in this regard are listed in Appendix C, and will be widely publicised to the students concerned.

5.   **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further information is available from Steve Tucker, Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement (s.tucker@abdn.ac.uk), Gillian Mackintosh, Director of Academic Services and Online Education (g.mackintosh@abdn.ac.uk) or Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar (e.tough@abdn.ac.uk).

18 April 2024

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

Examination misconduct

Purpose

In relation to the AKT, this policy sets out:
- Universities' expectations of candidates' professional behaviour
- what universities mean by examination misconduct
- how concerns about suspected examination misconduct by UK medical students will be dealt with
- penalties for examination misconduct.
- How information about exam misconduct will be shared with MSC and GMC

Universities' and the GMC's expectations of candidates' professional behaviour

The AKT is an exam quality assured by the GMC. Both universities and the GMC require all candidates to act professionally in relation to the AKT. Unprofessional behaviour, such as cheating or gaining an unfair advantage, would undermine confidence in the AKT.

Fitness to practise at the point of registration

Medical students with a UK primary medical qualification are entitled to provisional registration and a licence to practise if their fitness to practise is not impaired.

Examination misconduct in relation to the AKT may bring into question a candidate's fitness to practise as such behaviour falls below the standards of professional behaviour that the GMC and universities expect.

The GMC expects doctors to act with honesty and integrity

Patients must be able to trust doctors with their lives and health. To justify that trust, all doctors registered with the GMC must show respect for human life and make sure their conduct and practice meet the standards the GMC has set out in its core guidance, *Good medical practice*. In relation to acting with honesty and integrity, the GMC says that all registered doctors must make sure their conduct justifies their patients' trust in them and the public's trust in the profession[*].

The GMC and MSC guidance for medical students, *Achieving good medical practice*, shows how *Good medical practice* applies to them as students. Medical students are expected to mature while they are at medical school and learn about professionalism as they progress through their course. Understanding how the GMC's core guidance for doctors applies during their course and in their future careers helps them be good students and, in the future, good doctors.

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[*] Paragraph 65 of *Good medical practice*

The GMC and MSC make clear in *Achieving good medical practice* that medical students are expected to act with integrity. The guidance highlights, in the section Professionalism – key areas for concern, that cheating and plagiarism, including sharing the details of questions or tasks from exams, are behaviours that may lead to FTP action being taken against students.

What universities mean by examination misconduct

In relation to the AKT, the following non-exhaustive list of behaviours may be considered to be unprofessional as they fall below the standards the GMC and universities expect; and, if proven, could amount to examination misconduct:

- Sharing, or attempting to share, any AKT exam content not published as formative material by, including on social media and other online fora
- not complying with the reasonable instructions of an invigilator or other examination official
- viewing, or attempting to view, the work of another candidate
- removing, or attempting to remove, materials or content (including through the use of recording devices) from an examination other than those specifically permitted
- Attempting to take the exam using a different exam browser than the one mandated by the medical school to lockdown the online exam environment securely.
- bringing, or attempting to bring, materials or devices (including internet-enabled devices) other than those specifically permitted into the examination
- releasing, or attempting to release, n any AKT exam content not published as formative material to other candidates, a third party/commercial organisation
- communicating, or attempting to communicate, with other candidates while under examination conditions
- gaining, or attempting to gain, information about the examination questions, other than any in the public domain, in advance of an examination date
- impersonating, or attempts to impersonate, a candidate
- bribery or attempted bribery (of another candidate, examination official or other relevant person)
- disruptive behaviour during an exam
- aiding or abetting, or attempting to aid or abet, any of the above.

How concerns about suspected examination misconduct will be dealt with

How examination misconduct is detected

In relation to the AKT, suspected examination misconduct may be detected and reported by:

- invigilators
- candidates
- university staff or other persons responsible for delivering the AKT in the UK or overseas at campuses of UK universities
- any other person who becomes aware of suspected examination misconduct and
- any software used by MSC Assessment or the university to detect cheating during the AKT.

Anonymous reports of examination misconduct will only normally be acted on if there is supporting evidence. However, medical schools will investigate any information about examination misconduct brought to their attention.

Examination misconduct

Any suspected examination misconduct by a UK medical student will be dealt with under the medical school's or parent university's procedures for investigating and dealing with examination misconduct, unprofessional student behaviour or fitness to practise issues.

The release of scores to students may be delayed if a medical school is investigating a potential instance of exam misconduct.

This is so that a holistic approach to a medical student's fitness to practise is taken and any previous instances of examination misconduct, fitness to practise history and/or unprofessional behaviours are taken into account.

Sharing information about exam misconduct

If a medical school suspects exam misconduct they may need to get in touch with MSC to get technical reports as to any anomalies detected by the exam delivery platform or an early indication of the candidate's score. In these instances it is likely that a student will need to be named so that an investigation can take place.

In all other circumstances medical schools need not identify individual students but should supply MSC with;

- details of suspected examination misconduct during the AKT in the exam report they will submit to the MSC.
- Details of any concerns about examination misconduct that arise following submission of their exam report.
- The outcome of any investigations

This information must be shared to allow MSC to maintain the integrity of the items

used in the AKT, improve the security of the online delivery platform where necessary and fulfil its obligation to GMC with respects to quality assurance of the AKT.

Medical schools should ensure that any suspected examination misconduct (whether during or after the AKT) is dealt with through their or their university's procedures for dealing with concerns about examination misconduct, professional behaviours or fitness to practise (whichever is appropriate). Details of any investigation will be submitted to the GMC as part of the provisional registration process.

If MSC becomes aware, through any means including software designed to identify collusion, that any exam misconduct may have occurred it will inform medical schools of the nature of the suspected misconduct, the names of the students involved and all the information needed for a medical school to investigate through its' own processes.

MSC will provide GMC with details of any instances of exam misconduct detected through internal processes described above and any steps taken to address these as part of annual report submitted at the end of the assessment cycle.

Penalties for examination misconduct

In relation to their students, medical schools and/or universities will apply penalties for AKT examination misconduct applicable under their procedures for dealing with concerns about examination misconduct, professional behaviours and/or fitness to practise (whichever is appropriate). If a students fitness to practice is brought into question as a result of alleged misconduct in relation to the AKT it may not be possible for the university to graduate students and or for the GMC to register and provide a licence to practice.

Declaring findings of examination misconduct

In relation to the AKT, UK medical students must declare any findings of examination misconduct and any penalty applied when they apply for GMC provisional or full registration with a licence to practise.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Mapping Against the UK Quality Code

SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT

Academic Services | *Quality & Policy*
academicservices@abdn.ac.uk

Authored: January 2022 | Updated: March 2024

SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Quality Code is split into 12 themes, available online on the QAA website at https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code. Assessment, as one of the key themes, is critically important in ensuring the academic standards and integrity of University degrees. Each student must be assessed fairly and appropriately for the courses in which they partake, and should be recognised accordingly. The code describes this theme as follows:

> *Assessment is a fundamental aspect of the student learning experience. Engagement in assessment activities and interaction with staff and peers enables learning, both as part of the task and through review of their performance. It is a vehicle for obtaining feedback. Ultimately, it determines whether each student has achieved their course's learning outcomes and allows the awarding body to ensure that appropriate standards are being applied rigorously. Deliberate, systematic quality assurance ensures that assessment processes, standards and any other criteria are applied consistently and equitably, with reliability, validity and fairness.*

In practice, this means that assessments should be appropriate for the course and level, and should assess students fairly, consistently and rigorously. This means that approval processes should also be fair, consistent and robust. In handling assessment, the University should also ensure robust policies and procedures to manage the diverse array of courses, programmes and assessments.

In defining key terms that will be used frequently in this section, the Quality Code notes the following:

Formative assessment: Assessment with a developmental purpose, designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and how it can be improved and/or maintained. Reflective practice by students sometimes contributes to formative assessment.

Summative assessment: Used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or course. Typically, within summative assessment, the marks awarded count towards the final mark of the course/module/award.

Module: A self-contained, formally structured unit of study, with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Some providers use the word 'course' to refer to individual modules.

SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT

The Quality Code has three different sections: the expectations for standards; the expectations for quality; and the guiding principles. The relevant expectations for standards and quality are detailed below. The Guiding Principles are mapped to the University's own policies, procedures and quality mechanisms. There are two separate sections for the University's practices, detailing what the University does and has in place to support that expectation/principle, as well as the supporting documentation, which includes reference to supporting policy, procedure, website or other document.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STANDARDS & CORE/COMMON PRACTICES	EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY & CORE/COMMON PRACTICES
The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.	Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.	From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.
The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.	The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.
The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.
The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.	The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES	UNIVERSITY PRACTICES	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	
1. Assessment methods and criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and teaching activities. There is alignment between intended learning outcomes, teaching strategies, methods of assessment and assessment criteria. Constructive alignment is a model where learning environments and activities are designed to enable all students to achieve the desired learning outcomes, measured through assessment activities using clearly aligned criteria. Learning outcomes, assessment criteria and learning and teaching activities are developed in accordance with the academic level of study, using appropriate descriptors and consistent language. They reflect course and module aims as well as other factors where appropriate, such as professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements.	The University operates a robust system of Programme and Course approval and review that ensures that Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and assessment are aligned, and that appropriate teaching and learning strategies are then deployed to support students in meeting the ILOs to the best of their abilities. This system follows the principles of Biggs' Constructive Alignment model, setting learning and the assessment of that learning at the heart of the student experience. The system comprises the following stages: 1. Academic staff discuss informally a course or programme proposal with their relevant Head of School / Discipline. This might be a new provision or modification to an existing provision. 2. The University's Curriculum Management System (CMS) requires those submitting course proposals to set out the ILOs and align them with relevant assessments and teaching activities. The system utilises an inbuilt 'ready reckoner' to assist academic staff in ensuring that their ILOs are of an appropriate level, based on a 3D version of Blooms' Taxonomy (see link opposite). In this way, Schools are required to ensure that every assessment has associated intended learning outcomes for students to engage in their learning. At this stage, requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) are taken into account and alignment with these is ensured and highlighted. 3. Course and Programme proposals are submitted to the University's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for scrutiny and advice. QAC members (themselves academic staff) from a different academic discipline are allocated by QAC to oversee and scrutinise proposals and offer advice and support to applicants. This ensures that the focus is on process rather than subject. The designated QAC member is tasked with ensuring that the ILOs are appropriate to the SCQF level of the provision, that the assessment method(s) is /are realistic and appropriate and that the amount of assessment is consistent with other courses or programmes in other Schools / Disciplines elsewhere in the	Course and Programme Approvals (Webpage) Types of Assessment, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Setting Assessments, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Video Guidance: Devising Learning Outcomes Using Blooms' Taxonomy

	University (i.e. to avoid over- or underassessment for a similar amount of credits elsewhere). 4. Once approved by QAC, the Registry is informed and a course or programme code allocated. Alongside the initial development of ILOs, academic and other teaching staff are provided with professional development opportunities by both the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) and their School / Discipline to understand more about how to write effective ILOs and their relationship with student learning and the wider SCQF Framework. These include introducing new staff to the various University Codes of Practice on Assessment (section 2 refers) and the Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment (section 6 refers). Additionally, the University and AUSA Students' Union have worked together to create an Excellence Award for the Most Creative Assessment. This initiative allows the University to gather information from students on what assessments they value most, while also recognising and rewarding the efforts of staff in engaging with assessment enhancement.	
2. Assessment is reliable, consistent, fair and valid. The assessment process is objective and repeatable over time. All assessment activities have clearly articulated assessment criteria, weightings and level descriptors that are understood by all students and staff involved in the assessment process. To ensure equity, academic standards for each award are rigorously set and maintained at the appropriate level (in accordance with the relevant national qualification frameworks). Awards at the same	The University's Codes of Practice on Assessment (both Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught) outline the important principles of fairness, consistency and reliability of assessments. In terms of marking assessments, the University operates a marking and moderation policy procedures, with provision for anonymous marking, and 'blind' marking policy to ensure that students are not disadvantaged in the marking of their assessments. This ensures fair and consistent marking and feedback provided to students. A major piece of work undertaken by the University in 2014 was the introduction of a Common Grading Scale (CGS), replacing the former Common Assessment Scale. As well as introducing a simplified grading system that could be used across different disciplines to help students to understand their grade (itself part of feedback), the Scale also includes a series of written descriptors against each grade band. These help	Undergraduate Code of Practice on Assessment (Document) Postgraduate Taught Code of Practice on Assessment (Document) Types of Assessment, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Setting Assessments, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Double, 'Blind' and Anonymous Marking and Return of Grades, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Moderation Policy Procedures (Policy) External Examining (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review (Webpage) Common Grading Scale (CGS) (Webpage)

level are comparable in terms of qualification and level descriptors, assessment criteria, Subject Benchmark Statements, and, where applicable, PSRB requirements. 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. The validity of an assessment - how well a test measures what it claims to measure - is reviewed through annual and periodic review, supported by external subject specialists and external examiners.	students to understand their feedback in general terms (e.g. at what level they are performing) before then going on to read the more detailed comments on their assessments.

Alongside this, the subject External Examiners appointed by the School review assessments as part of the process of setting assessment and providing feedback to the School on their appropriateness. External Examiners also provide feedback by means of formal Examiners' Meetings as well as their formal annual report. This report is escalated via QAC to ensure institutional oversight of the issues raised in the report and feedback is provided to the External Examiner. The External Examiners' Reports are uploaded to MyAberdeen to ensure the closure of the feedback loop to students.

These individual elements, whilst robust in themselves, are in turn scrutinised in ~~an~~a holistic manner every five years as part of the University's Internal Teaching Review (ITR). Schools are required to complete and submit an evidence-based Critical Analysis and Curriculum Map as part of their ITR submission. Annual Programme Reviews, External Examiner Reports, and School learning and teaching metrics reviewed as part of the Annual School Planning Process are also considered. The ITR team comprises academic staff from different disciplines with the University, alongside QAC members and an appropriate number of external assessors (based on the number of QAA Subject Benchmark Statements represented). | |
| 3. **Assessment design is approached holistically.** Assessment is designed 'top down' - beginning with the award, then going down into module level (where appropriate). Assessment design considers all modes of course delivery and environment, including where employers may be involved in assessment for work-based | Assessment is planned as part of an overall approach to ensuring that the student learning experience is a~~n~~ holistic one. Timing of assessment is such that it takes place at appropriate points to assess learning, be that at the end of a course, at a mid-point or by continuous assessment. Timing of assessments across Programmes is considered through the process of storyboarding, where Schools seek such support. Hosted jointly by CAD and the relevant Programme Co-ordinator, storyboarding events involve constituent Course Co-ordinators in taking a strategic overview of the Programme and award, then viewing the individual component courses and their ILOs followed by key activities in each course which help | Principles of Blended Learning (Webpage) Academic Integrity (Webpage) TESTA@ABDN (webpage) |

learning programmes such as apprenticeships. Variety in modes of assessment meets a need, based on academic judgement, and is not just for the sake of variety. Variety helps develop a range of skills and competencies and assesses a range of learning styles - the variety itself should not become a barrier to learning. Assessment design needs to develop across stages as the student develops, as well as levels of study, as part of the overarching award design process and on an ongoing basis.	students to meet these (assessment, teaching delivery, feedback). By plotting these constituents of each course as a timeline against each other, a visual representation of the Programme emerges, allowing all concerned to see how all of the courses link to create the Programme and support the award, plus where the potential pinch points are. Staff can then agree amongst themselves how to address these. Within this process, any particular requirements for involvement of employers, placement requirements or other time away from the University can be clearly seen by all involved and its implications discussed and changes made as necessary. On the back of these storyboarding sessions, CAD also provides, on request, a range of bespoke sessions for specific Schools to promote robust assessment design (including elements of both academic integrity [section 10 refers] and alternative assessment [section 4 refers] both as part of support for wider curriculum design and specific to individual course assessments. CAD have been working with schools to implement the TESTA porgramme (Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment). This is a method of reviewing the assessment and feedback practices at a programme-level to identify areas of enhancement. aiming to enhance the student learning experience by increasing student engagement through more varied assessment and feedback approaches.	
4. **Assessment is inclusive and equitable.** Every student has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement through the assessment process, with no group or individual disadvantaged. In designing assessments, the needs of students are considered, including those studying at different locations, from different	The Institutional Framework for Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education ensures that all teaching, learning and assessment is fair, inclusive and promotes equality. It presents a series of resources to assist with inclusivity in teaching, learning and assessment. Setting assessments, and associated approvals, Schools must ensure that their assessments are fair, consistent and do not put any students at disadvantage. The approvals route for course proposals via the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) provides balances and checks at a cross-institutional scale to ensure that assessments remain fair and inclusive.	Inclusivity and Accessibility Framework for Education (Webpage) Rules for the Conduct of Prescribed Assessments and Written Examinations for Degrees or Diplomas (Document) Guidance for those with Responsibility for Making Examination Arrangements for Disabled Candidates (Document) Types of Assessment, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Setting Assessments, Academic Quality Handbook (Document)

cultural/educational backgrounds, with additional learning needs, or with protected characteristics. Assessment procedures and methods are flexible enough to allow adjustments to overcome any substantial disadvantage that individual students could experience.	External Examiners are consulted as part of the assessment design process to ensure that assessments are appropriate, consistent and fair. There is guidance available for invigilating examinations to ensure that the arrangements in place are fair and inclusive. Face to face training (now replaced with an online equivalent) is offered before each exam diet, including those out-with the normal timeframe. Tailored online training is also provided to staff based at ~~our Doha campus in Qatar, and for staff involved in assessment of our jointly-delivered provision at South China Normal University (SCNU)~~<u>our Transnational Education (TNE) partners in Qatar, South China Normal (SCNU) and Harbin Engineering Universities</u>. The invigilation manual is maintained by Registry and available to all participants in advance to enable training to focus on the policies via a step-by-step presentation and a Q&A format. Our provision of alternative assessments has become a major focus over the past ~~two~~<u>few</u> years, building on work by the CAD and QAC to encourage academic and other teaching staff to think more broadly about how students can be assessed and how to assess their ILOs through more authentic assessment modes that are not constrained by students' individual learning differences or cultural requirements. This led, in 2021, to a University-wide initiative driven by the Dean for Educational Innovation to encourage alternative assessment modes to be adopted more widely. <u>Additionally, resources are available for Schools in relation to the ongoing work to decolonise our curriculum and assessments.</u>	External Examiners in relation to Marking (Document) Invigilation (Webpage) Exams Manual for Invigilators, AQH (Document) Alternative Assessment Modes (Webpage) Decolonising the Curriculum Resources (Webpage)
5. **Assessment is explicit and transparent.** Assessment policies, regulations and processes are explicit, transparent and accessible to all staff and students involved in the assessment process. Students are clearly informed of the purpose and requirements of each assessment task and the	Assessments are approved via our curriculum approvals process as detailed in section 1, with all relevant policies, procedures and codes of practice related to assessment available via links opposite. All assessments are available to view in the University's Course Catalogue for every course, ensuring students have the opportunity to review and consider the assessments for optional and compulsory course choices in advance of starting their studies. The information advises students of the	Curriculum Management (Webpage) Course and Programme Approvals (Webpage) Course Catalogue (Webpage) Undergraduate Code of Practice on Assessment (Document) Postgraduate Taught Code of Practice on Assessment (Document) Moderation Procedures (Policy)

standards expected. Feedback on assessments explicitly relates to the stated learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and students have the necessary support to understand and interpret assessment criteria and how these are used to enable staff to recognise differential student achievement.	type of assessment, expected parameters in which the assessment will be conducted (e.g. word count) and the weighting of the assessment.

Assessments are detailed further in individual Course Handbooks or available on MyAberdeen (the University's Virtual Learning Environment) for every course. These provide ILOs, deadlines by which assessments must be completed, deadlines for feedback to be returned to students and any other relevant information. Together these documents facilitate transparency in assessment information for students.

As part of the CMS project the more detailed information on ILOs, feedback and assessment timing is being migrated from course handbooks to also be visible in the Course Catalogue. | Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment (Document)
Markers, Double, Blind and Anonymous Marking (Document)
Common Grading Scale (CGS) (Webpage)
General Regulations for First Degrees (Webpage)
Supplementary Regulations for Higher and Postgraduate Degrees (Webpage) |
| 6. **Assessment and feedback is purposeful and supports the learning process.**

Assessment relates directly to course aims and learning outcomes, reflecting the nature of the discipline or subject and ensuring that students have opportunities to develop a range of knowledge, skills and attributes. Assessment is fit for purpose and methods are valid in measuring achievement against learning outcomes. Assessment enables students to benchmark their current level of knowledge or skills, identify areas for improvement and make judgements about the overall progress made. Feedback (including 'feed-forward') reflects attainment relevant to learning outcomes and marking criteria for | The Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment sets out our principles of feedback, namely that it is timely, rewards effort, is understandable, relevant, constructive, and supportive. The Framework goes on to outline the approach taken with regards to marking and feedback, ensuring a supportive, consistent and fair system. Assessments and associated feedback align with intended learning outcomes, ensuring assessments measure students learning.

Feedback on assessment should also identify areas for development ('feed-forward') and areas of good practice. Feedback should be constructive, helping students to understand what they have done well and providing them with information that will help them improve future work and assessment. Guidance has been created on feedback on assessment, which is provided to staff to ensure that feedback remains constructive and feeds forward. Further information on feedback is also available on the University's webpages.

CAD provides a range of development opportunities and interactive sessions for academic and other teaching staff and PGRs who teach and support learning, which include assessment and feedback. These include our AdvanceHE-accredited PG Certificate in H.E. Learning & Teaching and | Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment (Document)
Feedback (Webpage)
Feedback on Assessment (Webpage)
Assessment and Feedback, Toolkit (Video) |

	the assessment task. Feedback on assessment builds on dialogue and opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. The teaching and assessment strategy progressively enhances students' assessment literacy to enable them to increasingly regulate their own learning and performance.	the popular Principles of Learning & Teaching in H.E. short programme for PGRs and others new to teaching. The Centre also hosts a range of open, drop-in discussion sessions addressing topics such as 'Providing Effective Feedback'.	
7.	**Assessment is timely.** Assessment tasks and feedback are timed appropriately to promote student learning and facilitate improvement. Students are given sufficient time and opportunity to engage in learning and teaching activities that build their capacity for assessment. A holistic view of assessment deadlines can help to ensure that they are timed appropriately, to avoid overburdening students. Expectations in relation to feedback and feedback turnaround time for each assessment are consistent and clearly articulated. Feedback comments are provided in sufficient time to enable students to enhance their performance in subsequent assessment tasks.	Assessment is planned ~~as part of an overall approach~~ to ~~ensuring~~ ensure that the student learning experience is a~~n~~ holistic one. Timing of assessment is such that it takes place at appropriate points to assess learning, be that at the end of a course, at a mid-point or by continuous assessment. Timing of assessments across Programmes is considered through the process of storyboarding, where Schools seek such support. Hosted jointly by the Centre for Academic Development and the relevant Programme Co-ordinator, storyboarding events involve constituent Course Co-ordinators in taking a strategic overview of ILOs and then key activities in each course which help students to meet these (assessment, teaching, feedback). By plotting these constituents of each course as a timeline against each other, a visual representation of the Programme emerges, allowing all concerned to see where the potential pinch points are and then agree amongst themselves how to address them.

Previously, ~~Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, at~~ at a University level, the term dates identified a formal exam period at the end of each half-session alongside additional continuous assessment during the course. ~~During Covid-19~~As a result of the revised academic year structure, implemented from academic year 2024/25, the formal exam diets have been replaced by assessment diets as well as use of other forms of assessments (e.g. essays, open book exams, online assessments) which has provided more flexibility in assessment. We ensure that modes of assessment delivery adhere to any PSRB requirements in relevant courses and programmes. | Course and Programme Approval (Webpage) Academic Calendar (Webpage) Exam Diet Dates (Webpage) |
| 8. | **Assessment is sufficient and manageable.** | Through the curriculum management processes and approval via the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), assessments are scrutinised and reviewed to ensure that they are sufficient and manageable for students, | Course and Programme Approval (Webpage) Quality Assurance Committee (Webpage) |

The scheduling of assignments and the amount of assessed work required provides a reliable and valid profile of achievement without overloading students or staff involved in the assessment process. Assessment requirements take into account the notional learning hours for any given unit of study. The spread, number and methods of assessment are considered with other, concurrent modules in mind to ensure that the burden of assessment is not excessive. For example, an overview of assessment deadlines across the course of study is taken to avoid 'bunching' where possible, given students' choice around modules.	as well as staff. Course coordinators and programme directors are encouraged to look holistically at programmes and constituent courses to ensure that assessment is sufficient, appropriate and that the scheduling is manageable and not 'bunched' (section 3 refers).

The guidance documents in the form of Types of Assessment and Setting Assessments also provide relevant course coordinators information with regard to sufficient and manageable assessments. | Types of Assessment, Academic Quality Handbook (Document)
Setting Assessments, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) |
| 9. **Students are supported and prepared for assessment.**
Students are given opportunities to develop assessment literacy, practise subject-related skills and knowledge, engage with content and develop the competencies required to meet learning outcomes. This often involves formative assessment opportunities. Students are provided with appropriately timed feedback that is understandable, constructive and helps them meet their developmental needs. | The University operates a variety of support mechanisms for students to ensure that they are well-supported for study and prepared for assessment. These include:
- **Personal Tutoring**: Each student is assigned a personal tutor as a contact for pastoral and academic support.
- **Student Learning Service**: The student-facing part of CAD, the Student Learning Service (SLS) offers academic skills workshops and online resource sites in MyAberdeen. SLS works with students on a one-to-one basis to improve understanding and help implement feedback from marked assessments.
- **Academic Writing ~~Skills~~ Course**: Some Schools provide Academic Writing Skills courses which are available to assess students' level of academic writing when they begin study in first year. These courses are facilitated by CAD.
- **Induction**: All Schools provide induction to their programmes during Welcome Week, during which students are informed of the support mechanisms available to them in terms of their teaching, | Assessment (Webpage)
Types of Assessments, Academic Quality Handbook (Document)
Personal Tutoring (Webpage)
Student Learning Service (Webpage)
Feedback (Webpage)
Academic Writing Skills, Toolkit (Webpage) |

	learning and assessment. <u>The University is implementing a new approach to broaden the scope of induction with the introduction of two weeks at the start of each term focussing on professional development and skills development of our students. These weeks will be in September and January to cover both our main undergraduate cohorts and January start cohorts, which also gives two opportunities through the academic year cycle for students to focus on their professional development. Initial ideas (yet to be confirmed) are for the inaugural weeks to focus on the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills as the revised Induction Weeks are launched in academic year 2024-25.</u> ▪ **Course Coordinators**: Course Coordinators support students by offering office hours to discuss any issues that may arise over the course of completing an assessment. ▪ **Formative Assessment**: Schools make use of formative assessments, which do not count towards the final course grade, to allow students the opportunity to develop their skills and prepare them for the summative assessment. Support also takes the form of previous feedback and feed-forward. These provide students with constructive ways to improve and enhance their work, while supporting them to enhance their academic skills. This information can be found on our feedback webpages ('Your Academic Feedback').	
10. Assessment encourages academic integrity. Assessment is designed to minimise opportunities for students to commit academic misconduct, including plagiarism, self-plagiarism and contract cheating. Wherever possible, a suitable variety of assessment methods should be used, to minimise the availability of opportunities for students to	A University-wide approach across Schools aims to encourage academic integrity. We actively promote academic integrity as an issue via a series of ongoing awareness raising workshops for teaching staff, exploring issues of assessment design to minimise opportunities for academic misconduct and developing students' academic literacies. Guidance for students and staff helps ensure that <u>assessment</u> ~~assessment encourages and improves academic~~<u>is undertaken with</u> integrity. <u>Our approach to developing resources and guidance for students on ensuring academic integrity has been supported through the completion</u>	<u>Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) (Document)</u> <u>Academic Integrity: Guide for Students (Document)</u> <u>Academic Integrity (Webpage)</u> <u>Moderation Procedures (Policy)</u> <u>Markers, Double, Blind and Anonymous Marking (Document)</u> <u>External Examiners in relation to Marking (Document)</u>

| incorporate plagiarised work by another author, or previous work by the student, either within the level of study or across levels. Policies and procedures relevant to academic integrity are clear, accessible and actively promoted rather than simply made available. | of a series of research projects. These projects aimed to understand the drivers and facilitators for students engaging in specific types of misconduct, such as contract cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. By developing a better understanding of the specific challenges our students face, we have been able to further enhance our guidance and training resources. This ensures that they are directly relevant to the challenges our students encounter.

In terms of the assessments themselves, regulation takes the form of assessment design (including advice and feedback through discussion with External Examiners at this stage of the process), followed by marking and moderation, during which process the issues of academic integrity are foregrounded and open for discussion amongst the markers. Following this, both the internal pre-Examiners' meetings and the formal Examiners' Meeting involving the External Examiners provides further opportunity for discussion around the academic integrity of assessments. | |

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

CELEBRATING
525 YEARS
1495 – 2020

Mapping Against the UK Quality Code

SECTION 7: LEARNING & TEACHING

Academic Services | *Quality & Policy*
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SECTION 7: LEARNING & TEACHING

INTRODUCTION

The Quality Code is split into 12 themes, available online on the QAA website at https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code. The Learning and Teaching theme ensures the strategic direction of all learning, teaching and education activity within an organisation. Learning and Teaching is particularly important in the higher education setting, as one of the key strands of activity alongside research. This theme also ensures that all policies are in place to ensure students have a supported and meaningful educational experience. The Quality Code describes this theme as:

> This Theme gives guidance to providers to help support the provision of effective, high-quality learning opportunities for all students, wherever or however the learning is enabled and whoever enables it. It applies to any learning opportunity that leads to the award of a UK higher education qualification or academic credit, from short courses involving single modules to multi-year courses. Learning and teaching enables students' achievement to be reliably evaluated through assessment, calibrated to the national reference points, for example the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications.

This theme aims to ensure there is strategic direction and a strategic approach taken to the learning and teaching activities within the University. It also ensures that all students have a high-quality education and student experience, with opportunities for growth and development.

In defining key terms that will be used frequently in this section, the Quality Code notes the following:

Learning: The process through which students acquire new, build on, or reformulate existing, knowledge, skills and practice. 'Teaching' is any activity that facilitates this learning.

Effective learning and teaching: Learning and teaching that enables student achievement towards their intended qualifications or awards, through education that they, and other stakeholders, value. This may be monitored through providers evaluating learner engagement levels.

Stakeholders: The wider community of individuals and bodies that inform, influence and/or contribute to learning and teaching practice in higher education.

SECTION 7: LEARNING & TEACHING

The Quality Code has three different sections: the expectations for standards; the expectations for quality; and the guiding principles. The relevant expectations for standards and quality are detailed below. The Guiding Principles are mapped to the University's own policies, procedures and quality mechanisms. There are two separate sections for the University's practices, detailing what the University does and has in place to support that expectation/principle, as well as the supporting documentation, which includes reference to supporting policy, procedure, website or other document.

EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY & CORE/COMMON PRACTICES
Courses are well designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their education experience.
The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES	UNIVERSITY PRACTICES	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
GUIDING PRINCIPLES		
1. Effective learning and teaching is underpinned by a shared understanding of the	The University launched its Aberdeen 2040 University Strategy in 2020. This puts education and research at its heart alongside strategic themes of inclusivity, international, interdisciplinary and sustainability. Aberdeen 2040 provides a defining vision for Education at the University and sets out a number of commitments as outlined in the link to our Strategy.	Aberdeen 2040 Strategy (Webpage) University Education Committee (Webpage) Principles and Guidance for Blended Learning (Webpage) Five Principles of Teaching (Webpage)

provider's learning and teaching strategy. Providers adopt an evidence-based strategic approach to learning and teaching, developed and delivered in partnership with staff, students and other stakeholders (where relevant). Course-level strategies for learning and teaching are consistent with provider-level strategy and tailored to the specific needs of the discipline, which may include relationships with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).	The University's Aberdeen 2040 Strategy is supported by an operational plan for 2021-2025 which provides details of the actions, supporting measures, and KPIs to address each strategic commitment. Education Commitments are detailed in the operational plan and are being actioned through a series of Task and Finish Groups (TFGs) in the following areas: Aberdeen 2040 Delivery of Education, Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills, Decolonising the Curriculum, Pastoral Support Review, Work Placements, Monitoring and Absence, and International Experience. These TFGs align to specific Commitments within the Strategic Plan in order to deliver changes to further advance the educational and student experience. A number of these TFGs have concluded their work and reported via the University Education Committee. The Education TFG remits for Aberdeen 2040 Strategy have been shared with the wider community including through the University Education Committee and Senate. The focus for the Aberdeen 2040 work has been discussed widely and agreed through consultation with staff and with students. All Schools and Professional Services Directorates develop annual plans which are reviewed centrally by the Senior Management Team and inform budget setting and planning. Within these, Schools and Directorates are required to comment on their strategic priorities relating to Education and how these align to, and progress made towards Education-related performance indicators. These plans also seek comment on alignment to the Aberdeen 2040 Strategic themes. The University Education Committee has oversight of strategic matters relating to Education and the work in regard to delivery of Education commitments as set out in Aberdeen 2040. Proposals for new degree programmes require business case approval through the Programme Management Committee. As part of the business case, Schools require to comment on the alignment of the proposed programme to their School plan.	

	Where programmes are accredited by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB), their requirements and guidelines are taken into account in informing curriculum design and assessment. In response to Covid-19, the University developed a range of Principles of Blended Learning, which are embedded into the education that we deliver. These were developed in consultation with Schools and the wider University community. Building on these Principles, the Delivery of Education ~~for 2022-23~~ is underpinned by the Five Principles of Teaching. Support for educational development is provided via the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) via School Directors of Education. This structure enables colleagues to develop and deliver education in a tailored way, which is facilitated through an innovative Summer micro-credential short course for staff in preparation for the start of the academic year. In addition, the Community of Practise accessible through the former Enhancement Theme, has provided further opportunities for sharing good practise and access to peer support. In order to support learning, teaching and assessment in the effective use of technology and our virtual learning environment and to encourage the sharing of good practice, we have also set up a community of practice to regularly share ideas and resources (MyAberdeen User Group on Teams).	
2. Effective learning and teaching is underpinned by a focus on student achievement and outcomes. Providers design, deliver, monitor and evaluate learning and teaching with a focus on the outcomes to be achieved by the student and how effectively the chosen learning and teaching	For every degree programme, the relevant regulations are in place to ensure that students can achieve and succeed in their learning. This includes assessment regulations to ensure that intended learning outcomes are achieved and assessed appropriately. Aims and intended learning outcomes, at a course and programme level, are considered for appropriateness as part of the approval process and are made available to students ensuring transparency for learners and providing an ability to gauge progress towards the stated outcomes. In addition, students are monitored at a course level in terms of their progress towards the stated	General Regulations for First Degrees (Webpage) Supplementary Regulations for Postgraduate & Research Awards (Webpage) Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework (Webpage) Inclusivity & Accessibility Reflection Document (Document) Student Support Committee (Webpage) Information Centre (Webpage) Student Monitoring (Webpage)

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approaches enable this. Providers use a variety of evidence to assess student achievement and outcomes throughout their educational experience and respond accordingly.	outcomes and a system for support exists for individuals who are flagged 'at risk' in terms of not being able to meet the intended outcomes. All courses and programmes are monitored annually through the University's Annual Course and Programme Review procedures. These procedures draw upon a range of feedback to inform the process of review including student feedback through the course feedback form, Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings, feedback from External Examiners, Programme Advisory Boards and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies together with analysis of course data and feedback from the course delivery team and input from class representatives. While Schools manage the Annual Course Review process reviewing these internally, all forms are submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) ~~and these are sampled by QAC~~. Annual Programme Reviews are submitted by Schools to QAC and are discussed with Schools with any policy issues being referred to relevant committees for consideration, as appropriate. A Framework for Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education has been developed, which draws together existing policies, guidance, resources, support, and specialist training provided to staff and students. This responds to the commitments within the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy of inclusivity, aiming to provide all students with the opportunity to reach their full potential. This also takes into consideration elements of the Equality Act 2010 and The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018. The Planning Team provide data to Schools on non-continuation, degree classifications, graduate outcomes and league tables, by means of the PowerBI system. These data are then shared with Schools to enhance their quality processes and inform improvements. The data also form part of the discussion at the Student Support and Experience, and Employability and Entrepreneurship Committees, where data are scrutinised by academic and professional service members.	Annual Course and Programme Review (Webpage)

Commented [ITH1]: @Dyker, Liam , suggest adding Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee here too, as Graduate Outcomes steering group sits here.

	Student outcomes and achievement are discussed as part of the University's ITR process with implications for learning and teaching identified (see section 5 below). Our virtual learning environment also supports the use of 'Goals' which can be effectively aligned with learning outcomes, making the attainment of relevant outcomes transparent to staff, students and external bodies.	
3. Effective learning and teaching provides students with an equivalent high-quality learning experience irrespective of where, how or by whom it is delivered. The nature, content and context of students' learning experiences may vary but providers ensure parity of quality of learning opportunities by adopting inclusive learning and teaching practices (see the Assessment Theme for guidance on how this is mirrored in providers' approaches to assessment). Providers ensure that practices take account of different ways of learning, modes of study, diverse educational, linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds, and abilities to provide a flexible and inclusive approach that enables and empowers every student to fulfil their potential and achieve a successful outcome.	The University has a very diverse student body. Our students may be studying on campus in Aberdeen or on one of our TNE (Transnational Education) campuses, or online studying either a full degree or a single short course. We have a highly international student and staff population drawn from over 130 nationalities. We also have a long-standing commitment to widening access. Our Aberdeen 2040 Strategy recognises this diversity and places strong emphasis on inclusivity recognising our foundational purpose of being "open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others." As part of the University Aberdeen 2040 Strategy, inclusivity is a key strand and incorporates equality of opportunity and accessibility for all students. The University's vision for Equality & Diversity is "To strive to create an inclusive culture which celebrates the diversity of the University's staff and students. In recognising that this diversity brings new and engaging perspectives and enriches the experience of all who work, study and visit the University, we will take a proactive approach to embedding and mainstreaming the principles of Equality and Diversity." The EDI policy supports this work. The University operates Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that no group is unduly discriminated against and to ensure activities are carried out in a fair and transparent way. All new policies should be reviewed by means of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure they are fit for purpose in an inclusive environment. The University has developed an Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework which aims to enable inclusion and accessibility to be fully integrated into all aspects of the design and delivery of learning,	Aberdeen 2040 Strategy (Webpage) Inclusion and Accessibility (Webpage) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Webpage) Equality Impact Assessments (Webpage) Widening Access (Webpage) Principles and Guidance for Blended Learning (Webpage) Risk Register Technical Guidance (Document) Resilient Learning Community of Practice (Webpage)

teaching and assessment. The Framework draws together relevant guidance, policies, resources, support and specialist training relating to accessibility and inclusivity.

We have a long-standing commitment to widening access and removing unnecessary barriers for prospective students. In this way we aim to create an inclusive educational environment to ensure every student has the opportunity to reach their potential.

Educational provision forming part of any collaboration e.g. TNE, joint degrees etc is subject to the same quality scrutiny as standard home campus provision. To ensure consistency of approach, and equality of experience, student outcomes and evaluations are considered as part of a 'whole' irrespective of mode, method and geographical location of delivery. For example, students studying at overseas campuses would be considered at Examiners' Meetings alongside students on the Aberdeen campus; similarly, School Internal Teaching Reviews include all teaching irrespective of delivery method/location.

In response to Covid-19, the University developed a range of Principles of Blended Learning, which are embedded into the education which we deliver. These were developed in consultation with Schools and the wider University community and were applied across the Institution, further ensuring consistency in our delivery of learning irrespective of individual circumstances. Building on these Principles, the Delivery of Education for 2022-23 is underpinned by the Five Principles of Teaching. The University developed its 'No Detriment' policies and procedures to specifically to ensure equality in outcomes throughout this time the Covid-19 Pandemic.

In addition, the former Resilient Learning Communities Enhancement Theme 'Community of Practice' has provided further opportunities for staff to share good practice with supportive peers and this work continues as part of the current institutional enhancement activities. In the last few years, the University has invested heavily in technology in order to ensure a smooth and easily accessible teaching, learning and

	assessment opportunities for all. ~~Recently, we~~We have upgraded our virtual learning environment to the Ultra Course View from Blackboard Learn/Anthology. Thus ensuring we are providing an accessible and mobile environment to all our staff and students. Likewise, web conferencing software is up to date to support remote learning, along with video technology to record teaching and learning sessions. Similarly, the Education Strategic Risk Register is maintained by the University Education Committee with its sub-Committees overseeing the relevant risks. This offers oversight and discussion on the key areas and risks pertinent to the Education portfolio.	
4. Effective learning and teaching is informed through reflective practice and providers enable staff to engage in relevant, timely and appropriate professional development that supports students' learning and high-quality teaching. Effective student learning is facilitated by interaction with appropriately qualified, supported and developed teaching and support staff. Providers ensure that staff demonstrate up-to date knowledge and practice in both their subject and appropriate pedagogies. Providers ensure that staff engage in self-reflection to appropriately inform their learning, teaching and assessment design and practice. Staff are provided with access to	The University's periodic review process, Internal Teaching Review, allows for a holistic review of the pedagogic provision within the academic Schools. This process is focused on quality enhancement with the engagement of management, staff and students within the School. The School is required to complete a Critical Analysis prior to the review which reflects on the pedagogic provision currently taking place in the School. Every programme (or cognate group of programmes) is required to submit an Annual Programme Review, which encourages Schools to reflect, review and discuss each programme and its constituent courses. These programme reviews are overseen by the Quality Assurance Committee, with support from the Academic Services team. They identify areas of good and innovative practice, while also highlighting areas for development and enhancement. Our current institutional Quality Enhancement Activities build on the work of the previous QAAS Enhancement Theme, Resilient Learning Communities and are overseen by the Dean for Quality Assurance & Quality Enhancement, supported by CAD alongside the Deans for Educational Innovation, Student Support & Experience, and Employability & Entrepreneurship. Activities include the co-ordination of the University's Annual Academic Development Symposium 2024, themed	Internal Teaching Review (Webpage) Critical Analysis Guidance (Document) Annual Programme Review (Webpage) Enhancement Themes, Leadership (Webpage) Enhancement Themes, University (Webpage) Annual Academic Development Symposium (Webpage) Toolkit Resources (Webpage) Introduction to Learning & Teaching in Higher Education at the University of Aberdeen

continuing professional development (CPD) that is planned, monitored and evaluated (for example, for its impact on student achievement, where possible). Providers offer opportunities for all those involved in learning and teaching to inform each other's practice and experience.	'Embracing Diversity: Supporting Inclusive Learning Communities' and a further call for projects as part of the Learning & Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP). ~~The University is fortunate to have input in sector-level leadership in the Enhancement Theme, as our Vice-Principal, Education acts as Deputy Chair. Our institutional Enhancement Theme activities are overseen by the Steering Group and shared with the Resilient Learning Community of Practice. Activities are supported by the CAD which also co-ordinates the University's Annual Academic Development Symposium, aligned with the current Enhancement Theme, to which external colleagues are invited. Other external-facing activities include our involvement with the 'Understanding Micro-Credentials and Small qualifications in Scotland' and 'Valuing and Recognising Prior Learning and Experience' projects.~~ CAD offers professional development (including programmes accredited by AdvanceHE) for all staff and PGRs who teach and support learning. Workshops, courses, networks and discussion fora encourage participants to focus on active student engagement. Further, the University encourages self-learning by use of the updated Toolkit resources. In addition, all academic staff new to the University of Aberdeen are required to participate in ~~a~~ the mandatory ~~2-day induction course,~~ 'Introduction to Learning and Teaching at the University of Aberdeen' course.	
5. Effective learning and teaching is underpinned by routine evaluation of provision to manage and enhance their learning and teaching activities, including achievement of qualification and award outcomes. Providers use a range of internal and external information and	The University's annual and periodic monitoring processes include Annual Programme Review and Internal Teaching Review, respectively. Annual Programme Reviews are the process by which Programme Coordinators reflect and review their teaching provision on their courses and programmes. This process feeds into the wider annual monitoring activities and includes significant input from the Quality Assurance Committee. The Internal Teaching Review process occurs every 5-6 years and allows Schools the opportunity to reflect on the pedagogic provision in their School. The Review Panel includes External Subject Specialists (ESS). The	Annual Programme Review (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review Process (Document) External Examining (Webpage) School Planning Process Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (Webpage) NSS (Webpage) University 5th in UK for Student Satisfaction in NSS (Webpage) Student-Staff Liaison Committees (Document) Course Evaluation Forms (Webpage)

feedback to enable them to keep their approach to learning and teaching under review, taking deliberate steps to facilitate the continuous improvement of the learning opportunities and support they provide. Evaluation and enhancement takes place for all learning and teaching activities.	ESS may come from a UK or overseas institution, from industry or from professional practice. The teaching review includes sessions with an array of stakeholders, including School management, academic and support staff, as well as students. One of the key elements within the Internal Teaching Review process is the Pedagogic Partnership Session, which invites academic staff and students alike to join together to create an action plan for the School and to assess each other's feedback. External experts, including appointed external examiners, assist Schools in the reflection and evaluation of teaching provision. Programme Advisory Boards and similar include industry and academic experts to assist the School/Programme in the enhancement of quality within the provision. External Examiners are appointed to every programme (or cognate group of programmes) and evaluate the teaching, learning and assessment within that programme. Formal Examiners' Meetings allow for an open and constructive dialogue with the School on matters pertinent to the assessment and degree classification of students. Schools are expected to liaise with their External Examiner on new assessments and changes to existing assessments to ensure their appropriateness. Where relevant, Schools also draw upon Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body guidance to inform the curriculum ensuring it remains in alignment with requirements. Provision provided with or through partner institutions is scrutinised on an annual basis through the reports submitted to the QAC. The planning process for Schools also allows for an evaluation of provision. Each School and Professional Services Directorate has the opportunity to meet with the Senior Management team and colleagues in the Directorate of Planning to evaluate their provision, aspects of good practice and aspects for development, as well as reviewing resource allocation and financial planning, which supports the teaching provision.	Programme Advisory Boards (Webpage)

In terms of student evaluation of teaching, the University uses an array of mechanisms to ensure teaching is high quality and that feedback can enhance their education. These include:

- *Aberdeen Student Experience Survey:* this is an internal survey developed for University of Aberdeen students and is separate from national surveys, such as NSS. The survey gathers feedback on an array of University Services, facilities and activities which help to inform enhancements to the student experience.
- *Undergraduate Experience Survey (UES):* is an internal survey developed by the University of Aberdeen to gather student feedback on the quality of their educational experience and is completed by all undergraduate students who are not in their final year of studies and therefore completing the NSS instead.xxx
- *Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES):* is a national survey managed by Advance HE with gathers student feedback on the quality of PGT students educational experience. xxx
- *Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES):* is a national survey managed by Advance HE with gathers student feedback on the educational experiences of PGR students. xxx
- *National Student Survey (NSS):* NSS is managed by the Office for Students on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council and gathers student opinion on the quality of their courses. This assists Universities in enhancing the student and academic experience.
- *Student-Staff Liaison Committees:* within each School, class representatives are invited to collaborative fora to discuss any ongoing issues or concerns that the School could act upon or seek University action on. These help to enhance the student learning and teaching provision, and allow for constructive dialogue with students.
- *Course Evaluation Forms:* every student has the opportunity to submit feedback on each of their courses. This is accessed electronically by a dedicated system and allows teaching staff to ascertain the issues and positive aspects of their provision. These forms feed into the wider annual monitoring activities, such as Annual Course Reviews and Annual Programme Reviews. When

	using our virtual learning environment, we encourage staff to re-think and re-fresh content, offering programme/course review sessions which are mapped out using storyboards. We also provide a checklist to ensure content is quality assured. A recent enhancements is offering an accessibility support service and informal course checks within our online environment.	
6. **Effective learning and teaching activities, facilities and resources make the learning environment accessible, relevant and engaging to all students.** Providers design their learning environment to be safe, accessible and suitable for the nature of the learning activities and planned in a systematic way in consultation with students. The learning environment may encompass: • physical environment (seating, lighting and acoustics, availability of technology) • virtual environment (technological facilities including virtual learning environments and library systems) social learning environment (dialogue based on mutual dignity and respect and a safe environment for exploring new ideas and providing feedback).	The University Estates Committee's purpose is to oversee the University's estate in order that it can support world-class academic, teaching and research activity. The Committee makes recommendations to the Finance and Resources Committee and Court in terms of facilities development required to enhance the learning environment. The University has three Library sites, including the Sir Duncan Rice Library and Taylor Law Library on the Old Aberdeen Campus, as well as the Medical Library on the Foresterhill Campus. These libraries are available to students throughout their studies and during term time are open until late. During periods of exams, the libraries move to 24-hour opening which allows students the opportunity to study at all times of day. These ensure that resources and dedicated study spaces are available and accessible to students when they need them. The University also has an array of dedicated study spaces, including: ▪ The University Libraries ▪ Computer classrooms which are available on all campuses, when not being used for teaching ▪ A number of drop-in co-lab based group student spaces in the Sir Duncan Rice Library and the Suttie Centre ▪ A small number of single occupancy study spaces, which can be booked for those with an online class followed directly by an on-campus class and vice-versa. The University also delivers TNE through its Qatar Campus where teaching is delivered in partnership with AFG College, ~~and~~ at the Aberdeen Institute of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence at South	Digitally Enhanced Learning Spaces, Online (Webpage) Digitally Enhanced Learning Spaces, Toolkit (Webpage) Our Libraries (Webpage) Study Spaces (Webpage) Hardship Options, including Digital Poverty Fund (Webpage) Framework on Accessibility & Inclusivity in Education (Webpage) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (Webpage) Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group (Webpage)

China Normal University and at Harbin Engineering University. To ensure equity of student experience, care is taken to ensure the facilities and digital infrastructure align, where appropriate, with the Aberdeen campus taking account of cultural needs.

The University uses Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) to support delivery of teaching, learning and assessment, both for students studying on campus and those learning online. Since 2019, Schools have been moving their courses from the Institutional VLE, MyAberdeen (which uses Blackboard Learn), to Blackboard's newer course view, 'Ultra'. The Ultra Course View provides a simpler, more modern, personalised and accessible course experience for staff and students, than before. ~~The remaining Schools moved over to Ultra in time for teaching in~~All Schools moved over to Ultra in time for teaching in September 2022.

To help improve the accessibility of learning materials on MyAberdeen, the University provides access to 'Blackboard Ally' software. Blackboard Ally provides automated feedback to teaching staff, alternative file formats to students and tools for reporting on the accessibility of courses on MyAberdeen. In 2021, CAD also piloted a small Course Accessibility Service which aimed to support staff who are looking to improve their learning materials, in particular inaccessible documents. In September 2022, this service was made available to all courses to allow staff to seek advice on the accessibility of their course, and work with colleagues in CAD to ~~fix~~ modify documents that may cause accessibility issues for students.

The University is further supporting staff to improve the accessibility of learning materials by funding an external video captioning service for use on courses which have students with a disability provision. The University has also provided central funds to academic schools to help more generally in ~~the push to make~~making video material more accessible by employing students to support captioning work.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and prior, extensive work was carried out by colleagues in Digitally Enhanced Teaching and Meeting Spaces Group, including colleagues from Estates, IT, CAD and the Dean for Educational Innovation, which was set up to oversee the development of digitally enhanced classrooms to support the requirements for blended learning. This negates the necessity for some staff to 'double teach' and allows for online and on-campus students to be present in the same place. This work is also part of an ongoing approach to developing our physical and digital infrastructure, particularly in support of our education provision.

In supporting students to engage in their studies, the University has also set up a range of hardship funds, which includes a Digital Poverty Fund for those students who did not have adequate or necessary equipment to allow them to engage in their studies during blended learning. This is administered by the University student support team.

The University has recently developed its Framework on Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education, which draws on policies, guidance, resources, support and specialist training provided to all staff and students. This responds to the commitments within the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy of inclusivity, aiming to provide all students with the opportunity to reach their full potential. It also outlines the range of support available to students to support them in their studies, should they require it.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee also plays a role in ensuring that the University is a safe, inclusive and accessible space for all staff and students, regardless of race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or gender, for example. The Committee includes members of senior management, relevant colleagues and memberships of various equality networks.

In addition, as part of the ongoing Aberdeen 2040 Strategy agenda, the Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group will developdeveloped an approach which addresses embedded racial stereotypes and/or limited

	perspectives in the curriculum and ~~will support~~supported Schools to develop learning materials which offer students a rich diversity of views and role models. This ~~will help~~helped to facilitate a safe and inclusive pedagogic experience for students. The work of Decolonising the Curriculum is now continued as part of a Community of Practice led by the Dean for Educational Innovation.	
7. **Effective learning and teaching ensures that information about, and support for, learning and teaching is clear and accessible to all students and stakeholders.** Providers give clarity on the responsibilities of staff, students and, where appropriate, other stakeholders (such as employers involved in work-based learning and apprenticeships) for learning and teaching and its support. Information is provided in an inclusive, transparent and accessible way. Providers engage students to monitor, review and evaluate this information to ensure that it meets the needs of different groups of students.	The University committee structures related to Education ~~have been changed to~~ include greater focus and collaboration with the academic Schools. ~~These changes~~ This structure ensures that there is close integration and communication between School Education Committees and the University Education Committee, Quality Assurance Committee and ~~its~~ their sub-committees. This ensures that decision-making relating to Education matters is appropriately informed by the discipline specific perspectives of all Schools. This close working with Schools is further strengthened by ~~fortnightly~~ informal meetings between the Vice Principal, Education and the Director of Academic Services and Online Education with the School Directors of Education providing a forum for engagement, discussion and close collaboration. There ~~are~~ is a range of communications that are provided to students prior to study and over the course of their studies that give detailed information on their teaching, learning and assessment. These are informed by the Student Communication Policy. These include: ▪ New Student Communications ▪ Ongoing eZines; providing relevant information on the student and academic experience ▪ Online Orientation; providing information on induction and orientation to students about their studies ▪ Orientation Events; which allow students to gain an insight into their studies An area within the VLE which outlines the key policies and policy changes relevant to the students' teaching and learning is highlighted to students. This contains information and addresses issues such as what to do when	Student Communication Policy (Policy), note this is currently being reviewed. Communicating with You (Webpage) New Student Communications (Webpage) Online Orientation and Induction (Webpage) Key Policies for Students (Webpage) MyAberdeen (Webpage) Toolkit (Webpage)

	absent, how to raise an appeal or complaint and processes for degree classification, among other things. Information is updated at least annually, with a communication issued to students and broadcast on social media to alert them to this important information. This ensures the information is disseminated to students in a clear and accessible manner. At a programme and course level, handbooks and information within VLE organisational areas provides students with specific information relating to their course and programme covering topics including intended learning outcomes, assessment arrangements, key contacts and deadlines. Key resources and information about student support services are available through the University's Virtual Learning Environment. Information is also available in the University's Toolkit which provides a rich set of learning resources. Detailed information regarding our relationships and working practices with employers and other stakeholders in relation to work-based learning is available in our separate document mapping our policies and procedures to Section 12 of the Quality Code relating to Work-Based Learning.	
8. **Effective learning and teaching encourages and enables students to take an active role in their studies.** Providers enable students to engage in independent learning relevant to the level of study, working in partnership with individuals and teams to display appropriate academic behaviour and integrity. Providers assist students to transition and progress through their studies.	The University has established transition programmes with a focus on widening access students and these ~~have~~ had expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic to be available to all students. Recruitment and academic colleagues collaborate closely on these programmes. These programmes provide students with an insight into the University experience (academic and wider) and students can be signposted to more specific training, such as in relation to maths. A staged orientation programme enables students (new and returning) to enhance their skills in working with the University systems (such as the Virtual Learning Environments and Toolkits) before teaching begins. Orientation is at central University level, and also at School level, and is reviewed constantly to ensure that it is as effective as possible for	Widening Access (Webpage) Student Orientation (Webpage) Pastoral Support & Guidance (Webpage) Personal Tutoring (Webpage) Peer Support (Webpage) MyCurriculum (Webpage) Support & Wellbeing (Webpage) Study Resources (Webpage) Centre for Academic Development (Webpage) Accredited Programmes, CAD (Webpage) Inclusivity & Accessibility in Education Framework (Webpage) Disability Services (Webpage)

| | students to be aware of what is expected of them and how to meet this. When students join the University, Professional Development courses for UG and PGT students enable further development of professional and transferrable skills which students can use to ensure they engage actively in their studies.

Pastoral support systems (such as the undergraduate Personal Tutor) and peer support systems provide a framework within which students can raise questions informally, and also access more specific support (for example Registry, MyCurriculum and Student Support) to ensure they have the necessary information and support.

The Student Learning Service (SLS) in CAD works closely with students and academic staff. SLS provides support for students and staff, ensuring students can take an active role in their studies. SLS provides specialist academic skills support for neurodivergent students ~~with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs)~~.

The Accessibility and Inclusivity in Education Framework draws together resource and practice to support staff in enabling all aspects of Education to be inclusive such that all students can take an active role. The Disability Team in the Student Support and Advisory Team, School Disability Coordinators and academic staff collaborate, with support from staff in CAD, to ensure that any reasonable adjustments can be delivered in an effective and timely manner.

Financial support is available through the Hardship Fund to all students in need. This was particularly valuable in providing IT hardware support in COVID times.

The University's established policy regarding recording of lectures, alongside the practice of lectures only being recorded (and now captioned) in COVID times has provided flexibility for students and more options for their active engagement in their studies. | Money Matters (Webpage)
Policy on Lecture Capture (Policy)
Class Representation, AUSA (Webpage)
Student Feedback (Webpage)
STAR Award (Webpage)
Co-Curricular Activities (Webpage)
Principles and Guidance for Blended Learning (Webpage)
How Do I Encourage Active Learning in the Online Environment? (Webpage)
Students with Specific Support Needs (Webpage)
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (Webpage)
Student Monitoring (C6 and C7) (Webpage) |

The Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) School Convenor system and Class representative system provides a formal structure for students to influence actively the ongoing and future delivery of teaching and learning for example through Staff-Student Liaison Committees. The *You Shape UoA* feedback system and the Aberdeen Student Experience Support also provide other opportunities for feedback and academic and professional services colleagues work closely to ensure issues are considered by the relevant person.

In terms of co-curricular activities, the Careers and Employability Service support a range of activities to enhance and support student learning. Some of these initiatives include ~~the STAR (Students Taking Active Roles) Award,~~ paid internships, volunteering opportunities, career mentoring, study abroad, and enterprise and entrepreneurship. Students are encouraged to record and reflect on their activities and their skills development journey via the MySkills system. ~~These activities are recognised on the Student Transcript as a recognition of the extra- and co-curricular activities that have been undertaken throughout their studies.~~

Building on the move to blended learning during the COVID-19 period, which has led to teaching, learning and assessment being delivered in different ways, providing a variety of means for students to engage actively, the ~~academic year 2022-23~~ delivery of education is underpinned by the Five Principles of Education. ~~Discussion through the Aberdeen 2040 Education Steering Group is currently giving consideration to the future approach to be taken to delivery.~~

The University recognises the links between delivery of teaching and learning and the wider University experience. There is regular collaboration between students, Professional Services Directorates and School to ensure that students are provided with the best opportunities to engage actively with their studies, particularly in relation to students with particular experiences and characteristics (e.g. disabled, race, estranged from family).

		The University has an established system of monitoring engagement with study to identify at an early stage those who may be struggling. This allows active engagement and support to be provided to ensure that students can be helped to get back on track with their studies. This activity is supported by the School Monitoring Leads Group which meets to monitor, review, and enhance monitoring procedures across the institution, chaired by the Dean of Student Support and Experience and includes School academic and administrative leads and professional service representatives.	
		~~The delivery of education is structured around the Community of Inquiry Framework (Garrison, 2008; Vaughan, 2013). This model is based on an approach that students are supported to develop a social presence and through this be supported to enhance their active engagement with learning opportunities.~~	
		CAD offers professional development (including programmes accredited by AdvanceHE) for all staff and PGRs who teach and support learning. Workshops, courses, networks and discussion fora encourage participants to focus on active student engagement.	
9.	Providers encourage and enable students to evaluate and manage their own learning development, supported by opportunities for ongoing dialogue with staff. Providers encourage students to evaluate their learning experiences and provide feedback in dialogue with individuals and teams through deliberate steps	Within each Academic School, students are engaged in evaluation of their teaching and learning experience in ~~a~~ myriad ~~of~~ ways. This includes the Student-Staff Liaison Committees, which include representation from all student cohorts, levels and degree programmes. This is facilitated by the Class Representation System, linked closely with the Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA). The Course Evaluation Form process further allows students to provide feedback at a course level both in regard to areas for improvement but also areas of good practice. As part of course design staff are encouraged to ensure that assessment strategies include sufficient opportunities for formative assessment and feedback, in addition to summative assessment. These provide students with opportunities to evaluate their own progress within a course.	Student-Staff Liaison Committees (Document) Course Evaluation (Webpage) Class Representation, University (Webpage) Class Representation, AUSA (Webpage) Student Monitoring (Webpage) Feedback Framework (Webpage) Design, Deliver and Evaluate your Teaching (Webpage) University Education Committee (Webpage) Senate, Membership (Webpage) Cognitive Presence (Webpage)

| that inform the enhancement of learning and teaching. | The University recognises the importance of feedback in supporting and developing students' learning and the value of self-evaluation as part of this process. As such, the University operates a Feedback Framework which provides students with a clear set of expectations for this process.
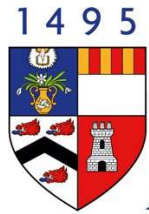
The Student Monitoring process is used to highlight students who may be at risk of not meeting learning outcomes at a course level, as part of a supportive framework. Students are encouraged to meet with staff to discuss any issues they may be encountering and are signposted to additional sources of support.

The University places strong emphasis on the involvement of students on committees and in decision making. Each School has an AUSA elected School Convener who is the lead student representative for each School. They work closely with the elected class representatives to feed any concerns about courses and programmes to the School. The School Convener (or other student representative) attends School-level committees (e.g. School Education Committee) where they are able to contribute to discussions around future courses and programmes, policy matters, feedback (e.g. NSS results) and other matters. At a University level, AUSA representatives are also full members of all Education committees including the University Education Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee along with Senate which is the University's main academic decision-making body.

The Vice President for Education at AUSA is included on the Vice-Principal, Education's informal education team. The Vice-Principal, Education also meets with the AUSA Education Committee ~~monthly~~regularly, to foster good relations in the spirit of collaboration and transparency.

The Student Learning Service (SLS) offers academic skills advice and guidance to students to evaluate and manage their learning, through one-to-one sessions, workshops, and online resources (section 8 refers). | |

| | Within the Community of Inquiry Framework approach embedded within the University of Aberdeen's teaching development, the domain of cognitive presence encompasses a focus on supporting students to track and review their progress. Cognitive presence refers to the extent to which participants, both students and teaching staff, are able to construct meaning through sustained communication. This kind of communication, as opposed to one-way dissemination of information, encourages critical thinking. | |

UNIVERISTY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Mapping Against the UK Quality Code

SECTION 7: LEARNING & TEACHING

Academic Services | *Quality & Policy*

academicservices@abdn.ac.uk

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SECTION 7: LEARNING & TEACHING

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>

The Quality Code is split into 12 themes, available online on the QAA website at https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code. The Learning and Teaching theme ensures the strategic direction of all learning, teaching and education activity within an organisation. Learning and Teaching is particularly important in the higher education setting, as one of the key strands of activity alongside research. This theme also ensures that all policies are in place to ensure students have a supported and meaningful educational experience. The Quality Code describes this theme as:

> *This Theme gives guidance to providers to help support the provision of effective, high-quality learning opportunities for all students, wherever or however the learning is enabled and whoever enables it. It applies to any learning opportunity that leads to the award of a UK higher education qualification or academic credit, from short courses involving single modules to multi-year courses. Learning and teaching enables students' achievement to be reliably evaluated through assessment, calibrated to the national reference points, for example the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications.*

This theme aims to ensure there is strategic direction and a strategic approach taken to the learning and teaching activities within the University. It also ensures that all students have a high-quality education and student experience, with opportunities for growth and development.

In defining key terms that will be used frequently in this section, the Quality Code notes the following:

Learning: The process through which students acquire new, build on, or reformulate existing, knowledge, skills and practice. 'Teaching' is any activity that facilitates this learning.

Effective learning and teaching: Learning and teaching that enables student achievement towards their intended qualifications or awards, through education that they, and other stakeholders, value. This may be monitored through providers evaluating learner engagement levels.

Stakeholders: The wider community of individuals and bodies that inform, influence and/or contribute to learning and teaching practice in higher education.

SECTION 7: LEARNING & TEACHING

The Quality Code has three different sections: the expectations for standards; the expectations for quality; and the guiding principles. The relevant expectations for standards and quality are detailed below. The Guiding Principles are mapped to the University's own policies, procedures and quality mechanisms. There are two separate sections for the University's practices, detailing what the University does and has in place to support that expectation/principle, as well as the supporting documentation, which includes reference to supporting policy, procedure, website or other document.

EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY & CORE/COMMON PRACTICES
Courses are well designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their education experience.
The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES	UNIVERSITY PRACTICES	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
GUIDING PRINCIPLES		
1. Effective learning and teaching is underpinned by a shared understanding of the	The University launched its Aberdeen 2040 University Strategy in 2020. This puts education and research at its heart alongside strategic themes of inclusivity, international, interdisciplinary and sustainability. Aberdeen 2040 provides a defining vision for Education at the University and sets out a number of commitments as outlined in the link to our Strategy.	Aberdeen 2040 Strategy (Webpage) University Education Committee (Webpage) Principles and Guidance for Blended Learning (Webpage) Five Principles of Teaching (Webpage)

provider's learning and teaching strategy. Providers adopt an evidence-based strategic approach to learning and teaching, developed and delivered in partnership with staff, students and other stakeholders (where relevant). Course-level strategies for learning and teaching are consistent with provider-level strategy and tailored to the specific needs of the discipline, which may include relationships with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).	The University's Aberdeen 2040 Strategy is supported by an operational plan for 2021-2025 which provides details of the actions, supporting measures, and KPIs to address each strategic commitment. Education Commitments are detailed in the operational plan and are being actioned through a series of Task and Finish Groups (TFGs) in the following areas: Aberdeen 2040 Delivery of Education, Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills, Decolonising the Curriculum, Pastoral Support Review, Work Placements, Monitoring and Absence, and International Experience. These TFGs align to specific Commitments within the Strategic Plan in order to deliver changes to further advance the educational and student experience. A number of these TFGs have concluded their work and reported via the University Education Committee. The Education TFG remits for Aberdeen 2040 Strategy have been shared with the wider community including through the University Education Committee and Senate. The focus for the Aberdeen 2040 work has been discussed widely and agreed through consultation with staff and with students. All Schools and Professional Services Directorates develop annual plans which are reviewed centrally by the Senior Management Team and inform budget setting and planning. Within these, Schools and Directorates are required to comment on their strategic priorities relating to Education and how these align to, and progress made towards Education-related performance indicators. These plans also seek comment on alignment to the Aberdeen 2040 Strategic themes. The University Education Committee has oversight of strategic matters relating to Education and the work in regard to delivery of Education commitments as set out in Aberdeen 2040. Proposals for new degree programmes require business case approval through the Programme Management Committee. As part of the business case, Schools require to comment on the alignment of the proposed programme to their School plan.	

	Where programmes are accredited by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB), their requirements and guidelines are taken into account in informing curriculum design and assessment. In response to Covid-19, the University developed a range of Principles of Blended Learning, which are embedded into the education that we deliver. These were developed in consultation with Schools and the wider University community. Building on these Principles, the Delivery of Education ~~for 2022 23~~ is underpinned by the Five Principles of Teaching. Support for educational development is provided via the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) via School Directors of Education. This structure enables colleagues to develop and deliver education in a tailored way, which is facilitated through an innovative Summer micro-credential short course for staff in preparation for the start of the academic year. In addition, the Community of Practise accessible through the former Enhancement Theme, has provided further opportunities for sharing good practise and access to peer support. In order to support learning, teaching and assessment in the effective use of technology and our virtual learning environment and to encourage the sharing of good practice, we have also set up a community of practice to regularly share ideas and resources (MyAberdeen User Group on Teams).	
2. Effective learning and teaching is underpinned by a focus on student achievement and outcomes. Providers design, deliver, monitor and evaluate learning and teaching with a focus on the outcomes to be achieved by the student and how effectively the chosen learning and teaching	For every degree programme, the relevant regulations are in place to ensure that students can achieve and succeed in their learning. This includes assessment regulations to ensure that intended learning outcomes are achieved and assessed appropriately. Aims and intended learning outcomes, at a course and programme level, are considered for appropriateness as part of the approval process and are made available to students ensuring transparency for learners and providing an ability to gauge progress towards the stated outcomes. In addition, students are monitored at a course level in terms of their progress towards the stated	General Regulations for First Degrees (Webpage) Supplementary Regulations for Postgraduate & Research Awards (Webpage) Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework (Webpage) Inclusivity & Accessibility Reflection Document (Document) Student Support Committee (Webpage) Information Centre (Webpage) Student Monitoring (Webpage)

approaches enable this. Providers use a variety of evidence to assess student achievement and outcomes throughout their educational experience and respond accordingly.	outcomes and a system for support exists for individuals who are flagged 'at risk' in terms of not being able to meet the intended outcomes.

All courses and programmes are monitored annually through the University's Annual Course and Programme Review procedures. These procedures draw upon a range of feedback to inform the process of review including student feedback through the course feedback form, Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings, feedback from External Examiners, Programme Advisory Boards and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies together with analysis of course data and feedback from the course delivery team and input from class representatives. While Schools manage the Annual Course Review process reviewing these internally, all forms are submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) ~~and these are sampled by QAC~~. Annual Programme Reviews are submitted by Schools to QAC and are discussed with Schools with any policy issues being referred to relevant committees for consideration, as appropriate.

A Framework for Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education has been developed, which draws together existing policies, guidance, resources, support, and specialist training provided to staff and students. This responds to the commitments within the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy of inclusivity, aiming to provide all students with the opportunity to reach their full potential. This also takes into consideration elements of the Equality Act 2010 and The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

The Planning Team provide data to Schools on non-continuation, degree classifications, graduate outcomes and league tables, by means of the PowerBI system. These data are then shared with Schools to enhance their quality processes and inform improvements. The data also form part of the discussion at the Student Support and Experience, and Employability and Entrepreneurship Committees, where data are scrutinised by academic and professional service members. | Annual Course and Programme Review (Webpage) |

		Student outcomes and achievement are discussed as part of the University's ITR process with implications for learning and teaching identified (see section 5 below). Our virtual learning environment also supports the use of 'Goals' which can be effectively aligned with learning outcomes, making the attainment of relevant outcomes transparent to staff, students and external bodies.	
3.	Effective learning and teaching provides students with an equivalent high-quality learning experience irrespective of where, how or by whom it is delivered.	The University has a very diverse student body. Our students may be studying on campus in Aberdeen or on one of our TNE (Transnational Education) campuses, or online studying either a full degree or a single short course. We have a highly international student and staff population drawn from over 130 nationalities. We also have a long-standing commitment to widening access. Our Aberdeen 2040 Strategy recognises this diversity and places strong emphasis on inclusivity recognising our foundational purpose of being "open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others."	Aberdeen 2040 Strategy (Webpage) Inclusion and Accessibility (Webpage) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Webpage) Equality Impact Assessments (Webpage) Widening Access (Webpage) Principles and Guidance for Blended Learning (Webpage) Risk Register Technical Guidance (Document) Resilient Learning Community of Practice (Webpage)
	The nature, content and context of students' learning experiences may vary but providers ensure parity of quality of learning opportunities by adopting inclusive learning and teaching practices (see the Assessment Theme for guidance on how this is mirrored in providers' approaches to assessment). Providers ensure that practices take account of different ways of learning, modes of study, diverse educational, linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds, and abilities to provide a flexible and inclusive approach that enables and empowers every student to fulfil their potential and achieve a successful outcome.	As part of the University Aberdeen 2040 Strategy, inclusivity is a key strand and incorporates equality of opportunity and accessibility for all students. The University's vision for Equality & Diversity is "To strive to create an inclusive culture which celebrates the diversity of the University's staff and students. In recognising that this diversity brings new and engaging perspectives and enriches the experience of all who work, study and visit the University, we will take a proactive approach to embedding and mainstreaming the principles of Equality and Diversity." The EDI policy supports this work.

The University operates Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that no group is unduly discriminated against and to ensure activities are carried out in a fair and transparent way. All new policies should be reviewed by means of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure they are fit for purpose in an inclusive environment.

The University has developed an Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework which aims to enable inclusion and accessibility to be fully integrated into all aspects of the design and delivery of learning, | |

teaching and assessment. The Framework draws together relevant guidance, policies, resources, support and specialist training relating to accessibility and inclusivity.

We have a long-standing commitment to widening access and removing unnecessary barriers for prospective students. In this way we aim to create an inclusive educational environment to ensure every student has the opportunity to reach their potential.

Educational provision forming part of any collaboration e.g. TNE, joint degrees etc is subject to the same quality scrutiny as standard home campus provision. To ensure consistency of approach, and equality of experience, student outcomes and evaluations are considered as part of a 'whole' irrespective of mode, method and geographical location of delivery. For example, students studying at overseas campuses would be considered at Examiners' Meetings alongside students on the Aberdeen campus; similarly, School Internal Teaching Reviews include all teaching irrespective of delivery method/location.

In response to Covid-19, the University developed a range of Principles of Blended Learning, which are embedded into the education which we deliver. These were developed in consultation with Schools and the wider University community and were applied across the Institution, further ensuring consistency in our delivery of learning irrespective of individual circumstances. Building on these Principles, the Delivery of Education for 2022-23 is underpinned by the Five Principles of Teaching. The University developed its 'No Detriment' policies and procedures to specifically to ensure equality in outcomes throughout this timethe Covid-19 Pandemic.

In addition, the former Resilient Learning Communities Enhancement Theme 'Community of Practice' has provided further opportunities for staff to share good practice with supportive peers and this work continues as part of the current institutional enhancement activities. In the last few years, the University has invested heavily in technology in order to ensure a smooth and easily accessible teaching, learning and

	assessment opportunities for all. ~~Recently, we~~We have upgraded our virtual learning environment to the Ultra Course View from Blackboard Learn/Anthology. Thus ensuring we are providing an accessible and mobile environment to all our staff and students. Likewise, web conferencing software is up to date to support remote learning, along with video technology to record teaching and learning sessions. Similarly, the Education Strategic Risk Register is maintained by the University Education Committee with its sub-Committees overseeing the relevant risks. This offers oversight and discussion on the key areas and risks pertinent to the Education portfolio.	
4. Effective learning and teaching is informed through reflective practice and providers enable staff to engage in relevant, timely and appropriate professional development that supports students' learning and high-quality teaching. Effective student learning is facilitated by interaction with appropriately qualified, supported and developed teaching and support staff. Providers ensure that staff demonstrate up-to date knowledge and practice in both their subject and appropriate pedagogies. Providers ensure that staff engage in self-reflection to appropriately inform their learning, teaching and assessment design and practice. Staff are provided with access to	The University's periodic review process, Internal Teaching Review, allows for a holistic review of the pedagogic provision within the academic Schools. This process is focused on quality enhancement with the engagement of management, staff and students within the School. The School is required to complete a Critical Analysis prior to the review which reflects on the pedagogic provision currently taking place in the School. Every programme (or cognate group of programmes) is required to submit an Annual Programme Review, which encourages Schools to reflect, review and discuss each programme and its constituent courses. These programme reviews are overseen by the Quality Assurance Committee, with support from the Academic Services team. They identify areas of good and innovative practice, while also highlighting areas for development and enhancement. Our current institutional Quality Enhancement Activities build on the work of the previous QAAS Enhancement Theme, Resilient Learning Communities and are overseen by the Dean for Quality Assurance & Quality Enhancement, supported by CAD alongside the Deans for Educational Innovation, Student Support & Experience, and Employability & Entrepreneurship. Activities include the co-ordination of the University's Annual Academic Development Symposium 2024, themed	Internal Teaching Review (Webpage) Critical Analysis Guidance (Document) Annual Programme Review (Webpage) Enhancement Themes, Leadership (Webpage) Enhancement Themes, University (Webpage) Annual Academic Development Symposium (Webpage) Toolkit Resources (Webpage) Introduction to Learning & Teaching in Higher Education at the University of Aberdeen

continuing professional development (CPD) that is planned, monitored and evaluated (for example, for its impact on student achievement, where possible). Providers offer opportunities for all those involved in learning and teaching to inform each other's practice and experience.	'Embracing Diversity: Supporting Inclusive Learning Communities' and a further call for projects as part of the Learning & Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP). ~~The University is fortunate to have input in sector-level leadership in the Enhancement Theme, as our Vice-Principal, Education acts as Deputy Chair. Our institutional Enhancement Theme activities are overseen by the Steering Group and shared with the Resilient Learning Community of Practice. Activities are supported by the CAD which also co-ordinates the University's Annual Academic Development Symposium, aligned with the current Enhancement Theme, to which external colleagues are invited. Other external-facing activities include our involvement with the 'Understanding Micro-Credentials and Small qualifications in Scotland' and 'Valuing and Recognising Prior Learning and Experience' projects.~~ CAD offers professional development (including programmes accredited by AdvanceHE) for all staff and PGRs who teach and support learning. Workshops, courses, networks and discussion fora encourage participants to focus on active student engagement. Further, the University encourages self-learning by use of the updated Toolkit resources. In addition, all academic staff new to the University of Aberdeen are required to participate in ~~a~~ the mandatory ~~2-day induction course,~~ 'Introduction to Learning and Teaching at the University of Aberdeen' course.	
5. Effective learning and teaching is underpinned by routine evaluation of provision to manage and enhance their learning and teaching activities, including achievement of qualification and award outcomes. Providers use a range of internal and external information and	The University's annual and periodic monitoring processes include Annual Programme Review and Internal Teaching Review, respectively. Annual Programme Reviews are the process by which Programme Coordinators reflect and review their teaching provision on their courses and programmes. This process feeds into the wider annual monitoring activities and includes significant input from the Quality Assurance Committee. The Internal Teaching Review process occurs every 5-6 years and allows Schools the opportunity to reflect on the pedagogic provision in their School. The Review Panel includes External Subject Specialists (ESS). The	Annual Programme Review (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review Process (Document) External Examining (Webpage) School Planning Process Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (Webpage) NSS (Webpage) University 5th in UK for Student Satisfaction in NSS (Webpage) Student-Staff Liaison Committees (Document) Course Evaluation Forms (Webpage)

feedback to enable them to keep their approach to learning and teaching under review, taking deliberate steps to facilitate the continuous improvement of the learning opportunities and support they provide. Evaluation and enhancement takes place for all learning and teaching activities.	ESS may come from a UK or overseas institution, from industry or from professional practice. The teaching review includes sessions with an array of stakeholders, including School management, academic and support staff, as well as students. One of the key elements within the Internal Teaching Review process is the Pedagogic Partnership Session, which invites academic staff and students alike to join together to create an action plan for the School and to assess each other's feedback. External experts, including appointed external examiners, assist Schools in the reflection and evaluation of teaching provision. Programme Advisory Boards and similar include industry and academic experts to assist the School/Programme in the enhancement of quality within the provision. External Examiners are appointed to every programme (or cognate group of programmes) and evaluate the teaching, learning and assessment within that programme. Formal Examiners' Meetings allow for an open and constructive dialogue with the School on matters pertinent to the assessment and degree classification of students. Schools are expected to liaise with their External Examiner on new assessments and changes to existing assessments to ensure their appropriateness. Where relevant, Schools also draw upon Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body guidance to inform the curriculum ensuring it remains in alignment with requirements. Provision provided with or through partner institutions is scrutinised on an annual basis through the reports submitted to the QAC. The planning process for Schools also allows for an evaluation of provision. Each School and Professional Services Directorate has the opportunity to meet with the Senior Management team and colleagues in the Directorate of Planning to evaluate their provision, aspects of good practice and aspects for development, as well as reviewing resource allocation and financial planning, which supports the teaching provision.	Programme Advisory Boards (Webpage) TESTA@ABDN (webpages)

In terms of student evaluation of teaching, the University uses an array of mechanisms to ensure teaching is high quality and that feedback can enhance their education. These include:

- *Aberdeen Student Experience Survey:* this is an internal survey developed for University of Aberdeen students and is separate from national surveys, such as NSS. The survey gathers feedback on an array of University Services, facilities and activities which help to inform enhancements to the student experience.
- *Undergraduate Experience Survey (UES):* is an internal survey developed by the University of Aberdeen to gather student feedback on the quality of their educational experience and is completed by all undergraduate students who are not in their final year of studies and therefore completing the NSS instead.xxx
- *Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES):* is a national survey managed by Advance HE with gathers student feedback on the quality of PGT students educational experience. xxx
- *Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES):* is a national survey managed by Advance HE with gathers student feedback on the educational experiences of PGR students. xxx
- *National Student Survey (NSS):* NSS is managed by the Office for Students on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council and gathers student opinion on the quality of their courses. This assists Universities in enhancing the student and academic experience.
- *Student-Staff Liaison Committees:* within each School, class representatives are invited to collaborative fora to discuss any ongoing issues or concerns that the School could act upon or seek University action on. These help to enhance the student learning and teaching provision, and allow for constructive dialogue with students.
- *Course Evaluation Forms:* every student has the opportunity to submit feedback on each of their courses. This is accessed electronically by a dedicated system and allows teaching staff to ascertain the issues and positive aspects of their provision. These forms feed into the wider annual monitoring activities, such as Annual Course Reviews and Annual Programme Reviews. When

	using our virtual learning environment, we encourage staff to re-think and re-fresh content, offering programme/course review sessions which are mapped out using storyboards. We also provide a checklist to ensure content is quality assured. A recent enhancements is offering an accessibility support service and informal course checks within our online environment. ▪ A core part of the Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment (TESTA) programme is the collection, and interpretation of data collected via course reviews, student questionnaires, and focus groups, and programme-level meetings bring teaching teams together to reflect upon current practices and potential enhancement areas	
6. Effective learning and teaching activities, facilities and resources make the learning environment accessible, relevant and engaging to all students. Providers design their learning environment to be safe, accessible and suitable for the nature of the learning activities and planned in a systematic way in consultation with students. The learning environment may encompass: • physical environment (seating, lighting and acoustics, availability of technology) • virtual environment (technological facilities including virtual learning environments and library systems) social learning	The University Estates Committee's purpose is to oversee the University's estate in order that it can support world-class academic, teaching and research activity. The Committee makes recommendations to the Finance and Resources Committee and Court in terms of facilities development required to enhance the learning environment. The University's Old Aberdeen campus has three Library sites, including the Sir Duncan Rice Library and Taylor Law Library on the Old Aberdeen Campus, as well as the Medical Library on the Foresterhill Campus. Additionally, library provision is available at our TNE campuses. These libraries are available to students throughout their studies and during term time are open until late. A large proportion of library resources are available online and can be accessed by our online and distance learning students. During periods of exams, the libraries move to 24-hour opening which allows students the opportunity to study at all times of day. These ensure that resources and dedicated study spaces are available and accessible to students when they need them. The University also has an array of dedicated study spaces, including: ▪ The University Libraries ▪ Computer classrooms which are available on all campuses, when not being used for teaching	Digitally Enhanced Learning Spaces, Online (Webpage) Digitally Enhanced Learning Spaces, Toolkit (Webpage) Our Libraries (Webpage) Study Spaces (Webpage) Hardship Options, including Digital Poverty Fund (Webpage) Framework on Accessibility & Inclusivity in Education (Webpage) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (Webpage) Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group (Webpage)

environment (dialogue based on mutual dignity and respect and a safe environment for exploring new ideas and providing feedback).	- A number of drop-in co-lab based group student spaces in the Sir Duncan Rice Library and the Suttie Centre - A small number of single occupancy study spaces, which can be booked for those with an online class followed directly by an on-campus class and vice-versa. The University also delivers TNE through its Qatar Campus where teaching is delivered in partnership with AFG College, ~~and~~ at the Aberdeen Institute of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence at South China Normal University and at Harbin Engineering University. To ensure equity of student experience, care is taken to ensure the facilities and digital infrastructure align, where appropriate, with the Aberdeen campus taking account of cultural needs. The University uses Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) to support delivery of teaching, learning and assessment, both for students studying on campus and those learning online. Since 2019, Schools have been moving their courses from the Institutional VLE, MyAberdeen (which uses Blackboard Learn), to Blackboard's newer course view, 'Ultra'. The Ultra Course View provides a simpler, more modern, personalised and accessible course experience for staff and students, than before. ~~The remaining Schools moved over to Ultra in time for teaching in~~ All Schools moved over to Ultra in time for teaching in September 2022, with the exception of the healthcare programmes which utilise a bespoke VLE. To help improve the accessibility of learning materials on MyAberdeen, the University provides access to 'Blackboard Ally' software. Blackboard Ally provides automated feedback to teaching staff, alternative file formats to students and tools for reporting on the accessibility of courses on MyAberdeen. In 2021, CAD also piloted a small Course Accessibility Service which aimed to support staff who are looking to improve their learning materials, in particular inaccessible documents. In September 2022, this service was made available to all courses to allow staff to seek advice on the accessibility of their course, and work with colleagues in	

CAD to ~~fix~~ modify documents that may cause accessibility issues for students.

The University is further supporting staff to improve the accessibility of learning materials by funding an external video captioning service for use on courses which have students with a disability provision. The University has also provided central funds to academic schools to help more generally in ~~the push to make~~making video material more accessible by employing students to support captioning work.

~~Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and prior, extensive work was carried out by colleagues in Digitally Enhanced Teaching and Meeting Spaces Group, including colleagues from Estates, IT, CAD and the Dean for Educational Innovation, which was set up to oversee the development of digitally enhanced classrooms to support the requirements for blended learning. This negates the necessity for some staff to 'double teach' and allows for online and on-campus students to be present in the same place. This work is also part of an ongoing approach to developing our physical and digital infrastructure, particularly in support of our education provision.~~

In supporting students to engage in their studies, the University has also set up a range of hardship funds, which includes a Digital Poverty Fund for those students who did not have adequate or necessary equipment to allow them to engage in their studies during blended learning. This is administered by the University student support team.

The University has recently developed its Framework on Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education, which draws on policies, guidance, resources, support and specialist training provided to all staff and students. This responds to the commitments within the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy of inclusivity, aiming to provide all students with the opportunity to reach their full potential. It also outlines the range of support available to students to support them in their studies, should they require it.

	The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee also plays a role in ensuring that the University is a safe, inclusive and accessible space for all staff and students, regardless of race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or gender, for example. The Committee includes members of senior management, relevant colleagues and memberships of various equality networks. In addition, as part of the ongoing Aberdeen 2040 Strategy agenda, the Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group ~~will develop~~developed an approach which addresses embedded racial stereotypes and/or limited perspectives in the curriculum and ~~will support~~supported Schools to develop learning materials which offer students a rich diversity of views and role models. This ~~will help~~helped to facilitate a safe and inclusive pedagogic experience for students. The work of Decolonising the Curriculum is now continued as part of a Community of Practice led by the Dean for Educational Innovation.	
7. **Effective learning and teaching ensures that information about, and support for, learning and teaching is clear and accessible to all students and stakeholders.** Providers give clarity on the responsibilities of staff, students and, where appropriate, other stakeholders (such as employers involved in work-based learning and apprenticeships) for learning and teaching and its support. Information is provided in an inclusive, transparent and accessible way. Providers engage students to monitor, review and	The University committee structures related to Education ~~have been changed to~~ include greater focus and collaboration with the academic Schools. ~~These changes~~This structure ensure~~s~~ that there is close integration and communication between School Education Committees and the University Education Committee, Quality Assurance Committee and ~~its~~their sub-committees. This ensures that decision-making relating to Education matters is appropriately informed by the discipline specific perspectives of all Schools. This close working with Schools is further strengthened by ~~fortnightly~~ informal meetings between the Vice Principal, Education and the Director of Academic Services and Online Education with the School Directors of Education providing a forum for engagement, discussion and close collaboration. There ~~are~~is a range of communications that are provided to students prior to study and over the course of their studies that give detailed information on their teaching, learning and assessment. These are informed by the Student Communication Policy. These include: ▪ New Student Communications	Student Communication Policy (Policy), note this is currently being reviewed. Communicating with You (Webpage) New Student Communications (Webpage) Online Orientation and Induction (Webpage) Key Policies for Students (Webpage) MyAberdeen (Webpage) Toolkit (Webpage)

evaluate this information to ensure that it meets the needs of different groups of students.	- Ongoing eZines; providing relevant information on the student and academic experience - Online Orientation; providing information on induction and orientation to students about their studies - Orientation Events; which allow students to gain an insight into their studies An area within the VLE which outlines the key policies and policy changes relevant to the students' teaching and learning is highlighted to students. This contains information and addresses issues such as what to do when absent, how to raise an appeal or complaint and processes for degree classification, among other things. Information is updated at least annually, with a communication issued to students and broadcast on social media to alert them to this important information. This ensures the information is disseminated to students in a clear and accessible manner. At a programme and course level, handbooks and information within VLE organisational areas provides students with specific information relating to their course and programme covering topics including intended learning outcomes, assessment arrangements, key contacts and deadlines. Key resources and information about student support services are available through the University's Virtual Learning Environment. Information is also available in the University's Toolkit which provides a rich set of learning resources. Detailed information regarding our relationships and working practices with employers and other stakeholders in relation to work-based learning is available in our separate document mapping our policies and procedures to Section 12 of the Quality Code relating to Work-Based Learning.	
8. Effective learning and teaching encourages and	The University has established transition programmes with a focus on widening access students and these ~~have~~ had expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic to be available to all students. Recruitment and	Widening Access (Webpage) Student Orientation (Webpage) Pastoral Support & Guidance (Webpage)

enables students to take an active role in their studies. Providers enable students to engage in independent learning relevant to the level of study, working in partnership with individuals and teams to display appropriate academic behaviour and integrity. Providers assist students to transition and progress through their studies.	academic colleagues collaborate closely on these programmes. These programmes provide students with an insight into the University experience (academic and wider) and students can be signposted to more specific training, such as in relation to maths. A staged orientation programme enables students (new and returning) to enhance their skills in working with the University systems (such as the Virtual Learning Environments and Toolkits) before teaching begins. Orientation is at central University level, and also at School level, and is reviewed constantly to ensure that it is as effective as possible for students to be aware of what is expected of them and how to meet this. When students join the University, Professional Development courses for UG and PGT students enable further development of professional and transferrable skills which students can use to ensure they engage actively in their studies. Pastoral support systems (such as the undergraduate Personal Tutor) and peer support systems provide a framework within which students can raise questions informally, and also access more specific support (for example Registry, MyCurriculum and Student Support) to ensure they have the necessary information and support. The Student Learning Service (SLS) in CAD works closely with students and academic staff. SLS provides support for students and staff, ensuring students can take an active role in their studies. SLS provides specialist academic skills support for neurodivergent students ~~with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs)~~. The Accessibility and Inclusivity in Education Framework draws together resource and practice to support staff in enabling all aspects of Education to be inclusive such that all students can take an active role. The Disability Team in the Student Support and Advisory Team, School Disability Coordinators and academic staff collaborate, with support from staff in CAD, to ensure that any reasonable adjustments can be delivered in an effective and timely manner.	Personal Tutoring (Webpage) Peer Support (Webpage) MyCurriculum (Webpage) Support & Wellbeing (Webpage) Study Resources (Webpage) Centre for Academic Development (Webpage) Accredited Programmes, CAD (Webpage) Inclusivity & Accessibility in Education Framework (Webpage) Disability Services (Webpage) Money Matters (Webpage) Policy on Lecture Capture (Policy) Class Representation, AUSA (Webpage) Student Feedback (Webpage) STAR Award (Webpage) Co-Curricular Activities (Webpage) Principles and Guidance for Blended Learning (Webpage) How Do I Encourage Active Learning in the Online Environment? (Webpage) Students with Specific Support Needs (Webpage) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (Webpage) Student Monitoring (C6 and C7) (Webpage)

Financial support is available through the Hardship Fund to all students in need. This was particularly valuable in providing IT hardware support in COVID times.

The University's established policy regarding recording of lectures, alongside the practice of lectures only being recorded (and now captioned) in COVID times has provided flexibility for students and more options for their active engagement in their studies.

The Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) School Convenor system and Class representative system provides a formal structure for students to influence actively the ongoing and future delivery of teaching and learning for example through Staff-Student Liaison Committees. The *You Shape UoA* feedback system and the Aberdeen Student Experience Support also provide other opportunities for feedback and academic and professional services colleagues work closely to ensure issues are considered by the relevant person.

In terms of co-curricular activities, the Careers and Employability Service support a range of activities to enhance and support student learning. Some of these initiatives include ~~the STAR (Students Taking Active Roles) Award,~~ paid internships, volunteering opportunities, career mentoring, study abroad, and enterprise and entrepreneurship. Students are encouraged to record and reflect on their activities and their skills development journey via the MySkills system. ~~These activities are recognised on the Student Transcript as a recognition of the extra- and co-curricular activities that have been undertaken throughout their studies~~.

Building on the move to blended learning during the COVID-19 period, which has led to teaching, learning and assessment being delivered in different ways, providing a variety of means for students to engage actively, the ~~academic year 2022-23~~delivery of education is underpinned by the Five Principles of Education. ~~Discussion through the Aberdeen 2040~~

	~~Education Steering Group is currently giving consideration to the future approach to be taken to delivery.~~	
	The University recognises the links between delivery of teaching and learning and the wider University experience. There is regular collaboration between students, Professional Services Directorates and School to ensure that students are provided with the best opportunities to engage actively with their studies, particularly in relation to students with particular experiences and characteristics (e.g. disabled, race, estranged from family).	
	The University has an established system of monitoring engagement with study to identify at an early stage those who may be struggling. This allows active engagement and support to be provided to ensure that students can be helped to get back on track with their studies. This activity is supported by the School Monitoring Leads Group which meets to monitor, review, and enhance monitoring procedures across the institution, chaired by the Dean of Student Support and Experience and includes School academic and administrative leads and professional service representatives.	
	~~The delivery of education is structured around the Community of Inquiry Framework (Garrison, 2008; Vaughan, 2013). This model is based on an approach that students are supported to develop a social presence and through this be supported to enhance their active engagement with learning opportunities.~~	
	CAD offers professional development (including programmes accredited by AdvanceHE) for all staff and PGRs who teach and support learning. Workshops, courses, networks and discussion fora encourage participants to focus on active student engagement.	
9. Providers encourage and enable students to evaluate and manage their own	Within each Academic School, students are engaged in evaluation of their teaching and learning experience in ~~a~~ myriad ~~of~~ ways. This includes the Student-Staff Liaison Committees, which include representation from all	Student-Staff Liaison Committees (Document) Course Evaluation (Webpage) Class Representation, University (Webpage)

learning development, supported by opportunities for ongoing dialogue with staff.	student cohorts, levels and degree programmes. This is facilitated by the Class Representation System, linked closely with the Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA). The Course Evaluation Form process further allows students to provide feedback at a course level both in regard to areas for improvement but also areas of good practice.	Class Representation, AUSA (Webpage) Student Monitoring (Webpage) Feedback Framework (Webpage) Design, Deliver and Evaluate your Teaching (Webpage) University Education Committee (Webpage) Senate, Membership (Webpage) Cognitive Presence (Webpage)
Providers encourage students to evaluate their learning experiences and provide feedback in dialogue with individuals and teams through deliberate steps that inform the enhancement of learning and teaching.	As part of course design staff are encouraged to ensure that assessment strategies include sufficient opportunities for formative assessment and feedback, in addition to summative assessment. These provide students with opportunities to evaluate their own progress within a course. The University recognises the importance of feedback in supporting and developing students' learning and the value of self-evaluation as part of this process. As such, the University operates a Feedback Framework which provides students with a clear set of expectations for this process. The Student Monitoring process is used to highlight students who may be at risk of not meeting learning outcomes at a course level, as part of a supportive framework. Students are encouraged to meet with staff to discuss any issues they may be encountering and are signposted to additional sources of support. The University places strong emphasis on the involvement of students on committees and in decision making. Each School has an AUSA elected School Convener who is the lead student representative for each School. They work closely with the elected class representatives to feed any concerns about courses and programmes to the School. The School Convener (or other student representative) attends School-level committees (e.g. School Education Committee) where they are able to contribute to discussions around future courses and programmes, policy matters, feedback (e.g. NSS results) and other matters. At a University level, AUSA representatives are also full members of all Education committees including the University Education Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee along with Senate which is the University's main academic decision-making body.	

The Vice President for Education at AUSA is included on the Vice-Principal, Education's informal education team. The Vice-Principal, Education also meets with the AUSA Education Committee ~~monthly~~regularly, to foster good relations in the spirit of collaboration and transparency.

The Student Learning Service (SLS) offers academic skills advice and guidance to students to evaluate and manage their learning, through one-to-one sessions, workshops, and online resources (section 8 refers).

~~Within the Community of Inquiry Framework approach embedded within the University of Aberdeen's teaching development, the domain of cognitive presence encompasses a focus on supporting students to track and review their progress. Cognitive presence refers to the extent to which participants, both students and teaching staff, are able to construct meaning through sustained communication. This kind of communication, as opposed to one-way dissemination of information, encourages critical thinking.~~

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Mapping Against the UK Quality Code

SECTION 12: WORK-BASED LEARNING

Academic Services | *Quality & Policy*

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SECTION 12: WORK-BASED LEARNING

The Quality Code is split into 12 themes, available online on the QAA website at https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code. As part of this, *Work-based Learning* brings together aspects of provision which involves elements of practical, work-based education. In providing opportunities for students to engage in work-placements or apprenticeships, it allows students to gain a variety of applied practical-based skills not otherwise gained through academic study. The Quality Code describes this theme as follows:

> *Work-based learning for higher education courses describes courses that bring together higher education providers and work organisations to create learning opportunities. This Theme needs to be considered in conjunction with other regulatory requirements including providers' academic regulations, funding body requirements and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies' (PSRB) rules and regulations.*

This theme applies to academic provision that utilises work-based learning, and to courses offered by colleagues in Professional Services teams, such as the Careers and Employability Service, where similar courses or programmes of activity are offered.

In defining key terms that are used in this section, the Quality Code notes the following:

Apprenticeships: This Theme is intended to be relevant to all apprenticeships that include higher education irrespective of the nation in which they are delivered. This will include, for example, Degree Apprenticeships, Graduate Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships. Providers will need to make reference to other relevant guidance from QAA and other involved bodies for specific requirements, advice and guidance, relevant to the apprenticeship being delivered.

Student: Where the term 'student' is used in this document, it should be used to refer equally to those students who are also 'apprentices'.

Work-based learning: This involves learning through work, learning for work and/or learning at work. It consists of authentic structured opportunities for learning which are achieved in a workplace setting or are designed to meet an identified workplace need. This type of learning typically has a dual function of being designed to meet the learning needs of the employees, developing their knowledge, skills and professional behaviours, and also meeting the workforce development needs of the organisation.

Work-based learning is, therefore, learning which is distinguished from work-related or simulated learning activity that has not been formulated or commissioned by, or in partnership with, employers to address a current workforce need.

SECTION 12: WORK-BASED LEARNING

The Quality Code has three different sections: the expectations for standards; the expectations for quality; and the guiding principles. The relevant expectations for standards and quality are detailed below. The Guiding Principles are mapped to the University's own policies, procedures and quality mechanisms. There are two separate sections for the University's practices, detailing what the University does and has in place to support that expectation/principle, as well as the supporting documentation, which includes reference to supporting policy, procedure, website or other document.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STANDARDS & CORE/COMMON PRACTICES	EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY & CORE/COMMON PRACTICES
The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.	Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.	From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.	The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.
The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.
The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.	The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.
	The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.
	The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES	UNIVERSITY PRACTICES	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
GUIDING PRINCIPLES		
1. Work-based learning courses and opportunities are designed and developed in partnership with employers, students and other stakeholders (where appropriate) and contain learning outcomes that are relevant to work objectives. Within the context of the Code and the advice and guidance, work-based learning is integral to the course of study and is designed in partnership between the education organisation, employers and students. Other stakeholders may be involved, for instance, care users, professional bodies and regulatory authorities. To ensure integration and an effective experience, course design should include learning outcomes that are directly relevant to work objectives.	The University currently offers a limited range of work-based learning opportunities including one Graduate Apprenticeship programme which is being phased out due to limited student recruitment. The University's Strategic Plan, 'Aberdeen 2040', states that we will "equip our graduates for global employment through our curriculum and teaching methods" and "ensure that all our students can experience innovative, challenge-led education involving external stakeholders". To drive this strategic vision forward, a Task and Finish Group ~~has been~~completed a consultation exercise, developed a vision and menu for upscaling work-based learning provision and a 5-year plan. A workstream under the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee is in place to implement recommendations. ~~established and a consultation exercise has recently been completed as part of the work of this group.~~ The University's Guidance Note on Placements provides advice to staff, students and placement providers in regard to placement provision. This guidance is currently being updated and taken through our Committee structure for approval. The guidance will also be informed by the ~~next phas~~workstream in place, ~~e of the placement consultation exercise~~ highlighted above. Through Programme Advisory Boards (PABs), Schools are able to engage with employers and local organisations to discuss programme and course design as well as enabling close links with work-based learning providers. In those Schools with PABs they interface with teaching in a variety of ways, with some being sub-specialist (e.g. variety of engineering PABs related to each discipline speciality in engineering). ~~These PAB groups are currently being reviewed to consolidate their activity across the University.~~ Additionally, the requirement for work-based learning in some programmes (e.g., school placement provision in Education Degrees) is a	[Course and Programme Approval Processes (Webpage)](#) [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Policy)](#) [Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy (Policy)](#) [Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)](#) Work Placements Task & Finish Group – Remit & Composition (Document) [Programme Advisory Boards (Webpage)](#)

	Professional Statutory and Regulatory (PSRB) requirement and where this is the case the work-based learning is developed in close alignment with the PSRB requirements. Schools are responsible for ensuring that any work-based learning activity clearly defines the relevant responsibilities of the various parties, intended learning outcomes and appropriate assessment. The development of work-based learning is undertaken in partnership with employers, students, and other stakeholders where appropriate. The University's procedures for course and programme approval apply equally to periods of work-based learning. Within the quality assurance documentation submitted for approval, Schools are required to provide details of learning outcomes and clearly map how this will be assessed. In developing any period of work-based learning, academic Schools are also required to take account of: - The capability of the workplace provider to fulfil the University's expectations and legal responsibilities in regard to the Disability Discrimination Act; - The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy; - The health, safety and welfare of students; - Whether the placement will require students to complete a Disclosure Scotland check (e.g., School-based placements for teacher training).	
2. Work-based learning consists of structured opportunities for learning and is achieved through authentic activity and is supervised in the workplace. Work-based learning in the context of the advice and	Academic Schools are responsible for the organisation and management of work-based learning activity. When organising work-based learning, a member of University staff is identified as having responsibility for the activity. Where students have proactively identified an opportunity for work-based learning to support their overall learning experience, the School works closely with the students and the organisation to ensure there is full clarity and understanding around the relative roles and responsibilities of all parties.	Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document) Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Policy (Policy)

guidance is a structured opportunity. It is an integral part of a course that is achieved through authentic activity which is intended to contribute to meeting a genuine workplace need. Arrangements between employer, education organisation and student should be agreed on how the student is supervised within the workplace, and regular contact should be maintained - appropriate to the student, the workplace context and specific work-based learning opportunity.	Heads of School are responsible for ensuring those staff members who are arranging and overseeing placements and work-based learning are competent to do so, and that they are provided with appropriate training opportunities. This makes sure the learning opportunities are authentic by ensuring staff have current knowledge and can therefore support students because they have real world expertise and are aware of current trends within the discipline. Academic Schools must also ensure that work-based learning providers are aware of their role and responsibilities in the support of students during the placement and, where appropriate, assessment of students, if they are required to carry out assessments as part of the agreed activity. Training is provided for providers on assessment practices and procedures that are used by the University (e.g. using the virtual learning environment or other systems required for specific degree programmes). Where an activity is identified as requiring students to complete a Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check, academic Schools ensure that this has been completed satisfactorily before the work-based learning period begins. Schools are also responsible for ensuring that students complete the correct level of (PVG) checking as required for the planned activity.	
3. Work-based learning opportunities are underpinned by formal agreements between education organisations, employers and students. Work-based learning opportunities will be agreed between education organisations, employers and students; they will need to be formally agreed to ensure all understand the	Arrangement of work-based learning opportunities involves close liaison between the academic School and the work-based learning provider to agree the structure of the placement, the support that will be provided to the student and the assessment, where required. These are supported by an agreement detailing relative responsibilities of the various parties. Depending on the nature of the work-based learning opportunity, they are sometimes governed by the provider rather than the University (e.g. industrial placements that require students to agree and sign-up to terms and conditions provided by the organisation delivering the placement).	[Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)](#)

respective roles, responsibilities and expectations. The format and detail of the agreement will vary depending on each opportunity and may follow a format specified by another organisation, for example, apprenticeship agreements and commitment statements in England (see also Partnerships Theme).		
4. Education organisations and employers consider any specific issues in relation to the workplace environment and deal with them appropriately, including informal agreements where appropriate. Education organisations, employers and students have responsibilities to themselves and to others in relation to the workplace environment. These will include, for example, health and safety and safeguarding. Education organisations and employers need to be clear on their respective responsibilities and provide guidance to each other and to students on the specific issues with relevant training, if required. Formal agreements may also need to include details on how specific issues, such as sharing of data, are dealt with.	Arrangements are agreed in writing with University staff, the student(s) and the work-based learning provider. In advance of any work-based learning activity taking place, academic Schools should consult with the work-based learning provider to ensure: - The learning outcomes and assessment arrangements are agreed. - Issues of health, safety and wellbeing are discussed. - The responsibilities and rights of all parties are discussed. - Contact details are shared, including guidance on who to contact should a student have a concern or complaint. - Implications for accessing University and work-based learning organisation services, salary, holiday entitlements and other statutory terms and conditions. - Specific needs of the student are arranged (e.g., disability requirements).	Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)

5. Work-based learning is delivered through a meaningful partnership between students, employers and the education organisation.	During the delivery of the work-based learning activity, academic Schools are responsible for ensuring that:	Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)
Work-based learning covers a range of opportunities which, if well designed and managed, will provide a quality experience for all involved. In order to ensure that the needs of the student, employer and education organisation are fully met, the partnership arrangements should be considered and agreed prior to the work-based learning commencing. These arrangements will vary depending on the nature of the work-based learning, as will the format of the recording of the agreed arrangements.	- regular contact is maintained, usually via e-mail and more recently Teams/Zoom calls; - where appropriate, visits are carried out as required; - any problems notified to them by the student and/or provider are dealt with promptly; - any concerns raised by the provider relating to the conduct of the student are dealt with promptly and in line with University procedures; - appropriate monitoring of the student's progress is undertaken, with a formal record being kept. For some students on longer term work-based learning programmes (e.g., year-long industrial placements), following the placement, academic Schools provide appropriate guidance and support to assist the student as they re-integrate into their University studies. For students on our Gradate Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering, we have a tri-partite agreement that explicitly details the meaningful partnership between the student, the University and the employer.	
6. Work-based learning opportunities enable students to apply and integrate areas of subject and professional knowledge, skills and behaviours to enable them to meet course learning outcomes.	Work-based learning opportunities are explicitly linked with specific degree programmes and as such must have defined learning outcomes that allow students to apply their subject-specific knowledge, skills and behaviours. The course and programme approval process includes consideration of work-based learning opportunities and as such learning outcomes are reviewed together with their alignment to the assessment. For those students on programmes that have defined Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) (e.g., Medicine and Dentistry programmes), these PSRB requirements also form part of the quality assurance and approval processes that are required for the work-based learning activity.	Course and Programme Approval Processes (Webpage) Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)
The significant potential benefits for workbased learning are best achieved where the opportunity exists to integrate all aspects, that		

is, subject and professional knowledge, skills and behaviours. Learning outcomes for work-based learning should be written to enable these areas to be fully integrated (see also Course Design and Development, Learning and Teaching, and Assessment themes).		
7. **Parties understand and respect the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations of the education organisation, employer and student, and appropriate training and support is provided where required.** It should be clear what the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations are for the education organisation, the employer and the student. These will vary depending on the type of work-based learning and the relationships between the employer, student and education organisation. They should be clear and transparent and communicated to all involved in the work-based learning provision. Where employers are involved in assessment, their role is clearly defined, appropriate training is given, and, for summative assessment, standard	The University Guidance Note for Placement Learning provides advice to staff, students and placement providers in regard to the development, delivery and monitoring of placement provision. Further, and more specific, responsibilities and expectations are communicated through course and/or programme handbooks, which specify all of the required information for work-based learning frameworks, assessment and feedback processes and outline the timeline of work that is required to be completed throughout the work-based learning activity. Assessment and feedback for most work-based learning is carried out by University academic staff. It is sometimes carried out by providers of work-based learning. Where providers are involved in assessment and feedback, training is provided to ensure they are familiar with all of the current University assessment practices and regulations. Any provider-led assessment is subject to the University policies and procedures on the quality assurance of assessment (e.g., moderation). Providers may, where appropriate, also be granted access to the virtual learning environment to allow them to complete assessments and monitor course/programme activity virtually – if this is required providers are also given appropriate training. Within the academic School at least one individual is identified as being responsible for managing the work-based learning opportunity. This person, or persons are, required to have the appropriate skills and knowledge to support the student. They are required to engage with	[Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)](#)

mechanisms of moderation, standardisation and external examination are fully used.	development and training support so that they can carry out their role appropriately (e.g., maintaining up to date health and safety training records). The University works with work-based learning providers to identify training and development needs that the University can support.	
8. Education organisations and employers acknowledge individuals have unique needs within the education organisation and in the workplace, and collaborate to ensure opportunities are inclusive, safe and supported. Providers, whether the education organisation or the employer, establish the unique learner needs for the learning environments and work in partnership to ensure an inclusive approach to the provision of work-based learning opportunities. This will include through reasonable adjustments to procedures, activities and physical environments (see also Enabling Student Achievement Theme).	The University of Aberdeen's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy applies to all students, including those accessing work-based learning opportunities. In the planning phase of any work-based learning opportunity, the academic School is responsible for ensuring all aspects of the student's individual needs are discussed and appropriate support put in place if it is required. Students on work-based learning courses and/or programmes maintain access to all of the relevant student support opportunities such as being able to contact their Personal Tutor or access the Student Advice and Support Service. In addition, the student has access to a staff contact who is there to offer support academically and pastorally through the University Personal Tutor system. Furthermore, the Aberdeen University Student Association (AUSA) provides support for all students including those carrying out work-based learning. As work-based learning opportunities are developed collaboratively between student, academic staff and employer where appropriate, this approach ensures that support mechanisms are bespoke to each individual arrangement.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Policy) Pastoral and Guidance Support (Webpage) Student Advice and Support Team (Webpage) AUSA Advice Team (Webpage)
9. Work-based learning opportunities are designed, monitored, evaluated and	The Guidance Note on Placement Provision sets out the requirements for monitoring, evaluation and review on work-based learning opportunities Academic Schools are responsible for ensuring that feedback is gathered from staff and students on the quality and standards of the work-based	Annual Course and Programme Review Process (Webpage) Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document) Programme Advisory Boards (Webpage)

reviewed in partnership with employers. Work-based learning consists of authentic structured opportunities for learning which are achieved in a workplace setting or are designed to meet an identified workplace need. In order to meet the respective objectives for employer, student and provider, the design, monitoring and evaluation of the workplace learning opportunities should be carried out in partnership between the employer and the provider, with input from student representatives where possible and relevant. This partnership should include obtaining feedback from employers and students and involving them in the evaluation process.	placements provided. This feedback is collected through completion of evaluation forms by the students and discussions at student-staff liaison committee meetings, plus additional feedback from the placement provider. The feedback obtained from students and from the work-based learning placement provider informs the Annual Course and Programme Reviews that are overseen by the University's Quality Assurance Committee. Following review of the feedback received, any appropriate actions are identified and will then, in collaboration with the work-based learning provider, be discussed and changes made when required. These changes are then subjected to the same quality assurance measures as other University courses and refined as appropriate, thus always ensuring the work-based learning is current and fit for purpose. The changes are then subjected the same quality assurance procedures as any course and/or programme changes. Schools formally engage with employers through their Programme Advisory Boards (or equivalent) and informally through staff-employer interactions or informal meetings throughout work-based learning activities.	

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QAC QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

QATAR ADMISSION PROTOCOLS

1.   PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

> This paper sets out admission protocols to be applied for entry to programmes in Qatar.

2.   PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	**Date**
Previously considered by	UG Admissions Selector (External Relations) Qatar Planning Group /Task and Finish Group	Ongoing – July 2022 to Jan 2024
Further consideration/ approval required by	QAC Quality Assurance Committee IAG International Advisory Group QAPSG Qatar Academic Planning Subgroup	tbc

3.   RECOMMENDED ACTION

> The Group is invited to:
>   **For QAC Quality Assurance Committee**
> - **approve** that curriculum mapping in relation to partnerships with colleges that allow advanced entry needs to take place, as set out in **Appendix 1.2 & 1.3**
> - **approve** the approach to the Accreditation of Prior Learning set out in section 6.
>   **For IAG International Advisory Group[1]**
> - **review and consider** the live and proposed agreements which would allow students to transfer into a programme on the Qatar campus from a partner organisation.
>   **For QAPSG Qatar Academic Planning Subgroup**
> - **approve** the process set out in section 4 in relation to applicants to programmes delivered in Qatar.
> - **approve** the admissions protocols to be applied only for direct applications to programmes, as set out in **Appendix 1.1 & Appendix 1.4**
> - **note** the admission process draft set out in **Appendix 3**.
> - **note** the timeline for admission and registration set out at **Appendix 4**.
> - **note** the list of the key contacts set out in **Appendix 5**
> - **note** Qatar's admissions reporting template set out in **Appendix 6 -** to be finalised in the Qatar Planning Group/Task and Finish Group

4.   INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The University and AFG College have a current admissions protocol which has served its purpose for the early part of the partnership. The Qatari MOHE (Ministry of Higher Education), approved the protocol, but also provided feedback to both UoA and AFG that this will need to be reviewed considering the landscape of partnership in Qatar.

In mid-2023, an amended admissions protocol was circulated to various committees and groups for consideration and further feedback was given. The formal process of reviewing the admissions protocol began again in November 2023.

In January 2024, a revised version (See appendix 1 and sub sections) was completed. The contents of Appendix 1 represent months of discussion and collaborations between UoA Admissions team and AFG Colleges Admissions and Marketing team.

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[1] Further information about the IAG is available at International Advisory Group | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen (abdn.ac.uk)

With outstanding applications (c50) for programmes for September 2024 entry, a review by circulation to various committees/groups within the current governance structure at the University is needed, so that the applicants can get have their decisions/assessments on their applications expedited. From QAC, this paper will be reviewed by IAG circulation, and finally reviewed by Qatar Academic Planning Group.

5.   ADMISSIONS PROCESS

5.1   An application for admission should be completed by the applicant and submitted to the AFG admissions contact. It is essential when submitted for consideration by the selector that the application captures all relevant educational qualifications and/or professional experiences.[2](Documents required list is attached at **Appendix 2**). The application is then provided to the appropriate contact at UoA for review and a decision (key contacts list is attached at **Appendix 5) (**A draft of the Admissions process is attached at **Appendix 3** the final process to be included once finalised in the Task and Finish Group).

5.2   It is anticipated that applications for entry will be reviewed and normally a decision communicated back to AFG within 5 working days (as operated by the Aberdeen campus, Monday to Friday), recognising that more complex, non-standard applications that fall out with agreed protocols or partnerships where curriculum mapping has been carried out may take longer. (A draft of the registration timeline is attached at **Appendix 4 -** the final timeline to be included once finalised in the Task and Finish Group)

5.3   If the AFG admissions team believe that the admissions decision is not in line with the agreed protocols, then this should be communicated to the appropriate contact as set out at **Appendix 3** with new information supporting this. Any further requests for a review should be submitted to the Head of Admissions along with any new information or evidence not previously provided in the original application.

6.   ADMISSIONS PROTOCOLS.

6.1   The tables at **Appendix 1.1 & Appendix 1.4** set out the requirements for direct entry and **Appendix 1.2 & 1.3** set out the requirements for advanced entry (i.e. not through a college partnership) to current undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes offered on the Qatar Campus. The table shows the current threshold applied, and any recommended changes going forward.

6.2   In order to arrive at recommendations, there has been a review across all current published requirements to ensure that they are, as far as possible, consistent with each other, and this has resulted in some changes being recommended as set out in the table. Entry requirements have also been reviewed against equivalencies recently applied by the MoHE

6.3   Another column in the table also sets out the equivalent entry requirement for the Aberdeen campus. Although it is recognised that the Qatar programmes, with their embedded foundation element, should not require the same level of entry qualification, this review has highlighted both where Qatar admissions requirements appear to be too high against Aberdeen requirements, and also where they appear to be too low. This has resulted in some further suggested change for 2024 entry.

6.4   It is also proposed that, as with admission to undergraduate degrees on the Aberdeen campus, consideration is given to the recentness of the academic qualifications to ensure that the applicant has an appropriate level of current academic study experience. For undergraduate programmes, the expectation is that qualifications should **normally** have been obtained within

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[2] If not all information has been provided it may be possible to issue an offer that is conditional on evidence being provided. However there does need to enough information in the application to allow for a judgement on the level of offer, whether conditional or unconditional, to be made.

the last six years, but account will be taken of relevancy of professional experience when considering the currency of the qualification.

7. ADVANCED ENTRY/ENTRY WITH OTHER FORMS OF PRIOR LEARNING

7.1 In approving applications for advanced entry, admissions protocols need to reflect the need to provide evidence that curriculum subjects have been adequately covered at the required level. For school-level qualifications that follow a standard curriculum, any options for advanced entry to undergraduate programmes are included in the table at **Appendix 1.2 & 1.3**

7.2 Advanced entry from College/other provider

7.2.1 In relation to colleges/other institutions where advanced entry on the basis of, for example, an HN qualification, is regularly requested, it is proposed that curriculum mapping is carried out to confirm how the HN curriculum at that college maps on to the Aberdeen Qatar curriculum. Documenting this would the allow the same approach to be taken for all applicants from a particular college This is the approach taken with Aberdeen-campus partnerships with Scottish FE Colleges.

7.2.2 It is noted that advanced entry to Qatar programmes is in place or under development via the following partnership organisations/routes**.**

- Academic Bridge Programme
- University Foundation College
- University of Doha for Science & Technology (formerly College of the North Atlantic)
- Community College of Qatar
- Qatar Aeronautical College

7.2.3 It is recommended that the University's International Advisory Group reviews agreements with the above-mentioned partners, ensuring the appropriateness of the curriculum pathways outlined. Articulation agreements should be reviewed whenever new programmes are launched.

7.2.4 The current protocol refers to various advanced entry options, including HND, HNC, QUALIFI, BTEC, OTHM, and other qualifications. Ongoing discussions are in progress to finalise the entry requirements for these qualifications. (The final advanced entry section to be included once finalised in the Task and Finish Group).

7.2.5 Applications with one of the mentioned qualifications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by Aberdeen's Admissions Committee, in accordance with the final entry requirements outlined in Appendix 1.2. (The final advanced entry section to be included once finalised in the Task and Finish Group).

7.3 Other forms of prior learning

7.3.1 In other cases where advanced entry is sought on the basis of prior learning the principles of the University of Aberdeen Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy should apply. This sets out how APL can be used in the admissions process, and provides the framework to be used in respect of admission to the Qatar campus. Subject to any implications from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education - Qatar

7.3.2 The Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is considered at discipline/programme level as set out in the University's Policy. The applicant must provide additional evidence that their experiential learning meets the learning outcomes for the course(s) that they wish to get recognition for and that they are academically able to cope with the depth of learning required at the level of study they will be joining. Subject to any implications from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Qatar.

7.3.3 It is proposed that this evidence should take the form of a CV together with a written statement from the applicant outlining how the experience in their CV has ensured that they have covered

the parts of the curriculum for which they wish to be accredited. The AFG programme lead will use the evidence provided to map against a programme's learning outcomes to determine whether specific credit can be awarded in line with Section 6.3.1 of the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy and make a recommendation to the Aberdeen admissions contact. Subject to any implications from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Qatar.

8   REGISTRATION DEADLINES

8.1   The University's Academic Regulations stipulate that no more than one-sixth of teaching should be missed on a course of study, and a final deadline for registration linked to that requirement is set relative to the start of teaching. (A draft of the registration timeline is attached at **Appendix 4 -** the final timeline to be included once finalised in the task and finish group)

9   REPORTING TEMPLATES

9.1   Work has been ongoing to develop an admission reporting template which looks consistent for both Qatar and the Aberdeen campus, and an agreed example report for Qatar is shown in **Appendix 6 -** to be finalised in the task and finish group). It should be noted that the Qatar UG admissions statuses are not exactly the same as Qatar PGT and Aberdeen statuses, in that there is no Qatar UG stage that maps cleanly on to "offer accepted". A note has been included in the reporting template to clarify this.

10   FURTHER INFORMATION

9.1   Further information is available from Carol Baverstock, Head of Admissions, University of Aberdeen and Sherine Tabsh, Group Director for Student Recruitment and Marketing, Student Recruitment and Marketing Department, AFG College with the University of Aberdeen (sherine.tabsh@afg-aberdeen.edu.qa).

01 May 2024

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Closed

Appendix 1
Appendix 1.1

Qatar Admissions Entry Requirements:
Review of 2022 protocol
Recommendation Admissions Protocol for 2024 entry onwards

UNDERGRADUATE APPLICANTS

	Current	**UoA campus direct entry (noting that we cannot directly compare as degree specification is different, but to give context)**	**Recommended changes for 2024 entry onwards?**	**Equivalencies, where available**
Qatar Public Schools	Thanawiya 65% or above Proof of English language at IELTS 5.5 or above (minimum 5.0 in all sections) or equivalent qualification.	Equivalent to GCSE so would not normally be accepted in isolation	Raise Thanawiya to 70% as consistent with GPA requirement. **Subject to any implications from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Qatar	
American Schools	SAT High School Diploma >2.9; good grade in Maths	minimum cumulative 3.0 unweighted High School GPA plus one of the following:	GPA 2.3 and above SATs Evidence Reading & Writing and good grades in Maths – Minimum 480 per section. 2 AP tests at minimum 3.0	MoHE GPA/Thanawiya equivalency:
	SATs Evidence Reading & Writing and Maths – Minimum 400 per section.	SAT 1250+		(see table below)
	Essay minimum 4 per section	ACT composite score of 26+		
	SAT subject tests – Minimum 400	3 AP examinations (in relevant subjects): 3+		

Equivalency table (Equivalencies column):

GPA weighted	GPA unweighted	Thanawiya
3	2	73% - 76%
2.7	1.7	70% - 72&
2.3	1.3	67% - 69%

		If taken pre-2020, 3 SAT subject tests (in relevant subjects): 600+		
	AP (Good passes 3.0 GPA or above)			
	Current	**UoA campus direct entry (noting that we cannot directly compare as degree specification is different, but to give context)**	**Recommended changes for 2024 entry onwards?**	**Equivalencies, where available**

British Schools	Minimum of 5 IGCSEs with grade "C" or above. Plus 2 AS level passes	3 A Levels BBB (120 UCAS) OR BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma: DDM in related subjects (128 UCAS)	**Level 1 Entry:** Minimum of 5 IGCSEs with grade C/4 or better" (level 2). Plus 2 AS levels at minimum of CC; or equivalent e.g. if a student as lower than CC at AS Level this can be compensated for by strong performance in GSCEs. *note – E is a pass grade at AS Level. Although MOEHE agreed 2 AS passes, 2 Es is a very low academic requirement and only Level 1 in the UK Framework and so out of line with all other thresholds.*
			
			BTEC:
			BTEC Level 2 extended Certificate:
			    Eleventh grade students:
			    - One BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate is equivalent to 2 IGCSE.
			
			BTEC Level 3 Certificate:
			    Twelfth grade students:
			
			    - BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma -- PPP – this in place of 3 A Levels.
			    - BTEC Level 3 National Diploma – MP - this is in place of 2 A Levels so a student will need 1 more subject at
				Examples of MoHE applied equivalencies.
				
				| Actual applicant profile
					Thanawiya equivalency

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3 x AS (AAC) 4 X IGCSE at C/4 or better)	82.1%	 UK Qualifications framework: • Level 1 is GCSE grades D, E, F, G • Level 2 is GCSE grades A*, A, B, C • Level 3 AS Level; A Level or BTEC

	Current	UoA campus direct entry (noting that we cannot directly compare as degree specification is different, but to give context)	Recommended changes for 2024 entry onwards?	Equivalencies, where available
		AS Level, minimum C, or 1 more A Level. - BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate – D – this is in place of 1 A Level so a student will need 2 more subjects at AS Level, minimum CC, or 2 more A Levels. - BTEC Level 3 Foundation Diploma – M – this is in place of 1.5 A Levels – so in essence it is the equivalent of 1 A Level and 1 AS Level.		
Canadian Schools	Minimum 65% over 6 subjects in Grade 12		Minimum 65% over 6 subjects in Grade 12	
Indian Schools	Higher Secondary Certificate (CBSE/Standard Grade 12) Minimum of 65%.	Minimum 75%	No substantive change	
	Current	**UoA campus direct entry (noting that we cannot directly compare as degree specification is different, but to give context)**	**Recommended changes for 2024 entry onwards?**	**Equivalencies, where available**
Lebanese Schools	Lebanese Baccalaureate General: Year 2 entry: 16 overall; Year 1 entry: 12-14 overall. French track requires proof of English proficiency.	Arts & Social Sciences: 16 overall Science: 16 overall, 16 in two science subjects Engineering: 17 overall, 17 in Mathematics and Physics Law: 17 overall	Lebanese Baccalaureate General: Year 1 entry: 12-14 overall French track requires proof of English proficiency.	

Philippines Schools	High School Diploma Grade 12 (Academic track) Minimum of B (Beginning) grade with proof of English proficiency.		High School Diploma Grade 12 (Academic track); Minimum of B (Beginning) grade In relation to entrants from the Philippines School in Qatar, Proof of English proficiency can include previous Medium of Instruction being English; a policy statement from the School could suffice rather than having to request this from every individual applicant.	
French Schools	French Baccalaureate Terminal: Year 2 entry: 16 overall Year 1 entry: 12-14 overall with proof of English proficiency.	Arts & Social Sciences: 13 overall Science: 13 overall, 14 in two science subjects Engineering: 13 overall, 14 in Mathematics and Physics Law: 14 overall	French Baccalaureate Terminal Year 1 entry: An overall average mark of 11. With proof of English proficiency, which can be demonstrated by achieving 14 in English. UoA comment: We would only admit to second year if there was evidence that the first-year curriculum has been covered by courses previously taken at school or in some other institution, and given the content of the French Baccalaureate this would not be the case.	ECCTIS (formerly NARIC): "every subject passed in *seconde, premiere,* or *terminale* which has a counterpart in the GCSE syllabus may be considered at least comparable to GCSE grades A*-C/9-4 where a grade of 10 or above has been achieved.
	Current	**UoA campus direct entry (noting that we cannot directly compare as degree specification is different, but to give context)**	**Recommended changes for 2024 entry onwards?**	**Eqvuialencies, where available**
Other International schools	Complete International Baccalaureate with 32 points, including 5, 5, 5 at HL *(note: we usually accept applicants who have around 32 points, means more than 27 points)*	32 points, including 5, 5, 5 at HL	**Level 1 entry:** International Baccalaureate with overall 26 points, including 3 subjects at 4, 3, 3 at HL.	

Appendix 1.2

Advanced Entry:

School Systems	Year	Requirements
British System	**Year 2**	A Level at A in the subject selected for single Honours plus BB, or AB in the subjects selected for joint Honours plus a further B.
International Baccalaureate	**Year 2**	International Baccalaureate with minimum of 30 points, including 5 or better in HL Business Management and at least 3 in SL Economic. To ensure that the student can exceed at level 2.
Lebanese System	**Year 2**	Might be possible for specific routes if curriculum mapping carried out - but not yet in place.
French System	**Year 2**	✓ 16 overall points
Academic Bridge Program	**Year 1, 2ⁿᵈ Semester**	✓ Full year with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and Business focus courses. ✓ We might accept applicants with 2.5 GPA and above
University Foundation College	**Year 2 – Business Management Programme**	**Business Track** ✓ NCUK: minimum grades "C" in Business Studies, Economics and Math's ✓ NCC: 50% in Business Studies, Economics and Math's with a C in NCUK's English for Academic Purposes (EAP) module or 50% on NCC's Advanced English Language Module
	Year 2 – BM & International Relations Programme	**Huminites Track** ✓ NCUK: minimum grades "C" in Business Studies, Global Studies and Math's ✓ NCC: 50% in Business Studies, Global Studies and Math's with a C in NCUK's English for Academic Purposes (EAP) module or 50% on NCC's Advanced English Language Module
Advanced Entry		
College of the North Atlantic – Qatar / University of Doha for Science and Technology	**Year 2**	✓ 2 years Diploma in any Business Subject or Office Administration with minimum GP 3.0 ✓ To Market 3.0 GPA, however we might accept applicants who have 2.7 and above GPA
	Year 3	✓ 3 years Diploma in any Business Subject with minimum GPA 3.0 ✓ To Market 3.0 GPA, however we might accept applicants who have 2.7 and above GPA

Community College of Qatar	**Year 2**	✓ 2 years Diploma in Associate of Arts with a GPA 3.0 ✓ To Market 3.0 GPA, however we might accept applicants who have 2.7 and above GPA
	Year 3	✓ 3 years Diploma in Business Administration with a GPA 3.0 ✓ To Market 3.0 GPA, however we might accept applicants who have 2.7 and above GPA
Qatar Aeronautical College	**Year 3 – Business Management Programme**	✓ Diploma of Airport Operations Management ✓ Relevant Work Experience ✓ Other Diplomas might be considered for Year 2 entry if relevant work experience is available*
International Transfer	**Year 2**	✓ To provide full and clear transcript to be assessed by Admissions Committee against Appendix 1.3 for entry into Year 2 ✓ Year 1 of each Qatar programme is mapped below. Course content must have been covered to allow exemptions
	Year 3	✓ To provide full and clear transcript to be assessed by Admissions Committee against Appendix 1.3 for entry into Year 3 ✓ Year 2 of each Qatar programme is mapped below. Course content must have been covered to allow exemptions

The final advanced entry section to be updated once finalised in the Task and Finish Group

OTHM	**Year 2 – Business Management Programme**	✓ OTHM Level 3 and Level 4 Diploma in Business Studies
	Year 3 – Business Management Programme	✓ OTHM Level 4 and Level 5 Diploma in Business Studies
BTEC Level 4 HNC	**Year 2 – Business Management Programme**	✓ BTEC Level 4 HNC in Business
	Year 2 – Computing Science Programme	✓ BTEC Level 4 HNC in Computing, on completion of HNC with Distinction and to also include a pass in the optional units 'Maths for Computing' and 'Web Design and Development'
BTEC Level 5 HND	**Year 3 – Business Management Programme**	✓ BTEC Diploma Level 5 in the subject of Management on completion of HND with grade Distinction.
	Year 3 – Accountancy & Finance	✓ BTEC HND Diploma Level 5 in Business might be considered on a case by case basis 　o The compulsory units do not cover enough Accounting and Finance – but if the student's transcript shows they have taken the optional units relating to Financial Accounting for example within Level 4, (10 Financial Accounting)

		the Certificate, and they are taking the optional units for Accounting and Finance at Level 5 (30 Taxation and 31 Statistics for Management) – then this enables us to consider.
QUALIFI	✓ **Advanced entry into Level 2 or Level 3 cannot be given.**	
High National Certificate (HNC)	**Year 2 – Business Management Programme**	✓ HNC Business, to pass the HNC and achieve a B in the graded unit
	Year 2 – Accountancy & Finance Programme	✓ HNC Accounting, to pass the HNC and achieve a B in the graded unit
	Year 2 – Computing Science Programme	✓ HNC Computing with a Mathematics qualification equivalent to SQA Higher Mathematics at grade C or above.
High National Diploma (HND)	**Year 3 – Business Management Programme**	✓ HND Business, pass the HND (240 SCQF credit points) and achieve A in all graded units
	Year 3 – Accountancy & Finance Programme	✓ HND Accounting, to pass the HND (240 SCQF credit points) and achieve A in all graded units
CMI	**Year 2 - Business Management Programme**	✓ CMI Level 5 Diploma in Management and Leadership
LMQ Level 7	**Year 2 - Business Management Programme**	✓ LMQ Level 7 in Business Management

Appendix 1.3
Year 1

UG Curriculum (Qatar) *Courses in bold are non-business courses – Year 1	
MA (Hons) Business Management	**MA (Hons) Accountancy and Finance**
Academic Practice for Study (QQ 1001)	Academic Practice for Study (QQ 1001)
English for Academic Purposes (QQ 1002)	English for Academic Purposes (QQ 1002)
Culture, Society and Business in the 21st Century (QB 1003)	Culture, Society and Business in the 21st Century (QB 1003)
Data, Information and Knowledge for Business (QB 1004)	Data, Information and Knowledge for Business (QB 1004)
Introduction to Accounting (QB 1501)	Introduction to Accounting (QB 1501)
Introduction to Economics (QB 1502)	Introduction to Economics (QB 1502)
Introduction to Finance (QB 1503)	Introduction to Finance (QB 1503)
Introduction to the Management of Organisations (QB 1504)	Introduction to the Management of Organisations (QB 1504)

BSc Business Management & Information Systems	MA (Hons) Business Management & International Relations
Academic Practice for Study (QQ 1001)	Academic Practice for Study (QQ 1001)
English for Academic Purposes (QQ 1002)	English for Academic Purposes (QQ 1002)
Modelling and Problem Solving for Computing (QC 1002)	Culture, Society and Business in the 21st Century (QB 1003)
Object Oriented Programming (QC 1502)	**Politics and International Relations 1: Democracy and Governance (QI 1001)**
Introduction to Accounting (QB 1501)	Introduction to Accounting (QB 1501)
Computer Systems and Architecture (QC 1504)	Introduction to Economics (QB 1502)
Web Development (QC1505)	**Politics and International Relations 2: Power and Conflict (QI 1501)**
Introduction to the Management of Organisations (QB 1504)	Introduction to the Management of Organisations (QB 1504)

MA (Hons) Politics and International Relations	BSc Computing Science
Academic Practice for Study (QQ 1001)	Academic Practice for Study (QQ 1001)
English for Academic Purposes (QQ 1002)	English for Academic Purposes (QQ 1002)
Culture, Society and Business in the 21st Century (QB 1003)	**Modelling and Problem Solving for Computing (QC 1002)**
Politics and International Relations 1: Democracy and Governance (QI 1001)	**Object Oriented Programming (QC 1502)**
Introduction to Accounting (QB 1501)	**Programming 1 (QC1003)**
Introduction to Economics (QB 1502)	**Computer Systems and Architecture (QC 1504)**
Politics and International Relations 2: Power and Conflict (QI 1501)	**Web Development (QC1505)**
Introduction to the Management of Organisations (QB 1504)	**Mathematics for Science (QC1507)**

Year 2

UG Curriculum (Qatar) *Courses in bold are non-business courses – Year 2	
MA (Hons) Business Management	**MA (Hons) Accountancy and Finance**
Finance 2: Business Finance (QB 2004)	Management Accounting 2 (QB 2002)
Introduction to Human Resource Management (QB 2006)	Finance 2: Business Finance (QB 2004)
Marketing (QB 2007)	Introduction to Human Resource Management (QB 2006)
Business Law (QB 2008)	Marketing (QB 2007)
Financial Markets and Regulation (QB 2501)	Financial Markets and Regulation (QB 2501)
Understanding Statistics (QB 2504)	Financial Accounting 2 (QB 2502)
Operations Management (QB 2505)	Business Law (QB 2503)
Introduction to International Business (QB 2506)	Understanding Statistics (QB 2504)

BSc Business Management & Information Systems	MA (Hons) Business Management & International Relations
Introduction to Human Resource Management (QB 2006)	Introduction to Human Resource Management (QB 2006)
Marketing (QB 2007)	Marketing (QB 2007)
Software Programming (QC 2001)	**Ideas and Ideologies in Politics and International Relations (QI 2001)**
Databases and Data Management (QC 2002)	Understanding Statistics (QB 2504)
Understanding Statistics (QB 2504)	Introduction to International Business (QB 2506)
Operations Management (QB 2505)	**Global Politics: Equality and Inequality (QI 2501)**
Human-Computer Interaction (QC 2501)	Introduction to International Business (QB 2506)
Algorithms and Data Structures (QC 2503)	Introduction to Human Resource Management (QB 2006)

MA (Hons) Politics and International Relations	BSc Computing Science
Ideas and Ideologies in Politics and International Relations (QI 2001)	**Understanding the Physical World (QC 1006)**
Global Politics: Equality and Inequality (QI 2501)	**Algebra (QC 1008)**
Plus 60 credit points from courses of choice (see table below)	**Software Programming (QC 2001)**
Management Accounting 2 (QB 2002)	**Databases and Data Management (QC 2002)**
Finance 2: Business Finance (QB 2004)	**Human - Computer Interaction (QC 2501)**
Marketing (QB 2007)	**Algorithms and Data Structures (QC 2503)**
Databases and Data Management (QC 2002)	**Understanding Data (QC 1509)**
	Plus 15 credit points from second half-session courses of choice)
	Financial Markets and Regulation (QB2501)
	Financial Accounting 2 (QB 2502)

	Business Law (QB 2008)
	Understanding Statistics (QB 2504)
	Operations Management (QB 2505)
	Introduction to International Business (QB 2506

Appendix 1.4
Postgraduate taught applicants

Programme	Entry Requirement
MBA	**Academic Requirements:** Degree at 2:2 (lower second class) UK Honours level (or a degree from a non-UK institution which is judged by the University to be of equivalent worth). **Experience Requirements:** A minimum of 2 years post degree work experience is required for the MBA
MSc-IBM	**Academic Requirements:** Degree at 2:2 (lower second class) UK Honours level (or a degree from a non-UK institution which is judged by the University to be of equivalent worth).
MBA (IBM Pathway)	**Academic Requirements:** Successful completion of the MSc International Business Management, only for University of Aberdeen graduates. **Experience Requirements:** For the award of MBA, candidates must have completed two years post first Undergraduate degree work experience at the time of starting their MBA Professional Practice Journal. ** Note: The MBA (IBM Pathway) programme will conclude after the 2024-25 intake, and AFG is collaborating with the Business School to explore alternative options.*
MSc-IHRM	**Academic Requirements:** Degree at 2:2 (lower second class) UK Honours level (or a degree from a non-UK institution which is judged by the University to be of equivalent worth).
LLM	**Academic Requirements:** For entry into the LLM Programme, applicants need to have a first degree in law with a degree classification of 2:1 or above in Law or a related discipline will normally be required for entry to the programme. In exceptional circumstances, applicants not having a law degree but

	possessing significant relevant experience may be admitted to the programme
MSc Global Business Communication	**Academic Requirements:** ✓ Degree at 2:1 (Upper-second class) UK Honours level (or a degree from a non-UK institution which is judged by the University to be of equivalent worth). ✓ A range of undergraduate degree backgrounds including language, linguistics, communication, business studies, law or legal studies **To be checked and reviewed with MoEHE
MSc Global Energy Transition Systems and Technologies	**Academic Requirements:** ✓ **2:1 (upper second class)** UK Honours degree, or an Honours degree from a non-UK institution which is judged by the University to be of equivalent worth, in **Engineering o**r a related field such as the **natural sciences, physical sciences** or **mathematics.** ✓ **Or 2:2 (lower second class)** UK Honours degree in **Engineering o**r a related field, or equivalent with 5+ years relevant experience **To be checked and reviewed with MoEHE
Master of Public Health	**Academic Requirements:** ✓ A health-related degree at 2:2 (Lower-second class) UK Honours level, or a degree from a non-UK institution which is judged by the University to be of equivalent worth, or be able to demonstrate evidence of equivalent experience in health care practice or research ✓ Students from non-health backgrounds: a degree at 2:2 (Lower-second class) UK Honours level in in science, social science, or humanities subjects will be considered for the programme
All Programmes	**English Language Requirements:** If the most recent academic qualification not taught in English, we may also ask applicants to supply us with evidence of English proficiency by providing a minimum overall IELTS Academic score of 6.5 with a minimum in the following: Listening - 5.5; Reading - 6.0; Speaking - 5.5; Writing - 6.0 Or equivalent

Appendix 2

Undergraduate Documents Required:

➢ Year 1 Entry:

- High School Certificate & Transcript (official certificates from awarding body)
- NOC Letter from Military Service (Male Qatari only)
- High School Equivalency Statement Letter (Private/International schools only)
- Qatari ID or Passport

➢ Advanced Entry:

- High School Certificate & Transcript (official certificates from awarding body)
- Degree certificate (Foundation/Diploma)
- Transcripts (Foundation/Diploma)
- NOC Letter from Military Service (Male Qatari only)
- High School Equivalency Statement Letter (Private/International schools only)
- Qatari ID or Passport

Postgraduate Documents Required:

MBA:

1. Attested Degree Certificate
2. Attested Degree Transcript
3. CV
4. Letter of experience (a proof of minimum 2 years work experience post the first degree)
5. High School Degree
6. Qatari ID or passport

MSc in International Business Management:

1. Attested Degree Certificate
2. Attested Degree Transcript
3. CV
4. High School Degree
5. Qatari ID or passport

MSc in International Human Resource Management:
1. Attested Degree Certificate
2. Attested Degree Transcript
3. CV
4. High School Degree
5. Qatari ID or passport

LLM (Master's in international Commercial Law):
1. Attested Degree Certificate
1. Attested Degree Transcript
2. Updated CV
3. Letter of Experience
4. Personal Statement Letter
5. Two Recent References
6. Copy of ID or passport

MSc Global Business Communication:
1. Attested Degree Certificate
2. Attested Degree Transcript
3. CV
4. High School Degree
5. Qatari ID or passport

MSc Global Energy Transition Systems and Technologies:
1. Attested Degree Certificate
2. Attested Degree Transcript
3. CV
4. Letter of experience (a proof of minimum 5 years work experience post the first degree)
5. High School Degree
6. Qatari ID or passport

Master of Public Health:
1. Attested Degree Certificate
2. Attested Degree Transcript
3. CV
4. High School Degree
5. Qatari ID or passport

Appendix 3

AFG Admissions Process - to be updated once finalised in the task and finish group
Application Received

Responsible: Course Advisors

1. Document Check:
   Examine all the documents submitted by the applicant.
2. Applicant Notification:
   Notify the applicant about the status of their application, indicating whether it is being processed or is pending.
3. Cover Form Completion:
   Fill out the necessary information on the cover form, which includes applicant details, the programme applied for, entry level, qualifications, and experience.
4. Spreadsheet Entry:
   Create a new entry on the Excel Spreadsheet and allocate the application a reference number.
5. SharePoint Data Input:
   Ensure that the application in SharePoint carries the same reference number as in the spreadsheet.
6. Application Scanning & Uploading:
   Scan and upload the application on OneDrive and SharePoint: Digitally store the application for easy access and reference.
7. Filing:
   File the application in the appropriate location, incorporating all submitted documents, the decision email, the offer letter, and any attestation/equivalency documents.

Application Review

Responsible: Student Recruitment & Admissions Team Lead / Admissions Office / UoA Central Admissions

1. AFG - OneDrive Application Check:
   Check OneDrive for new applications: Download any new applications that need to be shared with UoA.
2. AFG - Document and Entry Review:
   Check all documents and entry requirements: Review all documents and entry requirements in accordance with the Admissions protocol and previous decisions.
3. AFG - Application Dispatch to Admissions/School Representatives:

Send applications to Central Admissions/Schools reps: Dispatch each application in a separate email to Central Admissions/School representatives. Include details such as:

- Cover form with the following details:
    - (i) Applicant personal details
    - (ii) Programme applied for
    - (iii) Entry level applied for
    - (iv) Applicant's qualification & experience
    - (v) ECCTIS Check (for PG Programmes)
- Applications form and documents submitted
- Summary of the applicant's educational and experiential background, and documents submitted

4. **UoA - Decision Documentation:**
   For documentation purposes, each applicant's decision must be received separately via email to be able to add the email as a reference in the applicant folder.

5. **UoA - Decision Receipt:**
   Receive decisions within 3 to 5 working days: Expect decisions from UoA within 3 to 5 working days from the date of receipt, or within one working day closer to the registration deadline.

Decision Received

Responsible: Student Recruitment & Admissions Team Lead / Admissions Office / UoA Central Admissions / Course Advisor

1. **Decision Review:**
   When the decision is received, the team lead should review it to ensure it aligns with the agreed Admissions protocol.

2. **Spreadsheet Update:**
   If the decision is in line with the Admissions protocol, the Team Lead/Admissions officer to update the spreadsheet with the decision.

3. **Offer Letter Processing:**
   Within 24-48 hours of receiving the decision, the Team Lead/Admissions officer should generate the offer letter by exporting the decision from the spreadsheet on OneDrive using Mail Merge and send it via the AFG Admissions email address with Lyn Batchelor BCC'd

4. **SharePoint Update:**
   Course Advisors should update the application record on SharePoint and upload a copy of the acceptance letter and the decision email.

Appendix 4

AFG Enrolment & Registration / Timeline - to be updated once finalised in the task and finish group

Before Registration

1. Receive acceptance: After applying, students will typically receive an acceptance or rejection letter. If accepted, the letter and email will outline any next steps that need to be taken.

2. Confirm enrolment: Once accepted, students will need to confirm their enrolment by submitting a deposit and any required paperwork by a specified deadline

    - PG

        o Sign last two pages of acceptance letter

        o Complete Deposit fee payment: 5000QR

    - UG

        o Complete Registration fees payment: 2100QR

3. Once confirmed: The Spreadsheet and SharePoint must be updated (Payment and student status)

4. At least **6** working days before IT Registration session:

    - Day1: Offer holder must complete payment of 1st instalment

        o Teams involved:

            ➢ Accounts Department

            ➢ Admissions Team

- Day1: Payment Status must be updated on SharePoint and MasterSheet

  - Teams involved:

    - Accounts Department

- Day 1: Student records on SharePoint must be updated and all documents should be available

  - Teams involved:

    - Accounts Department

    - Admissions Team

- Day 2: Upload student record

  - Teams involved:

    - Admissions Team

- Day2: Inform University of Aberdeen Qatar Registry Team

  - Teams involved:

    - Admissions Team

    - UoA Qatar Registry Team

- Day3: After 24 hours from uploading student record on SharePoint, UoA will be able to export the record.

  - Teams involved:

    - UoA Qatar Registry Team

- Day 3: University of Aberdeen IT team to export record and inform Admissions Team – AFG

- o Teams involved:

  - ➢ UoA Qatar Registry Team

  - ➢ Admissions Team

- Day 4: Student ID can be used only after 24 hours from time of exporting.

- Day 5: Admissions Team to update shared list with Academic Admins and Student Hub.

  - o Teams involved:

    - ➢ Admissions Team

    - ➢ Student Hub

- Day 6: Admissions Team to send IT registration Communication and to print out Student ID details

IT Registration

- **Admissions Team**

5. Liaise with Student Hub to schedule the session on a suitable date

6. Invite new students to attend the session via:

  - o Emails

  - o What's app

  - o SMS

7. Book the room for the session

8. Inform IT team

9. Inform Marketing team and request needed materials

10. Take attendance

11. In case of absence, Admissions team will be responsible for contacting new students and ensure they show up for registration

12. Responsible for ensuring new students to check their emails and complete the registration in case of Online registration (Via email).

- **Student Hub**

13. Responsible for ensuring the applicant successfully and fully registered in liaising with University of Aberdeen Student Records team.

14. Responsible for fixing and dealing with any errors facing the new students during the session.

- **Online & Late Registration**

  - Online Registration

    o Student Hub team should be responsible for sending IT Registration emails to new students, in case of the request for online registration due to emergency faced by the applicant.

    o The Admissions team should inform the other teams of any requests for online registration.

    o The Admissions team should update the shared list with the student's ID.

    o The Student Hub team should CC Admissions Team in the communication sent to the new student.

    o The Admissions team should ensure that the new student checks their email and completes the registration process.

    o The Admissions team should direct the new student to contact the Student Hub team in case of any enquiries about the registration process.

  - Late Registration

- o UG

  a. Last day to receive applications should be on the fourth day of the first week of teaching

  b. Last day to upload student record should be on the second day of the second week of teaching

  c. Last day for student ID activation should be on the last day of the second week of teaching only if the applicant has an ID already

- o PG for Businesses School, School of Law, and the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture Programmes

  a. Last day to receive applications should be four working days before preparation week (uploading records).

  b. Last day to upload student record should be four days before first day of preparation.

  c. Last day for student ID activation should be on the first day of preparation.

- o PG for Linear Programmes, i.e. Master of Public Health.

  a. Last day to receive applications should be four working days before preparation week (uploading records).

  b. Last day to upload student record should be four days before first day of preparation.

  c. Last day for student ID activation should be on the first day of preparation.

- o Student Hub team should be responsible for sending IT Registration emails to new students, in case of the request for online registration due to emergency faced by the applicant.

- o The Admissions team should update the shared list with the student's ID.

- o The Student Hub team should CC Admissions Team in the communication sent to the new student.

- o The Admissions team should ensure that the new student checks their email and completes the registration process.

- The Admissions team should direct the new student to contact the Student Hub team in case of any enquiries about the registration process.

My Curriculum

- Student hub team to liaise with Admissions team to schedule My Curriculum sessions on campus or online depends on the semester and students' number

- To be announced at least 6 months before IT registration

Welcome

- Student hub team to liaise with Programme leaders to schedule and circulate Welcome schedule

- To be announced at least two months before IT registration

Timeline

	Team Responsible	Action	Note
1st instalment	1- Admissions Team 2- Accounts	Following up with Offer holders by Admissions Team	Must be paid in order to upload students record on SharePoint
Upload Record	1- Accounts 2- Admissions Team	1- Accounts to update Payment status on SharePoint 2- Admissions to Upload Records on SharePoint 3- Admissions to Inform UoA student records team	- Admissions team to share registration timeline and important dates to Accounts - Accounts department must update MasterSheet and SharePoint daily
ABDN to send IDs	UoA IT Support and Student records team: Point of contact: **Loli Anggraini**	UoA Student records team to export student IDs and send to Admissions	UoA Student records team need minimum of **3 days** to export student records
IT Registration	1- Admissions Team 2- Student Hub 3- IT Team	1- Admissions team to send communications to offer holders. The communication for PG must include the following: a. Academic Schedule b. IT registration details c. MyC details The communication for UG must include the following: a. IT registration details	Student ID is activated only after 24hrs from the time of exporting the student ID

		b. MyC details	
		2- Admissions team to take attendance	
		3- Student Hub to register students on the day of IT registration	
		4- IT Team to support Student hub	
MyC	Student Hub	Student hub team to make sure all students registered.	MyC is activated only after 3 hours of IT registration

Welcome	1- Student Hub
	
	2- Programme Leaders
	
	3- IT Team
	
	4- Other departments:
	
	    a. Library
	
	    b. Careers
		Student hub team to liaise with Programme leaders to schedule and circulate welcome schedule	To be announced at least two months before registration

Preparation week (PG)	1- Student Hub 2- Programme Leaders		First Day of preparation should be announced by Programme leader at least one month before welcome

Appendix 5

KEY ADMISSIONS CONTACTS

Starting 2024/25 academic year all postgraduate and undergraduate application will be sent to the central Admissions.
- Carol Baverstock. Head of Admissions
- Tracey Stewart, Undergraduate Admissions Manager

AFG Admissions department to be introduced to a representative from each school in order to assist the team with understanding the programme and its importance, and to arrange possible workshops.

Currently:

All undergraduate programmes: (existing and new)

- Carol Baverstock, Head of Admissions
- Tracey Stewart, Undergraduate Admissions Manager

Postgraduate programmes: Law

- Professor John Paterson
- Nevena Jevremovic

Postgraduate programmes: Business

- Xiaoqing (Joyce) Chen
- School Administration Manager: Kate Smith

Postgraduate programmes: Global Business Communication

- Professor Chris Collins
- Kit Dunster

Postgraduate programmes: Master of Public Health

- Professor Amudha Poobalan

Postgraduate programmes: Global Energy Transition Systems
- Central Admissions:
    - Carol Baverstock, Head of Admissions
    - Tracey Stewart, Undergraduate Admissions Manager

Appendix 6
To be finalised in Task and Finish Group

Reporting dates:
2021/22: 22/06/2021
2022/23: 22/06/2022
2023/24: 19/06/2023

		For entry point: September 2023																						
Fee region/campus	Programme	Total Application			% Change		Original Offers			% Change		Proportion of Apps with Offer			Rejections			Acceptances or for UG registration/deposit fee paid*			% Change		Target
		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021-2023	2022-2023	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021-2023	2022-2023	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021-2023	2022-2023	
Qatar	Business Management																						
	Accountancy and Finance																						
	Business Management & International Relations																						
	Business Management & Information System																						
	Business Management & Legal studies																						
	MBA - Master of Business Administration																						
	MSc International Business Management																						
	Msc International Human Resource Management																						
	LLM International Commercial Law																						
	MBA - Top Up																						
	IPGDE																						
	Total																						

* Unlike applicants to Aberdeen campus, there is no UG admission category of "acceptance"; applicants move from "offer of place" to "registration fee paid".

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

DED START DATE AMENDMENT

PMC Coversheet document (Programme Amendment)

Amendment rec'd 6.3.24

Item/Heading:	Content:		
Provisional title for the programme:	D Ed		
Parent Academic School:	Education		
Contributing Academic School(s):	N/a		
Proposal Author(s)/Leads:			
Programme Type (UG/PGT/PGR):	PGT/ PGR		
Reviewed by the Head of School:	N/a		
Intended start year and month:	September 2024		
Proposed Start Dates (Sept/Jan/Both):	October 2024		
Method of delivery:	Online / blended		
Part-time/Full-time/Both:	Part time		
Student Numbers:	N/A		
Resource requirements:	N/a		
Marketing information provided:	N/a		
Please note re the Marketing information:	N/a		
Financial Information provided:	N/a		
Please note re the financial information:	N/a		
Transnational Education Campuses (TNE) (if yes, state which campus(es)):	N/a		
External Partnerships:	N/a		
PMC Decision	Approved by Chair's Action		
DATE	7.3.24		

PROGRAMME AMENDMENT (MODIFICATION) PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Undergraduate Single Honours Programmes and Postgraduate Programmes:

Is the Programme UG or PG (tick as appropriate)	UG		PG	Yes
Programme Title (eg MA Mathematics)	Degree of doctor of education			
Programme Code	81X302J3			
Academic Year in which the revisions are to take effect	2024			
Type of Change Requested (tick as appropriate)	**Title**			
	Programme Content	Yes		
Reason for Change	The programme was originally advertised as September start but then teaching didn't start until October so we would like it to be advertised now as an October start.			
If new title requested, please provide details here				
Please attach an updated programme prescription using track changes to show where changes are to be made. If a new, as yet unapproved (and therefore un-coded course) is replacing an existing course, please enter the course title and level and detail the sub-session in which the course will run (eg 1st)				

Undergraduate Only: Joint Honours Programme(s):

Joint Honours degrees in (eg Mathematics)	
Programme Code(s)	
Academic Year in which the revisions are to take effect	
Type of Change Requested (tick as appropriate)	**Title**	
	Programme Content	
Reason for Change	
If new title requested, please provide details here	
There is no need to prepare multiple programme prescriptions. Please attach an example updated joint honours programme prescription using track changes to show where changes are to be made.	

If a new, as yet unapproved (and therefore un-coded course) is replacing an existing course, please enter the course title and level and detail the sub-session in which the course will run (eg 1[st])

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

AdvanceHE

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

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**ADVANCEHE REACCREDITATION
(SCHOOL OF EDUCATION / CAD)**

Professor Jo-Anne Murray
Vice-Principal Education
University of Aberdeen
Regent Walk
Aberdeen
AB24 3FX

26 February 2024

Subject: Accreditation Panel Outcome and Feedback

Dear Professor Murray

Thank you very much to the team at the University of Aberdeen for submitting provision for accreditation. The documentation was considered by the Advance HE Accreditation Panel held on 15 February 2024. The Panel considered the following lines of provision:

- **ABDN: Professional Recognition Scheme for Advance HE Fellowship (Descriptors 1-3)**

- **Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching & Learning (Descriptor 2)**

- **Principles of Learning & Teaching in Higher Education (Descriptor 1)**

I am pleased to inform you that the Panel has agreed that this provision can be accredited **subject to just four conditions.** These conditions have been captured in the attached action plan.

The date by which we would like to receive the University's response to the conditions set by the Panel is **Tuesday 09 April 2024.** In addressing the conditions, we ask the team to signpost to the action taken within the final column of the action plan and to submit revised participant guidance (with revisions highlighted) and/or a new narrative explanation as appropriate (please do not return to the submission templates).

Please send the revised documentation to our accreditation team at accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk.

Accreditation Panel Commendations

The Accreditation Panel identified many areas of good practice in relation to your accreditation submission and wishes to commend the University of Aberdeen on the following aspects:

- The Professional Values of the Professional Standards Framework 2023 (PSF) are at the heart of the 'Aberdeen 2040' strategy, which articulates the University's strategic themes around inclusion, collaboration and sustainability (p7).

- The University is forming significant collaborations with international partners which should enrich learning and teaching practice through cultural exchange, extended networks and mutual learning.
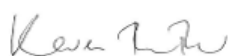
- Staff at the new Qatar campus are able to engage in the range of professional development opportunities on offer, including access to fellowship via appropriate routes through the accredited provision. Access to the development on offer is enabled by online delivery, with appropriate scheduling in place to ensure staff based outside the UK can fully engage.

- The University of Aberdeen's Five Principles for the Delivery of Education closely align with the PSF 2023 Dimensions. The Principal's Teaching Excellence Awards raise the profile of learning and teaching and reward excellent practitioners. A new Senior and Principal Fellows' Network will promote cross-institutional collaborations and learning and teaching initiatives. Staff have opportunity to collaborate and share best practice in teaching, learning, and assessment via monthly Learning & Teaching Network events and monthly Pedagogical Inquiry Network (PIN) events.

- A recent review of the scholarship and professional practice promotions track has enabled a more transparent use of fellowship as an esteem indicator in an application for promotion.

- The institution-wide adoption of Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment (TESTA) methodology, supported by the Centre for Academic Development (CAD), provides teaching teams with holistic data to evaluate the student experience across an entire degree programme. This fosters critically evaluative, reflective and evidence-informed approaches to learning and teaching.

- The changes introduced for this new accreditation cycle have been carefully considered and create a greater clarity for participants, mentors and reviewers. The ABDN: Professional Recognition Scheme for Advance HE Fellowship mirrors the Advance HE direct application format and utilises Advance HE guidance. The Postgraduate Certificate programme has a stronger practice-based focus and requires participants to have two years' experience to enrol.

- Guidance documents for the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching and Learning programme explain the PSF 2023 well. Assessment tasks across the programme are well designed to generate evidence to meet Descriptor 2; in particular, the Panel considers the poster assessment to be an innovative design for PSF V5 'collaborate with others to enhance practice'.

- A distinct handbook for Staff Contributors to the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching and Learning programme (Appendix E2.5) provides clear and useful guidance which will support mentors, guest lecturers and observers to understand the PSF 2023 and the nature of their role and responsibilities within the programme.

If you or your colleagues would like to discuss the outcome of the Accreditation Panel further, please do get in touch and I will be happy to explain the panel conditions set and information requested. We look forward to receiving the revised information requested by Tuesday 09 April 2024 and send our congratulations to you and your colleagues on this highly positive outcome for the University of Aberdeen.

Yours sincerely

Karen Hustler SFHEA
Head of Accreditation and Excellence Awards
E karen.hustler@advance-he.ac.uk

Accreditation Action Plan: University of Aberdeen

AdvanceHE

Conditions set by Accreditation Panel

In addressing the conditions outlined below, please submit revised participant guidance (with revisions highlighted) and/or a narrative explanation as advised in the supporting explanation. Please provide clear signposting to the action taken in the last column below.

No	Provision	Action Set	Supporting Explanation	Cross reference to response by institution
1	**ABDN: Professional Recognition Scheme for Advance HE Fellowship (D1-3)**	Enhance /provide participant guidance related to aspects of the design of the provision, support in place and assessment process	The Panel asks for guidance to be enhanced/provided as follows: 1. Currently the Application Forms (Appendix E1.4) include links to the full Advance HE applicant packs rather than direct links to the Advance HE Associate Fellow, Fellow and Senior Fellow Guide to the PSF 2023 Dimensions documents themselves. The Panel asks that these links are updated to avoid confusion, as the Advance HE applicant packs also include guidance for direct applicants (including fees, application processes etc.) and templates, etc. that would need to be adapted for PRS participants. 2. Explain how participants initially determine which category of fellowship to apply for and how those applying for Associate Fellowship are supported to decide which two Areas of Activity to choose to evidence. 3. Provide the guidance participants receive that supports them to understand how they should construct their application to appropriately evidence the relevant Descriptor. 4. Provide the participant guidance that explains the assessment process, possible outcomes, timeline and resubmission process (including the support in place for resubmissions). 5. Provide the guidance participants receive about the support provided by mentors and how mentors are allocated.	
2	**ABDN: Professional Recognition Scheme for Advance HE Fellowship (D1-3)**	Enhance mentor guidance to include examples of appropriate D1-3 practice	Enhance the guidance in the ABDN PRS Mentor Handbook (Appendix E1.1) to include information about the types of practice appropriate to each PSF 2023 Descriptor in order to ensure that mentors and are clear about evidence requirements for each category to enable them to appropriately advise mentees. This might be achieved, for example, through adding some explanation about the importance of, and direct links to, the Advance HE Guide to the PSF 2023 Dimensions documents (as above in Condition 1.1).	

3	**ABDN: Professional Recognition Scheme for Advance HE Fellowship (D1-3)**	Address two points related to the fellowship judgement process	Please address the following two points: 1. Page 7 of the ABN PRS Reviewer Handbook (Appendix E1.2) states that "The Lead Reviewer is responsible for collating the feedback both they and Reviewer 2 have independently produced and writing the final feedback for the original submission and the resubmission if necessary." However, the Panel is unclear about how the feedback should be presented, as the review proformas do not appear to be designed for this purpose and there is no explanation provided. Please enhance the guidance to clarify the format to be used and how this will be issued, along with (if applicable) the feedback templates to be used. 2. Enhance the Terms of Reference for the ABDN Ratification Board (Appendix E1.3) to include how this Board operates in practice to carry out its defined purpose "To oversee and ensure fair and transparent governance and decision-making in the processes associated with the award of Advance HE Fellowship at Associate Fellow, Fellow, and Senior Fellow"; please add information to clarify the responsibilities and operation of this Board. If the Board could potentially overturn a fellowship judgement, please include information about the basis for this.	
4	**Principles of Learning & Teaching in Higher Education – Descriptor 1**	Ensure that PSF 2023 is accurately referenced	1. The Panel understands that any two Areas of Activity selected from A1, A2, A3 and A4 to suit the participants' context are the focus of assessment on this programme and the reason why A5 is excluded from the programme assessment. They also note that the Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023) Descriptor 1 criteria have been altered in the PLTHE Handbook (Appendix E3.1, p.5) and in the PLTHE Course Guide (Appendix E3.2, pp.5, 19, 23, 24, 27 and 28). To ensure that the PSF 2023 is accurately referenced and represented, the Panel asks that only the wording of Descriptor 1 as set out in the [PSF 2023](#) on page 7 is used, and instead a contextual sentence about A5 and the PLTHE is added at the relevant points. Please revise E3.1 and E 3.2 accordingly. 2. In the PLTHE Course Guide (Appendix E3.2), text around Slide 5 on page 25 states "reflect on how you have engaged with and are *showing your commitment* to the Professional Values (V1 and V3) in your approaches to teaching and/or supporting student learning". The Panel considers that the wording highlighted in italics reflects UKPSF 2011. A change introduced in PSF 2023 is to ask for evidence of active '*use*' of Professional Values and the Panel asks for the text to be updated.	

Recommendations made by Accreditation Panel

The Accreditation Panel also made five recommendations that the team may wish to consider. No further information is required by the Panel.

	Provision	Recommendation
A	Institution	Given the new international collaborations, growing use of fellowship and the link to the scholarship and professional practice promotions track, the Panel recommends that the University considers whether it might be useful to broaden the remit and membership of the Advance HE Professional Recognition Review Board, perhaps to include a senior leader of learning and teaching (e.g. PVC), representation from the new Qatar campus and HR representation, for example.
B	ABDN: PRS (D3)	The Panel notes mention in the narrative that the focus for the next accreditation cycle in increasing the overall number of Senior Fellows across the University. However, from the forecast numbers, the narrative provided and recent Senior Fellow success rates it was not quite clear how the increase in Senior Fellowship numbers will be achieved and recommends that progress towards this aim is monitored.
C	PGCHETL (D2)	One member of the PGCHETL does not currently hold a category of fellowship. The Panel notes that this team member is not involved in assessment (an accreditation policy requirement) but given the responsibility this member of staff has in supporting participants to engage with the PSF 2023 and fellowship during the programme, they recommend that support is put into place for this individual to achieve an appropriate category of fellowship.
D	PGCHETL (D2)	Appendix E2.5 - PGCert Guide for Staff Contributors mentions that "mentors do not feature as a mandatory aspect of the PGCert" and the Panel recommends that the team monitors the participant experience to ensure that there is no disadvantage to those participants without mentors.
E	PLTHE (D1)	The Panel considers that guidance in the PLTHE Course Guide (Appendix E3.2) around summative assessments 1 and 2 (rubrics, questions and explanatory text) would benefit from additional emphasis being placed on practice needing to be demonstrated as effective and inclusive.

Accreditation - Terms and Conditions

Please note that once awarded, accredited provision must operate as explicitly accredited. Accreditation does not cover provision that is developed for commercial sale. Please refer to the full terms and conditions set out in Appendix 1 of the Advance HE Accreditation Policy 2023 for further information. Institutions who wish to request any changes to accredited provision should discuss plans with Advance HE and seek approval of any changes through the major and minor change process (Section 8 of policy).

**General
Dental
Council**

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Mr Jim Mackie
Programme Lead
University of Aberdeen
Institute of Dentistry
Argyll House
Cornhill Road
Aberdeen
AB25 2ZR

**GENERAL DENTAL COUNCIL
(SCHOOL OF MMSN)**

18 December 2023

Dear Jim,

**GDC Inspection of the University of Aberdeen Diploma of Higher Education
in Dental Technology**

I am writing to inform you that the Education Associates have submitted their final report following the inspection of the University of Aberdeen Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology programme. I have considered the findings within the report, together with your observations.

I confirm that I have ratified the Associates' recommendation. The programme is 'approved' to enable graduating cohorts of students to apply for registration with the General Dental Council (GDC).

I note the summary of actions within the report and your responses to these in your observations. We will request an update on the progress made against the actions within the report through our regular monitoring process. Future quality assurance of the programme will be based on the updates you provide through completion of our monitoring form.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Education and Quality Assurance Team if you have any queries or questions about this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Gurvinder Soomal

Interim Chief Executive and Registrar

CC. Dr Rosa Moreno Lopez – Education Lead

CC. Mrs Victoria Stables – Senior Institute Administrator

FYI

From: Kathryn Counsell-Hubbard <KCounsell-Hubbard@gdc-uk.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 7, 2024 5:00 PM
To: Khalaf, Khaled <khaled.khalaf@abdn.ac.uk>; Lopez, Rosa Moreno <r.m.lopez@abdn.ac.uk>
Cc: Martin McElvanna <MMcElvanna@gdc-uk.org>
Subject: Monitoring outcome - Aberdeen BDS

Good afternoon

GDC Monitoring of the BDS programme

Thank you for providing the information and documentation that we requested for assessment for monitoring of the BDS programme delivered by the University of Aberdeen. All the information provided has been reviewed by the Education Associates and Education & Quality Assurance Team to determine whether any further quality assurance activity is required.

Based on the information provided it has been recommended that **no further action is required**. We have identified a low level of risk and the programme will not be subject to a planned inspection during the next academic year. You will continue to be subject to routine monitoring in the future.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes,

Kathryn Counsell-Hubbard
Quality Assurance Manager
General Dental Council

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Team: +44(0)20 7167 6110
Email: kcounsell-hubbard@gdc-uk.org
Web: www.gdc-uk.org

I am currently on a phased return to work so will be working shorter hours. For urgent queries please forward your email to amullins-downes@gdc-uk.org. I do not work on Mondays.

General Dental Council

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General Dental Council

Education Quality Assurance Inspection Report

Education Provider/Awarding Body	Programme/Award
University of Aberdeen	Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology

Outcome of Inspection	Recommended that the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology continues to be approved for the graduating cohort to register as dental technicians.

Inspection summary

Remit and purpose of inspection:	Inspection referencing the *Standards for Education* to determine approval of the award for the purpose of registration with the GDC as a dental technician Risk based: focused on 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21.
Learning Outcomes:	**Preparing for Practice (dental technician).**
Programme inspection date:	**4 May 2023**
Inspection team:	**Gillian Mawdsley (Chair and non-registrant member)** **Darren Ware (DCP member)** **Barbara Chadwick (Dentist member)** **James Marshall (GDC Quality Assurance Manager)**
Report Produced by:	**James Marshall (GDC Quality Assurance Manager)**

The GDC undertook a risk-based inspection to review the delivery of the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology awarded by the University of Aberdeen, focusing on Requirements 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 21. During the inspection, the panel interviewed staff, students and workplace supervisors, who play a crucial role in the employment and supervision of dental technician students in the workplace.

The panel was pleased to note continued improvements with the e-portfolio system. As the key reporting system for monitoring student progression in the workplace, the e-portfolio system is vital for providing assurance of the experience being gained by students outside of the dental institute. The updated e-portfolio system is now more user friendly and with increased functionality.

The panel also noted a range of enhancements to improve the assessment strategy, including the implementation of a 'fit for purpose' marking criteria for practical work and a transition from multiple choice questions to short answer question papers.

The panel agreed that further stakeholder engagement should be taking place. As the programme is heavily reliant on a good working relationship between the Institute, students and workplace supervisors, it is imperative that each stakeholder has the opportunity to provide effective and contemporaneous feedback to allow for monitoring and ongoing evaluation.

The GDC wishes to thank the staff, students, and external stakeholders involved with the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology for their co-operation and assistance with the inspection.

Background and overview of qualification

Annual intake	Maximum of 15 students per intake
Programme duration	34 weeks over 10 months/years
Format of programme	e.g.: Year: 1: Primary Dental Laboratory Skills, Professional Practice, Oral Anatomy and Partial Dentures 2: Dental Alloy Techniques, Complete Dentures, Design Principles and Procedures and Dental Public Health, Leadership and Management 3: Fixed Prosthodontics (single unit and bridges) and Orthodontics
Number of providers delivering the programme	University of Aberdeen (1)

Outcome of relevant Requirements[1]

Standard One	
3	Partly Met
5	Partly Met
7	Met
Standard Two	
11	Partly Met
12	Met
Standard Three	
13	Met
14	Met
15	Partly Met
16	Met
17	Partly Met
18	Met
21	Met

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[1] All Requirements within the *Standards for Education* are applicable for all programmes unless otherwise stated. Specific requirements will be examined through inspection activity and will be identified via risk analysis processes or due to current thematic reviews.

Standard 1 – Protecting patients
Providers must be aware of their duty to protect the public. Providers must ensure that patient safety is paramount and care of patients is of an appropriate standard. Any risk to the safety of patients and their care by students must be minimised.

Requirement 3: Students must only provide patient care in an environment which is safe and appropriate. The provider must comply with relevant legislation and requirements regarding patient care, including equality and diversity, wherever treatment takes place. *(Requirement Partly Met)*

The panel was pleased to note the new admissions process in place for the cohort of students starting in the 2023/2024 academic year. The panel was informed that all dental laboratories will now receive a visit from a member of the programme team before an offer of a place is made to a student. A follow up review of the workplace will be completed ahead of the start of the student's third year of the programme. The students confirmed that third year workplace visits are now taking place.

In addition to this, from the 2023/2024 academic year, all offers for entry onto the programme will be formally conditional, with final entry dependent on a number of completed actions requiring engagement from employers and workplace supervisors. These include:

1. Completion of a Workplace Check. The updated checklist now includes time for the programme staff to formally meet with workplace supervisors, discuss the role and answer questions.
2. Submission of Honorary Contract applications from workplace supervisors and completion of key training, for example EDI Training.
3. Signing of Tripartite Educational Agreement.

The panel was reassured to note that any dental laboratory which is to be used by a student to achieve portfolio technical experience requirements which their primary employer cannot facilitate, will receive an inspection from the programme team. The panel was informed that these additional laboratories will be subject to the same inspections and checks as primary places of employment.

However, existing students and workplace supervisors expressed some dissatisfaction with the current model of review and engagement, noting a significant number of what were deemed to be unnecessary changes to processes during their involvement with the Institute. The programme team confirmed that there has been a review of how workplace supervisors are engaged with the programme and going forward, both expectations of the role and communication with all stakeholders should be clarified and take place more efficiently consistently, and effectively.

The panel was satisfied that progress continues to be made, however, the Institute must continue to monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness and levels of workplace supervisor engagement with the revised admissions process.

Requirement 5: Supervisors must be appropriately qualified and trained. This should include training in equality and diversity legislation relevant for the role. Clinical supervisors must have appropriate general or specialist registration with a UK regulatory body. *(Requirement Partly Met)*

The panel was informed that during the 2022/2023 academic year, a new set of communications, handbooks and workplace supervisor requirements were put in place. The Institute noted that whilst this new process was an improvement on previous years, further

development was required. All workplace supervisors were required to have an honorary contract in place, resulting in further training and guidance being required to ensure all supervisors were aware of the requirements for the role.

As noted in Requirement 3, from the 2023/2024 academic year, all offers for entry onto the programme will be dependent on a number of completed actions requiring engagement from employers and workplace supervisors, including the completion of the workplace check and completion of mandatory training.

The Education Associates recognised this move towards an improved process, however they did identify a level of disengagement from the current workplace supervisors due to the increased expectations on them. The Institute must ensure workplace supervisors, both existing and prospective, fully engage with all university requirements.

Requirement 7: Systems must be in place to identify and record issues that may affect patient safety. Should a patient safety issue arise, appropriate action must be taken by the provider and where necessary the relevant regulatory body should be notified. *(Requirement Met)*

The panel was informed that during the 2022/2023 academic year, workplace supervisors have been invited to regular meetings with the programme team alongside their students. These meetings have been held following the Technical Progress Committee (TPC) and feedback or concerns can be discussed during these sessions. The programme team provided an example of a student who had been struggling to demonstrate sufficient technical experience prior to the TPC meeting. These issues were discussed with the workplace supervisor, who supported and facilitated the student to gain additional experience.

In addition to this, all workplace supervisors are invited to attend an end of year meeting, during which non-student specific concerns and issues can be raised. The Institute confirmed that all workplace supervisors for the current third year students have attended a feedback session with the programme lead.

The panel was pleased to note that the 2023/24 programme handbook is currently being developed, which provides additional clarity on how workplace supervisors are able to raise concerns directly with the programme team. Furthermore, a new Non-Academic Student Record system is being embedded into both the BDS and dental technology programmes and will be used for collating low level student concerns and issues. The panel noted the system is currently being trailed with internal staff members and supports the Institute plans to roll this out to workplace supervisors in the next academic year.

Standard 2 – Quality evaluation and review of the programme
The provider must have in place effective policy and procedures for the monitoring and review of the programme.

Requirement 11: Programmes must be subject to rigorous internal and external quality assurance procedures. External quality assurance should include the use of external examiners, who should be familiar with the GDC learning outcomes and their context and QAA guidelines should be followed where applicable. Patient and/or customer feedback must be collected and used to inform programme development. *(Requirement Partly Met)*

Within the pre-inspection evidence, the panel was informed that students were able to provide feedback on the programme through several mechanisms. These include:

- Open Forum - informal staff / student meetings that allow issues to be raised and actioned without the need to wait for more formal meetings. Open Forum action trackers are stored on the MyAberdeen VLE, which is accessible by all students.
- Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) – both dental technology and BDS students, along with senior Institute staff, are invited to attend the SSLC. The minutes of these meetings are shared with entire cohorts and saved onto the MyAberdeen system.
- Course Evaluation Forms (SCEFs).

While the panel was pleased to see systems in place, they were concerned that a number of students were unaware of the options available for providing feedback on the programme. Both students and workplace supervisors commented that when feedback was provided, there was a lack of clarity if or how their suggestions would be actioned.

The panel was also disappointed to note that dental technology cohorts do not have an opportunity to mix and share their experiences. The panel acknowledged the logistical challenges involved due to the nature of the programme delivery, however they agreed this was a missed opportunity as a number of shared themes were discussed with the Education Associates during the inspection.

Going forwards, the Institute must consider innovative ways to ensure both student and workplace supervisor feedback is effectively captured, actioned and outcomes communicated to all stakeholders.

Requirement 12: The provider must have effective systems in place to quality assure placements where students deliver treatment to ensure that patient care and student assessment across all locations meets these Standards. The quality assurance systems should include the regular collection of student and patient feedback relating to placements. *(Requirement Met)*

As reported in Requirement 3, the panel was pleased to note the revised and improved process for initial and ongoing monitoring of dental laboratory workplaces. The panel was provided with a copy of the recently revised workplace supervisor and programme handbooks and informed that a further review will take place in advance of the 2023/2024 student cohort starting.

The panel was informed that all laboratories will now receive a visit from a member of the programme team before an offer is made to a student. In addition to this, a follow up review of the workplace will be completed ahead of the start of the student's third year on the course. Following concerns raised previously about secondary work placements, the Institute confirmed that any laboratory which is to be used by a student to achieve portfolio requirements and which their primary employer cannot facilitate, will receive an inspection from the programme team.

The panel was also pleased to note that the workplace checklists have been reviewed and updated. They continue to include checks to laboratory requirements such as MHRA and Health & Safety compliance, but also now include a discussion space for recording feedback from members of the workplace team.

Standard 3– Student assessment

Assessment must be reliable and valid. The choice of assessment method must be appropriate to demonstrate achievement of the GDC learning outcomes. Assessors must be fit to perform the assessment task.

Requirement 13: To award the qualification, providers must be assured that students have demonstrated attainment across the full range of learning outcomes, and that they are fit to practise at the level of a safe beginner. Evidence must be provided that demonstrates this assurance, which should be supported by a coherent approach to the principles of assessment referred to in these standards. *(Requirement Met)*

The panel was pleased to note that assessments throughout the programme have been updated to incorporate a 'fit for purpose' marking criteria. The panel agreed that it is vital for practical elements of the course to reflect real life dental technology and the inclusion of this criteria enhances the student assessment experience.

The fit for purpose criteria is now used for both formative and summative assessments. During formative assessments, it is used to review and provide constructive feedback to students. The criteria are also used within the summative OSPE assessments. The panel was encouraged to note that the criteria had been developed in collaboration with dental technology experts at the Institute and from external stakeholders.

As part of the annual module review process, the fit for purpose criteria can be updated following feedback from students and Institute staff. While there was a general understanding of the new criteria, some students reported that they were not aware of how it would impact their assessments. Going forwards, the Institute should ensure all students are aware of the fit for purpose marking criteria.

Requirement 14: The provider must have in place management systems to plan, monitor and centrally record the assessment of students, including the monitoring of clinical and/or technical experience, throughout the programme against each of the learning outcomes. *(Requirement Met)*

The panel was pleased to note significant improvements with the e-portfolio system, which now appears to be working effectively. The previous issue regarding the timeliness of workplace supervisors uploading their feedback on the system also have been resolved through the introduction of the workplace supervisor app.

On completion of the student application process and once an honorary contract has been issued to a workplace supervisor, they are given access to the e-portfolio app. This application allows for supervisor feedback to be uploaded against completed work. Following this, students are required to submit their own reflection on the uploaded task.

The Education Associates agreed that the Institute should continue to monitor and review the effectiveness of the e-portfolio and workplace supervisor app to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Specifically, the Institute should review the frequency of workplace supervisor feedback to ensure it is sufficient but not overly burdensome. The Institute should also review student and workplace supervisor log in details to ensure relevant stakeholders have the required access.

Requirement 15: Students must have exposure to an appropriate breadth of patients/procedures and should undertake each activity relating to patient care on sufficient occasions to enable them to develop the skills and the level of competency to achieve the relevant GDC learning outcomes. *(Requirement Partly Met)*

During the inspection the panel was pleased to note within the revised student admissions process that specific focus is placed on identifying students applying from single discipline dental laboratories. The panel agreed that, for the new cohort of students, the revised workplace check process provides a satisfactory opportunity for students and supervisors to identify any areas of dental technology that the student may require additional support and opportunity to achieve the full range of GDC Learning Outcomes. Workplace supervisors are then required to put in place an action plan for identifying additional work experience locations, with support from the Institute.

In addition to the revised recruitment process, the Institute maintains a contemporaneous contact list of known dental laboratories who are able to support students. Furthermore, if needed the programme team is able to deploy a rapid check of new dental laboratories, should this be required to broaden the students' experience.

However, during meetings with the current students, the panel was concerned that some were unaware of what process would need to be followed should they require additional experience outside of their contractual dental workplace. Of specific concern was a lack of understanding from current students in single discipline laboratories. The Institute must ensure all students and workplace supervisors in single discipline laboratories are aware of their responsibility to identify alternative work experience locations. The Institute must support students and workplace supervisors to achieve this.

Requirement 16: Providers must demonstrate that assessments are fit for purpose and deliver results which are valid and reliable. The methods of assessment used must be appropriate to the learning outcomes, in line with current and best practice and be routinely monitored, quality assured and developed. (*Requirement Met*)

The panel was pleased to note the work that has been undertaken during the 2022/23 academic year to increase the number of assessment questions available across the dental technology programme, however they questioned whether currently there was an overreliance on existing BDS questions being utilised. The Institute confirmed that there is an ongoing and continued development of the question bank. The panel agreed that the Institute should continue to enhance the number of questions available, and ensure any questions developed are appropriately drafted for the dental technology programme.

During the inspection, the panel was encouraged to learn that some assessments will be moving from MCQs to SAQs. The Education Associates agreed this was a positive move and supported the planned additional training for students on how to complete this type of assessment. During the ongoing enhancement of the assessment process, the panel agreed that the Institute should continue to ensure valid and effective assessment feedback is provided to students, so they are able to learn from their experiences.

Requirement 17: Assessment must utilise feedback collected from a variety of sources, which should include other members of the dental team, peers, patients and/or customers. *(Requirement Partly Met)*

The panel noted that effective use of the e-portfolio system enables workplace supervisors to provide feedback on student performance. The e-portfolio is then used as a tool to inform student progression and provide an assurance of student competence. As noted above, improvements to the e-portfolio process and workplace supervisor app have resulted in more appropriate, reliable and consistent feedback to be incorporated into the assessment process.

However, the panel was disappointed that, despite the opportunity for students to undertake defined peer review during their monthly study days on site at the Institute, this does not appear to be taking place. The panel acknowledged that students may provide some feedback to each other during lessons, however students were unaware of how and when this takes place, and there were no clearly defined criteria for students to carry out this beneficial task. Going forwards, the Institute must ensure students are provided adequate and structured opportunity to use peer review as part of the assessment process, including the use of greater cross-cohort engagement where possible.

Requirement 18: The provider must support students to improve their performance by providing regular feedback and by encouraging students to reflect on their practice. *(Requirement Met)*

As noted above, a new workplace supervisor application is available to all supervisors to deliver feedback to students in a timely manner. Workplace supervisors are provided with access to this as soon as an honorary contract is in place. This app allows for supervisor feedback to be uploaded against completed work. The app allows the supervisors to access a student's portfolio and highlights the outstanding feedback required. When a workplace supervisor has uploaded their feedback, the student is required to reflect on their performance and record this on the e-portfolio.

The panel was pleased to note during meetings with students and supervisors that there were no reports of delays in providing feedback, allowing timely reflection opportunities for students.

Requirement 21: Assessment must be fair and undertaken against clear criteria. The standard expected of students in each area to be assessed must be clear and students and staff involved in assessment must be aware of this standard. An appropriate standard setting process must be employed for summative assessments. (*Requirement Met***)**

The panel was informed that the Modified Angoff standard setting methodology is used within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition. The panel acknowledged the challenge the Institute faces with standard setting for a relatively small programme like the diploma in dental technology.

During the inspection, the panel was pleased to note there is the potential for NHS dental technicians to support and inform the OSPE standard setting process. The Education Associates agreed that this will increase the available pool of expertise and fully support this development.

Summary of Action

Requirement number	Action	Observations & response from Provider	Due date
3	The Institute must continue to review the effectiveness and levels of workplace supervisor engagement with the revised admissions process.	Starting from the 2023-24 academic year, offers were made to successful interview candidates on the condition of the following being in place ahead of the start of the academic year: - A tri-party agreement signed between the Workplace Supervisors and University of Aberdeen - Honorary University of Aberdeen contract in place for Workplace Supervisor The Institute ensured that these items were all in place for candidates joining for the new academic year. Mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training is to be completed in a reasonable timeframe upon commencement of the academic year. As part of the review of WPS engagement, the Programme team will continue to inspect workplaces at the beginning of the initial programme year and again at the start of the third year. In addition, the Programme team will hold a minimum of two individual meetings with each Workplace Supervisor per Semester. The meetings serve to support the obligations of the tri-party agreement and honorary contract by: - engaging regularly with each WPS; - ensuring each WPS is fully up to date and understands programme processes and expectations;	Annual monitoring 2024

| | | - ensuring that each WPS is in receipt of links to complete EDI training and providing a timeframe for this;
- providing the WPS opportunity to feed back on any aspect of the programme;
- ensuring each WPS is engaged with supporting their students with their study, and are aware of the self-study needs of the curriculum;
- discuss student engagement and progress within the programme to date, highlighting any concerns on either side.

Each WPS will be emailed to arrange a meeting. If two emails go unanswered, the Programme Coordinator will follow up with a telephone call.

To be able to review engagement of each WPS, meetings with each WPS follow a schedule of:
- September: following the first practical class of the new academic year.
- November: prior to the Semester One Technical Progress Committee.
- February: following the first practical class of the new Semester.
- May: prior to the Semester Two Technical Progress Committee.

WPS are reminded at these meetings that they can also contact the programme team at any point during the academic year. The programme team will use a standard template for these meetings to achieve consistency. The Programme team will check with central University for a record of completed EDI training by each WPS.

A collective online group Open Forum with all WPS' hosted by the Programme Coordinator will be arranged | |

		twice a year, one in November and one in April. The WPS' will be invited to one further meeting together at the end of the academic year. These meetings aim to gather feedback on the programme and solve general concerns.	
5	The Institute must ensure workplace supervisors, both existing and prospective, fully engage with all university requirements.	Offers to the programme are now entirely conditional subject to the following being in place at the start of the teaching year: - A tri-party agreement signed between the Workplace Supervisors and University of Aberdeen - Honorary University Aberdeen contract in place for Workplace Supervisor The University is rigorous in not permitting a student to join the programme if the prospective WPS has not satisfied the requirements above. This information is stipulated within the Application Guidance available on the Institute of Dentistry's website. The programme team hold meetings with each WPS during the academic year where the mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training is followed up on to check engagement. The Programme team will also check with the central University for confirmation of compliance with the required training. Each WPS is in receipt of an electronic copy of the Workplace Supervisor handbook ahead of the new academic year. A printed copy is also sent to each WPS. We will try and hold a yearly conference day where all students and supervisors will be invited to attend. This conference will aim at engaging all students and their	Annual monitoring 2024

		WPS with the conference whilst also providing CPD to all of them.	
11	The Institute must consider innovative ways to ensure both student and workplace supervisor feedback is effectively captured, actioned and outcomes communicated to all stakeholders.	In regard to practical feedback, the e-portfolio app has been enhanced so that supervisors have their own app to enter feedback. It is not possible for a supervisor to enter feedback using the student e-portfolio app. There have been changes to the way in which images are uploaded to the e-portfolio. These are changes to the way in which the app itself uploads an image. Previously this was a two-stage process whereby the app uploaded the title of the image first, followed by the image itself. There had been instances where the second stage was unsuccessful, leading to students thinking they had uploaded an image when in fact the upload had not been successful. Under the new process, once the student adds an image, the app will upload it in a one stage process and the image will be uploaded straight away.

Each WPS is invited to provide feedback during scheduled meetings during the academic year with the Programme team. WPS are also told that they can contact the programme team at any point during the academic year. The Programme team also use the meeting to provide updates to each WPS.

The Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) are held four times per academic year. The second and fourth SSLC of the academic year focus on the results of the Semester One and Semester Two Student Course Evaluation (SCEF) Feedback surveys. From the 2023-24 academic year, all dental technology students are invited to join the SSLC meeting, rather than only Class Reps. This is due to the small number of students in | Annual monitoring 2024 |

		each cohort. The SSLC for the dental technology programme will also be held exclusively for dental technology students to ensure that adequate time is given to discuss feedback for their programme. The results of the SCEF survey are uploaded to each course area of MyAberdeen, as well as the organisational page for the Dental Technology programme. This is accessible to both students and WPS. The SCEF survey results will also be shared via email with students and WPS. An action tracker will be completed during the SSLC meeting and shared with the students on the same page to follow on the outcomes of these meetings.	

13	The Institute should ensure all students are aware of the fit for purpose marking criteria.	The Fit for Purpose marking criteria was discussed with all students on their first day of the academic year.
		
		The Fit for Purpose marking criteria will be referred to in the Workplace Supervisor Handbook and added to:
		  - MyAberdeen
		  - Assessment and Progression Handbook
		
		The Fit for Purpose marking criteria will be raised at the Programme Team meetings with each WPS.
		Students will also be using the fit for purpose marking criteria to mark each other as part of the peer-assessment that takes place at the practical sessions in Aberdeen, twice a month.
			Annual monitoring 2024

14	The Institute should review the frequency of workplace supervisor feedback to ensure it is sufficient but not overly burdensome. The Institute should also review student and workplace supervisor log in details to	The Institute of Dentistry ensures that Honorary contracts are in place for each WPS via the Human Resources contracts team. The Institute of Dentistry are readily able to access user ID details of each Honorary contract holder if these are misplaced by a	Annual monitoring 2024

	ensure relevant stakeholders have the required access.	WPS. The Institute of Dentistry can raise a call with the IT service desk to support Workplace Supervisors who are experiencing any difficulties with their University IT account. The programme team can check with each WPS at their individual meetings to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulty with the e-portfolio app. The e-portfolio app has been revised to allow feedback for each stage. In the past it has been difficult to provide feedback against each image if multiple images have been uploaded. It is now possible to clearly add feedback for each image uploaded, documenting clearly feedback for each stage of the course.	
15	The Institute must ensure all students and workplace supervisors in single discipline laboratories are aware of their responsibility to identify alternative work experience locations. The Institute must support students and workplace supervisors to achieve this.	This is raised through a number of means during the programme: - by the Programme Coordinator at in-person laboratory visits at the start of the 1st year of the programme, and again at the second laboratory visit undertaken at the start of the 3rd year of the programme. - within the tri-party agreement, signed by the WPS prior to all students joining the programme from 2023-24 onwards. - at teaching classes when raised as required in relation to specific aspects of a course - The students submit a form at the beginning of each term confirming that they will have access to appropriate cases to complete the portfolio for that specific term. When some of these cases will be done outside the main lab, the student must specify the lab and the new WPS on that other lab. Another inspection will take place on that external lab.	Annual monitoring 2024

		- If students struggle to find a suitable place to perform some of the activities on their portfolios, they can raise this with the programme co-ordinators who can suggest some laboratories previously inspected by the programme coordinators. Information on this matter can be found on the student programme handbook.	
16	The Institute should continue to enhance the number of questions available, and ensure any questions developed are appropriately drafted for the dental technology programme.	The Institute of Dentistry assessment team have built a question bank specifically for the dental technology programme on ExamSoft. All questions are reviewed by an appropriate panel, including the External Examiner. Year Two of the Dental Technology programme will undertake Short Answer Question assessment from Semester 2 2023-24 in place of the previously used Multiple Choice Question assessment. Year Three will use Short Answer Question assessment and two Case Reports.	Annual monitoring 2024
16	The Institute should continue to ensure valid and effective assessment feedback is provided to students, so they are able to learn from their experiences.	The Programme follows assessment feedback processes of the University of Aberdeen for healthcare programmes. In addition, all students undertake a formative assessment every time they undertake a new assessment type: OSPE, Multiple Choice Question and Single Answer Question for guidance and feedback. Following the Exam Board and ratification of results students will receive individual feedback in the forms of: - Multiple Choice: a breakdown of categories and number of questions answered correctly within those categories. - Short Answer Questions: detailed written feedback for those answers where students did not get full marks.	Annual monitoring 2024

		- OSPE: written comments provided during the assessment. - Case reports: written comments written during the marking of the reports using the rubric and also detailed written feedback on the course work. - Course work: use of fit for purpose criteria and peer-assessment (feedback from both staff and students).	
17	The Institute must ensure students are provided adequate and structured opportunity to use peer review as part of the assessment process.	Students provide peer review using the fit for purpose marking criteria for all course work. This is undertaken at the end of each practical class session in Aberdeen. Peer on peer feedback is given, then general comments are discussed as a group.	Annual monitoring 2024

Observations from the provider on content of report

The programme team have sought advice from the GDC over expectations for completion of EDI training by workplace supervisors. The programme team were concerned that due to time constraints it could be difficult for supervisors to complete the training prior to the start of the academic year. The GDC have clarified that the expectation is that workplace supervisors complete the training as soon as practically possible, however this would not need to be ahead of the start of the academic year.

Recommendations to the GDC

Education associates' recommendation	The Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology continues to be approved for holders to apply for registration as a Dental Technician with the General Dental Council.
Date of next regular monitoring exercise	2024

Annex 1

Inspection purpose and process

1. As part of its duty to protect patients and promote high standards within the professions it regulates, the General Dental Council (GDC) quality assures the education and training of student dentists and dental care professionals (DCPs) at institutions whose qualifications enable the holder to apply for registration with the GDC. It also quality assures new qualifications where it is intended that the qualification will lead to registration. The aim of this quality assurance activity is to ensure that institutions produce a new registrant who has demonstrated, on graduation, that they have met the learning outcomes required for registration with the GDC. This ensures that students who obtain a qualification leading to registration are fit to practise at the level of a safe beginner.

2. Inspections are a key element of the GDC's quality assurance activity. They enable a recommendation to be made to the Council of the GDC regarding the 'sufficiency' of the programme for registration as a dentist and 'approval' of the programme for registration as a dental care professional. The GDC's powers are derived under Part II, Section 9 of the Dentists Act 1984 (as amended).

3. The GDC document 'Standards for Education' 2nd edition1 is the framework used to evaluate qualifications. There are 21 Requirements in three distinct Standards, against which each qualification is assessed.

4. The education provider is requested to undertake a self-evaluation of the programme against the individual Requirements under the Standards for Education. This involves stating whether each Requirement is 'met', 'partly met' or 'not met' and to provide evidence in support of their evaluation. The inspection panel examines this evidence, may request further documentary evidence and gathers further evidence from discussions with staff and students. The panel will reach a decision on each Requirement, using the following descriptors:

A Requirement is met if:

"There is sufficient appropriate evidence derived from the inspection process. This evidence provides the education associates with broad confidence that the provider demonstrates the Requirement. Information gathered through meetings with staff and students is supportive of documentary evidence and the evidence is robust, consistent and not contradictory. There may be minor deficiencies in the evidence supplied but these are likely to be inconsequential."

A Requirement is partly met if:

"Evidence derived from the inspection process is either incomplete or lacks detail and, as such, fails to convince the inspection panel that the provider fully demonstrates the Requirement. Information gathered through meetings with staff and students may not fully support the evidence submitted or there may be contradictory information in the evidence provided. There is, however, some evidence of compliance and it is likely that either (a) the appropriate evidence can be supplied in a short time frame, or, (b) any deficiencies identified can be addressed and evidenced in the annual monitoring process."

A Requirement is not met if:

"The provider cannot provide evidence to demonstrate a Requirement or the evidence provided is not convincing. The information gathered at the inspection through meetings with staff and students does not support the evidence provided or the evidence is inconsistent and/or incompatible with other findings. The deficiencies identified are such as to give rise to serious concern and will require an immediate action plan from the provider. The consequences of not meeting a Requirement in terms of the overall sufficiency of a programme will depend upon the compliance of the provider across the range of Requirements and the possible implications for public protection"

5. Inspection reports highlight areas of strength and draw attention to areas requiring improvement and development, including actions that are required to be undertaken by the provider. Where an action is needed for a Requirement to be met, the term 'must' is used to describe the obligation on the provider to undertake this action. For these actions the education associates must stipulate a specific timescale by which the action must be completed or when an update on progress must be provided. In their observations on the content of the report, the provider should confirm the anticipated date by which these actions will be completed. Where an action would improve how a Requirement is met, the term 'should' is used and for these actions there will be no due date stipulated. Providers will be asked to report on the progress in addressing the required actions through the monitoring process. Serious concerns about a lack of progress may result in further inspections or other quality assurance activity.

6. The Education Quality Assurance team aims to send an initial draft of the inspection report to the provider within two months of the conclusion of the inspection. The provider of the qualification has the opportunity to provide factual corrections on the draft report. Following the production of the final report the provider is asked to submit observations on, or objections to, the report and the actions listed. Where the inspection panel have recommended that the programme is sufficient for registration, the Council of the GDC have delegated responsibility to the GDC Registrar to consider the recommendations of the panel. Should an inspection panel not be able to recommend 'sufficiency' or 'approval', the report and observations would be presented to the Council of the GDC for consideration.

7. The final version of the report and the provider's observations are published on the GDC website.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF PERSONNEL AND DEVELOPMENT (BUSINESS SCHOOL)

CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF PERSONNEL AND DEVELOPMENT

ACCREDITATION LICENCE AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT made on

BETWEEN:

(1)   **Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development,** a charity incorporated by Royal Charter (RC000758) and registered under number 1079797 whose registered office is at 151 The Broadway, London SW19 1JQ ('**CIPD**'); and

(2)   **University of Aberdeen** whose registered office is at University of Aberdeen Business School, MacRobert Building, Kings College, Aberdeen, AB24 5UA Scotland, United Kingdom (the '**Licensee**')

RECITALS:

(A)   CIPD exists to promote the art and science of people management and development for the public benefit. CIPD, as an awarding organisation, can grant licences to organisations to provide a wide range of educational programmes.

(B)   The Licensee is an organisation with qualification awarding powers undertaking the delivery of educational programmes to individuals enrolled with the Licensee ('**Students**') and wishes to offer certain educational programmes as CIPD accredited programmes that may lead to a specified grade of CIPD membership in line with CIPD professional standards.

(C)   The Licensee has successfully completed the CIPD accreditation process in respect of certain programmes and CIPD is willing to grant accreditation to the Licensee to offer such programmes as CIPD Accredited Programme(s) subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

IT IS AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

'**Accreditation Licence**' means a non-transferable, non-exclusive right to deliver CIPD Accredited Programmes at locations and via the mode(s) as approved by CIPD;

'**Accredited Programme Provider**' means an organisation approved and accredited by CIPD to offer the Accredited Programmes set out in schedule 1;

'**Accredited Programmes**' means programmes that are offered by the Licensee and have been accredited by CIPD;

'**Agreement**' means this Accreditation Licence Agreement including its recitals and schedules.

'**Applicable Laws**' means all regional, national and international laws, rules, regulations and standards including those imposed by any governmental or regulatory authority and all applicable industry standards and standards determined by any self-regulatory body which apply from time to time to the delivery of educational programmes;

'**Accreditation Date**' means the date the Licensee receive accreditation;

'Approved Programmes' means the CIPD approved programmes offered by the Licensee prior to the date of this Agreement under a separate centre licensing agreement;

'Branding Requirements' means the directions issued to Centres from time to time governing the use of the CIPD Branding, the current version of which is set out in Schedule 3;

'Business Day' means a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, on which banks in the City of London are open for over the counter business;

'CIPD Accredited Programmes' means the Licensee's qualifications accredited by CIPD set out in Schedule 1;

'CIPD Branding' means the CIPD name and logo as set out in Schedule 3;

'Confidential Information' means any information, however conveyed or presented, that relates to the business, affairs, operations, processes, policies, strategies, personnel, clients and suppliers of the disclosing party, together with all information derived by the receiving party from such information and any other information clearly designated by a party as being confidential (whether or not it is marked 'Confidential'), or which ought reasonably to be considered as confidential;

'Fee' means the fees payable for the Accreditation Licence by the Licensee to CIPD and any amount due for Student registration, delivery sites, changes to approvals as set out in the CIPD Centre Fees document as published on the CIPD website at www.cipd.co.uk;

'Force Majeure Event' means any acts, events, omissions or accidents beyond a party's reasonable control including, but not limited to, pandemic, epidemic, war, riot, civil commotion, terrorist attack, fire, flood, storm, strikes, lockouts or other industrial disputes, excluding any such event relating to or induced by the workforce of the affected party;

'Good Practice' means exercising the same skill, expertise and judgement and using facilities and resources of a similar or superior quality as might be expected from a supplier in the Licensee's industry, profession or trade who:

      (a)   is skilled and experienced in providing the services in question; and

      (b)   takes all reasonable care and is diligent in performing its obligations;

'Intellectual Property Rights' means any and all intellectual property rights of any nature anywhere in the world including but not limited to all patents, utility models, copyright and related rights, trade marks, logos, service marks, trade, business or domain names, goodwill, design rights, rights in databases, moral rights, know-how and any other intellectual property rights, in each case whether registered or unregistered and including all applications for and renewals or extensions of such rights, and all similar or equivalent rights or forms of protection and **'Intellectual Property'** shall be construed accordingly;

'Material Default' means any breach of this Agreement which CIPD considers to be sufficiently material as to justify termination of all or part of this Agreement including, but not limited to, any breach of clause 5.4, 6.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.9, 10.12, 10.13(b), 10.16; 10.18, 11 (and Schedule 4), 14, 17 or 18.1;

'Month' means a calendar month;

'Performance Criteria' means the criteria stipulated by CIPD as set out in Schedule 2 to assess the Licensee's performance as an Accredited Programme Provider approved to deliver CIPD Accredited Programmes;

'Students' has the meaning ascribed to it under recital (B) above;

'Transfer Plan': means the plan for the orderly transition of the Licensee's obligations under this Agreement in the event of full or partial termination of this Agreement, prepared and updated in accordance with clause 14; and

'VAT' means value added tax chargeable in the United Kingdom for the time being and any similar additional tax.

IT IS NOW HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **INTERPRETATION**

   1.1   Clause and schedule headings shall not affect the interpretation of this Agreement.

   1.2   A person includes a natural person, corporate or unincorporated body (whether or not having separate legal personality) and that person's legal and personal representatives, successors and permitted assigns.

   1.3   Words in the singular shall include the plural and vice versa. Words imparting a gender shall include the other genders.

   1.4   A reference to a statute or statutory provision is a reference to it as amended, extended or re-enacted from time to time.

   1.5   Any reference to a party is to a party to this Agreement.

   1.6   A reference to 'writing' or 'written' includes email.

   1.7   Any words following the terms **including**, **include**, **in particular**, **for example** or any similar expression shall be construed as illustrative and shall not limit the sense of the words, description, definition, phrase or term preceding those terms.

   1.8   References to clauses and the Schedules are to the clauses of, and Schedules to, this Agreement. The Schedules (including appendices) form part of this Agreement and shall have effect as if set out in full in the body of this Agreement. Any reference to this Agreement includes the Schedules (including appendices).

2. **LICENCE**

   2.1   CIPD grants the Accreditation Licence to the Licensee on the basis that the Licensee shall deliver the CIPD Accredited Programmes in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

   2.2   The parties acknowledge that the centre licence agreement entered into by the parties for the delivery of Approved Programmes prior to the commencement of this Agreement is and shall remain a separate agreement which shall continue in full force and effect until terminated in accordance with its terms.

3. **TERM**

   This Agreement shall commence on the Accreditation Date and continue subject to the Licensee continuing to meet the requirements of this Agreement, unless otherwise terminated by either party pursuant to clause 12.

4. **CIPD ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES**

   4.1   The Licensee agrees to deliver the CIPD Accredited Programmes in accordance with the terms of this Agreement and shall comply with all policies, procedures and guidance notes as may be issued by CIPD from time to time.

   4.2   CIPD will advise the Licensee of any changes to these requirements as soon as reasonably practicable after the changes are made.

5. **FEE AND PAYMENT**

   5.1   The Licensee shall pay the Fee to CIPD in accordance with the payment terms set out in the CIPD Centre Fees document.

   5.2   CIPD will issue the Licensee with an invoice in respect of the Fee and the Licensee will pay the Fee within 30 calendar days of the date of the invoice.

   5.3   CIPD may review the Fee from time to time, and any changes to the Fee will be notified to the Licensee in writing.

5.4   Failure or delay in making any payment due to CIPD under this Agreement will constitute a Material Default.

6.   LICENCE TO USE CIPD BRANDING

6.1   CIPD grants to the Licensee a non-transferable, non-exclusive, revocable licence, to use the CIPD Branding in connection with the delivery of CIPD Accredited Programmes in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

6.2   The Licensee acknowledges that all Intellectual Property Rights in the CIPD Branding are the sole and exclusive property of CIPD.

6.3   The Licensee shall use the CIPD Branding only as expressly authorised in this Agreement and in accordance with the Branding Requirements and shall observe any further directions given by CIPD in relation to the use of the CIPD Branding. A breach of this clause 6.3 by the Licensee shall constitute a Material Default.

7.   INDEMNITY

7.1   The Licensee shall indemnify CIPD against any and all liabilities, costs, expenses, damages and losses (including all interest, penalties and legal costs) incurred or suffered by CIPD arising out of the performance or non-performance by the Licensee of this Agreement or arising in connection with the delivery of CIPD Accredited Programmes.

7.2   To the fullest extent permitted by law, CIPD shall not be liable to the Licensee for any costs, expenses, loss or damage (whether direct, indirect or consequential, and whether economic or other) arising from the Licensee's exercise of the rights granted to it under this Agreement.

8.   INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

8.1   All Intellectual Property Rights owned by CIPD as at the date of this Agreement shall remain the sole property of CIPD.

8.2   Any Intellectual Property created by the Licensee during the delivery of CIPD Accredited Programmes or in connection with this Agreement shall vest solely in the Licensee.

8.3   The Licensee shall at any time during the term of this Agreement if so required by CIPD, and in the event of the termination of this Agreement for whatever reason (whether lawfully or otherwise), immediately surrender to CIPD or destroy at CIPD's sole discretion all original and copy documents in its possession, custody or control belonging to CIPD or relating to its business, together with any other Intellectual Property belonging to or created for CIPD.

9.   CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

9.1   Each party shall keep the other party's Confidential Information confidential and shall not without the prior written consent of the other party:

(a)   use such Confidential Information except for the purpose of performing its rights and obligations under this Agreement; or

(b)   disclose such Confidential Information in whole or in part to any third party, except as expressly permitted by this clause.

9.2   The obligations set out in clause 9.1 shall not apply to any Confidential Information which:

(a)   either party can show to the satisfaction of the other was already in its possession at the time of disclosure other than by a breach of any confidentiality obligation;

(b)   was, is or becomes available to the receiving party on a non-confidential basis from a person who, to the receiving party's knowledge, is not bound by a confidentiality agreement with the disclosing party or otherwise prohibited from disclosing the information to the receiving party;

(c)   is already in the public domain at the date of disclosure or becomes publicly available through no fault of either party; or

(d)   the parties agree in writing is not confidential or may be disclosed.

9.3   A party may disclose the other party's Confidential Information:

(a)   to such of its employees, agents or representatives on a 'need to know' basis for the purpose of performing its rights and obligations under this Agreement; or

(b)   to the extent that it is required to do so by law, by any governmental or other regulatory body or by a court or other authority of competent jurisdiction, provided that, to the extent it is legally permitted to do so, it gives the other party as much notice of such disclosure as possible.

9.4   On termination of this Agreement each party shall on demand either destroy or return to the other all documents and materials (including any copies) containing, incorporating or based on the other party's Confidential Information.

9.5   The provisions of this clause 9 shall survive termination of this Agreement.

10.   LICENSEE'S OBLIGATIONS

10.1   The Licensee shall comply with this Agreement in accordance with Good Practice and Applicable Laws.

10.2   The Licensee shall exercise all due skill, care and diligence to ensure that the CIPD Accredited Programmes are delivered by appropriately experienced, qualified and trained personnel.

10.3   Without prejudice to the generality of clause 10.2, the Licensee shall ensure that the delivery of CIPD Accredited Programmes is strictly in accordance with the Performance Criteria and with all other requirements in respect of CIPD Accredited Programmes notified by CIPD to the Licensee from time to time.

10.4   The Licensee shall notify CIPD and provide Relevant Details if at any time:

(a)   it has six or more Students who are employed by the same organisation registered on a CIPD Accredited Programme with the same commencement date; or

(b)   it intends to deliver a CIPD Accredited Programme as an in-house programme for an organisation where all registered Students are employed by the same organisation.

For the purpose of this clause 10.4 **Relevant Details** means the contact details (including full name; job title; work email address and telephone number) of the main contact from the relevant organisation employing the Students. The Licensee shall ensure that it has all necessary consents and notices in place to enable lawful transfer of the Relevant Details to CIPD for marketing and performance management purposes.

10.5   The Licensee shall notify CIPD in advance if at any time it is or intends to become party to a partnership arrangement with another organisation in respect of any CIPD Accredited Programme and shall:

(a)   provide full details and a signed copy of the heads of agreement that documents the respective roles and responsibilities of the Licensee and its proposed partner (the '**Heads of Agreement**');

(b)   notify CIPD within 10 Business Days if:

(i)   any changes are made to the proposed partnership or the Heads of Agreement; or

(ii)   any existing partnership is dissolved or discussions relating to a proposed partnership are terminated for any reason whatsoever; and

(c)   in the event that any change to such partnership has or is likely to have a detrimental impact on the Licensee's ability to offer CIPD Accredited Programmes, to act in accordance with clause 10.13 with a view to enabling registered Students to complete a CIPD Accredited Programme or to transfer to a suitable alternative CIPD Accredited Programme at another CIPD Accredited Programme Provider.

10.6   The Licensee shall ensure that all Students who are registered for a CIPD Accredited Programme are also registered as current members of CIPD. The Licensee shall inform all Students of the requirements and benefits of CIPD professional recognition and membership.

10.7 The Licensee shall act as an ambassador for CIPD and undertakes to develop and maintain a professional and constructive relationship with CIPD.

10.8 The Licensee shall on reasonable notice from CIPD permit CIPD, a CIPD nominated representative to inspect the delivery of CIPD Accredited Programmes to ensure that the Performance Criteria are being complied with.

10.9 The Licensee is required to gain CIPD accreditation prior to commencing the delivery of a CIPD Accredited Programme in a different delivery method and or at a different delivery location and or with a different partner. For the avoidance of doubt, the Licence issued to the Licensee is limited to the delivery locations and delivery methods and, where appropriate, delivery partner for which approval has been granted.

10.10 In the event that the Licensee decides to discontinue any CIPD Accredited Programme or where there are anticipated ownership/governance changes then the Licensee shall notify CIPD within 10 Business Days of such decision or such a change first being anticipated and shall ensure that arrangements for existing Students are maintained or that transfer arrangements are agreed with the CIPD to enable completion of the respective CIPD Accredited Programme in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

10.11 If the Licensee does not deliver a CIPD Accredited Programme to new Students for a period of two consecutive years, approval for such CIPD Accredited Programme will be deemed to have lapsed and the Licensee shall be required to obtain re-approval from CIPD before recruiting any further Students to such CIPD Accredited Programme.

10.12 If the Licensee becomes aware that it has failed to maintain the Performance Criteria, it shall inform CIPD within five Business Days and shall, if so required by CIPD, suspend delivery of all CIPD Accredited Programmes until such time as CIPD is satisfied that the Performance Criteria will be maintained.

10.13 If the Licensee fails to deliver a CIPD Accredited Programme in accordance with this Agreement and any policies, procedures and guidance notes as may be issued by CIPD from time to time, the Licensee hereby undertakes:

(a) to comply with any and all of the following staged responses, as may be demanded by CIPD at its absolute discretion:

    (i) meet all CIPD accreditation and monitoring action and development points;

    (ii) arrange for senior management of the Licensee to discuss the failure with CIPD;

    (iii) arrange an audit or visit to the Licensee by a CIPD representative and to pay any costs associated therein;

    (iv) accept suspension of Student registrations with CIPD;

    (v) accept suspension of CIPD Accredited Programme approval; or

    (vi) accept termination of this Agreement in accordance with clause 12 below, and

(b) if, having been notified of a response under 10.14 (a), it fails within a reasonable time to take appropriate action in pursuance of that response, such failure shall constitute a Material Default.

10.14 In the event of termination of a CIPD Accredited Programme, the Licensee shall provide notice to CIPD within 10 Business Days of how it proposes to deal with the Students registered on such CIPD Accredited Programme, with a view to enabling them to complete the CIPD Accredited Programme or transfer to a suitable alternative CIPD Accredited Programme at another Accredited Programme Provider. The Licensee agrees that CIPD shall be entitled to veto any proposed alternative CIPD Accredited Programme and/or Accredited Programme Provider at its absolute discretion. In such circumstances, the Licensee undertakes to work constructively with CIPD to agree an appropriate alternative CIPD Accredited Programme to meet the registered Students' needs and reasonable expectations, either to be delivered by that Accredited Programme Provider or by another Accredited Programme Provider as determined by CIPD.

10.15 The Licensee shall allow CIPD or CIPD's authorised representatives or agents to have access to the Licensee's premises at all reasonable times in order to audit and take copies of the Licensee's books and records related to this Agreement.

10.16 The Licensee shall comply (and ensure compliance by its officers, employees and agents) with all applicable laws, regulations, codes and guidance from time to time in force relating to (a) anti-bribery and anti-corruption including, but not limited to, the Bribery Act 2010; (b) the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and (c) Diversity and Inclusion obligations under clause 14.

10.17 The Licensee shall co-operate with CIPD in all matters relating to CIPD Accredited Programmes, and comply with CIPD's instructions including any policies, procedures and guidance notes as may be issued by CIPD from time to time.

10.18 The Licensee shall not do or omit to do anything which may cause CIPD to lose any licence, authority, consent or permission on which it relies for the purposes of conducting its business.

10.19 The Licensee shall be responsible for the legality, reliability, accuracy and quality of any data provided to CIPD in connection with the CIPD Accredited Programmes and pursuant to this Agreement.

11. DATA PROTECTION

The data protection obligations of the parties under this Agreement are set out in Schedule 4.

12. TERMINATION

12.1 Either party may terminate this Agreement in whole by giving the other party not less than three Months' written notice without financial penalty. However, upon such notice to terminate, each party shall remain liable to the other for the payment of any outstanding sums and any sums which would otherwise be or become due to the other during such three Month notice period including, for the avoidance of doubt, any such sums which remain unpaid upon or after expiry of the notice period.

12.2 Without prejudice to any other rights that have accrued under the Agreement or any other rights or remedies that it may have, CIPD may by giving written notice to the Licensee immediately terminate all or part of this Agreement if:

(a) the Licensee commits a Material Default;

(b) the Licensee commits a breach of this Agreement which is not capable of remedy;

(c) the Licensee commits a breach of this Agreement which is capable of remedy but which it has failed to remedy within 10 Business Days of receipt of a notice from CIPD requiring that breach to be remedied;

(d) the Licensee commits repeated breaches of its obligations under this Agreement (whether of the same or different obligations and regardless of whether these breaches are capable of remedy), the cumulative effect of which shall be a Material Default;

(e) the Licensee has been required to take one or more of the staged responses set out in 10.13(a) above and, having been subjected to additional or alternative responses under 10.13(b), continues for a further period of 10 Business Days not to take appropriate action pursuant to such responses;

(f) the Licensee is unable to pay its debts within the meaning of section 123 Insolvency Act 1986 or any statutory modification or re-enactment of that or an equivalent provision in another jurisdiction;

(g) the Licensee commences negotiations with all or any class of its creditors with a view to rescheduling any of its debts, or makes a proposal for or enters into any compromise or arrangements with its creditors;

(h) a petition is filed, a notice is given, a resolution is passed, or an order is made, for or in connection with the winding up of the Licensee;

(i) an application is made to court, or an order is made, for the appointment of an administrator, or if a notice of intention to appoint an administrator is given or if an administrator is appointed, over the Licensee; or

(j) a person becomes entitled to appoint a receiver over the assets of the Licensee or a receiver is appointed over the assets of the Licensee.

12.3   In the event that CIPD decides to no longer offer a CIPD Accredited Programme, it shall be entitled to terminate the Accreditation Licence in respect of such CIPD Accredited Programme by giving the Licensee one Month's written notice. CIPD will provide to the Licensee the final date for Student registrations and certifications in respect of the relevant CIPD Accredited Programme. In such circumstance the parties agree that neither party shall be liable to the other for any loss, damages, costs, legal costs, professional and/or other expenses whatsoever.

12.4   CIPD may terminate this Agreement with immediate effect if it reasonably considers that continued association with the Licensee will bring it into disrepute or adversely affect its ability to achieve its charitable objectives.

13.   CONSEQUENCES OF TERMINATION

13.1   On expiry or termination of this Agreement for any reason and subject to any express provisions set out elsewhere in this Agreement:

(a)   all outstanding sums payable by the Licensee to CIPD shall immediately become due and payable;

(b)   all rights and licences granted pursuant to this Agreement shall cease; and

(c)   the Licensee shall cease all use of the CIPD Branding.

13.2   In the event of the termination or expiry of this Agreement for any reason, the Licensee shall provide assistance as reasonably required by CIPD to facilitate the transfer of Students to another Accredited Programme Provider in accordance with a mutually agreed Transfer Plan.

14.   DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

14.1   The Licensee shall:

(a)   perform its obligations under this Agreement (including those in relation to the provision of CIPD Accredited Programmes) in accordance with:

(i)   all applicable equality law (whether in relation to race, sex, gender identity/expression, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy, maternity or otherwise);

(ii)   the CIPD's equality and diversity policy as provided to the Licensee from time to time; and

(iii) any other requirements and instructions which the CIPD reasonably imposes in connection with any equality obligations at any time under applicable equality law; and

(b)   take all necessary steps, and inform the CIPD of the steps taken, to prevent unlawful discrimination designated as such by any court or tribunal, or the Equality and Human Rights Commission or (any successor organisation).

15.   WAIVER

No waiver by CIPD of any breach of the Licensee's obligations shall constitute a waiver of any other prior or subsequent breach and CIPD's rights, under this Agreement or otherwise, shall not be affected by any delay, failure, or omission to enforce or express forbearance granted in respect of any obligation of the Licensee.

16.   VARIATION

No variation, supplement, deletion or replacement of or from this Agreement shall be effective unless made in writing and signed by or on behalf of each party.

17.   NON-ASSIGNMENT

The Licensee may not assign, transfer, delegate or sub-contract any benefit or burden it has under this Agreement to any other party without the express prior written permission of the CIPD.

18.   CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP

18.1   Either party shall immediately notify the other of any change in its ownership, or any pending legal actions, or other facts which would reasonably be expected to have an impact on the ability of that party to carry out its obligations under this Agreement.

18.2   For the purposes of this clause, a change in ownership shall mean the acquisition of the power by a person to secure by law or by corporate structure that the affairs of the party concerned are conducted in accordance with the wishes of that person and includes, but is not limited to, where any such person acquires (directly or indirectly) or holds in aggregate more than 50% of the voting rights in the party concerned.

19.   SURVIVAL OF PROVISIONS

Termination of this Agreement shall not affect any of its provisions which are intended to continue to have effect after it has come to an end, which includes but is not limited to clauses 7, 8, 9, 10.16, 11, 19, 22, 24 and 25.

20.   FORCE MAJEURE

20.1   Neither party shall be in breach of this Agreement, nor be liable in any way for loss, damage or expense arising directly or indirectly from any failure or delay in performing any obligation under this Agreement if such failure or delay results from a Force Majeure Event. In such circumstances, the affected party shall be entitled to a reasonable extension of the time for performing such obligations. If the period or delay or non-performance continues for three Months or more, either party may terminate this Agreement with immediate effect by giving written notice to the other party. Such termination shall be without prejudice to the rights of the parties in respect of any breach of this Agreement occurring prior to the relevant Force Majeure Event.

21.   NOTICE

21.1   Any notice or other communication to be given under this Agreement shall be in writing, shall be deemed to have been duly served on, given to or made in relation to a party if it is left at the address of that party as stated at the beginning of this Agreement, unless otherwise stated, posted by first class post or registered post addressed to that Party at such address, or email to a machine situated at such address and shall if:

(a)   personally delivered, be deemed to have been received at the time of delivery;

(b)   posted in the United Kingdom, be deemed to have been received on the second Business Day after the date of posting; or

(c)   sent by email, be deemed to have been received on the day that it was sent,

provided that where, in the case of delivery by hand, or email and delivery or transmission occurs after 6.00 pm on a Business Day or on a day which is not a Business Day, receipt shall be deemed to occur at 9.00 am on the next following Business Day.

22.   ENTIRE AGREEMENT

22.1   This Agreement, together with all policies, procedures and guidance notes issued by CIPD contains the entire agreement and understanding of the parties and supersedes all prior agreements, understanding or arrangements (both oral and written) relating to the subject matter of this Agreement.

22.2   Each party acknowledges that, in entering this Agreement, it does not rely on, and shall have no remedy in respect of, any statement, representation, assurance or warranty of any person (whether a party to this Agreement or not).

22.3   Nothing in this clause shall limit any liability for fraud.

23.   SEVERABILITY

23.1   If any provision of this Agreement (or any part of any provision) is found by any court or other authority of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable, that provision or part-provision shall, to

the extent required, be deemed not to form part of this Agreement, and the validity and enforceability of the other provisions of this Agreement shall not be affected.

23.2   If a provision of this Agreement (or any part of nay provision) is found illegal, invalid or unenforceable, the provision shall apply with the minimum modification necessary to make it legal, valid and enforceable.

23.3   The invalidity or partial invalidity of any term of this Agreement shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other term of this Agreement.

24.   RIGHTS OF THIRD PARTIES

A person who is not a party to this Agreement shall not have any rights under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999.

25.   COUNTERPARTS

This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which when executed shall constitute a duplicate original, but all the counterparts shall together constitute one agreement.

26.   GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION

26.1   This Agreement and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with it shall be governed by and construed in accordance with, the law of England and Wales.

26.2   The parties irrevocably agree that the courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction to settle any dispute or claim that arises out of or in connection with this Agreement or its subject matter or formation (including non-contractual disputes or claims).

This Agreement has been entered into on the date stated at the beginning of it.

Signed by:

For and on behalf of **The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development**

Name: Victoria Winkler

Position: Professional Development Director

Date: 28 March 2024

Signed by:

For and on behalf of the **Licensee**

Name: Shainaz Firfiray

Position: Programme Lead, MSc International Human Resource Management, & Senior Lecturer, Business School

Accredited Programme Provider name: University of Aberdeen

Date: 5th April 2024

CIPD ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

MSc/PG Dip International Human Resource Management

1. Ensure the Centre's Senior Management Team is supportive of the execution of this Agreement. In so doing, ensure there is an appropriate independence of organisational ownership from the exercise of academic authority, to guarantee the distinction between the academic function and other functions within the organisation, avoiding any conflicts of interest, barriers to access, or restrictive practices and maintaining the integrity of CIPD Accredited Programmes.

2. Ensure that there are available sufficient financial resources and facilities available to enable it to deliver educational programmes until at least the time by which every Student on a CIPD Accredited Programme has had the opportunity to complete that programme.

3. Take all reasonable steps to comply with requests for information or documents made by the CIPD as soon as practicable.

4. Assist the CIPD in carrying out any reasonable monitoring activities.

5. Retain a workforce of appropriate size and competence to undertake the delivery of the CIPD Accredited Programmes as required by the CIPD, to have available sufficient managerial and other resources to enable it effectively and efficiently to undertake the delivery of the CIPD Accredited Programmes as required by the CIPD including the following:

   a) Provide members of the workforce with sufficient allocated time, resources and authority for them to effectively carry out their roles in relation to the CIPD Accredited Programmes.

6. Operate a complaints handling procedure, appeals process and malpractice policy and procedure for the benefit of Students.

7. Undertake the delivery of the CIPD Accredited Programme required by the CIPD in accordance with Applicable Laws including the Equality Act 2018 or any similar laws in any jurisdiction.

8. Only register Students for CIPD Accredited Programmes whom they reasonably expect to complete the CIPD Accredited Programme and that the Licensee has the resources, capability and capacity to deliver the CIPD Accredited Programme to the expected number of Students.

9. Maintain an appropriate Conflicts of Interest policy and declare all conflicts of interest to the CIPD immediately upon becoming aware of such conflict including any personal relationships between Centre staff and Students; or Centre staff and CIPD employees or Centre staff and external contractors.

10. Identify a single named point of accountability for the quality assurance and management of the delivery and assessment of the CIPD Accredited Programmes.

11. Maintain up-to-date contact details for the staff roles included in approval submission documentation

12. Advise CIPD promptly of any proposed changes or additions to the Accredited Programme, and gain approval prior to implementation.

13. Register all Students with CIPD using the designated online registration system

14. Supply Student results to CIPD in the format and structure designated by the CIPD using the designated online platform.

15. Maintain an infrastructure which can support: delivery and assessment; tracking of Student progress; the accumulation and transfer of credits; recording of exemptions, recognition of prior learning (RPL).

CIPD CENTRE BRANDING REQUIREMENTS

CIPD Branding

The Accredited Programme Provider's name and logo should appear as the main branding on all communications and the CIPD Accredited Programme Provider logo may be used alongside any other awarding organisation logos when promoting CIPD programmes.

All intellectual property rights in the CIPD Approved Centre logo are owned by CIPD. The Approved Centre logo is made up of the letters 'CIPD' and the wording 'Approved Centre' in a fixed logo style. Approved Centre logos must only appear in CIPD purple, or the white-out logo alternative (see below).

Sizing

Minimum width size: 20mm
Minimum width size for digital (online, screen): 104 pixels

Ideal width of logo for printed materials:

A6 25mm   A3 50mm
A5 30mm   A2 70mm
A4 40mm   A1 90mm

Colours

The logo must appear in the shown below:

CIPD Purple   **CIPD White Out**

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Schedule 4

DATA PROTECTION

</div>

'Agreed Purposes' means in the case of the receipt by CIPD of Shared Personal Data and the holding and use by CIPD of that Shared Personal Data for the purposes of discharging its obligations under this Agreement and clause 10.4 of the Agreement and in the case of receipt by the Licensee of Shared Personal Data from CIPD and the holding and use of that Shared Personal Data for the purpose of the provision of CIPD Accredited Programmes.

'Controller, Data Controller, Processor, Data Processor, Data Subject, Personal Data, Processing and appropriate technical and organisational measures' shall have the meanings given to them in the Data Protection Legislation.

'**Data Protection Legislation'** means   all applicable data protection and privacy legislation in force from time to time in the UK including the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) ('**UK GDPR'**); the Data Protection Act 2018; the Privacy and Electronic Communications Directive 2002/58/EC (as updated by Directive 2009/136/EC) and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/2426) as amended and all other legislation and regulatory requirements in force from time to time which apply to a party relating to the use of Personal Data (including, without limitation, the privacy of electronic communications); and the guidance and codes of practice issued by the relevant data protection or Information Commissioner and applicable to a party.

'Personal Data Breach' means a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to the Shared Personal Data.

'Shared Personal Data' means the Personal Data to be shared between the parties under paragraph 1.1 of this Schedule. Shared Personal Data shall be as listed in Appendix A.

1. **Purpose**

1.1 This Schedule sets out the framework for the sharing of Personal Data between the parties as Data Controllers. Each party acknowledges that one party (the '**Data Discloser'**) will regularly disclose to the other party (the '**Data Recipient'**) Shared Personal Data collected by the Data Discloser for the Agreed Purposes. Both parties will comply with all applicable requirements of the Data Protection Legislation. This Schedule is in addition to, and does not relieve, remove or replace, a party's obligations under the Data Protection Legislation. Any breach by a party of the Data Protection Legislation or any of its obligations under this Schedule shall constitute a Material Default entitling the other party to terminate the Agreement with immediate effect.

1.2 Notwithstanding paragraph 1.1, if and to the extent that the parties determine in respect of any Processing of Personal Data that the relationship between them is not one of Joint Controllers because it is between Controllers, or between Controller and Processor, then they will cooperate in agreeing and documenting appropriate arrangements for that other relationship or those other relationships.

1.3 Each party shall assist the other in complying with all applicable requirements of the Data Protection Legislation. In particular, each party shall:

1.3.1   assist the other party, at the cost of the other party, in ensuring compliance with its obligations under the Data Protection Legislation with respect to security, personal data breach notifications, data protection impact assessments and consultations with the Information Commissioner or regulators;

1.3.2   use compatible technology for the processing of Shared Personal Data to ensure that there is no lack of accuracy resulting from Personal Data transfers;

1.3.3   maintain complete and accurate records and information to demonstrate its compliance with its obligations under this Schedule and allow for audits by the other party or the other party's designated auditor; and

1.3.4   provide the other party with contact details of at least one employee as point of contact and responsible manager for all issues arising out of the Data Protection Legislation, including the training of relevant staff, the procedures to be followed in the event of a data security breach, and the regular review of the parties' compliance with the Data Protection Legislation.

1.4   The parties shall each maintain all necessary registrations under the Data Protection Legislation.

2.   Shared Personal Data

2.1   The parties shall process Shared Personal Data only for the Agreed Purposes.

2.2   Each party shall ensure that it processes the Shared Personal Data fairly and lawfully in accordance with paragraph 2.3.

2.3   Each party shall ensure that it has legitimate grounds under the Data Protection Legislation for the processing of Shared Personal Data.

2.4   The Data Discloser shall, in respect of Shared Personal Data, ensure that it provides clear and sufficient information to the Data Subjects, in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation, of the purposes for which it will process their Personal Data, the legal basis for such purposes and such other information as is required by Article 13 of the UK GDPR including if Shared Personal Data will be transferred to a third party, that fact and sufficient information about such transfer and the purpose of such transfer to enable the Data Subject to understand the purpose and risks of such transfer.

2.5   Each party shall comply with its obligations under Article 26 of the UK GDPR and:

2.5.1   shall make available to Data Subjects the essence of the arrangements contemplated by this Agreement as is required by Article 26(2) of the UK GDPR;

2.5.2   acknowledges that Data Subjects may exercise their rights under the GDPR in respect of and against each party in accordance with Article 26(3) of the UK GDPR; and

2.5.3   agrees to provide to the other party such cooperation as may reasonably be required to assist that other party in compliance with its obligations under Article 26 of the UK GDPR.

2.6   Where the Data Discloser is the Licensee it shall ensure that it has all necessary consents and notices in place to enable lawful transfer of the Shared Personal Data to CIPD for the Agreed Purposes. In doing so, the Licensee shall give full information to any Data Subject (including Students) whose Personal Data may be processed under the Agreement of the nature of such processing. This includes giving notice that, on the termination of the Agreement, Personal Data relating to them may be retained by or, as the case may be, transferred to CIPD or its successors and assignees. The Licensee undertakes to notify every Student that his Personal Data obtained in relation to the CIPD Accredited Programmes will be transferred to CIPD for the following purposes:

2.6.1   programme and membership registration;

2.6.2   communications in connection with CIPD membership and Performance Criteria monitoring;

2.6.3   issuing relevant certificates;

2.6.4   providing Relevant Details under clause 10.4 of the Agreement; and

2.6.5   where applicable, with the Education and Skills Funding Agency as part of the Learning Records Service.

3.   Data Quality

3.1   The Data Discloser warrants and undertakes that it is entitled to provide the Shared Personal Data to the Data Receiver and it will ensure that the Shared Personal Data are accurate.

4. Data Subjects Rights

4.1 The parties each agree to provide such assistance as is reasonably required to enable the other party to comply with requests from Data Subjects to exercise their rights under the Data Protection Legislation within the time limits imposed by the Data Protection Legislation.

5. Data retention and deletion

5.1 The Data Receiver shall not retain or process Shared Personal Data for longer than is necessary to carry out the Agreed Purposes.

5.2 Notwithstanding paragraph 5.1, the parties shall continue to retain Shared Personal Data in accordance with any statutory or professional retention periods applicable in their respective countries and / or industry.

5.3 The Data Receiver shall ensure that any Shared Personal Data are returned to the Data Discloser or destroyed in accordance with the any deletion procedure agreed by the parties on termination or expiry of the Agreement unless required by law to retain the Personal Data. For the avoidance of doubt, unless otherwise agreed in a Transfer Plan in accordance with clause 14.2, any sharing of Personal Data between the parties shall cease upon the expiration or termination of the Agreement.

6. Security and training

6.1 The Data Discloser shall only provide the Shared Personal Data to the Data Receiver by using secure methods as agreed and set out in Appendix B.

6.2 The parties undertake to have in place throughout the duration of the Agreement appropriate technical and organisational security measures to:

6.2.1 prevent:

(a) unauthorised or unlawful processing of the Shared Personal Data; and

(b) the accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, the Shared Personal Data

6.2.2 ensure a level of security appropriate to:

(c) the harm that might result from such unauthorised or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage; and

(d) the nature of the Shared Personal Data to be protected.

6.3 The parties shall keep such security measures under review and shall carry out such updates as they agree are appropriate throughout the duration of the Agreement.

6.4 It is the responsibility of each party to ensure that its staff members are appropriately trained to handle and process the Shared Personal Data in accordance with the technical and organisational security measures set out in Appendix B and the mitigating measures set out in Appendix A together with any other applicable national data protection laws and guidance and have entered into confidentiality agreements relating to the processing of Personal Data.

6.5 The level, content and regularity of training referred to in paragraph 6.4 shall be proportionate to the staff members' role, responsibility and frequency with respect to their handling and processing of the Shared Personal Data.

7. Data Transfers

7.1 For the purposes of paragraphs 7.1 to 7.3 (inclusive), transfers of Personal Data shall mean any sharing of Shared Personal Data by the Data Receiver with a third party, and shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

7.1.1 subcontracting the processing of Shared Personal Data;

7.1.2 granting a third party controller access to the Shared Personal Data.

7.2 If the Data Receiver appoints a third party processor to process the Shared Personal Data, it shall comply with Article 28 and Article 30 of the UK GDPR and shall remain liable to the Data Discloser for the acts and/or omissions of the Processor.

7.3 The Data Receiver may not make a transfer of Personal Data to a third party located outside the UK or the EEA as the case may be unless it;

7.3.1 complies with the provisions of Articles 26 of the UK GDPR; and.

7.3.2 ensures that (i) the transfer is to a country approved as providing adequate protection pursuant to section 17A of the DPA 2018; (ii) there are appropriate safeguards in place pursuant to Article 46 of the UK GDPR; or (iii) one of the derogations for specific situations in Article 49 of the UK GDPR applies to the transfer.

7.4 To the extent that the Licensee transfers Shared Personal Data from the EEA or is located in a third country where no other appropriate safeguard or exemption applies in respect to such restricted transfer, the parties hereby enter into the Standard Contractual Clauses 2016/679/EC (controller-to-controller transfers) as amended from time to time, which shall be deemed signed by the parties and incorporated by reference into this Schedule as follows:

7.4.1 The party that transfers the Shared Personal Data is the "Data Exporter" and the other party is the "Data Importer".

7.4.2 For the purposes of Clauses 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18 of the Standard Contractual Clauses, the parties shall be deemed to have selected Module One: Transfer controller to controller.

7.4.3 Annex 2 to the Standard Contractual Clauses shall be deemed to be prepopulated with the information set out in Appendix A to this Schedule.

7.4.4 All references in the Standard Contractual Clauses to EU GDPR are amended to mean UK GDPR, the EU or Member States amended to the United Kingdom, and supervisory authority amended to the Information Commissioner's Office (the ICO).

8. Personal data breaches and reporting procedures

8.1 Each party shall comply with its obligation to report a Personal Data Breach to the Information Commissioner and (where applicable) Data Subjects and shall each inform the other party without undue delay on becoming aware of any breach of the Data Protection Legislation in relation to the Shared Personal Data irrespective of whether there is a requirement to notify the Information Commissioner or Data Subject(s).

8.2 The parties agree to provide reasonable assistance as is necessary to each other to facilitate the handling of any Personal Data Breach in an expeditious and compliant manner.

9. **Direct marketing**

9.1 If the Data Receiver processes the Shared Personal Data for the purposes of direct marketing, each party shall ensure that:

9.1.1 the appropriate level consent has been obtained from the relevant Data Subjects to allow the Shared Personal Data to be used for the purposes of direct marketing in compliance with the Data Protection Legislation; and

9.1.2 effective procedures are in place to allow the Data Subject to "opt-out" from having their Shared Personal Data used for such direct marketing purposes.

10. **Indemnity**

10.1 Each party shall indemnify the other against all liabilities, costs, expenses, damages and losses (including but not limited to any direct, indirect or consequential losses, loss of profit, loss of reputation and all interest, penalties and legal costs (calculated on a full indemnity basis) and all other reasonable professional costs and expenses) suffered or incurred by the indemnified party arising out of or in connection with the breach of the Data Protection Legislation by the indemnifying party, its employees or agents, provided that the indemnified party gives to the indemnifier prompt notice of such claim, full information about the circumstances giving rise to it, reasonable assistance in dealing with the claim and sole authority to manage, defend and/or settle it.

Appendix A

DESCRIPTION OF SHARED PERSONAL DATA

Brief description of purpose of sharing	For the purposes of the Agreement
Duration of sharing	For the duration of the Agreement
Lawful basis for sharing	Performance of a contract
What categories of data are being shared?	In respect of Students: First name, surname, date of birth, membership/Student/student number, assessment performance Relevant Details (as defined in the Agreement)
Who is the data about?	Students
How is the sharing being done?	Uploading data to CIPD digital platforms By email (password protected)
What risks does the data sharing pose to data subjects (if any)?	Unauthorised access to data Loss or deletion of data
What mitigating measures are being taken to address those risks?	Restricted access to CIPD online platforms user access controls Data encryption Pseudonymisation where it is practical to do so Secure procedure for backing up all electronic Shared Personal Data and storing back-ups separately from originals Secure method of disposal of unwanted Shared Personal Data

Appendix B
Appropriate technical and organisational security measures

1. The parties shall use a digital moderation platform and an online registration system (together the '**Platforms'**) to transfer Shared Personal Data for the Agreed Purposes.

2. CIPD shall provide login and password details to the Licensee. The Licensee shall ensure all passwords for its use of the Platforms are kept secure, and confidential. The Licensee shall not license, sell, rent, lease, transfer, assign, distribute, display, disclose, or otherwise commercially exploit, or otherwise make the Platforms available to any third party.

3. Licensee is solely responsible for the accuracy, quality, and legality of the Shared Personal Data relating to Students provided to CIPD on the Platforms. Licensee shall not provide or make available to CIPD any Shared Personal Data in violation of the Agreement or which is otherwise inappropriate for the purposes of the Agreement.

4. Licensee shall, and shall procure that all its employees shall, at all times use the Platforms in accordance with CIPD's instructions as communicated from time to time and not do or omit to do anything which may cause CIPD to breach any terms of its licence with the Platforms provider. In particular, the Licensee shall take commercially reasonable steps to:

    i. limit access to the Platforms to authorised employees only and prevent any unauthorised access to, or use of, the Platforms and, in the event of becoming aware of any such unauthorised access or use, promptly notify CIPD;

    ii. ensure the reliability and appropriate training of authorised employees;

    iii. ensure that all authorised employees are made aware of the confidential nature of the data (including personal data) processed pursuant to this Agreement and have executed appropriate confidentiality agreements;

    iv. ensure that it does not access, store, distribute or knowingly or recklessly transmit any viruses, or any material during its use of the Platforms that is unlawful, harmful, threatening, defamatory, obscene, infringing, harassing or racially or ethnically offensive; facilitates illegal activity; depicts sexually explicit images; promotes unlawful violence; is discriminatory based on race, gender, colour, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability, or any other illegal activity; or causes damage or injury to any person or property. CIPD reserves the right, without liability to the Licensee, to disable the Licensee's access to the Platforms if it breaches the provisions of this paragraph;

    For the purpose of this Appendix B, '**authorised employee**' means an employee of the Licensee who has a need to know or otherwise access the Platforms and/or Shared Personal Data to enable the Licensee to perform its obligations under this Agreement. The total number of authorised employees shall not exceed the amount agreed with CIPD.

5. CIPD reserves the right to remove the Licensee's access to the Platforms in the event that it fails to comply with any terms of this Agreement including any policies or licence terms notified to the Licensee from time to time.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Guidance for the Appointment of Examiners for Research Degrees

This guidance is for the process of appointing internal and external examiners for research degrees. This guidance should be read in conjunction with <u>General Regulation 36 and 37 for Research Degrees</u> and Appendix 1: Roles within the Examination Procedure.

1. Examiners nomination process

In most cases examination for a research student thesis normally required one internal and one external examiner should be appointed, except in the below cases:

In cases where:

i) *The candidate is a lecturer at the University of Aberdeen:*

- Two external examiners shall be appointed, with an internal moderator appointed to oversee arrangements and chair the oral exam.
- Where a moderator is appointed the moderator is responsible for overseeing the examination and, in particular, to ensure that standard University procedures and policies are followed.

ii) *The candidate is a Teaching Fellow, Research Fellow or Research Assistant at the University of Aberdeen:*

- The examination team should normally comprise of one external and one internal examiner.
- The internal examiner should not be the candidate's line manager.
- Two external examiners do not need to be appointed, unless on the recommendation of the Head of School, it is felt appropriate to do so.
- Recommendation from a Head of School for two external examiners would most likely occur when only internals available with knowledge of the research area are closely associated with the candidate's work, e.g. they are member of staff named on any research contract on which the candidate is employed.

iii)   *The candidate is joint* **with Curtin University:**

- The Institutions, acting together, shall be responsible for the selection, approval, and appointment of the examiners.
- Two external examiners shall be appointed (one for Curtin and one for Aberdeen who shall be from the discipline in which the doctorate has been undertaken) along with one Moderator internal to the Home institution who shall not be one of the Supervisors and whose sole role is to uphold the correct conduct of the examination.

2. General Requirements in the Appointment of Examiners

Examiners will normally be expert in one or more aspects of the student's thesis. It is not expected that either will necessarily be expert in the whole field covered by the thesis, and their expertise will normally be complementary.

Examiners must be impartial in their thinking and have no connection that may suggest their decision could be influenced, no conflicts of interest and no personal gain from the outcome of the examination or publication of the student's thesis research.

Guidance on impartiality and what could constitute a conflict of interest in provided below.

3. Appointment of Internal Examiner

The Internal Examiner must:

- Be a Professor, Reader or Lecturer, or academic staff of an equivalent employment grade in the University who is **not and has not been** a supervisor of the candidate.
- Be a contracted employee of the University (this **excludes** emeritus and honorary members of staff) or:
    - A member of an associated research institute who holds a University of Aberdeen appointment, *or*:
    - A former member of staff who has left the University since the candidate completed their research (and will be offered the same fee as an external examiner).

Academic staff who have been involved as an assessor in Annual Progression Exercises may act as Internal Examiner if deemed appropriate by all parties.

4. **Appointment of External Examiner:**

The External Examiner must:

- Be a Professor, Reader or Lecturer, or academic staff of an equivalent employment grade. Where the proposed external does not hold an academic position a case should be made as to why the proposed examiner is the best person to examine the candidate.
- Emeritus and honorary members of staff can act as an external examiner as long as they were not involved in supervision of the student or the research project or meet any of the conflicts of interest described in section 6.

- Be independent from the University i.e.
  - Is not employed by the University of Aberdeen.
  - Not have worked in the same department as the candidate at any point, nor have been employed by the UoA whilst the candidate has been a student.
  - Not be due to start employment at the UoA.
  - See nomination form – an expert in field and with background but may not currently be employed in an academic role

5. **Impartiality**

Internal and external examiners must be impartial in their thinking and have no connection that may suggest their decision could be influenced. I.e., **must not** have a personal relationship with anyone involved in the examination process such as the student, supervisor, internal examiner, or anyone involved in the examination decision-making process.

It is recognised that some professional relationships will exist without impacting impartiality such as grading REF submissions, writing references.

6. **Conflicts of interest**

The following are conflicts of interest and should be avoided where possible and clearly justified when appointing an external examiner:

- Collaboration or co-authorship with the student

- Collaboration or co-authorship with the supervisor or internal examiner on topics closely related to the student's research
- The supervisor or internal examiner has recently examined, or will or imminently examine, one of the external's research students
- There exists a formal relationship with the department which might have meant working with student (e.g. honorary visiting professor in same research group).

The following might present conflict of interest and should be avoided where possible when appointing an internal or external examiner:

- An academic relationship exists, such as co-authorship or collaboration or sitting on the same funding committee, to the supervisor or internal examiner, but which does not involve the student project
- An academic relationship exists to the Department, but which does not involve the student as a researcher in any way
- The external was the supervisor's supervisor or the supervisor's supervisee
- The external recently supervised the student's dissertation or thesis at another institution as part of a previous taught programme.

The following examples would not constitute conflicts of interest:

- The external has met the student at conferences
- The external knows the supervisor well but no collaboration or co-authorship
- The external knows the internal examiner well but no collaboration or co-authorship
- Membership of same professional association or body as the supervisor or internal examiner
- The external was the supervisor's PhD examiner.

7. **Inclusive Adjustments**
- If the examiner(s) or the research student has a disability, inclusive adjustments can be made for the viva. Required adjustments from any party should be made clear at the initial stages of the nomination process as it may be necessary to align the student's needs with those of the examiner(s).
- The research student should arrange a meeting with Student Advice & Support and/or the Supervisory Team to discuss adjustments ahead of examination, if these have not already been agreed.
- Inclusive adjustments for an examination will be agreed on a case by case basis but examples can be found in provisions guidance document. Some provisions

may require additional approval from Registry or the Dean for PGR, this is indicated in the provisions guidance document.
- With the PGR's consent, the examiners can be made aware of the nature of the PGR's disability and associated adjustments, for question formation/structure within the viva. The same academic standards/core competencies for the progression through, and the award of the research degree, must be upheld.
- It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor to make sure that the internal examiner is aware of any provisions required e.g. room accessibility requirements and any adjustments that need to be made to the examination procedure. The supervisor and/ or internal examiner should contact their School's inclusion coordinator for support.

Appendix 1: Roles within the Examination Procedure

Head of School
- Nominates examiners after consultation with the candidate's supervisor.

Supervisor(s)
- Discuss potential examiners with Head of School
- Reviews Turnitin similarity report and highlights any concerns.
- Discuss inclusive adjustments with student and upon consent from the student, shares with internal examiner to put in place with support from School inclusion coordinator.

Internal Examiner
- Arranges oral examination with external examiner and candidate (ideally within 2 months of thesis being submitted), and makes sure supervisor is available on the day. Informs student of relevant information such as date/time.
- Informs the candidate of any delays in oral examination.
- Ensures University procedures are followed
- Ensures any required inclusive adjustments for student and/or examiners are put in place with the support of the School Disability Coordinator and student support.
- Makes sure Independent Reports are completed and exchange before the oral examination
- Makes sure that the candidate is informed on the day of the recommendation to be made by the examiners.
- Makes sure Joint Report is completed on day of oral examination and submitted to the Registry within three working days of the oral examination, along with both Independent Reports and corrections required, if required. The internal must ensure that the paperwork is completed and signed by both examiners.
- Signs off minor corrections as complete.

- Responsible for liaising with the external if any issues arise with reports, i.e. missing signatures etc.
- Ensures any inclusive adjustments are in place, with support from the [School Inclusion Coordinator](#).

Internal Moderator (if required)

- The Internal Moderator is required for Quality Assurance purposes and is there to ensure that the University's procedures are followed. The internal moderator will perform all the tasks stated above for the internal examiner, except examining the thesis.
- The internal moderator **is not permitted** to sign off a candidate's minor corrections. This must be one of the externals. The internal moderator must ensure that one external is designated to check the minor corrections and sign off the appropriate paperwork.

Registry

- Send nomination form to School for completion upon receipt of Intention to Submit.
- Send thesis to examiners upon receipt (the thesis will be sent as soon as possible from when it is submitted, providing the nomination of examiners has been approved).
- Issues letter detailing the outcome of the oral examination to the candidate from oral examination once reports are approved. A further letter will be issued once a minor corrections form is received from the internal examiner certifying that the corrections have been made.
- Will liaise with the internal examiner/moderator if reports/corrections forms remain outstanding for longer than the time frame for submission stipulated above.
- Receives reports from internal examiner/moderator post-oral examination and seeks QAC approval for the recommendation.
- Liaises with internal examiner/moderator if there are any issues arising from the reports. For
  example, if reports have been submitted without signatures, the Registry will contact the internal and ask that signed reports be supplied. It would be for the Internal to then liaise with the external.