

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

A meeting of the University Education Committee will be held on **Tuesday 16 January 2024 at 1.05pm** in **Sir Duncan Rice Library Meeting Room 1 (Floor 7)** and by **Microsoft Teams**.

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

AGENDA

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Approval of the Minute of the Meeting Held on 10 October 2023 (UEC/160124/001)

2. Matters Arising (UEC/160124/002)

3. Risk Register (UEC/160124/003)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the Risk Register with regards to the specific risks associated with Education.

4. Aberdeen 2040

(i) Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan (UEC/160124/004)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan.

(ii) Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills (UEC/160124/005)

Members of the UEC are invited to **approve** the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills, further to final approval at Senate in February.

(iii) Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum (UEC/160124/006)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the next steps in relation to the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum.

(iv) Decolonising the Curriculum: Community of Practice (UEC/160124/007)

Members of the UEC are invited to **approve** the arrangements for the Decolonising the Curriculum Community of Practice.

5. Upscaling Work-Based Learning Update (UEC/160124/008)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the update on the placements project.

6. Go Abroad Update (UEC/160124/009)

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the current context for student mobility.

7. Academic Year Structure Implementation: Update on Induction, Transition and Employability Week *(UEC/160124/010)*

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the update on the ITEW in the implementation of the Future Academic Year Structure.

8. Online Education Update *(UEC/160124/011)*

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** the update on Online Education, noting there is a requirement to **approve** the remit and composition of the Online Education Forum.

9. Education Data

- (i) National Student Survey – Plan for 2024** *(UEC/160124/012)*
- (ii) Appeals and Complaints Data 2022/23** *(UEC/160124/013)*
- (iii) Academic Discipline Data 2022/23** *(UEC/160124/014)*
- (iv) Education Data Reporting Schedule** *(UEC/160124/015)*

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** (i) National Student Survey – Plan for 2024; (ii) the Appeals and Complaints Data 2022/23; and (iii) the Academic Discipline Data 2022/23; and **note** (iv) the Education Data Reporting Schedule.

10. Vice-Principal (Education) and Chair of UEC

Members of the UEC will hear an oral update from the Vice-Principal (Education) and Chair of UEC.

11. Date of Next Meeting

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

12. Items for Routine Approval – see below/overleaf

13. 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.

12. FOR ROUTINE APPROVAL

12.1 UEC Remit and Composition *(UEC/160124/016)*

Members of the UEC are invited to **approve**, by routine approval, the Remit and Composition.

13. FOR INFORMATION

13.1 Minutes from the UEC sub-committees meetings:

- (i) Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) *(UEC/160124/017a)*
- (ii) Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC) *(UEC/101023/017b)*

13.2 Institutional Liaison Meeting Documentation

Members of the UEC are invited to **note** the submission to QAA Scotland regarding the Institutional Liaison Meeting.

13.3 Academic Student Surveys *(UEC/160124/018)*

Members of the UEC are invited to **note** the paper on Academic Student Surveys.

13.4 New and Revised Guidance for Generative AI in Education

Members of the UEC are invited to **note** the following new and revised guidance for Generative AI in Education:

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

13.5 University Careers and Employability Service Annual Report *(UEC/160124/019)*

Members of the UEC are invited to **note** the annual report for the University Careers and Employability Service.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

Present: Ruth Taylor (**Chair**), Waheed Afzal, Euan Bain, Lyn Batchelor, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Jason Bohan, Stuart Durkin, Bill Harrison, Helen Knight, Rhiannon Ledwell, David McCausland, Heidi Merkens (vice Ken Jeffrey), Kirsty Kiezebrink, Rona Patey, Amudha Poobalan, Shona Potts, Susan Stokeld, Steve Tucker, Asha Venkatesh, Joshua Wright, with Simon Bains, Julie Bray, Scott Carle, Liam Dyker, Nick Edwards, Gillian Mackintosh, Rhona Moore, Sara Preston, Patricia Spence, Louisa Stratton and Isabella Fausti (**Clerk**) in attendance.

Apologies: John Barrow, Harminder Battu, Brian Henderson, Tracey Innes, Alison Jenkinson, Ken Jeffrey, Graeme Kirkpatrick, Stuart Piertney, Michelle Pinard, Anne-Michelle Slater and Sai Shraddha S. Viswanathan.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 AUGUST 2023

(copy filed as UEC/101023/001)

- 1.1 Members of the Committee approved the minute of the meeting held on 29 August 2023.

MATTERS ARISING

(copy filed as UEC/101023/002)

- 2.1 Members of the Committee noted the actions arising following the meeting of UEC held on 29 August 2023. All, except one, of the actions were recorded as completed.
- 2.2 It was noted that the circulation of Graduate Outcomes School-level data is still in progress.

RISK REGISTER

(copy filed as UEC/101023/003)

- 3.1 Members of the UEC discussed the Risk Register, specifically in relation to Education.
- 3.2 It was suggested that the risk related to the Marking and Assessment Boycott could be removed. A discussion took place and it was agreed that the impact score would initially get downgraded until all actions have been completed.
- 3.3 The UEC also discussed a new risk that had been added to the risk register related to the impact of RAAC on the student experience and the delivery of education, especially at the Foresterhill campus. It was noted that mitigations were already in place for this term, but would need to be reviewed for next term. The impact might affect other Schools in addition to SMMSN. It was noted that, in relation to the impact on the medical library, all books are now available.

EDUCATION POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW SCHEDULE

(copy filed as UEC/101023/007)

- 4.1 Members of the UEC heard the updates in relation to the Education Policy and Regulations Review Schedule. It was noted that the timeline for the review of education policies over the next few years is intended to be flexible, to reflect the possible need to prioritise different

areas as required. The Committee noted the extensive amount of work that will be required to complete this review.

- 4.2 It was suggested that this timeline should also capture the terminology change in policies, regulations, the website and other documentation, following the approval of the future academic year structure by Senate. The Chair highlighted the need to complete this work as quickly as possible, while recognising that it is a vast amount of work.
- 4.3 It was suggested that, when regulations for Medicine and Dentistry are mentioned, this could be changed to Regulated Healthcare Programmes and include the Physician Associates programme, which will be regulated as of next year.
- 4.4 Finally, it was also suggested to embed employability and work-based programmes as there will be policy implications from the project.
- 4.5 The Chair noted that this timeline is a live document which should be reviewed regularly.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PRACTICE

(i) UPDATE ON THE GUIDANCE FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS ON THE USE OF GEN-AI IN EDUCATION *(copy filed as UEC/101023/004)*

- 5.1 Members of the UEC heard an update on the guidance for staff and students on the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in education. It was recommended that this guidance be reviewed one month prior to the start of each term to ensure it is as up-to-date as possible, as it concerns a rapidly changing technology. Members of the UEC were asked to get in touch with the authors of the paper if they think something is missing from this guidance. The Chair asked that UEC includes a review of this guidance in the agenda of UEC meetings that coincide with the start of each term. **Action: KK/Chair**
- 5.2 A member of the UEC asked if any training would be available. Some details of the upcoming training were shared, including an Education Panel that will take place in November. The importance of trying to reach a broader audience was highlighted, as it was noted that these sessions tend to be attended by the same people.

(ii) IMPLEMENTING THE AI DESIGN ASSISTANT IN MYABERDEEN

(copy filed as UEC/101023/005)

- 6.1 Members of the UEC heard an update on a new genAI tool, developed and launched by Anthology, the company behind the VLE Blackboard Learn (MyAberdeen), called AI Design Assistant. This tool has not been switched on yet on our institutional VLE, and consists of five separate and independent parts. The first generates keywords used for searching images that can be used on the course area from the image library Unsplash. The second generates an outline structure for Learning Modules in a course area. The third generates test questions and question banks. The fourth generates rubrics. And the fifth generates images.
- 6.2 The Committee heard that due diligence has been carried out in relation to copyright. Furthermore, our institutional data is not shared or used by the tool outwith our own environment. The recommendation from the authors of the paper is for the Committee to agree to switch on the first four options, with the caveat that staff are made aware that they

should be using these as a starting point for new ideas. However, it was recommended that the fifth option not be switched on, at this moment, due to copyright and ethical concerns.

- 6.3 A discussion took place on the advantages and concerns related to this tool. The Committee heard that discussions on this tool are happening across the sector.
- 6.4 It was suggested that we should consider any risks associated with turning on these features, in relation to the quality of education and on the communication with students. Members of the Committee highlighted the importance of being transparent, putting training in place, and communicating clearly with staff and students.
- 6.5 The committee heard that this tool is not going to learn from our data, making it a safer option than using third-party tools that cannot guarantee the protection of data. In addition, in terms of workload, it may free up capacity to support students further.
- 6.6 It was suggested that a more in-depth discussion could take place at the Education Away Day or at an additional UEC meeting.

(iii) IMPLEMENTING TURNITIN DRAFT COACH TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS

(copy filed as UEC/101023/006)

- 7.1 Members of the UEC discussed the possible implementation of Turnitin Draft Coach to improve students' writing skills. This tool is an add-on to MS Word which teaches students how to write effectively as they are writing. The difference with Turnitin is that it doesn't store the students' work in its database. The recommendation to UEC is to agree that it be switched on, as it provides equity of access to this service for all students and protects them from engaging with contract cheating services, and there is no additional cost to the University.
- 7.2 A discussion was had on the advantages and disadvantages of implementing this tool. It was emphasised the importance of communicating to students that if they need extra support the SLS is still available. Communication and guidance would also need to be provided to Schools, and it was suggested that the Dean for Educational Innovation could meet with Schools where there may be concerns so that these can be addressed. **Action: KK/SP/DoEs**
- 7.3 The Committee agreed to aim to have this feature in place for next term, once further conversations have taken place in Schools.

FUTURE ACADEMIC YEAR STRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

(copy filed as UEC/101023/008)

- 8.1 Members of the UEC heard an update on the Future Academic Year Structure Implementation Plan, which currently lists high-level actions, but further details will be provided at the next UEC meeting. **Action: GM/LD**
- 8.2 As mentioned earlier in the meeting, a substantive amount of work will need to go on changing the terminology in policies and online documentation. Additionally, details on what will be involved in implementing the ITE Week will need to be considered. **Action: JB**

ABERDEEN 2040

(i) ABERDEEN 2040 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

(copy filed as UEC/101023/009)

- 9.1 Members of the UEC noted the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan, in particular the change that was made after the last meeting.

(ii) ABERDEEN 2040 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

(copy filed as UEC/101023/010)

- 10.1 Members of the UEC heard an update on the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills, which will go to Senate for academic view in November and then again for approval in February.
- 10.2 It was noted that an extensive consultation had taken place and attention was drawn to specific areas of the paper. It was noted that the workload implications that the proposed changes will have for both academic and professional services colleagues had been considered. However, further consideration needs to be given to how to embed the Graduate Attributes and Skills in the delivery of education.
- 10.3 This paper was generally well-received by members of the UEC and it was noted that this would have a positive impact on students. A discussion was had on the possible workload implications for personal tutors and it was agreed that Deans for Employability and Entrepreneurship; and Student Support and Experience would meet to discuss and make amendments to the personal tutor website as appropriate.
- 10.4 In relation to further feedback, the following was noted: (i) confirmation that the proposal would be suitable for the partnership with AFG College; (ii) concerns regarding the use of existing PDPs / bespoke VLE / skills passport in MMSN and it was agreed that the Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship and Director of the Institute of Education in Healthcare and Medical Sciences would meet to discuss; (iii) confirmation from the Vice-President for Education (AUSA) that the proposal is an improvement on the Enhanced Transcript and will help students in developing their CVs; and (iv) a query as to whether there is a difference between UG and PGT skills which the Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship will follow up. **Action: JB**
- 10.5 Members were encouraged to send any further comments to the author of the paper and it was noted that the paper would come back again for approval.

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS)

(i) NSS 2023 EXTENDED REPORT

(copy filed as UEC/101023/011)

- 11.1 Members of the UEC discussed the extended report on the NSS results 2023. It was noted that this report has additional information compared to what was included in the report that was previously presented. The Committee noted that there were a number of very positive results, but also some less positive ones, especially for assessment and feedback.

- 11.2 It was noted that this information has been circulated with Schools and is being used to develop School Education Action Plans that will be reviewed at SSEC in November.

Action: DoEs

(ii) NSS INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLAN – ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

(copy filed as UEC/101023/012)

- 12.1 Members of the UEC discussed the NSS Institutional Action Plan, with a particular focus on assessment and feedback. It was noted that improvements to this area will have a significant impact on league tables and on the student experience. It was agreed that timeliness of feedback would need particular focus. The Committee also heard a brief update on the TESTA pilot.
- 12.2 A discussion took place on the support needed in Schools and on whether Schools could review the volume of assessment. It was noted by the Chair that Schools are able to review their approaches to assessment and make appropriate changes. Dates have previously been circulated so that Schools can make the changes in time.

COPYRIGHT LITERACY STRATEGY AND COPYRIGHT POLICY

(copy filed as UEC/101023/013)

- 13.1 Members of the UEC noted updates to the Copyright Literacy Strategy and Copyright Policy, and thanked all those who had been involved in this work. The Committee was asked to identify appropriate representatives from academic and professional services for the Copyright Literacy Steering Group who will oversee the delivery of the strategy. However, it was noted that some Terms of Reference for the Steering Group would be circulated before nominating appropriate representatives.

Action: SB

MINUTES FROM THE EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMMITTEE (EEC)

(copy filed as UEC/101023/014a)

- 14.1 The UEC noted the updated report from the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee.

MINUTES FROM THE STUDENT SUPPORT AND EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (SSEC)

(copy filed as UEC/101023/014a)

- 15.1 The UEC noted the updated report from the Student Support and Experience Committee.

UPDATED COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

(copy filed as UEC/101023/015)

- 16.1 Members of the UEC noted the updates to the composition and membership of the Committee.

ANNUAL MONITORING AMENDMENTS IN RELATION TO DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM AND EDI

(copy filed as UEC/101023/016)

- 17.1 Members of the UEC noted the annual monitoring amendments in relation to Decolonising the Curriculum and EDI.

SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL (SFC) GUIDANCE FOR QUALITY

(copy filed as UEC/101023/017)

18.1 Members of the UEC noted the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidance for quality.

UPDATES TO THE OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR THE TERTIARY ENHANCEMENT TOPIC

(copy filed as UEC/101023/018)

19.1 Members of the UEC noted the updates to the operational guidance to tertiary enhancement topic.

READING LIST SERVICE REPORT

(copy filed as UEC/101023/019)

20.1 Members of the UEC noted the Reading List Service Report.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

21.1 The next meeting of the UEC will be held on Tuesday 16 January 2023 at 13:05 pm. It will take place in person (location TBC) but a link to Microsoft Teams will be provided for those who might need to attend online.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ACTION LOG

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2023

Minute Point	Identified Action	Individual(s) Responsible	Action Status/Update
8.2	Clarification on timelines for reviewing assessment within Schools in relation to the Decolonising the Curriculum agenda.	Chair	In progress – to be added as standing item twice a year

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 29 AUGUST 2023

Minute Point	Identified Action	Individual(s) Responsible	Action Status/Update
12.1.1	Circulation of Graduate Outcomes School-level data.	J Barrow	In progress

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2023

Minute Point	Identified Action	Individual(s) Responsible	Action Status/Update
5.1	Include a review of guidance in the agenda of UEC meetings that coincide with the start of term.	K Kiezebrink / Chair	Complete: Agenda item 13.4 refers.
7.2	Meet with Schools to discuss AI tools	K Kiezebrink / S Preston / DoEs	In progress
8.1	Provide further details on the Future Academic Year Structure Implementation Plan	G Mackintosh / L Dyker	In progress
8.2	Consideration to be given to the Induction, Transition and Employability Week.	J Barrow	Complete: Agenda Item 7 refers.
10.4	Follow-up regarding whether there is a difference between UG and PGT skills.	J Barrow	In progress
11.2	School-specific information related to NSS has been circulated and should be used to develop School Education Action Plans, which will be reviewed at SSEC in November 2023.	DoEs	In progress
13.1	Circulate Terms of Reference of the Copyright Literacy Steering Group so that appropriate representatives can be nominated.	S Bains	In progress

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ABERDEEN 2040 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to provide members of the University Education Committee (UEC) with an opportunity to discuss the updates on the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan for Education, and identify areas where progress is being made and areas that might be lagging. This is to ensure the incoming Vice Principal (Education) receives the most recent update when they start.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

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

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members of the UEC are invited to discuss the Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan for Education, attached as Annex A.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Following previous updates to the University Education Committee (UEC), members of the Committee are invited to discuss and comment on the updated Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan, attached as Annex A as part of a process of updating on progress on actions.
- 4.2 The purpose of this discussion is to ensure that the incoming Vice Principal (Education) receives the most recent update when they start.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk) and Gillian Mackintosh, Director of Academic Services and Online Education (g.mackintosh@abdn.ac.uk).

15 December 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

APPROVAL OF THE ABERDEEN 2040 ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper outlines a new set of graduate attributes: the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills. The paper also provides an overview of a new Skills Framework to support their use with students.

Following an extensive design and consultation phase via a Workstream of the Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee, the proposals outlined in this paper have been further reviewed by the Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee, Sustainable Development Committee, University Education Committee and Senate to shape the current proposal for the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills.

The University Education Committee is now asked to review and approve the proposals laid out in this paper.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered by	UEC 2040	10 th May 2022
	Extraordinary EEC	25 th May 2022
	Extraordinary UEC	23 rd June 2022
	EEC	16 th December 2022
	DSC	10 th January 2023
	UEC	16 th January 2023
	Senate	8 th February 2023
	SDC	9 th March 2023
	EEC	4 th May 2023
	EEC	18 th September 2023
	UEC	10 th October 2023
	Senate	8 th November 2023
	EEC (approved)	5 th December 2023
Further consideration/approval required by	Senate (for approval)	14 th February 2024

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The University Education Committee is asked to:

- i) approve the proposals for the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills.
- ii) approve the proposed plans for implementation.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 External to the University, reports from leading industry and graduate careers groups have highlighted the need for graduates to be proficient not only in subject-specific knowledge but also key transferable skills such as communication, adaptability, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence¹. The ability for our graduates to enter a labour market and be competitive in jobs that require greater skills requirements as well as subject-specific knowledge is crucial for their success

¹ Institute of Student Employers Report – [5 Competencies Graduates Need to Thrive in the Modern Workplace](#) (February 2023)

after they complete their studies with us². This is further backed up by the Scottish Government via the Scottish Funding Council with one of their core objectives highlighting universities as a key component of a system that can respond effectively to the skills requirements of the economy locally and globally³.

- 4.2 Institutionally we do not perform as well as many of our competitors in the Graduate Outcomes (GO) survey, a survey directed at leavers 15 months after they have left the University. Multiple GO data metrics also feed into domestic league tables (Times & Sunday Times Good University Guide, Complete University Guide and the Guardian University Guide) and as such can impact on our performance in these. As such the roles our students are involved in after they leave the University are important, so if we can foster an educational environment that has a greater focus on employability and skills development, students will be able to have more positive destinations, which in turn will provide gains in GO performance and therefore league table performance.
- 4.3 Institutionally, there are multiple Aberdeen 2040 Commitments that interface with the wider skills agenda and enhance our ambitions for interdisciplinarity (Commitments 6⁴ and 7⁵), student employability (Commitment 12⁶) and sustainability (Commitment 17⁷). Our Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan sets out specific actions that are focussed on enhancing employability of our students across these Commitments (See Appendix A). As such, the setting up of a Workstream as part of the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee has carried out work to understand how we can provide opportunities for our students to articulate the attributes and skills they will develop through their time with us.
- 4.4 Alongside the Attributes and Skills Workstream, the Aberdeen 2040 strategy commits to providing more work-based learning (WBL), through placements and volunteering. Following an initial scoping exercise in January 2022, engagement with internal and external stakeholders and an institutional placement and WBL review report (produced by external consultants Gradconsult), a set of recommendations informed an institutional vision for upscaling WBL. The vision, to provide all undergraduate and postgraduate taught University of Aberdeen students with the option to gain experience via a flexible menu of work-based and work-related learning opportunities sets out a clear ambition to ensure all taught UG and PG students can gain a WBL opportunity but gives flexibility around the types of WBL opportunity provided. A workstream has been established for 2023-2024, reporting to the Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) and Digital Strategy Committee (DSC), which will focus on establishing a suitable approach to developing 1-year and 2-year upscaling WBL action plans for Schools. This workstream will complement and interface with the attributes and skills workstream to ensure a coherent approach to Aberdeen 2040 employability actions. The aim of both is to provide a coherent skills landscape for our students with clarity on the skills they are developing.
- 4.5 As part of this work, and previously presented and approved by the University Education Committee (UEC), a joint report from the work carried out by the Graduate Attributes and Skills and Enhanced Transcript Working Groups (see [here](#)) had a series of recommendations that were agreed at the University Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) on 25th May 2022 and then at the UEC on 23rd June 2022.
- 4.6 Findings from the above report have demonstrated that students have a limited understanding of our current Aberdeen Graduate Attributes (Finding 2 – *Students have limited awareness and understanding of the concept of graduate attributes and skills*), but they do wish to have activity recorded so they can evidence it (Finding 3 – *Students want recognition of their skills from across their student experience*) – see report highlighted in 4.5.
- 4.7 Consequently, the two main recommendations from this work were as follows:
- Create a system that can formally record and recognise student skills in all areas of their curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

² Universities UK Report – [Busting Graduate Job Myths](#) (April 2022)

³ Scottish Funding Council – [Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22](#) (September 2022)

⁴ Commitment 6 – “We will support a learning culture in which all our staff and students can exchange ideas and expertise across intellectual areas and organisational structures.”

⁵ Commitment 7 – “We will design new courses and programmes which encourage interdisciplinary learning; and ensure that all our students can experience innovative, challenge-led education involving external stakeholders.”

⁶ Commitment 12 – “We will equip our graduates for global employment through our curriculum and teaching methods.”

⁷ Commitment 17 – “We will educate all our students and staff to be leaders in protecting the environment.”

- The University should design a personalised skills development, recognition and reflection framework.

4.8 Since then, work has been carried out by a workstream group (Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills Workstream), that reports to EEC and UEC, to create both a new set of attributes and skills as well as a system to support them.

4.9 This work has culminated in the creation of the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills, and associated MySkills platform to support their use, which has been most recently presented at EEC (18th September 2023), UEC (10th October 2023) and Senate (8th November 2023). Links to the relevant papers, which cover the background and work carried out to date, are shown below:

- [EEC](#)
- [UEC](#)
- [Senate](#)

4.10 Approval is now also being sought from the above committees and the proposals outlined in this paper have been approved by EEC on 5th December 2023 with no amendments.

5. THE ABERDEEN 2040 ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS AND MYSKILLS PLATFORM

5.1 The overall aim for the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills is to provide a framework for students to evidence, reflect and develop their skills throughout their time with us, whether that is from their programme of study, co-curricular activities, or other activities they take part in.

5.2 In addition, the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills provide a common vocabulary for both staff and students to be able to discuss the value of the educational experiences and how they can be valued by employers and others.

5.3 The Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills are shown below, highlighting three skill sets within each of the six attribute themes. Linkages to the Aberdeen 2040 strategy are outlined in Appendix B.

Working with others	Active citizenship
Teamwork	Global citizens
Communication	Sustainability
Leadership	Inclusivity and cultural awareness
Managing yourself	Enterprise and innovation
Time management and organisation	Creativity
Self motivation	Independence
Resilience	Entrepreneurship
Analytical skills	Career readiness
Digital fluency	Opportunity awareness
Information literacy	Career planning and decision making
Critical thinking and problem solving	Presenting yourself

5.4 For a brief overview of the MySkills platform functionality a Panopto recording is available [here](#).

5.5 The Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills and MySkills platform, and their associated implementation plans (see Appendices C and D), have now been through multiple rounds of

feedback from external organisations and internal committee structures with the most recent feedback shown below from EEC, UEC and Senate.

6. RECENT DISCUSSIONS AND FEEDBACK

6.1 The proposed co-curricular and curricular changes highlighted above have been reviewed and an academic view provided by the most recent EEC (18th September 2023), UEC (10th October 2023) and Senate (8th November 2023) committee meetings. Furthermore, the next steps and implementation plan were discussed at a recent workshop as part of the Education Away Day 2023 (7th November 2023).

6.2 These discussions and feedback have been taken into consideration and informed the overall approach as outlined in Appendices C and D. Where appropriate, the links between this feedback and these appendices is shown in the table below.

6.3 EEC, UEC and Senate Discussions and Feedback

<i>Feedback</i>	<i>Response to Feedback</i>	<i>Consultation Group</i>
Students have commented on MySkills providing ownership of their skills development journey and the ability to develop their CV throughout their time at the University.	MySkills aims to give flexibility for students to record, reflect and articulate the skills they are developing. The flexibility allows students to record any aspect of their student life, be that in-course activity, co-curricular activity, or extra-curricular activity. MySkills also links with other activity students participate in on the Career Connect platform such as appointments with the Careers and Employability Service and identifying job opportunities that exist on the platform.	EEC, UEC and Senate
AUSA have commented on the MySkills platform providing greater clarity compared to the Enhanced Transcript.	The information that students input into the MySkills platform is owned by the student and as such allows them to record the activity without the required resource implications of the current recording of co-curricular activity on the Enhanced Transcript.	EEC and UEC
Are there any potential implications for the AFG College (Qatar) campus?	The approach being taken will transfer easily to our AFG Qatar campus students and it is helpful to note the implications on workload.	EEC
Are their impacts for those disciplines (e.g. healthcare programmes) that use other virtual learning environment (VLE) platforms? Concerns were raised that MySkills will not integrate with these VLEs.	VLE's used by healthcare programmes are different from MyAberdeen and instead are based on Moodle. This is not an issue as MySkills sits outside of all VLE's and is instead housed within the Career Connect system that all students have access to regardless of degree programme or level of study (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research).	UEC
Using Course Feedback Forms was considered by some as a positive approach and for others that it may not provide much more engagement as forms are not always completed by students.	The system to create and deliver Course Feedback Forms has greater functions than currently utilised. This additional functionality will be used to create links between MySkills and course feedback through messaging associated with the Course Feedback Forms and adapting the questions students are asked to provide an opportunity for students to reflect on the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills. (See <i>Short-term Curricular Changes table in Appendix C</i>).	EEC
Some degree programmes make use of portfolios, such as in healthcare so slight	Discussions will be had with each School to understand how the attributes and skills can fit with their programmes and also how students	UEC

concern that this will cause repetition for students.	can record these skills (<i>see Longer-term Curricular Changes table in Appendix D</i>).	
Workload implications for academic staff within courses and as Personal Tutors (if expectation is they are to discuss Attributes and Skills with their Personal Tutees) was raised as a concern for some.	<p>The onus for using MySkills and the associated Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills is on the student to engage.</p> <p>Academic staff will be required to include commentary and feedback on attributes and skills in course and annual programme reviews, which is a task they do currently, so it should not increase workload significantly if at all. Central teams (predominantly the Careers & Employability Service) will manage the day to day running of MySkills and provide support to School colleagues during the implementation phase (<i>see Short and Longer-term Curricular Changes table in Appendix D</i>).</p> <p>Current practice is for Personal Tutors to be aware of the existing Aberdeen Graduate Attributes, so it is not proposed that Personal Tutors are expected to be discussing the Attributes and Skills and instead changes to the information provided for Personal Tutors and to students on expectations is all that will be required.</p>	UEC and Senate
Students and staff raised the lack of awareness of MySkills.	Communications about MySkills are ongoing via the Careers and Employability Service. MySkills was switched on at the start of Induction Week in 2023-24. As such, the system is something new for students and staff to engage with. Linkages between Careers Advisers, School Employability & Skills Champions and School Directors of Education and Academic Managers is strengthening and will be a key component of a communication strategy to launch the adapted MySkills platform for the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes & Skills.	Senate
Should we have different skills for different levels of study (e.g. Postgraduate vs. Undergraduate).	This was considered early in the process and the decision made to not have different skill sets for undergraduate and postgraduate students as the framework should be as streamlined as possible and flex to fit with curricula. It is noted that the employability challenges of postgraduate students will be different than undergraduates, but this is an area where the employability support rather than the skills development opportunities is different through support provided by the Careers and Employability Service.	Senate
Should subject knowledge be part of the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills.	Education is central to what we do as an organisation and as such the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes & Skills will aim to communicate to students and staff that skills development is an integral part of their education with subject expertise but the focus of the Attributes & skills is to explicitly surface the skills that a student gains alongside achieving the intended learning outcomes of their chosen courses.	Senate
Balance of MySkills Pathways and overall curriculum.	The MySkills Pathways are additional small 'micro-courses' that students can work through within the Career Connect system. The Careers and Employability Service can author them, and many have already been adapted to support our	Senate

	students while using the generic MySkills platform. The Pathways provide practical advice and guidance as well as activities students can complete to proactively develop their skills. For nearly all Pathways they are light-touch approaches to skills development and do not replace or change the balance of University courses that form part of the curriculum on our degree programmes.	
Include an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessment	A draft EDI Impact statement has been created (see <i>Appendix E</i>) and will be developed further as this work progresses.	UEC

6.4 Further to the above, a workshop session was delivered as part of the Education Away Day 2023 where Heads of School, Directors of Education, Heads of Professional Services, Interdisciplinary Directors, AUSA leadership and Deans were present to discuss the plans for implementing the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes & Skills and MySkills.

6.5 Specifically, participants were asked about future opportunities and approaches to using the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills, so at this stage will not impact on implementation plans documented in this paper but will inform future approaches. The main themes from this workshop are shown in the table below.

6.6 Education Away Day 2023 Workshop Discussions and Feedback

Opportunities	Embedding skills – Make skills part of the core curriculum through opportunities such as WBL and interdisciplinary projects.
	Space/time for reflection – Provide space and time for skills reflection within programmes and/or via the Induction, Transition & Employability Week (ITEW).
	Linkages to course/programmes – Mapping to course/programme intended learning outcomes or professional standards.
	Feedback and assessment – Reflective learning and creative assessments to allow students to clearly articulate skills development.
	Work-based learning – Providing in-curriculum work-based learning in all its forms (i.e. from placements to in-course assignments) to foster links between students and employers.
	External reach – Leveraging alumni and staff networks to provide opportunities for students to engage with external organisations.
	Professional services – Provisions aligned with resilience and/or employability skills.
	Interdisciplinarity – creating opportunity for students to come together in collaborative workspaces centered on interests not Schools/Departments.
Challenges	Resource – Financial and staff/student time to fully engage.
	Structural – Inflexibility of curriculum structures to embed opportunities for students.
	Assessment and feedback – Breaking from discipline norms and going beyond discipline boundaries to create authentic opportunities for students to enhance their skills.

6.7 Following the final round of academic input documented above, EEC is asked to approve the proposals for the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills and approve the proposed plans for implementation (Appendix C and D).

6.8 This paper has already been approved at EEC (5th December 2023) and will also be sent for approval at the next meeting of Senate (14th February 2024).

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 UEC is asked to approve the proposals for the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills and approve the proposed plans for implementation (Section 5.3 and Appendices C and D respectively).

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from John Barrow (j.barrow@abdn.ac.uk), Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship.

18th December 2023.

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

Appendix A – Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan Extracts

Commitment		2025 High-level Objectives
6	We will support a learning culture in which all our staff and students can exchange ideas and expertise across intellectual areas and organisational structures	Ensure our students are at the forefront of the digital revolution for learners by capitalising on the developments of our education with pedagogy at the heart of its use, and providing an environment in which students can connect and engage with an interdisciplinary experience.
7	We will design new courses and programmes which encourage interdisciplinary learning; and ensure that all our students can experience innovative, challenge-led education involving external stakeholders.	Building on the breadth curriculum at the University of Aberdeen, and embedded within the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum, increase the opportunities for interdisciplinary learning across all discipline areas with a focus on the interdisciplinary challenges in Aberdeen 2040. Ensure that co-curriculum interdisciplinary opportunities are identified as part of the overall work.
12	We will equip our graduates for global employment through our curriculum and teaching methods.	As part of the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum workstream, employability, enterprise and entrepreneurial learning and skills will be embedded within our curriculum and co-curriculum.
		Support our students to develop the relevant skills, through their learning, to support their development for global employment.
17	We will educate all our students and staff to be leaders in protecting the environment	Put in place a set of options or pathways for learning for a defined skillset for students with different ambitions associated with the protection of the environment. Ensure that all students have a minimum (to be defined) knowledge base on sustainability and protecting the environment.

Appendix B – Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills

Attributes	Text from A2040/Strategic Vision	Skills	Description	Selected Examples
Working with others	<i>"We will support our students through effective teamwork across the university" / "Students will need to be able to effectively communicate their ideas and research findings to different audiences, both orally and in writing" / "Our students will...be change-makers across the globe"</i>	Teamwork	The ability to work with others and across different disciplines and fields of study	Collaborating with a team of students from different degree programmes to develop and implement a work plan for a piece of coursework
		Communication	The ability to convey information clearly and effectively to different audiences	Giving people your full attention when speaking with them and offering constructive feedback on a problem they are facing
		Leadership	The ability to take initiative, lead others, and inspire change	Acting as a Class Rep to liaise between the staff and students on your course, and in the process building relationships with other groups and individuals
Active citizenship	<i>"Our students will grow in confidence and understanding" / "Our curriculum...enables our students to be leaders in protecting the environment" / "Our curriculum is inclusive and international"</i>	Global citizens	The ability to recognise the interconnectedness of local and global issues, understanding multiple perspectives to create an ethical, fair and democratic society	Becoming involved in societies or having a role in the Student Union to support other students on campus
		Sustainability	Understand the long-term impacts of our actions on the climate and nature crises facing society, mindful of the need to promote the well-being of current and future generations	Participating in a sustainability club that works to reduce waste on campus and educate the community about the importance of environmental conservation
		Inclusivity and cultural awareness	The ability to show empathy and compassion to others, understanding and appreciating cultural differences and all forms of diversity	Communicating and working effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds and being able to consider global issues from multiple perspectives
Managing yourself	<i>"With a flexible curriculum and opportunities for work-based learning, students will need to be able to manage</i>	Time management and organisation	The capacity of balancing multiple responsibilities and staying focused and organised to meet deadlines	Balancing coursework, a part-time job, and extracurricular activities while maintaining good grades

	<p><i>their time effectively and stay organised" / "All students can achieve success and thrive in the diverse workplaces of the future" / "Our Environment aims to be diverse, caring, supportive, challenging, innovative, and developmental"</i></p>	Self-motivation	The ability to identify personal goals and take initiative to work towards them, enabling individuals to pursue opportunities that align with their goals and values	Developing a plan to achieve a learning goal by setting aside dedicated study time each week, attending all their classes, and seeking out additional help when needed, taking initiative to follow through on the plan, even when faced with challenges or distractions
		Resilience	The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and be open to learning new things	Dealing with unexpected challenges and setbacks during your studies that require changes to plans so that you can still achieve your goals
Enterprise and innovation	<p><i>"We will foster their intellectual development, creative thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship" / "Our curriculum encourages students to grow as independent learners" / "We will foster their intellectual development, creative thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship"</i></p>	Creativity	The ability to think critically, generate new ideas and approaches to problems, and apply knowledge in new contexts	Researching existing literature to understand the current state of knowledge of a topic, then using this to generate new insights and understanding
		Independence	The ability to identify and pursue learning goals independently, seeking out resources and support as needed	Seeking out resources to learn a new piece of software on your own
		Entrepreneurship	The ability to make the difference. Taking ingenuity, creativity and willingness to spot and take advantage of opportunities, and view mistakes as an opportunity to learn and improve	Taking part in a challenge-based project or team-based activity that develops the capacity to problem solve and identify solutions
Analytical skills	<p><i>"We will make innovative use of digital technology to enable learning, and equip our graduates with digital skills" / "We will develop more challenge-led teaching, which enables students to learn by tackling real-world problems"</i></p>	Digital fluency	The capacity to use digital platforms and tools to communicate, collaborate, and access information, and adapt to new technologies as they emerge	Using video conferencing software to facilitate online collaboration with staff and students
		Information literacy	The ability to find, evaluate and use sources of information to support work or education	Using search tools to identify the correct information as part of an essay, or analysing data for drafting a report
		Critical thinking and problem solving	The capacity to identify and analyse problems, generate and evaluate potential solutions, and implement the most effective one	Participating in a challenge-led course that requires students to develop a solution to a real-world problem, such as improving access to

				healthcare in underserved communities
Career readiness	<i>"We will provide more work-based learning, through placements and volunteering." / "Our Education aims to be among the very best in the world, enabling our students to grow as independent learners, to achieve their full potential and succeed whatever their personal and social background, their mode of delivery and location, and to be equipped for global employment"</i>	Opportunity awareness	Sometimes called commercial awareness, an ability to understand market trends, organisations, sectors that organisations operate within whether in the public, private or not-for-profit sectors.	Attending an event, such as a careers fair, which will allow you to speak with organisations to gain a better understanding and give an opportunity for work experience
		Career planning and decision making	Having career goals and a good understanding of the skills, experiences and connections required to access the graduate job market	Using your Skills Framework to understand what your skills strengths and weaknesses are to understand if you are a good fit for an organisation, and to ultimately understand yourself
		Presenting yourself	The ability to articulate attributes and skills and present yourself self in a career context	Making use of your examples collected in your Skills Passport to evidence and support any applications you make for your chosen job role

Appendix C – Next Steps: Co-curriculum

	Current use of Aberdeen Graduate Attributes	Proposed Changes	Workload Implications	Proposed Timelines
Professional Development Courses	At undergraduate and postgraduate taught levels, the University runs professional development courses, PD1002 and PD5006 respectively, for all students. Both courses make mention of the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and Enhanced Transcript.	Changes required to content that refers to the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and the Enhanced Transcript.	Low – Careers and Employability Service staff will lead on this as Course Coordinators of the PD1002 and PD5006. These will be minimal changes that are required to update any reference to the current Aberdeen Graduate Attributes.	Work will progress following approval to be ready for the start of academic year 2024-25.
Achieve and Achieve+	Study skills for students are supported through the Achieve (undergraduate) and Achieve+ (postgraduate taught) MyAberdeen sites. Both resources highlight the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes to students.	Changes to content that mentions the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes.	Low – Student Learning Service will lead on these changes, although they are minimal and will only require changes to those pages/sections that make mention to the current Aberdeen Graduate Attributes.	Work will progress following approval to be ready for the start of academic year 2024-25.
University Webpages	Multiple areas of the University website mention the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and the Enhanced Transcript so will be amended, for example: Student resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Attributes • Careers • Infohub Staff resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral Support • Personal Tutoring • Supporting Students 	Amend content to reflect the new Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills, and MySkills.	Medium – Multiple webpages will be required to make small amendments to where the current Aberdeen Graduate Attributes are mentioned. As such this will involve staff from the Careers and Employability Service, Infohub, Centre for Academic Development, eLearning, and the Student Learning Service.	Work will progress following approval to be ready for the start of academic year 2024-25.
AUSA	The Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and the Enhanced Transcript are highlighted as part of AUSA activities.	Content changes where the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and Enhanced Transcript are referenced.	Low – Minor changes to the AUSA webpages which have already been completed.	Complete.

Appendix D – Next Steps: Curriculum

Proposed Short-term Curricular Changes				
	<i>Current use of Aberdeen Graduate Attributes</i>	<i>Proposed Changes</i>	<i>Workload Implications</i>	<i>Proposed Timelines</i>
<i>Course and Programme Approvals</i>	Both the New Course Proposal and Course Change documentation make reference to the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes. At present this takes the form of highlighting which of the four Aberdeen Graduate Attribute themes are linked to their programme or course but has no further details.	Proposed that changes will be made to the documentation to reflect the change to the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills and there will be an opportunity for linkages between the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills and the intended learning outcomes at a course level. This will begin to embed the attributes and skills into our courses and make them visible in the Catalogue of Courses .	Low – Changes to documentation for new courses and course changes will be required and approval will be sought via the Quality Assurance Committee and Programme Management Committee.	Work will progress following approval to be ready for the start of academic year 2024-25.
<i>Annual Course Review and Programme Review</i>	Currently the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes are mentioned in the Strengths and Weaknesses sections of the Course Review proforma as suggested topics for course appraisal. These suggestions for reflecting on a course also require staff to use feedback gathered from a variety of sources such as Course Feedback Forms (see row below).	Proposed to change the annual review documentation to ask staff to reflect on how the course has allowed students to acquire Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills, for example through the linking of Course Feedback Form data available to staff.	Low – Changes to course and programme review documentation will be needed and approvals sought through the Quality Assurance Committee.	Work will progress following approval to be ready for the start of academic year 2024-25.
<i>Course Feedback Forms</i>	Course Feedback Forms can be setup to capture information on all aspects of a course, but one section is universal to them all and captures information of effective teaching practices and general feedback on satisfaction, which is then used to aid the course review process (see above).	Proposed to change the emphasis of the feedback form to one of reflection. This will require changes to the questions that are generic to all forms but will not impact on Schools being able to decide the questions they wish to add. Further changes are proposed to the way that the forms are sent via email to students so the standard wording of the emails will be amended, and the system will be trailed to return completed forms to	Low – Changes to the existing Course Feedback Forms would require development work from the Applications Management Team.	Work will progress following approval to be ready for the start of academic year 2024-25.

		students for use in the Career Passport.		
Proposed Longer-term Curricular Changes				
	Current use of Aberdeen Graduate Attributes	Proposed Changes	Workload Implications	Proposed Timelines
Course Mapping to Intended Learning Outcomes	A small number of courses make explicit reference to aiming to enhance student Graduate Attributes (e.g., PU5548) but all courses should have Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO) that are visible in the Course Catalogue.	A systematic approach will be taken to work with teaching teams in Schools to identify the Attributes and Skills that are associated with courses and work to make them visible in the Course Catalogue to provide students with information to aid in course choice.	Medium – Changes will be discussed with Directors of Education and course teaching teams to begin conversations with the relevant stakeholders to identify and map which attributes and skills align with course ILOs.	Start in academic year 2023-24 (following approval) and continue throughout academic year 2024-25, aiming to complete in August 2025.
Curriculum Development Opportunities	N/A.	Wider than the course-level mapping above, it is proposed that the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills will function as an enabler for enhancing course and programme review and reflection by Schools.	Medium – Longer term changes and development opportunities will be discussed alongside discussions highlighted above to use the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills as a framework for explaining how courses and programmes of study can provide skills development and learning opportunities that enhance employability.	Start in academic year 2023-24 (following approval) and continue as needed as part of curriculum enhancements in programmes.

Appendix E

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessment

Title of Policy, Procedure, or Function: ABERDEEN 2040 ATTRIBUTES & SKILLS	
School/Directorate: Education Deans/VP Education	
Author/Position: John Barrow Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship	Date created: 22/10/2023

1. Aims and purpose of Policy, Procedure, or Function: The purpose of the paper is to provide an outline for the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes & Skills and associated MySkills Platform.		
2. Stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Academics • Professional Services 		
3. Additional Consultation/Involvement		
Organisation/person consulted or involved	Date, method, and by whom	Location of consultation records
Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC)	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are considered via EEC, including any issues relating to this specific paper on attributes and skills.	EEC papers.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC)	The final version of the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills paper will be reviewed by EDIC following academic input consultations that are currently ongoing.	N/A
<p>a) Brief summary of results of consultation indicating how this has affected the Policy, Procedure, or Function</p> <p>This is the initial stage of consultation; the EIA will be updated after any further revisions of the paper. The paper will go to the relevant committees for comment as required, including the Equality Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC) during the approval process.</p>		
<p>4. Monitoring</p>		
<p>a) Detail method of monitoring of the Policy, Procedure or Function and by whom</p>		
<p>Monitoring of the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills will be overseen by a workstream within EEC. Stakeholder engagement and feedback through the multiple stages of the project have been documented in EEC minutes and other committee updates as outlined in the paper.</p>		
<p>b) Detail how monitoring results will be utilised to develop the Policy, Procedure, or Function</p>		
<p>As above, the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills are monitored via EEC and as such any feedback and information that shapes them going forwards will be handled by the workstream within EEC should that be required.</p>		
<p>c) Timescale of monitoring including proposed dates</p> <p>See paper for previous consultation periods and proposed timeline going forwards for academic view prior to approval.</p>		

<p>5. Impact assessment</p>				
<p>Select what impact there will be on each group:</p>				
<p>Characteristic</p>	<p>Positive Impact</p>	<p>No Impact</p>	<p>Negative Impact</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p>Race</p>		<p>X</p>		

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		

<p>a) For each negative impact identified above, please state your mitigating actions below with timescales.</p>
<p>There are no negative impacts in relation to the protected characteristics above.</p>
<p>b) How does this Policy, Procedure, or Function contribute to eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and advancing equality of opportunity?</p>
<p>This paper is aimed at establishing an inclusive process for the recording, reflection and enhancement of the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills. The flexibility of the MySkills platform widens the opportunity for any activity a student participates in to be recorded and skills reflected upon, which goes further than the current Enhanced Transcript where only approved activity can be recorded.</p>
<p>c) How is the Policy, Procedure, or Function likely to promote good relations between people with different protected characteristics?</p>

The Aberdeen 2040 Attributes & Skills have been specifically created to align with the Aberdeen 2040 strategic plan and as such have inclusivity at their heart. Specifically, Commitments 1, 2 and 4, enabling students to achieve their full potential (Commitment 1), succeed whatever their personal and social background (Commitment 2) and provide a high standard of inclusion (Commitment 4).

7. Publication

a) Provide details of arrangements to publish assessment:

The assessment will be reviewed by EEC and published through EEC papers and other groups as required.

8. Review Date: 22/10/2023.

Author (Name and Position): John Barrow, Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship.

Authors signature:

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

Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support & Experience

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team member signature:

9. Date of submission to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee:

Approval Yes

No

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

EDUCATION AWAY DAY: ABERDEEN 2040 CURRICULUM OUTPUTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of the paper is to report on the discussions that took place at the Education Away Day in November with respect to Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum. The paper describes the outcomes of the discussions and makes suggestions about next steps.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

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

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

UEC is asked to note the paper and to discuss the proposed next steps.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 An Education Away Day took place on 07 November 2023. Attended by members of UEC, Deans, Directors, professional services colleagues, sabbatical officers, Heads of School, the last session of the day was on 'Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum'.
- 4.2 In the previous Aberdeen 2040 institutional implementation plan, the work on Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum had been planned to take place during academic year 2023/24. However, a decision was taken to delay the beginning of the work for two key reasons: to allow a number of other workstreams (e.g., decolonising the curriculum, Aberdeen 2040 attributes and skills) to draw to a close; and to reduce the workload for Schools and Directorates at the time as extensive discussions will need to take place.
- 4.3 The focus for the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum work is around maintaining a breadth curriculum whilst ensuring that:
- 4.3.1 Our Curriculum enables the ambitions of the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy.
 - 4.3.2 Identifying pathways or routes through our programmes that are clearer for students.
 - 4.3.3 Enabling a focus on students' interests and future employment aspirations.
 - 4.3.4 Facilitating ways in which staff workload can be addressed withing the delivery of our Curriculum.
- 4.4 The Education Away Day session aimed to put in place some foundations for the future development work for the Curriculum and encouraged discussion about the areas and issues that we need to consider and explore as we take forward those developments.
- 4.5 Two questions were asked of the participants:
- 4.5.1 What could we mean by curriculum breadth in the context of Aberdeen 2040?
 - 4.5.2 What do we need to know to inform our future approach to curriculum breadth?

- 4.6 The following table provides a summary of the outcomes, in themes, from the discussions at the tables. The full overview of the discussions is provided in appendix 1.

<p>Content</p> <p>Employability skills embedded Feedback from employers to support developments Work-based learning and entrepreneurship experiences What do our students want and need? What is our 'competition' offering? Professional skills and career development courses not taught by academics A broad first year which narrows as they progress (a funnel model) OR Less breadth in earlier years and more choice later once students have more experience (an upside down funnel model) Options from cognate subject areas (a specialist breadth model) (breadth vs depth discussion might be needed) Accreditation requirements must be adhered to Use interdisciplinary themes as a focus for breadth Sustainable development goals as part of the breadth curriculum</p>
<p>Experience</p> <p>Exciting and relevant Extent of choice available to students? Programme pathways Balance between prescribed and options needs to be right Ensuring students are prepared for breadth study Citizenship: how should we articulate what students do beyond the curriculum? Provide more structure for the breadth curriculum Mode of delivery – more online delivery? Mixed classes – UG and PGT?</p>
<p>Examples across our Schools</p> <p>Engineering: new programme development alongside optimizing current portfolio Medicine: some choice but within a very prescribed curriculum; additional year for industrial placements Law: removed a course in every term to allow more freedom of choice (previous Curriculum Reform) Decommissioning programme: interdisciplinary programme where options are based on the pathway chosen by the student Business School: working on real-life problems together MMSN: some projects allow junior and senior students to work together</p>
<p>Barriers</p> <p>Study Abroad students where elective choices cannot all be taught in one term Limited flexibility in some areas e.g., Law Challenges (and opportunities) with students learning across the Schools and having different / inconsistent experiences Remove the terminology of Sixth Century courses as it is confusing</p>
<p>Facilitators</p> <p>Consistent approach to course development e.g., in relation to templates, referencing, School structures, student experience, course management Put in place Industrial Advisory Boards across all Schools Streamlined QA processes to enable changes to be made easily Opportunities for these kinds of discussions (more than once per year) Agree collaborations across Schools Build in flexibility so that curriculum can be developed as new future careers are identified (adaptable curriculum?) Withdraw low recruiting courses and programmes – have a viability threshold – to enable staff to focus on other things [NB one table expressed concerns about this being used as a way to reduce staffing] Sixth Century courses are a good model which could be used to support the development of Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum</p>
<p>Process and data</p> <p>Lack of clarity about current pathways and requirements for MA and BSc degrees</p>

<p>Qatar: currently no breadth and growth of different disciplines depends on government priorities</p> <p>Ask questions of our current experience with Sixth Century courses: what worked? What didn't work? What have we learned? Ethos of interdisciplinary courses? How we collaborated? When they are timetabled (practicalities)?</p> <p>Co-ownership of courses</p> <p>Review our sustained study offer</p> <p>What programmes / courses UG students enter on vs what they graduate with</p>
<p>Areas beyond the Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum</p>
<p>Recruitment and Admissions: market research/data to support programme development</p> <p>Digital and estate infrastructure to support the Curriculum (and timetabling)</p>

- 4.7 It is recommended that next steps could include:
 - 4.7.1 Identify the data and information that is needed to inform the developments (see 'Process and Data' above).
 - 4.7.2 Identify possible models for breadth curriculum as a way to further develop the ideas and options for debate and eventual decision-making.
 - 4.7.3 Identify the content focus for breadth so that further discussion can then take place about models to support the delivery of that content.
 - 4.7.4 Ensure a mapping to Aberdeen 2040 whilst accepting that there may be adjustments to ensure future-proofing of the Curriculum based on external developments in the sector and beyond.
 - 4.7.5 Address all of the comments in the paper to determine what needs to be part of the developments.
 - 4.7.6 Set up a Group, possibly led by the Vice-Principal Education, that will start to scope out the work, consultation processes, and timelines.

- 4.8 The next steps could include consultation and collaboration with School Education Committees, colleagues in Schools, students, stakeholders, and others.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor Vice-Principal Education (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk)

18 December 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Appendix 1: Full overview of table discussions

Curriculum Breadth Session

TABLE 1

Discussion was had in relation to the breadth curriculum; the tenets of which were:

- Question raised in relation to what we mean by breadth.
- It is important that what is taught is exciting and relevant; employability skills should be embedded. This should be achieved for a minimal cost.
- Examples provided: in Engineering, the School are looking at which new programmes should be developed while optimising the portfolio that already exists within the School. The School look at what could be removed or replaced, and what is missing. It may be the case that there are too many courses and programmes, however, the School review the portfolio without minimising student opportunity for choice.
- Question was asked in relation to how much choice students should have to have to make them feel they have sufficient choice / flexibility.
- Some areas have programme pathways, where there is flexibility in the course choices which lead on a particular pathway.
- For Medicine, the programme is largely prescribed with a number of core learning outcomes. There is a component of choice, where students are able to build their area of specialist interest or have the opportunity to try various specialisms ('tasters'). The remainder of the programme is core courses.
- Students would have opportunities for choice in terms of placement options in Medicine. For Medical Sciences students, they can study an additional year as an industrial placement. Formerly, the placement was with bio-technology companies, however, this is no longer the case.
- Some barriers were highlighted to study abroad students, whereby elective courses cannot all be taught together in one semester. There are some areas where there is little flexibility. However, an example was given in relation to the Law School, which removed all compulsory courses at Year 3 of the LLB programme, which has allowed more students to undertake a period of study abroad.
- In relation to the previous Curriculum Reform, an example was given that the Law curriculum removed a course in every semester to be able to allow more freedom of choice.
- Question was asked regarding whether we meant less choice. It was stressed that the balance between prescribed / option needs to be right. An example was given in relation to social sciences, where it had been identified that students who had studied courses from other Schools had grades below that of their peer group who had studied courses from within the discipline/School. MMSN noted a different trend with medical humanities students, where it was suggested that these students do very well with the different courses on offer.
- Discussions with Student Learning Service had suggested that students in programme year 3 often feel they have not had the appropriate training in terms of writing essays at years 1 and 2. Question was asked in relation to how we ensure that students are prepared in the breadth of the curriculum.
- Question was asked in relation to what support structures or awareness of support structures do staff have for students on their courses.

- Example was given of an interdisciplinary programme (Decommissioning) which brings together multiple disciplines (engineering, law, economics), where there are optional materials based on the pathway chosen by the individual.
- Consistency between Schools and programmes was discussed, including the idea that there should be universal rules / template in relation to courses which all Schools should be able to sign up for. For example, it was noted that referencing differs from School to School (and sometimes within Schools), and that all Schools handle courses differently. Would help to enhance the student experience.
- Consistent School structures (eg Director of Education, Director of Research etc) make it much easier to ensure consistency across Schools.
- Student experience across Schools and courses is not consistent and it is not easy for students to navigate. Some Schools highlighted that all decisions related to courses are made centrally in the School and not by the Course Coordinator. There were differing practices highlighted in this regard.
- Suggested that it was not clear to staff or students what you can and cannot study in relation to MA and BSc degrees. Example given that Psychology has MA and BSc variations.
- It was suggested that the marketing team could be more proactive in their market research, approaching Schools with gaps identified in the market with associated need. Require necessary data that is relevant to the development of new programmes.
- Feedback from employers should be taken into account. Example given that in Psychology, employers look more favourably on UoA graduates as they have quality degrees. We are producing students of a high-quality that employers really value.
- Industrial Advisory Boards should be reinstated to advise on what employers are looking for in their workforce.
- In relation to citizenship, question raised in relation to what students do over and above their courses, i.e. extra curriculum.
- Suggested that work-based learning experiences and entrepreneurship experiences are valuable. Question raised in relation to what we can embed in the programmes in this regard and how students will recognise this.
- Example given of Business School students working on real life problems together. MMSN advised some projects allow Junior and Senior students to work together which proves beneficial for both parties.
- Course and programme approval processes are a barrier to development.

TABLE 2

- Qatar – no curriculum breadth to begin with, we are only starting to build it now – growth of different disciplines depends on government priorities
- Sixth-century courses
 - What worked and what didn't work?
 - What have we learned from these?
 - Interdisciplinary courses – we want to keep some of the ethos
 - Learned how to collaborate
 - Timetabled on a Wednesday
- Co-ownership of courses
- What have we learned from the pandemic?
 - Certain barriers can be overcome quickly, timescales for making changes can be reduced if we want – get rid of unnecessary hurdles

- It should not just be about convenience
- Requirements for entry at university have changed
 - Curriculum for Excellence – undermined excellence in specific disciplines?
- What do students need? What is our competition offering? (horizon scanning)
- Looking at the future, how do we achieve this? We need more opportunities and time for conversations, discussions and thinking to take place (such as the Away Day, but once per year not often enough)
- Digital and physical estate/infrastructure
 - Flat floors
- Resources
- Processes need to be up to date
- Culture and mindset shift
- More opportunities for students to study other courses in other disciplines alongside their main discipline
- Professional skills and career development courses – not taught by academics and timetabled on a Wednesday

TABLE 3

- There is a strong undercurrent that students should have exposure to lots of different subject and build curriculum based on their experiences. A broad first year, then narrowing down choices. A funnel effect leading to honours choices.
- Flexibility is a positive
- The Aberdeen undergraduate curriculum breadth is positive but complex. Breadth and flexibility is a valuable thing to conserve, but we should provide more structure to the choice.
- We should review our “sustained study” offering. Other institutions have all undergraduates start on a joint degree, for example.
- We should direct students to choose optional courses from cognate subject areas, in order to provide breadth that remains more relevant to core subject.
- Decision making on future curriculum aims would benefit from more data on what undergraduates enter on vs graduate out with.
- If a student’s degree is too broad, some programmes will struggle with (external) accreditation.
- Participant gave example of storyboarding a whole programme at the design stage (PGT example). Outcome was that they could help tailor the available choices to students’ career aspirations. Noted that individual direction easier to provide at PGT.
- Breadth vs depth is a balancing act at UG. Is it possible to have both? Are they mutually exclusive? At PGT we should have more focus on specialisms and career-inspired curricula.
- Timetabling is already very difficult. Practical constraints should be considered. King’s vs Foresterhill geography limits the options for students in MMSN.
- Suggestion to offer defined pathways outside usual disciplinary boundaries, by agreeing collaborations with other Schools.
- Curriculum breadth ought to be driven/informed by industry demands.
- Future (long term) focus required. We ought to be preparing UG curriculum for future students (children) who will go on to careers that do not yet exist. Need to build in flexibility to adapt the curriculum. Adapt by changing detail within an established structure.

- Comms. UG students report surprise at not being able to take a full load of their main subject. They might benefit from more time to consider secondary subjects before registering (particularly for first year).
- Courses and programmes with low numbers to be reconsidered/changed/combined/withdrawn. Inefficient to run a course for 2 students. A viability threshold could be set beneath which a course does not run.
- Can you put more elements of a course online to lessen timetabling load?

TABLE 4

The viability of aligning courses with the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy.

Sustained study? Was thus a requirement at one time.

What is the benefit of breath within teaching?

Not just launching someone into a course.

Interdisciplinary nature of subjects.

Co-creation of knowledge and cross-disciplinary nature.

Is it viable to have a work-based learning opportunity for all students?

Viability of programmes.

TABLE 5

What could we mean by curriculum breadth in the context of 2040?

- Do we need curriculum breadth in the first place? Many students forced to do courses they don't want to do, or some will find a course they want to do, only to be told they cannot do it.
- Boundaries given by 2040 strategy: need to consider curriculum breadth within this scope.
- Sixth Century courses (limited set of options) but provided opportunities for inter-disciplinary study. Could they be used as inspiration? **Replace curriculum breadth with inter-disciplinary themes instead?** Use these as the boundaries?
- We need to decide as an institution what is important and what, therefore, should be part of a degree programme. We also need to consider how you would 'label' them e.g., professional development so students can easily understand their wider value and why they should study them. Whereas e.g., the label 'Sixth Century' courses just confused students and anyone outside of these courses who had no idea what they were e.g., thought they were about the 6th Century! However, the courses themselves had / have big value in that it puts students together from different disciplines, forces them to work together and exchange ideas, learn from one another. These are all good long-term employability credentials to then highlight.
- We should put serious consideration to using the Sixth Century courses and their framework as a good starting point. Why not re-design these to align with 2040 strategy? This would essentially establish a series of protected time for these core courses e.g., embed employability etc. We know that these ideas only really work if they are embedded.
- We also need to think of the constraints, practicalities, timetabling issues before they are offered to students.
- Thinking about the inclusive angle: what about PGTs, online students? Why not mix them together e.g., put level 1 UG students together with PGT students, big learning potential in that potential industry / more mature student experiences to mix with UG students. Could be elements student-led, perhaps professional services / academic-related input from those with teaching / research experience.

TABLE 6

- Curriculum breadth was discussed in terms of interdisciplinarity and school cross-overs, but could it be thought of in relation to sustainability goals too?
- Participants understood the difficulty faced by students in their first two years of choosing courses, but one question raised was whether the 2/2 years of sub-honours/honours could be reversed so that students can use the freedom to take wider courses at a point where they've already had some time to think about what they want to do?
- Another approach to student choice issues was to suggest use of digital tools that allow a student to see what possibilities arise within the pathway if a certain option is selected and what is greyed out if a certain option is deselected. Students could also be given a way to see during the process of selection other things at stake in their selection than that a course has exams when they hate exams or is on Friday when they are working.
- Some frustration was expressed about the fact that not very long ago staff were asked to diversify and create many new courses but that they are now being asked to do the opposite and that the reason doesn't seem clear.
- Some scepticism was expressed about whether course reduction is really necessary. Is the purpose to try to reduce the numbers of staff from a financial point of view? And what is so bad about having such a wide variety of courses, especially if it provides interdisciplinary opportunities and institutional distinctiveness?
- Furthermore, the point was made that there are sometimes modules where there are very few students, but which are nevertheless important for completing education in the programme, and so a one size fits all approach to the numbers in courses across the university seems questionable.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM: COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides an update regarding the work of the Decolonising the curriculum Steering Group. This paper offers a comprehensive overview of the work completed thus far and outlines the upcoming establishment of a Community of Practice.

The University Education Committee is invited to take **note** of this progress report for informational purposes and **agree** the proposed next steps.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	N/A	
Further consideration/ approval required by	University Education Committee	16 January 2024

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members of the UEC are provided with this paper for **information** and to **agree** the proposed next steps.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 The Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group (DtCSG) was established May 2021. With the following remit:

REMIT

1. Develop a partnership and collaborative approach to working practices and the formulation of strategy, policies and guidance for the delivery of the purpose of the group.
2. Develop a set of principles and definitions that articulate the vision for the work of the group and the wider institutional goals associated with the group's purpose.
3. Undertake a scoping exercise to understand the existing curriculum practices, and from there identify both good practice and gaps for action.
4. Put in place an institutional action plan for the work, and monitor progress on the action plan.
5. Support Schools and Professional Services to develop their own plans to address the agreed vision and principles.
6. Develop a good practice toolkit and staff training for Schools so that they can:
 - a. Utilise evidence-based approaches to support their curriculum work
 - b. Gain literacy on decolonising curricula
7. Develop internal and external partnerships that will enrich the work of the group and enable the sharing of good practice.
8. Put in place an evaluation strategy.

4.2 The DtCSG has completed the following work:

4.2.1 The development of a 'definition' of Decolonising the Curriculum which guides the overall work of the University (see paper DCSG/240822/003 for the definition).

4.2.2 Developed set of Principles for the implementation of our ambition to Decolonise the Curriculum at the University of Aberdeen including timelines:

1. [*Where this has not already taken place*] All courses and programmes will commence work to decolonise their curriculum (including assessment) in academic year 2022/23, aiming to have completed a School review by the end of academic year 2023/24, and full implementation of all changes in academic year 2025/26.
2. Where new courses or programmes are proposed, these should include information on how the curriculum will address the principle of decolonisation.
3. [*Where this has not already taken place*] Schools will ensure that they work with students as active partners.
4. [*Where this has not already taken place*] All courses will review their Reading Lists as an initial step to providing additional perspectives on the course subject. Where additional texts are considered necessary, course coordinators should contact bookorders@abdn.ac.uk. It is noted that the University currently has trial access to the Diversity Collection which may assist with diversification of suggested texts.
5. School Education Committees will lead the implementation of this work, ensuring that they evaluate its development. Overall governance of the implementation of the work will be situated in the University Education Committee.
6. [Web-based](#) resources and a [Toolkit](#) are available for Schools to inform the development of their work
7. Training is in place to support Schools to take forward the required ([university course booking](#)).
8. Quality assurance processes, for course/programme/assessment change are in place to support Schools to make changes where these are required.

4.3 In relation to next steps, the following applies:

4.3.1 This paper officially concludes the work of the DtCSG as it has successfully completed all its tasks.

4.3.2 The process of decolonising the curriculum will persist throughout the university and will be facilitated by a Community of Practice (CoP).

4.3.3 The CoP will convene a minimum of three times per year and will include the Decolonising Champions from each School. This group aims to foster the sharing of best practices across the university, continually enhance resources, and provide support for all staff to sustain their efforts.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Prof Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean for Educational Innovation (k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk) or Prof Ruth Taylor, Vice Principal for Education, (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk)

[12 January 2024]

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
UPSCALING WORK-BASED LEARNING UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides an update on plans to progress institutional work to upscale work-based learning (WBL). The vision and menu for work-based learning provision remains unchanged, but the set of actions and timescales are adjusted to accommodate the impact of the current pause on recruitment.

The paper provides an upscaling WBL progress report and sets out a revised short-term upscaling plan and revised 5-year plan for delivering WBL at scale for information and discussion.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	SMT	03/11/2022
	Work Placements TFG	01/02/2023
	EEC	04/05/23
	UEC	16/05/23
	EEC (updated paper)	05/12/23
Further consideration required by	UEC	16/01/24

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

A progress report and revised short-term upscaling plan and 5-year plan for delivering work-based learning (WBL) at scale is provided. The committee is asked to consider the revised plans and discuss next steps in relation to implementation.

4. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

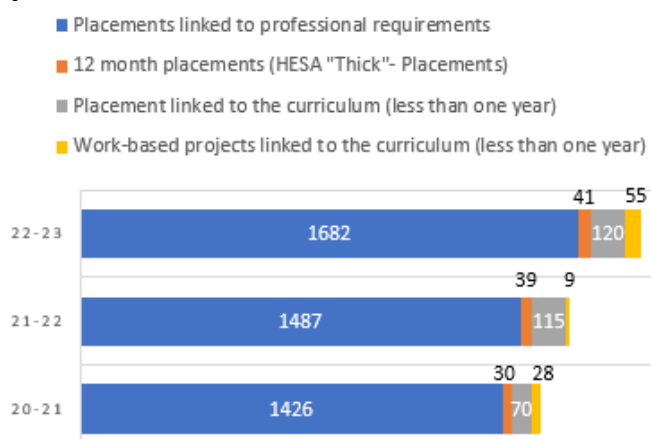
- 4.1 Work placement and work-based learning (WBL) provision is a core action area for Aberdeen 2040 commitments 7 and 12, which aim to foster interdisciplinary learning with external stakeholders and equip our graduates for global employment respectively. Aberdeen 2040 Education commitments state “**We will provide more work-based learning, through placements and volunteering**”.
- 4.2 In January 2022, a task and finish group conducted an initial scoping exercise. Following engagement with internal and external stakeholders, the Senior Management Team (SMT) approved work to conduct an institutional placement and WBL review report, produced by external consultants Gradconsult. The review report was presented to SMT in November 2022. The report provided a set of recommendations, using an evidence-base of relevant research and sector knowledge and experience, to achieve upscaling of WBL.
- 4.3 The recommendations included the following infrastructure and resource requirements to upscale provision of WBL:
- 4.3.1 Develop a diverse WBL offer by developing scalable experiential learning and embedded project-based employer learning initiatives.
 - 4.3.2 Create clear School-level accountability to grow WBL provision.
 - 4.3.3 Create a clear, concise, robust institutional placement policy.
 - 4.3.4 Establish infrastructure, systems, and processes to deliver WBL at scale.
- 4.4 A paper setting out short (March-August 2023), medium (March 2023-September 2024) and long (5 year) term proposals to implement the recommendations to upscale WBL was discussed and approved at SMT (March 2023), and shared for discussion at the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) (May 2023), and the University Education Committee (UEC) (May 2023).

- 4.5 The recommendations set out in the paper included a plan to establish a central WBL hub to provide the staff resource to support the phased growth of our menu of WBL. The dedicated WBL team structure and size includes growth of existing roles, and the introduction of roles we do not currently have at the Institution.
- 4.6 A phased approach to establishing a WBL hub was approved, with priority in 2023/24 being given to recruiting three Work-Based Learning Coordinators. The following roles and levels were agreed in the short term to build the support needed to implement the phased approach to upscaling WBL over the next five years:
- 4.6.1 Employer engagement roles: 3 FTE employer engagement staff now in place to support initial growth of employer connections and growth of opportunities in the short term. The team are allocated a School caseload each to support the development of upscaling plans and support growth of opportunities.
 - 4.6.2 Work-Based Learning Coordinator roles: This new student facing role will provide support to students in all aspects of the process of securing, onboarding and completing a WBL opportunity. The WBL coordinators will be allocated a school caseload each to support the delivery of WBL as provision is upscaled. 3 FTE at grade 5 were due to be recruited by September 2023 to support delivery in 2023-24. These posts are currently paused. While recruitment of these roles is paused, we have secured 1 post on a temporary acting up basis from December 2023 to July 2024.
- 4.7 It was agreed that beyond 2023-24, resource needs within Schools will be established to inform further growth of the work based learning hub team, to be considered in the 2024/25 school and directorate planning round. The following roles were set out for future consideration:
- 4.7.1 Work-Based Learning Designers: This new (third space professional) role would sit between academic and professional services, working with students, staff and employers to design high quality, impactful WBL learning experiences within the curriculum. Future WBL design resource needs, as upscaling plans are established, should be considered by Schools.
 - 4.7.2 Administrative support: This new role would support all aspects of WBL delivery, assisting staff in setting up WBL opportunities, assisting students in all aspects of their WBL experience and managing the processes associated with students being out in the workplace such as health and safety documentation and risk assessments. Future administrative support needs, as upscaling plans are established, should be considered by Schools.
- 4.8 An upscaling WBL work stream was due to commence work in November 2023 (see appendix 1 for draft workstream composition and remit) to:
- 4.8.1 Review progress of the WBL mapping activity conducted summer 2023 and complete a report on current WBL across the Institution by October 2023. Report to Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC).
 - 4.8.2 Establish a suitable approach to developing 1-year and 2-year upscaling WBL action plans for Schools. Report to EEC and SMT.
 - 4.8.3 Consider the need for, and merit of, developing a menu of centrally available/delivered WBL provision to complement/support the upscaling of WBL across the 12 Schools. Report to EEC.
 - 4.8.4 Consider and feedback on the developing overarching placements policy (currently being drafted by Gradconsult). Report to EEC in first instance. Establish need for, route and timescales for any academic views and approvals required.
 - 4.8.5 Input into the design and provide user feedback on the experiential learning digital platform developed via a University Partnership agreement with GTI (platform – Ginkgo). Report to the Upscaling WBL Digital Project Board and EEC.
- 4.9 Following the pause on recruitment in November 2023, the first workstream meeting was cancelled in order to assess the impact of this on capacity to take forward each of the actions. This paper sets out revised proposals to take forward aspects of the planned work using the resource we do have in the short term (section 5), recognising that some plans will need to be

slowed down until recruitment can take place, carefully considering an achievable timescale, maximising progress, using currently available resource. Adjusted longer term plans are set out in section 6.

5. UPSCALING WBL PROGRESS REPORT AND REVISED SHORT-TERM UPSCALING PLAN

5.1 Progress on upscaling work-based learning activity: there are currently several subject areas where work placements and WBL occurs, which ranges from short periods of time in work linked to a course to a full year away to gain an undergraduate (UG) Master's qualification. These areas of activity are currently being mapped, as well as postgraduate taught (PGT) activity, across each of the individual Schools. Known undergraduate work-based learning in curriculum over the last 3 years is shown in the chart:



Note that the upscaling plan and actions relate to non-statutory placements and do not include approaches to statutory placements required in subjects such as Health and Education.

5.2 The Aberdeen 2040 action to continue to grow our menu of internships (which take place outwith curriculum), including focus on part time internships, open to postgraduate taught students is currently on track. An expanded employer engagement team of three is in place to support Schools and growth of employer partnerships to increase opportunities for students to connect with employers. A part-time jobs fair was run for the first time in October 2023 with 24 employers and over 600 students attending. A new interdisciplinary, team-based, paid internship programme was completed by 31 UG and PGT students in summer 2023. Other summer 2023 internships included 14 students completing an Aberdeen Internship and 6 students completing an 'Interns with Impact' Internship. Internship vacancy numbers remains buoyant with 411 live vacancies on CareerConnect (Nov 2023). Internship opportunities planned from January 2024 include:

- 5.2.1 16 exclusive paid internships in: nature jobs, art/cultural sector, SME's
- 5.2.2 12 "Interns with Impact" summer internships (funded by Wood Foundation)
- 5.2.3 30+ Interdisciplinary, team-based, paid internship opportunities for UG/PGT

5.3 The Aberdeen 2040 action to continue the "Upscaling Work Related Learning Project" to develop systems to support work-based learning delivery at scale is currently on track (see workstream activity 5 in section 5.4).

5.4 A workstream was due to commence in November 2023. The table outlines planned actions for the workstream and adjustments to account for the slower than anticipated recruitment for resource.

	Workstream planned activity:	Updates and adjustments to planned activity:
1	Review progress of the WBL mapping activity conducted summer 2023 and complete a report on current WBL across the Institution by October 2023. Report to Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC).	Mapping is almost complete, but some Schools are yet to fully respond. The employer engagement team will review progress and a report will now go to EEC on 20 th February 2024.

2	Establish a suitable approach to developing 1-year and 2-year upscaling WBL action plans for Schools. Report to EEC and SMT.	Paused until resource is in place to support Schools. See section 6.3 for adjusted approach and timescales for development of School upscaling WBL plans.
3	Consider the need for, and merit of, developing a menu of centrally available/delivered WBL provision to complement/support the upscaling of WBL across the 12 Schools. Report to EEC.	Small working group established to explore possibility of offering a level 2 team-based challenge-led 15 credit course for term 2 in 2024-2025.
4	Consider and feedback on the developing overarching placements policy (currently being drafted by Gradconsult). Report to EEC in first instance. Establish need for, route and timescales for any academic views and approvals required.	The first draft of a policy has been provided by Gradconsult. The draft policy sets out a range of roles and responsibilities to deliver placements which are not yet in place. Internal review of the draft policy is required. This will take place over the next few months. Progress to be reviewed July 2024.
5	Input into the design and provide user feedback on the experiential learning digital platform developed via a University Partnership agreement with GTI (platform – Ginkgo). Report to the Upscaling WBL Digital Project Board and EEC.	This project is currently on track and is continuing via the established Project Board.

5.5 Progress and adjustments to the short term upscaling WBL plan will be reported to EEC, and UEC and SMT when appropriate.

6. REVISED 5 YEAR PLAN FOR DELIVERING WORK-BASED LEARNING AT SCALE

6.1 The Gradconsult report recommended a phased approach to upscaling WBL provision, emphasising the importance of establishing infrastructure, systems and processes and a clear, concise, robust institutional placement policy. It recommends the need for clear School-level accountability to drive growth of WBL, warning that scaled WBL provision cannot be delivered by the Careers Service in isolation. Significant collaboration with academic colleagues is required to build provision, support students and develop sustainable WBL partnerships with external partners. A range of roles will be needed to support growth of each of the types of WBL. The report notes that the skillset required to design and support delivery of work-related learning within the curriculum is often very different to the skillset required to deliver traditional placements and internships, and that sufficient resource should be in place to support the administrative processes associated with WBL provision.

6.2 The delay to recruitment has led to a slower than anticipated phasing to our upscaling WBL ambitions and requires adjustments to the timescales for establishing upscaling plans by Schools.

6.3 The following table sets out the initial planned approach for Schools to upscale WBL over the next 5 years (2023-2028) with an update on progress and adjustments to timescale (2024-2029):

Initial Plan (established February 2023)	Update and Adjusted Timescale (established November 2023)
For AY 2023-24: 1-year upscaling WBL action plan detailing planned WBL for delivery during 2023-24 to be completed by Schools by end August 2023. During this planning phase, Schools will be encouraged to establish % increases in students engaged in WBL for this academic year, and for future years.	Adjusted plan and timescale: Phase 1: Establish upscaling WBL action plan with a <u>selection of Schools</u> able to upscale existing WBL courses and / or introduce new WBL courses for the 2024-25 AY. Plans to be in place by end July 2024.

	Phase 2: Establish upscaling WBL action plan with <u>remaining Schools</u> able to upscale existing WBL courses and / or introduce new WBL courses for the 2025-26 AY. Plans to be in place by end April 2025.
<u>For AY 2024-28</u> : 4-year WBL upscaling plan detailing the planned WBL for delivery by year for 2024/25 to 2027/28 to deliver our vision to provide the option of WBL for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students by 2028. Overarching 4-year plan to be completed by end April 2024, then reviewed and adjusted annually.	<u>Adjusted plan and timescale</u> : Develop a 4-year WBL upscaling plan detailing the planned WBL for delivery by year for 2025/26 to 2028/29 to deliver our vision to provide the option of WBL for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students by 2029. 4-year plan to be completed by end April 2025 , then reviewed and adjusted annually.

6.4 Progress and adjustments to the long term upscaling WBL plan will be reported to EEC, and UEC and SMT at regular intervals.

7. **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**: this paper sets out an upscaling WBL progress report and revised short-term and 5-year upscaling plans for delivering WBL at scale for information and discussion. There is no change to the ambition and vision to provide the option of WBL for all students. Adjustments to the approach and timeframe reflect the current challenge in relation to staffing resource.

Discussion at relevant committees and with key stakeholders, and feedback regarding the revised plan for implementation set out in this paper, is welcome.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Tracey Innes (t.innes@abdn.ac.uk), John Barrow (j.barrow@abdn.ac.uk), Ruth Taylor (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk).

5th December 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Appendix 1:

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UPSCALING WORK BASED LEARNING WORK STREAM

REMIT AND COMPOSITION

(Sub-Group of the University Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC))

1 GROUP TITLE

Upscaling Work Based Learning Work Stream

2 DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT

September 2023

3 CHAIR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AREA

Co-Chairs: Head of Careers and Employability | Dean for Enterprise and Innovation

Administrative Support Area: Careers and Employability Service

4 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

4.1 Work placement and work-based learning (WBL) provision is a core action area for Aberdeen 2040 commitments 7 and 12, which aim to foster interdisciplinary learning with external stakeholders and equip our graduates for global employment respectively.

4.2 Our Aberdeen 2040 strategy commits to providing more WBL, through placements and volunteering.

4.3 A task and finish group in January 2022 conducted an initial scoping exercise. Following engagement with internal and external stakeholders, Senior Management Team (SMT) approved work to conduct an institutional placement and WBL review report, produced by external consultants Gradconsult. The review report was presented to SMT in November 2022. The report provided a set of recommendations, using an evidence-base of relevant research and sector knowledge and experience, to achieve upscaling of WBL. The full range of recommendations informed proposals set out in a further paper to SMT in March 2023.

4.4 A vision for upscaling WBL, and short-, medium- and long-term proposals to implement recommendations presented by external consultants to achieve our ambition to upscale WBL were approved by SMT in March 2023.

4.5 The following vision is approved by SMT: "By 2028, all undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT University of Aberdeen students will have the option to gain experience via a flexible menu of work-based and work-related learning opportunities". This vision sets out a clear ambition to ensure all UG and PGT students can gain a WBL opportunity but gives flexibility around the types of WBL opportunity provided. This flexibility ensures the WBL types offered fit with the needs of our programmes and our students, and includes WBL types which can be delivered at scale. It should be noted that the resource required to deliver against this vision is not fully in place, so this work stream will need to carefully consider an achievable timescale, maximising progress, using available resource when it is in place.

4.6 A digital project board is currently established to develop a system to enable us to provide students with WBL opportunities at scale.

4.7 There are currently several subject areas where work placements and WBL occurs, which can range from short periods of time in work linked to a course to a full year away to gain an undergraduate Master's qualification. These areas of activity are currently being mapped across each of the individual Schools to provide a clear starting position

from which to develop upscaling action plans, with an initial focus on implementation in AY 2023-24 and AY 2024-25.

5 REMIT

The workstream will complete the following work:

- 5.1 Review progress of the WBL mapping activity conducted summer 2023 and complete a report on current WBL across the Institution by October 2023. Report to Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC).
- 5.2 Establish a suitable approach to developing 1-year and 2-year upscaling WBL action plans for Schools. Report to EEC and SMT.
- 5.3 Consider the need for, and merit of, developing a menu of centrally available/delivered WBL provision to complement/support the upscaling of WBL across the 12 Schools. Report to EEC.
- 5.4 Consider and feedback on the developing overarching placements policy (currently being drafted by Gradconsult). Report to EEC in first instance. Establish need for, route and timescales for any academic views and approvals required.
- 5.5 Input into the design and provide user feedback on the experiential learning digital platform developed via a University Partnership agreement with GTI (platform – Ginkgo). Report to the Upscaling WBL Digital Project Board and EEC.

Members' Responsibilities:

Each member of the workstream will actively contribute to discussions and proactively feedback on discussions to and from their respective areas.

6 COMPOSITION:

Co-Chairs: Head of Careers and Employability Service | Dean for Enterprise and Innovation

Membership: School representatives (comprising those currently involved/interested in delivery of WBL)
 Careers and Employability Representative
 Academic Services Representative
 Centre for Academic Development Representative
 Information Governance Representative
 Employer Engagement and Work-based Learning Representatives
 Alumni Relations Representative
 Go Abroad Representative
 International Compliance Representative
 Deans with relevant areas of responsibility
 Students' Association Representative

ACCOUNT TO BE TAKEN OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP

7 MEMBERSHIP

Representative Area	Memberships
Co-Chair	Heather Morgan – Dean for Enterprise and Innovation Tracey Innes – Head of Careers and Employability
Clerk	Matthew Macculloch

Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship	John Barrow
Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Steve Tucker
Dean for Portfolio Development and Programme Engagement	Anne-Michelle Slater
Student Representation	Rhiannon Ledwell (Vice President for Education, AUSA) (confirmed)
Information Governance Representative	Claire Barranger-Clark
Employer Engagement or Work-based Learning nominees	Gary Coull (Employer Engagement Manager), Shannon McGuinness (Employer Engagement Adviser), Gayle Thomson (Employer Engagement Adviser)
Centre for Academic Development Representative	Darren Comber
Academic Services Representative	TBC
Alumni Relations Representative	Fiona Urquhart (TBC)
Go Abroad Manager	Louisa Stratton
International Advice and Compliance	Briony Livingston
Qatar Campus Representative	
School Representatives	
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition	Toni Gibson, Emily Cleland, Caroline Franco
Business School	Adam Smith
School of Social Sciences	Stuart Durkin (confirmed) Jennifer Walklate
School of Psychology	Oliver Hamlet
School of NCS	Raphael Cardoso (or nominee)
School of Engineering	
School of Geosciences	
School of DHPA	
School of Biological Sciences	
School of LLMVC	

School of Law	
School of Education	

8 REPORTING LINE/PARENT COMMITTEE AND INTERFACE WITH OTHER COMMITTEES

Formal reporting line: University Education Committee (UEC) and
Upscaling WBL Digital Project Board

Interface with other committees: Quality Assurance Committee (QAC),
Student Support Committee (SSC),
School Education Committees,
Graduate Outcomes Steering Group,
Employer Board, Programme Advisory Boards

9 FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS

Meetings to be at least every 6 weeks for the duration of the workstream.

10 PUBLICATION OF PAPERS

The agenda and meeting papers will be made available at least one week prior to meetings of the workstream. Where these papers are draft, this will be clearly identified

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

GO ABROAD UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to provide the members of the University Education Committee (UEC) with an update on international student exchange and other international mobility-related activities as of January 2024.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

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

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members of the UEC are asked to **note** the paper.

4. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY – NATIONAL CONTEXT

The past five years have been turbulent for international student mobility. The UK in particular has had to simultaneously deal with the consequences of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, both of which have significantly impacted cross-border travel:

- Mar 2020 – Covid-19 travel restrictions introduced across most of the globe;
- Dec 2020 – the UK Government withdraws from Erasmus Programme, and free movement between UK and EU ends.

4.1 Covid-19

The impact of the pandemic drastically altered cross-border mobility. Many institutions made the decision to cancel all inbound and outbound mobility. Others (such as us) allowed mobility to continue on a case-by-case basis, which was complex and labour-intensive. Maintaining oversight of a rolling set of rules and regulations was onerous and required massive efforts. Added to the international dimension and the changing landscape for partner countries, even small numbers of mobilities took a lot of staff time to support.

Mobility numbers were affected in 2019/20, where the majority of second semester and summer mobilities had to be cut short or cancelled. Similarly, the whole academic year of 2020/21 saw inbound and outbound numbers drastically reduced across the country. These numbers recovered partially in 2021/22 as many restrictions lifted. We will have to wait until spring 2024 to see the national picture for 2022/23 academic year but expect it to be only marginally higher than for 2021/22.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Outbound mobility totals (Scotland)*	5,430	4,635	1,635	3,600	TBC

* as reported to HESA (inbound totals unavailable)

4.2 Visas and immigration

The UK's departure from the EU led to new immigration controls between the two. For EU students coming to the UK, this meant mobilities of a semester or less were considered part of the **visitor visa** route, with EU passport holders not required to apply for this in advance of travel. Full year students required a **student visa** with all the additional expense that entails in visa fees and NHS surcharges; as such many incoming students have opted to stay for one semester only.

Outbound travel was further complicated, with a different visa route and/or requirements for each EU member country. In some cases, expensive medical checks that could only be performed by two doctors in the central belt of Scotland were needed. In others, documents would only be accepted once they had been legalised by Hague Apostille. While UK universities tried to build good relationships with local embassies and consulates, some parts of the process were beyond their jurisdiction, with some work-based visas having to be approved by the local authority in country, which could take several months. The first couple of years post-Brexit was marked by a lack of information, or contradictory information, making it challenging for students to navigate. Furthermore, universities were limited in the assistance they could provide, given that immigration advice in the UK can only be legally provided by a qualified individual, so nothing more than signposting to information was otherwise possible.

There is no doubt that these new immigration requirements have caused many students to withdraw from student mobility opportunities, either due to the cost and complexity of the task, or delays within the process itself which meant that they could not start their mobility within a reasonable timeframe. Universities UK have set up a working group on this issue, and we await its output at the next UUKi Outward Student Mobility Network meeting in spring.

A related impact is felt in the reduced number of EU students undertaking their degree in the UK. For many Scottish HEIs, recruitment from the EU was strong and these students often made up a sizeable proportion of outbound exchange students, as they were already mobile and internationally minded. With the introduction of fees for this group of students, there are far fewer undertaking their degree in the UK, impacting outbound mobility numbers (particularly at UoA, given our previous position as the Scottish HEI with the highest proportion of EU students).

4.3 Mobility funding

Despite Brexit, UK institutions were able to complete any projects that were funded under the 2014-2020 EU funding cycle, giving UK universities access to Erasmus funds for international student mobility until May 2023.

Shortly after our withdrawal from the Erasmus Programme was announced, the UK Government launched the Turing Scheme, which only partially replaces the funding aspect of Erasmus+, in that it only funds outbound student mobility as opposed to staff mobility or any broader collaborative activities. It also does not provide the framework for activity that Erasmus did, which in practice adds complexity, with each participating institution implementing the Scheme slightly differently, leading to a proliferation of different agreement templates and other associated documentation. This has had the effect of slowing down contract renewals between institutions, with many (including ourselves) reporting that post-Erasmus contract renewals had not yet been concluded when we gathered at a recent sector conference in September 2023.

The Turing Scheme has provided new opportunities, with the possibility to fund outward student mobility beyond Europe and for shorter durations. It has a welcome focus on widening access students (in theory, if not in practice). But the Turing Scheme also has significant limitations. Not enough funding is available to meet the demand from participating institutions. Annual funding awards are announced only shortly before the start of the academic year, causing uncertainty for students dependent on the funding to go abroad and leading many to withdraw (not least the widening access students that the Scheme purports to assist). There are also issues with the implementation of the programme, including the lengthy annual application, cumbersome reporting processes and an annual audit. While grateful that the Scheme was introduced, feedback from the sector has been overwhelmingly critical, but has not led to any significant changes in the first three years of the programme.

The Turing Scheme ran in parallel to the Erasmus Programme for its first two years (2021/22 and 2022/23), meaning that UK universities were not solely dependent on the Scheme for outward

student mobility funding. However, this changed from 2023/24, when the demand from the sector grew substantially but the budget did not. A survey by Universities UK of funding outcomes for this year showed a notable drop in funding allocated as a proportion of the total amount requested – in 2022/23 institutions were most commonly awarded 50-60% but this dropped to 30-40% in 2023/24. The UK Government has only committed to funding the Scheme until 2024/25 and there is massive uncertainty over institutional funding levels even within that time period, making it ever more important to look at alternative sources of funding. Without these, our ability to offer international opportunities to our students is significantly reduced.

The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2021-22 made a commitment to develop a two-way mobility scheme for Scotland's students and staff. It took until September 2023 for the Scottish Education Exchange Programme (SEEP) to be launched, with a limited "test and learn" window running from January to March 2024. While it is positive that the Programme provided funding for staff mobility and for the development of strategic partnerships, it did not offer funding for outbound student mobility. The Scottish Government has been keen to assure the sector at subsequent meetings that this will be a feature of future iterations of the Programme. However, there is an imperative that the Programme should not overlap with funding criteria for the Turing Scheme, ruling out SEEP as a funding source for semester or year-long study or work-based placements. The initial budget for the Programme was set at £1 million, in contrast to the Taith Programme in Wales, which was launched in 2022 with a budget of £65 million. The Scottish Government has set up a working group with representation from the sector (including from UoA) to scope out improvements to the Programme for 2024/25. The University submitted a bid for SEEP to align with our emerging strategic partnership with the University of Bergen, which was then withdrawn due to Bergen being unable to commit, largely due to timeframe constraints.

5. UoA MOBILITY NUMBERS 2023/24

5.1 Latest figures for 2023/24 are attached as Annex I. Corresponding data for 2018-19 – 2022-23 is provided in Annex II.

5.2 Outbound

While we do not yet have final figures for outbound student mobility in 2023/24, especially for summer activities, the latest snapshot indicates numbers are slightly down on 2022/23.

The key reason for this is funding; this is the first year that we have not been able to fund all eligible international mobility activity. Prior to this year, our funding allocations from both Erasmus and Turing were greater than student demand. However, in 2023/24, no longer having access to the Erasmus Programme, our main source of funding was limited to the Turing Scheme with UoA receiving only 32% against a sector average of 49% (with some correlation between the amount requested and the proportion awarded, with the higher requests receiving a lower proportion).

As such, we had to be strategic as to how our funding allocation would be distributed amongst students in line with the Turing Scheme rules which do not allow for partial funding. We committed to prioritising applications from students with a compulsory international mobility and those from a widening access background and were fortunate we had sufficient funding for all students who had applied by the deadline. Those Schools who had underwritten funding for compulsory placements as a recruitment tool for the 2021 intake of UG students (Law/LLMVC) continued to underwrite any 'late' applications. All other late requests were wait-listed, and those who made no funding request were considered as self-funded. Funding decisions were communicated to students in mid-July, with significant numbers of wait-listed and self-funded students subsequently withdrawing from their planned mobility.

We have set aside a limited amount of funding for optional summer activities as these had been a focus of our funding bid, addressing the priority area of widening access students by providing a short-term option but the majority of students who will go abroad for such activities will have to be self-funded. Under the Erasmus Programme, we used to have a good amount of funding for optional summer traineeships and we had previously used Santander funding to fully-fund a summer school in the Netherlands, however the funding settlement no longer includes funding for international mobility. We nominated 26 students to the Mitacs Globalink Research Internship scheme for access to fully funded 12-week internships in summer 2024 and are awaiting the results.

5.3 Inbound

As above, these are not finalised figures as the academic year is still in progress. While we are unlikely to add any further in-session students to the current total, there are a number of summer schools in the pipeline, that should result in at least a further 50 students in the study abroad section.

While the inbound exchange numbers rebounded quite soon after travel restrictions lifted, they are significantly down this year. There are various reasons for this, as previously mentioned: immigration requirements, being outside the Erasmus Programme, the termination of a number of agreements plus a major renewal process across both European and International exchange contracts (see below).

5.4 Contracts

Since our final Erasmus project was extended until May 2023, this meant that both inbound and outbound students until 2022/23 would continue to be covered by the 2013-2020 agreement contract. Thereafter, all European agreements had to be renewed. The Go Abroad team conducted a review process with Schools, and 100 out of 145 partnerships were taken forward to renewal. Of those that were not renewed, this was usually due to an imbalance between inbound and outbound mobility, with the partner no longer being a suitable or desirable destination for our students.

Approval was received from the International Partnerships Committee (May 2022) to continue to use the Erasmus Programme template for “third countries not associated to the programme” for two reasons:

- To streamline the renewal process
- To allow European partners to make use of Erasmus funding to send their students here.

More than 85% of European partners were happy to use this template, but the remaining 15% have transferred onto a standard bilateral agreement template. These are usually considerably longer – our own template is 20 pages long versus the six-page Erasmus template – and therefore take more time and effort to negotiate.

Our International Exchange contracts also required renewal in the same time period, a period which has been particularly challenging given staffing levels within the team.

Nevertheless, good progress has now been made with the majority of European Exchange and International Study Abroad and Exchange contracts now concluded, or in the final phase of negotiation, so we anticipate the inbound numbers to be higher for 2024/25.

6. ABERDEEN 2040 - INTERNATIONALISATION

6.1 Commitments and KPIs

Commitment 14 of the Aberdeen 2040 strategy seeks to, “*Ensure all our students can have an international experience, by studying abroad or working collaboratively with international partners*”. While the Go Abroad team does not have sole responsibility for delivering this commitment, the opportunities centrally managed by our team currently account for the majority of activity in this area. Of the three KPIs associated with this Commitment, the Go Abroad team have been working on KPIs 2 and 3.

KPI 2

“Provide 5% of all students with an international placement by 2025. Support this aspiration with a focus on curriculum design that enables flexibility for students who choose to undertake an international placement. Ensure that there are no barriers (eg financial) to students’ ability to choose to take an international placement opportunity.”

KPI 3

“Put in place increased numbers of volunteering and other ‘beyond the curriculum’ international learning opportunities. In time this work will be integrated with the wider Aberdeen 2040 Curriculum with the aim of adopting a more flexible approach to the international experience.”

6.2 Definition of the International Experience

In 2022/23, an International Experience Task and Finish Group was set up with John Barrow as Chair and representation from across Schools and Academic Services. The main aim of the

group was to agree a set of definitions in order to ensure we were aware of and collating data on the full scope of activity and to properly benchmark targets. While the group did produce a set of definitions and minimum duration for activity, follow up work was paused due to the imminent introduction of the new HESA Data Futures project, which had its own set of parameters to measure international activity. Now the project is further forward, work can resume in this area. Once definitions are set, a full scoping exercise can take place.

Following a briefing by HESA Data Futures staff at a recent Universities UK Outward Student Mobility Network meeting, we are likely to receive recommendations from Universities UK about their preferred way for us to implement the HESA changes in specific relation to mobility. Further information on this will be circulated when we have it.

Additionally, it was also flagged during this meeting that outward student mobility will be a new metric within the International Outlook section of the Times Higher World Rankings, though it is not yet known exactly when this will be introduced.

6.3 Working with government and policy makers

The Go Abroad team has provided a number of briefing notes about International Student Mobility, particularly in relation to the funding landscape. These have been shared with senior staff in advance of visits from the Scottish Government, Shadow Cabinet, and the Scottish Office of the UK Government. Briefings have also been provided in advance of consular visits to campus. Every opportunity has been taken to provide feedback on the Turing Scheme and SEEP via official mechanisms and informal channels of influence. Hopefully, this bears fruit in future iterations of these programmes.

6.4 Curriculum

The Curriculum Review that is set for 2024/25 is a good opportunity to push for changes to the degree structure that would allow for an optional mobility window within the standard four-year undergraduate programme. The School of Law have successfully cleared a semester of their LLB programme of compulsory courses and have seen a seven-fold increase in non-compulsory Law students going abroad, so that would seem to be a good model to replicate where possible. It may also allow for work-based, as well as study-based activities. Furthermore, the Upscaling Work-based Learning Workstream (via the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee) is taking forward work to create opportunities for work-based and work-related learning for our students.

6.5 New opportunities

The Go Abroad team has been working hard to expand the range of opportunities available to students, particularly where external funding is provided.

- Since 2021/22, we have participated in Mitacs Globalink Research Internship scheme by match-funding one fully funded internship for a UoA student at a participating Canadian university, where they assist with a research project. Due to the high volume of well-qualified candidates that we nominate to this scheme, we have received additional places fully funded by Mitacs each year that we have participated. The scheme covers a wide range of subject areas and is popular with students.
- We have promoted selected summer school opportunities at partner universities around the world used Turing funding since summer 2022, with moderate success. Under the rules of the Scheme, these must be at least 28 days in duration. Ideally, we would like to find a funding option for shorter duration summer schools, like the one-week opportunities provided by Radboud University in the Netherlands. These worked well for widening access students. In our final summer with access to Santander funding, we sent out 22 students, of whom over 80% were from widening access backgrounds. We are working with the Access & Articulation team to identify a new source of funding, though it is possible that SEEP may fit this purpose in future.
- In 2023/24, we secured access to the North2North mobility programme, which facilitates and funds mobility within the UArctic network, of which UoA is a member. The governments of Norway and Denmark have committed funding for students from participating Scottish HEIs to undertake a mobility period at an eligible institution. We have made use of pre-existing links with Aarhus University in Denmark and the Universities of Bergen and Tromsø in Norway, and sent our first three students through this programme, where they have received funding awards of approx £5k per semester, more than double the Turing rate. In exchange, we have agreed to provide four

semester-long fee waivers for incoming UArctic students.

- We have increased the number of places available under the Swiss European Mobility Programme (SEMP) to partner universities in Geneva, Lausanne, and Zurich, where both outbound and inbound funding is paid by the Swiss Government.

Against the backdrop of Covid-19, Brexit, recruitment pauses and long-term staff absence within the Go Abroad team, combined with a high volume of contract renewals, it has been challenging to make significant progress against these KPIs to date. However, the team is in a positive staffing position going forward, which will allow for greater strategic development to support growth in numbers.

7. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Modern Languages

The ongoing consultation on the future of Modern Languages is of major importance to the work of the Go Abroad team and our ability to deliver our outward mobility targets. Languages students have represented up to 40% of our outbound students within the last five-year period, and the inbound students that flow as a counterbalance to these outbound students have a critical role in internationalising the experience of our non-mobile students. Some of our most dedicated Go Abroad tutors can be found in Modern Languages and do such an excellent job of supporting students through their international journey. Any changes in provision could impact mobility programmes and partnerships.

7.2 Mobility management software

We currently do not have access to a mobility management system, but rather use a series of spreadsheets and a bespoke application portal developed by the Web Team. This does not really meet the needs of a modern Go Abroad team. We are keen to explore external software options.

7.3 Sustainable travel/carbon emissions

Student emissions are not currently counted towards the University's carbon footprint, though this is likely to come in the future. We must be careful to balance our mobility ambitions with the sustainability agenda and could look to incentivise green travel or short-distance options for this reason.

8. NEXT STEPS

Proposed actions for the next 12 months

- Schedule a series of meetings with Schools, to secure senior level buy-in for international opportunities, so that we can market bespoke opportunities to suit specific subject areas. This will also allow us to highlight the importance of the Go Abroad tutor role in advising students about their options for an international experience.
- Make improvements to the Go Abroad webpages once the new CMS is operational, to make the opportunities easier for students to navigate and understand.
- Reintroduce a "Clearing" round for outbound study exchange places, to capture any additional demand.
- Pursue any additional funding opportunities for widening access students, for example as mentioned above in relation to the one-week summer school.
- Increase fee-paying inbound mobility via semester and year-long study abroad, and a suite of summer school options. Our current third-party providers are sending low numbers of students, so we hope to develop new relationships at upcoming mobility conferences, such as NAFSA and EAIE.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Louisa Stratton, Go Abroad Manager, (l.stratton@abdn.ac.uk).

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open
Appendix I

Mobility numbers 2023/24 (in progress)

Outbound

	Study-based			Work-based				Total (head-count)	Total (block)
	Compulsory Languages	Compulsory Law	Non-compulsory	Compulsory Languages	Industrial Placement	Degree Project	Optional		
2023/24	34	12	89	19	10	8	-	172	226
Term 1	10	-	18	3	-	-	-	31	31
Term 2	12	-	61	6	-	8	-	87	87
FY	12	12	10	10	10	-	-	54	108
Summer	-	-	TBC	-	-	-	TBC	TBC	TBC

Inbound

	Exchange				Total (head-count)	Total (block)	Study Abroad				Total (head-count)	Total (block)
	A&SS	Eng	Law	Sci			A&SS	Eng	Law	Sci		
2023/24	142	16	27	96	281	311	17	7	-	31	55	55
Term 1	76	7	16	45	144	144	6	6	-	22	34	34
Term 2	48	9	11	39	107	107	11	1	-	9	21	21
FY	18	-	-	12	30	60	-	-	-	-	-	-
Summer	-	-	-	-	-	-	TBC	-	-	TBC	TBC	TBC

Appendix II

Mobility numbers – five-year comparison 2018/19-2022-23

Outbound

	Study-based			Work-based				Total (head-count)	Total (block)
	Compulsory Languages	Compulsory Law	Non-compulsory	Compulsory Languages	Industrial Placement	Degree Project	Optional		
2018/19	36	17	214	23	9	20	29	348	458
Term 1	2	-	61	3	-	1	2	69	69
Term 2	12	-	93	6	-	17	2	130	130
FY	22	17	45	14	9	-	3	110	220
Summer	-	-	15	-	-	2	22	39	39
2019/20	21	11	157	15	23	22	12	261	361
Term 1	2	-	43	2	-	-	4	51	51
Term 2	6	-	71	7	-	22	3	109	109
FY	13	11	43	6	23	-	4	100	200
Summer	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
2020/21	32	11	53	24	9	5	7	141	199
Term 1	7	-	9	3	-	1	2	22	22
Term 2	11	-	25	7	-	4	3	50	50
FY	14	11	8	14	9	-	2	58	116
Summer	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	11	11
2021/22	24	15	112	21	8	14	18	211	284
Term 1	7	-	14	4	-	-	1	26	26
Term 2	7	-	59	8	-	14	-	88	88
FY	10	15	28	9	8	-	2	72	144
Summer	-	-	11	-	-	-	15	26	26
2022/23	38	12	118	23	18	6	12	227	303
Term 1	11	-	29	5	-	-	-	45	45
Term 2	17	-	38	4	-	6	1	66	66
FY	10	12	21	14	18	-	1	76	152
Summer	-	-	30	-	-	-	10	40	40

Inbound

	Exchange				Total (head- count)	Total (block)	Study Abroad				Total (head- count)	Total (block)
	A&SS	Eng	Law	Sci			A&SS	Eng	Law	Sci		
2018/19	271	22	56	141	490	551	44	11	12	58	125	128
Term 1	149	13	35	88	285	285	14	1	-	16	31	31
Term 2	77	9	13	45	144	144	17	3	-	14	34	34
FY	45	-	8	8	61	122	1	-	-	2	3	6
Summer	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	7	12	26	57	57
2019/20	230	20	40	146	436	492	50	8	1	38	97	103
Term 1	124	10	24	96	254	254	32	3	-	18	53	53
Term 2	64	9	12	41	126	126	13	5	1	19	38	38
FY	42	1	4	9	56	112	5	-	-	1	6	12
Summer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2020/21	128	6	28	52	214	269	3	15	-	2	20	20
Term 1	54	3	12	23	92	92	-	1	-	1	2	2
Term 2	35	2	11	19	67	67	3	14	-	1	18	18
FY	39	1	5	10	55	110	-	-	-	-	-	-
Summer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2021/22	207	13	46	96	362	422	34	2	2	26	64	68
Term 1	92	7	33	47	179	179	23	1	-	15	39	39
Term 2	74	5	8	36	123	123	10	1	2	8	21	21
FY	41	1	5	13	60	120	1	-	-	3	4	8
Summer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2022/23	229	16	43	140	428	485	55	5	-	32	92	93
Term 1	118	7	35	74	234	234	16	-	-	20	36	36
Term 2	69	9	7	52	137	137	10	5	-	11	26	26
FY	42	-	1	14	57	114	-	-	-	1	1	2
Summer	-	-	-	-	-	-	29	-	-	-	29	29

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

INDUCTION, TRANSITION AND EMPLOYABILITY WEEK (ITEW) – UPDATE AND IDEAS**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

This paper outlines current thinking and plans for the Induction, Transition and Employability Week (ITEW). This week will form part of existing induction and transition activities that occur at the start of each term in September and January but will now have the additional focus of employability.

Plans for ITEW are at a very early stage and as such the University Education Committee is asked to discuss and provide comments and suggestions for ITEW, which will inform further planning.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	N/A	
Further consideration/ approval required by	N/A (at this stage)	

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The University Education Committee is invited to discuss the ideas in this paper and provide feedback to inform further planning.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Following extensive discussions with the academic community through the University Education Committee and Senate, a new academic year structure was approved at Senate on 20th September 2023.

4.2 As part of the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy, the University has committed to providing ‘an international education to learners from all around the world’ (Commitment 11), equipping ‘our graduates for global employment through our curriculum and teaching methods’ (Commitment 12), and to ensuring that ‘all our students can have an international experience, by studying or working collaboratively with international partners’ (Commitment 14). These ambitions are being addressed, in part, through our workstreams on placements and work-based learning, Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills, and international learning (through student mobility and collaborative online international learning (COIL)). The academic year structure aims to be an enabler for these ambitions by:

- Providing a consistent academic year structure, including three equal terms, to enable consistent and coherent engagement with external stakeholders (e.g., employers, student mobility placement providers).
- Providing a dedicated week for returning students at the start of terms 1 and 2 to be used as a focus on skills enhancement recognising the importance of the University supporting continuing UG students to enhance their employability (Induction, Transition and Employability Week (ITEW)). These transition weeks will not only enhance skills development but will also augment a sense of belonging. For new

entrants (UG and PGT) this time will be used for Welcome Week. Further work will be required to determine how best to use these weeks.

4.3 The ITE Weeks also provide a space for community building and creating a sense of belonging, as well as providing some flexibility for discipline-specific approaches to starting or continuing the delivery of Education across each term.

4.4 Specifically, the ITE Weeks are planned for the weeks beginning 16th September 2024 (Term 1 ITEW) and 20th January 2025 (Term 2 ITEW). See Appendix A for an outline of the new academic year structure including ITE Weeks.

5. POSSIBILITIES FOR ITEW

5.1 Possible options for ITEW include running central and School-specific activities as well as activities that are jointly run between the University and the Aberdeen University Students Association (AUSA) or external organisations. Some suggested possibilities for activities are outlined below but at this stage are not confirmed to be running.

5.2 **School-specific activities:** Some Schools are already reviewing what activity they might be able to place in these weeks. Through discussions with colleagues, suggestions have included:

- Social gatherings to foster networking opportunities
- Links to employers through events that are subject-specific

5.3 **University-wide activities:** There are a large array of centrally organised events in the current Welcome Week and also information for students who are new to the University (see [here](#)). At present discussions are at an early stage with the teams who deliver activities in Welcome Week but some suggestions have included:

- Skills development workshops
- Careers drop-in sessions
- Entrepreneurship team-based events

5.4 Many of these discussions are at an early stage but one common theme was the creation of a specific time and space within each ITEW to facilitate this activity and allow Schools and Professional Services the space to have activities that do not clash with their own induction and transition activities.

6. NEXT STEPS

6.1 A small working group will be setup and report to the Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC).

6.2 Meetings will be arranged in January 2024 between the working group and key stakeholder teams such as Experience, Engagement & Wellbeing, AB Ventures, and the Careers & Employability Service, all of whom have expressed an interest in helping develop activities for the ITE Weeks.

6.3 Plans from these meetings will then be agreed through the appropriate committees where appropriate, such as EEC and UEC.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 As highlighted in Section 5 and 6, this work is in its infancy, so UEC is asked to discuss and provide feedback on suggestions for activities and the approach taken to deliver them for the ITE Weeks.

7.2 Suggestions for UEC to consider, but not be limited to, are the following:

- Preference for centrally delivered vs in-School activities
- Open to all vs specific levels of study provision
- What would the key learning outcomes and/or aims for the week be?
- How would we measure success?

7.3 Further to this, the design approach for the ITE Weeks also needs to be considered, so UEC is asked to consider, but again not be limited to, the following:

- Content
- Methods of delivery
- Target audiences
- Timetabling alongside other activities
- Engagement with staff and students

7.4 Any feedback received will be taken forward as these plans develop via the next steps outlined above (Section 6).

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from John Barrow (Dean for Employability & Entrepreneurship, j.barrow@abdn.ac.uk).

21st December 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Appendix A – New Academic Year Structure (starting academic year 2024/25)

The file link below shows an extract from the Senate papers of 20th September 2023 when the new academic year structure was approved.



Adobe Acrobat
Document

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ONLINE EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper proposes the establishment of an Online Education Forum as a sub-group of UEC and sets out a range of support being put in place to help support the development of fully online provision across the University.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

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

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

UEC is invited to:

- (i) approve the establishment of an Online Education Forum as a sub-group of UEC;
- (ii) note the range of support being in place to support the development of fully online provision.

4. ONLINE EDUCATION FORUM

- 4.1 Over recent years, the Online Education Development Committee, a sub-committee of the Student Recruitment Committee (SRC), was the formal forum where the University's work on online education was discussed. Following a review of the SRC, its sub-committees were disbanded with the work of these being reassigned to relevant committees or managed through newly established forums of SRC. In the case of online education, much of the recruitment-related business of OEDC is now dealt with through existing committees (SRC, Fees & Scholarships Committee, Programme Management Committee and University Partnerships Committee).
- 4.2 While growth of online student numbers is clearly an important area of focus, it is also important that there is focus placed on the online student experience and the approach to our delivery of online education. Previously the OEDC remit did include oversight of these areas but with the committee's disbandment as outlined above, it is proposed that an Online Education Forum be established, reporting to the University Education Committee, to provide a forum to enable the discussion of such matters. A proposed draft remit and composition for the Online Education Forum is appended in Annex A.

5. SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF FULLY ONLINE PROVISION

5.1 The University has a significant portfolio of fully online programmes and courses as detailed on the [On-Demand Learning](#) site. With the University's need to grow revenue, focus is being placed on the further growth of online programmes and courses. In order to help support this work, the Centre for Academic Development will be offering an *Online Learning Design Service* which will provide support to Schools wishing to develop online provision. This support will be tailored depending on need, priorities and demand, and will be available for short courses

through to full programmes. Staff will be supported with course design (through programme review / storyboarding), course development and delivery through MyAberdeen.

- 5.2 To showcase the support available and share good practice in regard to the delivery of online education, an event “*Designing and Delivering Online Education*” is being arranged. This will be held on Thursday 8 February 2024 from 2-4pm and will be open to all. Further information, including how to book, will be circulated early in the new year.

6. PRINCIPLES FOR DELIVERY OF ONLINE EDUCATION

- 6.1 The University has a set of [Principles for the Delivery of Education](#). These were developed informed by the evaluation of blended learning delivery during the Covid pandemic. There are 5 principles: active learning, community building, assessment, feedback, and accessibility & inclusivity. These apply not only to on campus delivery but are equally applicable to fully online and blended delivery. The approaches and supporting examples provided are primarily focused on on campus delivery. As such, it is proposed that work will be undertaken to develop further the resources provided to include approaches and examples relating specifically to online delivery.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 7.1 Further information is available from Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean for Educational Innovation (k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk), Gillian Mackintosh, Director of Academic Services & Online Education (g.mackintosh@abdn.ac.uk), Rob Cummins, Head of Online Education (robin.cummins@abdn.ac.uk) and Patricia Spence (p.spence@abdn.ac.uk).

21 December 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
ONLINE EDUCATION FORUM
REMIT AND COMPOSITION

1. COMMITTEE TITLE

Online Education Forum

2. DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT

January 2024

3. CHAIR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AREA

Chair: Dean for Educational Innovation

Clerk: Academic Services and Online Education

4. PURPOSE

A Forum to enable focused discussion in regard to the delivery of online education, the pedagogic approach, the associated online student experience both academic and non-academic and the support of staff delivering online provision.

5. REMIT

The Online Education Forum support the delivery of a high-quality student learning experience for all online learners aligned with consistent institutional pedagogic approaches to the delivery of online learning. In doing so, the Forum will:

- Inform the principles to underpin the University's approach to the delivery of online education;
- Consider ways to enhance the academic student experience provided to online learners to ensure it meets their particular needs;
- Consider the non-academic needs of the online learners to ensure that they are appropriately supported and feel part of the wider University community;
- Review feedback from online learners (e.g. from the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey) and identify areas for improvement
- Ensure that consideration is given to issues of accessibility and inclusivity in the delivery of online education;
- Ensure that staff involved in the delivery of online education feel supported and informed;
- Promote the sharing of good practice from online education to inform on campus delivery and vice versa.
- Ensure that there is active representation of the online learning community.

Members' Responsibilities:

Each academic member will ensure that they consult with their own School, through their School Education Committee and other forums, on relevant matters, and provide feedback into the Forum which represents the views of their School.

6. COMPOSITION AND QUORUM:

Chair:	Dean of Educational Innovation
Membership:	Dean for Student Support & Experience
	Academic representative from each School (ideally someone who has responsibility for, or close involvement in, the delivery of online education)
	AUSA Representative
	Head of Online Education
	Development Officers (Online Education)
	Representative from the Centre for Academic Development
	Representation from the Student Experience Team
	Marketing Manager (Online Education)
	Clerk (from Online Education Team)

ACCOUNT TO BE TAKEN OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP

7. MEMBERSHIP

Chair:	Kirsty Kiezebrink
Membership:	TBC
Clerk:	TBC

8. REPORTING LINE/PARENT COMMITTEE AND INTERFACE WITH OTHER COMMITTEES

Formal reporting line:	University Education Committee
Interface with other committees:	SSEC

In addition to formal meetings of the Online Education Forum, the group will also organise open sessions to provide space for sharing of good practice in regard to online education.

9. FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS

The Group will meet at least five times per year preceding each meeting of UEC. Additional meetings may be arranged, as required.

Meetings between 10am – 4pm in accordance with University Policy.

10. PUBLICATION OF PAPERS

Cognisance will be taken of the University's Publication Scheme and Agenda papers will be made available on web pages/StaffNet where possible.

11. DATE ESTABLISHMENT OF GROUP APPROVED/RECORDED BY UMG:

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS)

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper sets out key dates and option questions for the National Student Survey (NSS) in 2024.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	SSEC	Nov 23
Further consideration/ approval required by		

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 The Office for Students published on 23 October 2023 arrangements for the National Student Survey 2024 and action required from participating institutions. Institutions are required to carry out three key tasks in preparation for the survey:

- Review/update their relevant NSS provider contact details on the NSS extranet. These updates have been made for the University of Aberdeen.
- Submit their completed 'My survey options' through the NSS extranet, including preferences for survey start week, optional questions, and details of any prize draws.
- Populate the institution's NSS 2024 sample templates with the requested contact details for all students on the target list, i.e. students eligible for NSS 2024.

3.2 The NSS 2024 will launch nationally on 08 January 2024 and fieldwork will take place between 08 January and 30 April 2024. Participating institutions can decide when to start the survey during the first five weeks. Last year, in the NSS 2023 Survey, the University chose to commence the NSS Survey in Week 4.

3.3 Providers in England are not required to promote the NSS 2024 survey to their students. Providers in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are still required to promote the survey.

4.3 For 2024, the core questions in the survey remain the same as for the 2023 survey. Providers may also choose up to six banks of optional questions, and may include up to two additional questions specific to the provider. Providers are asked to agree with students' unions their choice of optional banks of questions for inclusion. Providers should submit their choice of optional banks and additional questions to Ipsos. Last year, in the NSS 2023 Survey, the University chose to the optional bank questions as follows (see Appendix 1 for a full list of available questions):

B2. Students' Union (Association or Guild)

1. The Students' Union (Association or Guild) had had a positive impact on my sense of belonging to the university or college.
2. The Students' Union (Association or Guild) has had a positive impact on the local community.
3. The Students' Union (Association or Guild) has helped me develop useful life skills.

B7. Course Delivery

1. Learning materials made available on my course have enhanced my learning.
2. The range and balance of approaches to teaching has helped me to learn.
3. The delivery of my course has been stimulating.
4. My learning has benefited from modules that are informed by current research.
5. Practical activities on my course have helped me to learn.

B9. Welfare Resources and Facilities

1. There is sufficient provision of welfare and student services to meet my needs.
2. When needed, the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful.

B15. Employability and skills

1. My Higher Education experience has helped me plan for my future career.
2. My institution offered activities and resources designed to prepare me for the next step in my career.
3. The skills I have developed during my time in Higher Education will be useful for my future career.

B16. Environmental sustainability

1. My institution encourages good environmental practice.
2. My course has encouraged me to think about environmental sustainability.
3. I have had opportunities to take part in activities supporting environmental sustainability.

B17. Student safety

1. I feel safe to be myself at university/college.
2. My institution takes responsibility for my safety.

- 4.4 The University is in the process of populating the NSS 2024 sample templates with the requested contacts details for all students on the target list for 2024 eligible for participation in the survey. This data will be submitted by the deadline of 01 December 2023. As part of this process this year we will include a short consultation with the Schools to verify the students being submitted. This will take place after the submission of the population to Ipsos, but the submission can be changed prior to the launch of the NSS in January 2024.
- 4.5 Results are expected to be published in July 2024. Only data that conforms to NSS publication thresholds (at least 10 student responses and 50% overall response rate) will be made public. If no data is made available for a particular course on which students were surveyed, this means that the data did not meet this publication threshold.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY SSEC

The Student Support & Experience Sub-Committee approved that:

1. The starting date of the NSS Survey in 2024 is Week 4 (week commencing 29 January 2024, with initial email sent out on Thursday 01 February 2024) as this aligns well with the opening of term on 15 January 2024 after the Christmas break and the start of teaching on 22 January 2024.
2. The optional questions for NSS 2024 are the same as in 2023 so as to create continuity and build up consistent data over a number of years to understand trends.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk), Jason Bohan, Dean of Student Support and Experience (Jason.Bohan@abdn.ac.uk) Hulda Sveinsdottir, Director of Planning (hulda.sveinsdottir@abdn.ac.uk) and Chris Souter, Head of Data and Business Intelligence (chris.souter@abdn.ac.uk).

20 November 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

APPENDIX 1 - Bank of Optional Questions

B1. Personal Development

1. The course has helped me to present myself with confidence.
2. My communication skills have improved.
3. As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.

B2. Students' Union (Association or Guild)

1. The Students' Union (Association or Guild) had had a positive impact on my sense of belonging to the university or college.
2. The Students' Union (Association or Guild) has had a positive impact on the local community.
3. The Students' Union (Association or Guild) has helped me develop useful life skills.

B3. Careers

1. As a result of my course, I believe that I have improved my career prospects.
2. Good advice is available for making career choices.
3. Good advice is available on further study opportunities.

B4. Course Content and Structure

1. All of the compulsory modules are relevant to my course.
2. There is an appropriate range of options to choose from on my course.
3. The modules of my course form a coherent integrated whole.

B5. Work Placements

Did your course involve any work placements?

- a. Yes (ask all questions in this section)
 - b. No (skip this section)
1. I received sufficient support and advice from my institution about the organisation of my placements.
 2. My placements were valuable in helping my learning.
 3. My placements have helped me to develop my skills in relation to my course.
 4. My placements have helped me to develop my general life skills.
 5. The taught part of my course was good preparation for my placements.

B6. Social Opportunities

1. I have had plenty of opportunities to interact socially with other students.
2. I am satisfied with the range of clubs and societies on offer.
3. I am satisfied with the range of entertainment and social events on offer.

B7. Course Delivery

1. Learning materials made available on my course have enhanced my learning.
2. The range and balance of approaches to teaching has helped me to learn.
3. The delivery of my course has been stimulating.
4. My learning has benefited from modules that are informed by current research.
5. Practical activities on my course have helped me to learn.

B8. The Physical Environment

1. Security has been satisfactory when attending classes.
2. My institution provides an appropriate environment in which to learn.

B9. Welfare Resources and Facilities

1. There is sufficient provision of welfare and student services to meet my needs.
2. When needed, the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful.

B10. Workload

1. The workload on my course is manageable.
2. This course does not apply unnecessary pressure on me as a student.
3. The volume of work on my course means I can always complete it to my satisfaction.
4. I am generally given enough time to understand the things I have to learn.

B11. Assessment

1. Teaching staff test what I have understood rather than what I have memorised.

2. Assessment methods employed in my course require an in-depth understanding of the course content.

B12. Learning Community

1. I feel part of a group of students committed to learning.
2. I have been able to explore academic interests with other students.
3. I have learned to explore ideas confidently.
4. Within my course, I feel my suggestions and ideas are valued.
5. I feel part of an academic community in my college or university.

B13. Intellectual Motivation

1. I have found the course motivating.
2. The course has stimulated my interest in the field of study.
3. The course has stimulated my enthusiasm for further learning.

B14. Entrepreneurial opportunities

1. If I was interested in starting my own business, I know where I could find support in my institution.
2. My Higher Education experience has helped me develop skills that could help me run my own business in future.
3. As a result of my Higher Education experience, I am more likely to consider running my own business in the future.

B15. Employability and skills

1. My Higher Education experience has helped me plan for my future career.
2. My institution offered activities and resources designed to prepare me for the next step in my career.
3. The skills I have developed during my time in Higher Education will be useful for my future career.

B16. Environmental sustainability

1. My institution encourages good environmental practice.
2. My course has encouraged me to think about environmental sustainability.
3. I have had opportunities to take part in activities supporting environmental sustainability.

B17. Student safety

1. I feel safe to be myself at university/college.
2. My institution takes responsibility for my safety.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ACADEMIC APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING UPDATE (2022/23)

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper will provide members of the University Education Committee (UEC) with an update on academic appeal and complaint handling across the University.

This paper contains detailed data on appeal and complaint submissions (*appendices A and B refer*) received prior to and during the 2022/23 academic year, in addition to an analysis of emerging trends.

Members of the University Education Committee (UEC) are asked to **discuss** the paper,

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee	13 Dec 2023
	University Education Committee	16 Jan 2024
	Senior Management Team	TBC

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) / University Education Committee (UEC)** is invited to **discuss** the paper, in particular the data outlined in *Appendices A and B*.

The **Senior Management Team (SMT)** is invited to **discuss** the paper and **approve** the publication of the complaints data contained in *Appendix B*.

4. OVERVIEW

- 4.1 The University has in place a [Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals](#), and a [Complaints Handling Procedure](#) (CHP), providing frameworks for students (or other parties, as appropriate) to formalise any concerns they may have about aspects of their academic or non-academic experience. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the use of these policies in practice.

5. ACADEMIC APPEALS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 The Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals was approved by the University Senate and the University Court in February 2011, and most recently revised in August 2020. 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](#).

5.2 APPEALS DATA AND TRENDS

5.2.1 *Appendix A* provides a detailed analysis of appeal cases (and summary level complaint data for the purposes of comparison) since 2015/16. In summary, appeal cases received were as follows in *Table 1.1* below. Appeal submissions as a percentage of the total student population is provided in parentheses.

Table 1.1:

Academic Appeals by Academic Year							
2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
506 (2.3%)	464 (2.0%)	274 (1.3%)	198 (1.0%)	266 (1.6%)	242 (1.5%)	257 (1.7%)	229 (1.5%)

5.2.2 The total number of appeals has increased in academic year 2022/23 from those received in previous years and is at the highest level seen over the years of reporting set out above. However, the percentage of the student population submitting appeals is low (2.3%).

5.2.3 The following specific trends are also noted:

- A steady increase in the number of submissions: the number of appeal submissions has increased by 9.1% from 464 cases in 2021/22 to 506 cases in 2022/23. In particular, the Business School has seen a marked increase in the number of appeal cases (169 cases in 2021/22 compared to 200 cases in 2022/23, which accounts for 35.1% of all cases). Further, the Schools of Engineering (76 cases in 2021/22 compared to 82 cases in 2022/23), Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition (51 cases in 2021/22 compared to 76 cases in 2022/23) and Social Science (32 cases in 2021/22 compared to 46 cases in 2022/23) have also seen increases.
- The number of cases related to removal of a class certificate (C7) have fallen in 2022/23, though the number of cases remains high in proportion to other cases received, comprising 40.9% of all cases received. Work remains ongoing in relation to Monitoring, Absence and Engagement in regard to reviewing monitoring procedures and improving communication with students in this regard. Coupled with a review of the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals, it is anticipated that from academic year 2024/25 onwards, the number of C7 appeals will be greatly reduced.
- The number of combined cases (those cases which contain elements of both appeal and complaint) have tripled since 2021/22. Cases which are combined appeal and complaint are often more complex and cover a wide range of issues. These cases are treated under the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals, so as not to disadvantage the student procedurally by allowing a further stage of appeal, but often seek input in the School response from the Senior Management team to confirm that the University is content with the response. While the student population continues to grow, cases and the issues raised therein are more complex, particularly where cases concern international students studying on a student visa. It is likely that this could be attributable to the increase in combined cases.

5.2.4 As is noted above, in academic year 2022/23 approximately 2.6% of the student population appealed to the University. Of the 570 cases processed, 40.9% (233) related to student monitoring and were submitted in response to a student being issued with a 'C7' as a consequence of a lack of engagement with, or attendance at, a course. 71.7% (167) of appeal cases of this nature were upheld (or partially upheld), thereby removing one or more C7s from a student's record and reinstating them on the course(s) in question. Where cases of this nature aren't upheld, this can result in varying outcomes for the student which range from termination of studies (where multiple C7s demonstrate a lack of engagement) to the student being required to undertake, in the following teaching period, either (i) the course again (where its completion is prescribed) or (ii) an alternative, additional course to ensure an appropriate number of credits can be achieved.

5.2.5 With regard to the appeals received in 2022/23 which did not relate to student monitoring, these most commonly referred to mitigating circumstances, disputed degree classification or CGS assessment grade, request for a further resit opportunity, and perceived poor, inconsistent or

inaccurate communication and/or support. Mitigating circumstances concerns: (i) those circumstances which had not been reported by the student at the time of assessment; and (ii) those circumstances which had been reported but that the student has concerns as to whether these were taken into account by the School. Degree classification and CGS marks are disputed mainly where a student is borderline. Overall, 40.3% (110) of appeal cases which did not relate to student monitoring were upheld (or partially upheld).

5.2.6 There were 5 appeals attributed to the marking and assessment boycott (MAB); all of which were not upheld. Cases of this kind related to marking of work, including personnel, timeliness and appropriateness of marking.

5.2.7 Of the 506 appeal cases received in 2022/23, 92 cases (18.2% of the total number of appeals) were not able to be concluded within the timescales as stipulated in the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals. The 92 cases included those cases that were concluded at the initial stage (Head of School/Head of Section) and cases where students remained dissatisfied and had cases considered by Grounds to Proceed or Appeal Panels. On average, of the cases which were noted to extend beyond the timescales stipulated in the policy, cases which were considered at Head of School or Section level took 27.6 days to conclude. While most cases are resolved within the stipulated timescales, there is work ongoing, in particular a review of the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals, which aims to alleviate the issue.

6. COMPLAINT HANDLING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 The Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) follows the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) published by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), providing a consistent MCHP across all public services in Scotland. The text and procedure were largely prescribed by the SPSO, tailored only to fit the University's context where permitted. The University is required to adhere to the MCHP, which was in force from 1 April 2021. The intention of the CHP is to engage all staff members across the institution in complaint handling, whereby each School or administrative section has a nominated individual to take responsibility for the recording of all frontline (or informal) complaints received in that area. The University's CHP is available on the University's [staff](#) and [student](#) webpages. The CHP remains integral to the University's student experience and specifically to both engaging in and improving that experience.

6.1.2 The University is actively engaged with the Scottish Higher Education Complaints Forum, which meets quarterly and continues to meet to facilitate networking and the sharing of good practice on complaint handling. Anecdotal evidence regarding complaint figures (section 6.2 below further refers) suggests the University does not appear to be at odds with other comparable institutions within the sector.

6.2 COMPLAINTS DATA AND TRENDS

6.2.1 *Appendix B* provides a detailed analysis of complaint cases (both informal (frontline) and formal (investigated)) since 2015/16. In summary, however, informal (frontline) and formal (investigated) cases were as follows in *Tables 2.1 and 2.2* below.

Table 2.1

Frontline Complaints by Academic Year							
2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
38	16	6	8	19	72	80	56

Table 2.2

Investigated Complaints* by Academic Year							
2022/23	2021/22	2020/21 [^]	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
57	32	22	17	39	32	23	19

**The above figures denote those cases regarded as complaints and therefore with little or no elements of academic appeal.*

[^] In interpreting 2020/21 data, it should be noted that during the initial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the University saw a rise in the number of submissions received which have not been taken forward under the CHP. These submissions sought a refund of fees (tuition or accommodation) as a consequence of the impact of the pandemic. In these cases, an explanation was given as to why the University would not give a refund and why further investigation under the CHP was not appropriate.

- 6.2.2 Members of the Committee will note very few frontline complaint returns in recent academic years. Training was provided in early 2023 to Frontline Complaints Handlers to disseminate across Schools and Professional Services regarding frontline complaints to ensure better recording instances of frontline complaints. As can be seen for the data pertinent to 2022/23, there is a slight increase in the numbers reported and it is hoped that this will improve further going forward. Frontline resolution is helpful for students as it enables issues to be explored and resolved in a timely manner and avoids unnecessary bureaucracy where it is possible to allay their concerns. Where this is not possible, the formal complaint route is used as a last resort.
- 6.2.3 Regarding formal or investigated complaint cases, members of the Committee will note that complaint cases have almost doubled between academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23. Examples of submissions include issues related to course delivery and assessment, including feedback on assessment, tuition fee payment, issues pertaining to student accommodation or staff housing, admissions process, and provision of support offered by student support services.

6.3 REPORTING

- 6.3.1 The University is committed to reporting both internally and externally regarding complaints information. It is a requirement of the SPSO that the University report at least quarterly to the SMT and at least annually to the Senate and the Court on:
- performance statistics, in line with the complaints performance indicators published by SPSO;
 - analysis of the trends and outcomes of complaints (this should include highlighting where there are areas where few or no complaints are received, which may indicate either good practice or that there are barriers to complaining in that area).
- 6.3.2 The data as requested by the SPSO is provided in *Appendix B*, listed alongside comparable data for previous academic years. The attention of the Committee is drawn to the outcome of cases. The outcome of a complaint is not always easily defined as 'upheld' or 'not upheld', dependent on the nature of the concern raised. Where a resolution has been sought, the case has been recorded as 'upheld', however, where an issue has resulted in the clarification of policy, or noted without further investigation, the case has been appropriately recorded but 'not upheld'.
- 6.3.3 Members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) / University Education Committee (UEC) are invited to **discuss** the paper, in particular the data outlined in *Appendices A and B*.

Members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) are invited to **discuss** the paper and **approve** the publication of the complaints data contained in *Appendix B*.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor (Vice-Principal (Education)), ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk or Liam Dyker (Acting Assistant Registrar (Academic Services)), liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk.

27 November 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

	Academic Year 2022-2023	Student Population (12/10/23)	Academic Year 2021-2022	Student Population (26/01/23)	Academic Year 2020-2021	Student Population (06/05/21)	Academic Year 2019-2020	Student Population (06/05/21)	Academic Year 2018-2019	Student Population (11/12/19)	Academic Year 2017-2018	Student Population (27/08/18)	Academic Year 2016-2017	Student Population (15/09/17)	Academic Year 2015-2016	Student Population (11/01/16)
Total Cases	570	21981 (2.6%)	502	23176 (2.2%)	301	21676 (1.4%)	218	20199 (1.1%)	307	16978 (1.8%)	275	16208 (1.7%)	281	15479 (1.8%)	252	15118 (1.7%)
APPEALS																
Academic (including C7)	506 (88.8%)		464 (92.4%)		274 (91%)		198 (90.8%)		266 (86.7%)		242 (87.7%)		257 (91.5%)		229 (90.9%)	
C7	233 (40.9%)		271 (54%)		116 (38.5%)		87 (39.9%)		126 (41%)		129 (46.7%)		139 (49.5%)		127 (50.4%)	
Non-Academic	0 (0%)		4 (0.8%)		5 (1.7%)		1 (0.5%)		0		1 (0.4%)		0 (0.0%)		0 (0.0%)	
COMPLAINTS																
Academic	48 (8.4%)		22 (4.4%)		13 (4.3%)		9 (4.1%)		31 (10.1%)		20 (7.3%)		16 (5.7%)		18 (7.1%)	
Non-Academic	9 (1.6%)		10 (2%)		8 (2.7%)		8 (3.7%)		8 (2.6%)		9 (3.3%)		7 (2.5%)		2 (0.1%)	
COMBINED APPEAL/COMPLAINT																
Academic/Non-Academic	7 (1.2%)		2 (0.4%)		1 (0.3%)		2 (0.9%)		2 (0.7%)		3 (1.1%)		1 (0.4%)		3 (1.2%)	
STATUS																
Upheld	229 (40.2%)		286 (57%)		148 (49.2%)		119 (54.6%)		153 (49.8%)		147 (53.3%)		154 (54.8%)		138 (54.8%)	
Partially Upheld	79 (13.8%)		26 (5.2%)		15 (5%)		4 (1.8%)		20 (6.5%)		21 (7.6%)		13 (4.6%)		12 (4.8%)	
Not Upheld	241 (42.3%)		164 (32.7%)		118 (39.2%)		80 (36.7%)		103 (33.4)		93 (33.7%)		93 (33.1%)		86 (34.1%)	
Withdrawn	20 (3.5%)		26 (5.2%)		20 (6.6%)		15 (6.9%)		20 (6.5%)		12 (4.3%)		21 (7.5%)		16 (6.3%)	
In Progress	1 (0.2%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		11 (3.6%)		2 (0.7%)		0 (0.0%)		0 (0.0%)	
RESOLUTION STAGE																
Initial Stage (Head of School)	478 (83.9%)		437 (87.1%)		236 (78.4%)		175 (80.3%)		269 (87.6%)		236 (85.8%)		229 (81.5%)		193 (76.6%)	
Further Stage (Grounds to Proceed)	89 (15.6%)		64 (12.7%)		42 (43%)		30 (13.8%)		25 (8.1%)		22 (8.0%)		26 (9.3%)		25 (9.9%)	
Further Stage (Formal Hearing)	2 (0.4%)		1 (0.2%)		3 (1%)		3 (1.4%)		2 (0.7%)		5 (1.8%)		7 (2.5%)		14 (5.6%)	
SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (SPSO)																
Total Cases	7 (1.2%)		12 (2.4%)		8 (2.7%)		6 (3%)				10 (3.6%)		2 (0.7%)		0 (0%)	
Upheld	1 (0.2%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)				1 (0.4%)		0 (0%)		-	
Partially Upheld	0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		1 (0.5%)				0 (0%)		1 (0.4%)		-	
Not Upheld	6 (1.1%)		12 (2.4%)		8 (2.7%)		5 (2.3%)				9 (3.3%)		0 (0%)		-	
COMPLETED WITHIN TIMESCALE																
Yes	447 (78.4%)		420 (83.7%)		274 (91%)		188 (86.2%)		238 (77.5%)		210 (76.3%)		201 (71.5%)		195 (77.4%)	
No	122 (21.4%)		82 (16.3%)		27 (9%)		30 (13.8%)		64 (20.8%)		63 (22.9%)		71 (25.3%)		47 (18.7%)	
SCHOOL/SERVICE¹																
Business School (inc. Qatar)	200 (35.1%)		169 (33.7%)		59 (18.6%)		50 (22.9%)		33 (10.7%)		42 (15.3%)		31 (11%)		23 (9.1%)	
Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History	35 (6.1%)		31 (6.2%)		27 (9%)		16 (7.3%)		27 (8.8%)		18 (6.5%)		35 (12.5%)		13 (5.2%)	
Education	11 (1.9%)		16 (3.2%)		8 (2.7%)		4 (1.8%)		20 (6.5%)		3 (1.1%)		4 (1.4%)		2 (0.5%)	
Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture	19 (3.3%)		21 (4.2%)		10 (3.3%)		19 (8.7%)		21 (6.8%)		32 (11.6%)		30 (10.7%)		31 (12.3)	
Law	33 (5.8%)		45 (9%)		11 (3.7%)		6 (2.8%)		13 (4.2%)		15 (5.5%)		11 (3.9%)		20 (7.8%)	
Social Science	46 (8.1%)		32 (6.4%)		11 (3.7%)		23 (10.6%)		27 (8.8%)		41 (14.9%)		40 (12.2%)		33 (13.1%)	

¹ Please note: the School/Service level data includes 1 case which was considered jointly by the Schools of Business, DHPA and Social Science. In this case, the case has been counted in the data for each School in which it was heard.

Biological Sciences	9 (1.6%)		10 (2%)		5 (1.2%)		33 (15.1%)		6 (2%)		7 (2.5%)		8 (2.8%)		5 (2%)
Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition	76 (13.3%)		51 (10.2%)		37 (12.3%)		29 (13.3%)		47 (15.3%)		21 (7.6%)		25 (8.9%)		22 (8.7%)
Psychology	13 (2.3%)		3 (0.6%)		8 (2.7%)		2 (0.9%)		4 (1.3%)		4 (1.5%)		1 (1.4%)		2 (0.8%)
Engineering	82 (14.4%)		76 (15.1%)		72 (24%)		38 (17.4%)		62 (20.2%)		52 (18.9%)		36 (11.7%)		41 (16.2%)
Geosciences	12 (2.1%)		4 (0.8%)		8 (2.7%)		4 (1.8%)		5 (1.6%)		11 (4%)		9 (3.2%)		8 (3.2%)
Natural and Computing Sciences	13 (2.3%)		21 (4.2%)		19 (6.3%)		6 (2.8%)		17 (5.5%)		11 (4%)		13 (4.6%)		15 (6%)
Sixth Century Courses	0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		2 (0.7%)		11 (3.9%)		9 (3.6%)
Services	23 (4.0%)		23 (4.6%)		27 (9%)		18 (8.3%)		23 (7.5%)		14 (5.1%)		27 (9.6%)		25 (9.9%)
LEVEL OF STUDY															
Undergraduate	365 (64.0%)		312 (62.2%)		177 (58.8%)		145 (66.5%)		204 (66.4%)		213 (77.5%)		213 (75.8%)		191 (75.8%)
Postgraduate	200 (35.1%)		190 (37.8%)		122 (40.5%)		72 (33%)		101 (32.9%)		60 (21.8%)		66 (23.5%)		61 (24.2)
N/A‡	5 (0.9%)		0 (0%)		2 (0.7%)		1 (0.5%)		2 (0.7%)		2 (0.7%)		2 (0.7%)		
NATIONALITY															
UK	248 (43.5%)		239 (47.6%)		156 (51.8%)		125 (57.3%)		176 (57.3%)		171 (62.1%)		159 (56.6%)		159 (63.1%)
EU	42 (7.4%)		36 (7.2%)		34 (11.3%)		29 (13.3%)		34 (11.7%)		39 (14.2%)		48 (17.1%)		30 (11.99%)
International	272 (47.7%)		224 (44.6%)		106 (35.2%)		62 (28.4%)		91 (29.6%)		61 (22.2%)		69 (24.6%)		63 (25%)
N/A‡	8 (1.4%)		3 (0.6%)		5 (1.7%)		2 (0.9%)		6 (2%)		4 (1.5%)		5 (1.8%)		
GENDER															
Male	309 (54.2%)		299 (59.6%)		189 (62.8%)		127 (58.3%)		181 (59%)		164 (59.6%)		161 (57.3%)		168 (66.7%)
Female	253 (44.4%)		199 (39.6%)		110 (36.5%)		91 (41.7%)		125 (40.7%)		111 (40.4%)		119 (42.4%)		84 (33.3)
Not Declared	4 (0.7%)		-		-		-		-		-		-		-
N/A‡	4 (0.7%)		4 (0.8%)		2 (0.7%)		0 (0%)		1 (0.3%)		-		1 (0.4%)		-
AGE															
Under 18	5 (0.9%)		5 (1%)		2 (0.7%)		11 (5%)		1 (0.3%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		2 (90.8%)
18 - 20	162 (28.4%)		140 (27.9%)		70 (23.3%)		44 (20.2%)		60 (19.5%)		83 (30.1%)		108 (38.4%)		76 (30.1%)
21 - 25	229 (40.2%)		194 (38.7%)		124 (41.2%)		121 (55.5%)		136 (44.3%)		127 (46.2%)		99 (35.2%)		115 (45.6%)
26 +	166 (29.1%)		160 (31.9%)		100 (33.2%)		51 (23.4%)		104 (33.9%)		61 (22.2%)		69 (24.6%)		59 (23.4%)
N/A‡	8 (1.4%)		3 (0.6%)		5 (1.7%)		1 (0.5%)		6 (2%)		4 (1.5%)		5 (1.8%)		
DISABILITY															
Declared	121 (21.2%)		84 (16.7%)		59 (19.6%)		30 (13.8%)		230 (75%)		59 (21.5%)		50 (17.8%)		43 (17.1%)
Not Declared	449 (78.8%)		418 (83.3%)		242 (80.4%)		188 (86.2%)		77 (25%)		216 (78.6%)		231 (82.2%)		209 (82.9%)

* All percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

‡ Where the appellant/complainant is not an enrolled member of the student population, it has not been possible to acquire demographical information.

	Academic Year 2022/23	Student Population 2022/23	Academic Year 2021/22	Student Population 2021/22	Academic Year 2020/21	Student Population 2020/21	Academic Year 2019/20	Student Population 2019/20	Academic Year 2018/19	Student Population 2018/19	Academic Year 2017/18	Student Population 2017/18	Academic Year 2016/17	Student Population 2016/17	Academic Year 2015/16	Student Population 2015/16
Total Number of Cases	95	21981 (0.4%)	48	23662 (0.2%)	33	14473 (0.2%)	25	15045 (0.2%)	58	16978 (0.3%)	104	16208 (0.6%)	94	15479 (0.6%)	75	15118 (0.5%)
Frontline Cases	38 (40%)		16 (33%)		11 (33%)		8 (32%)		19 (33%)		72 (74%)		80 (85%)		56 (75%)	
Investigated Cases	57 (60%)		32 (67%)		22 (67%)		17 (68%)		39 (67%)		32 (33%)		14 (15%)		19 (26%)	
Frontline Cases Closed Within Timeline (within 5 working days)	22 (23%)		9 (19%)		9 (27%)		8 (32%)		9 (16%)		57 (57%)		74 (93%)		51 (91%)	
Frontline Cases Granted an Extension*	16 (17%)		7 (15%)		2 (6%)		0 (0%)		10 (17%)		15 (15%)		6 (7%)		4 (7%)	
Investigated Cases Closed Within Timeline (within 20 working days)	26 (27%)		21 (44%)		20 (61%)		11 (44%)		23 (40%)		20 (19%)		4 (29%)		11 (58%)	
Investigated Cases Granted an Extension*	30 (32%)		11 (23%)		2 (6%)		6 (24%)		16 (28%)		12 (12%)		10 (71%)		8 (42%)	
Frontline Cases Upheld~	22 (23%)		6 (13%)		8 (24%)		7 (28%)		6 (10%)		27 (28%)		36 (41%)		36 (64%)	
Frontline Cases Partially Upheld~#	4 (4%)		5 (10%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		1 (2%)		16 (16%)		1 (1%)		4 (7%)	
Frontline Cases Not Upheld~	12 (13%)		5 (10%)		3 (11%)		1 (4%)		12 (21%)		29 (30%)		43 (49%)		15 (27%)	
Investigated Cases Upheld	18 (19%)		6 (13%)		6 (18%)		2 (8%)		7 (12%)		10 (10%)		5 (36%)		6	
Investigated Cases Partially Upheld#	13 (14%)		4 (8%)		3 (9%)		1 (4%)		10 (17%)		6 (6%)		3 (21%)		2	
Investigated Cases Not Upheld	22 (23%)		18 (38%)		12 (36%)		11 (44%)		20 (34%)		14 (13%)		5 (36%)		9	
Investigated Cases Not Yet Closed	1 (1%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		2 (3%)		2 (2%)		1 (7%)		-	
Average Time Taken to Resolve Frontline Cases (in working days)	7 working days		8 working days		8 working days		1 Working day		9 Working days		7 working days		3 working days		7 working days	
Average Time Taken to Resolve Investigated Cases	27 working days		25 working days		24 Working days		24 Working days		27 Working days		17 working days		20 working days		31 working days	

*The MCHP recognises that not all investigations will be able to meet the 5 or 20 day deadlines on the basis of the complex nature of some submissions which will require careful consideration and detailed investigation. Where a delay occurs, the agreement of the complainant is sought.

~The outcome of informal (frontline) cases is not always easily defined as ‘upheld’ or ‘not upheld’ dependent on the nature of the concern raised. Where a resolution has been sought, the case has been recorded as ‘upheld’, however, where an issue has resulted in the clarification of policy, or noted without further investigation, the case has been appropriately recorded but ‘not upheld’.

#Where a complaint has covered several issues, where any of these are upheld, the outcome is recorded as ‘partially upheld’.

“This figure includes cases withdrawn by the complainant or referred for investigation under a process or policy other than the CHP, such as internal HR procedures.

Complaints* by School/Section														
School/Section	Academic Year 2020/21		Academic Year 2019/20		Academic Year 2018/19		Academic Year 2017/18		Academic Year 2016/17		Academic Year 2015/16		Academic Year 2014/15	
	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated
Business School	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	1		1	1			
School of Divinity, History & Philosophy	0	1	0	2	0	5	1	1			5			
School of Education	0	0	0	1	0	8	2	4		3		1		
School of Language & Literature	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2		2			3	3
School of Law	1	1	0	0	0	1	9	1				1		
School of Social Science	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	2	2	1	1	1
School of Biological Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		2				
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition	0	1	0	3	0	2	0	1	6	4	1	1		
School of Psychology	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1						
School of Engineering	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	3		1	1	3	2	2
School of Geosciences	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3				2		
School of Natural & Computing Sciences	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	0		1				
Academic Affairs	0	2	0	3	0	6	3	3	3	1	9	8	12	12
Accommodation	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	1					1	1
Campus Services (incl. Commercial and Catering Services)	0	0	0	0	3	0	23	1	9		3		1	1
Careers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			1			
Communications and Events	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Estates	0	1	4	0	0	3	0	2	1	1	3		1	1
External Relations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Finance	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Human Resources	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0						
Student Life (including Infohub)	1	1	0	1	3	3	1	3	7	5	10	1	2	2
IT Services	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2						
Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					2	2
Research & Innovation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Student Recruitment and Admissions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Library	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2			4		1	1
Development Trust	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Principal's Office/Secretary/SVP Offices	1	1	0	0	9	0	27	0	48		14		31	31
Arts & Social Sciences (College Office)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Physical Sciences (College Office)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				1		
Life Sciences & Medicine (College Office)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			2			
Totals	6	22	8	17	19	39	72	32	80	23	56	19	57	57

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT UPDATE (2022/23)

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper will provide members of the University Education Committee (UEC) with an update on academic misconduct cases across the University.

This paper contains detailed data on academic misconduct cases (*Appendix A refers*) received prior to and during the 2022/23 academic year, in addition to an analysis of emerging trends.

Members of the University Education Committee (UEC) are asked to **discuss** the paper.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee	13 Dec 2023
	University Education Committee	16 Jan 2024

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The **University Education Committee (UEC)** is invited to **discuss** the paper, in particular the data outlined in *Appendix A*.

4. OVERVIEW

- 4.1 The University has in place a [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\)](#) (hereafter referred to as ‘the Code’) which defines categories of disciplinary offences and sets out the procedures to be followed in instances of academic misconduct.
- 4.2 The Code is regularly reviewed as any issues with the current Code are identified, such as the need for new categories of academic misconduct, for example, and in line with recent developments in academic integrity, with the most recent version approved in June 2023 to take account of the prevalence of artificial intelligence. The version used in 2022/23 was approved by the University Court in June 2022, with its use starting in 2022/23. A revised version of the Code, incorporating the use of artificial intelligence tools as a form of plagiarism, will be used for new cases relating to the 2023/24 academic year.

5. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**5.1 DATA AND TRENDS**

- 5.1.1 *Appendix A* provides a detailed analysis of academic misconduct cases since 2016/17. *Tables 1.1 and 1.2* below provide high level summary information on academic misconduct cases. Table 1.1 details the total cases of academic misconduct (and shown as a % of the total student population headcount), and Table 1.2 provides a summary by type of case (including the percentage increase or decrease on the previous year).

Table 1.1:

Academic Misconduct Cases by Academic Year							
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Total	288	409	210	166	136	77	76
% of Population Headcount	1.28%	1.82%	1.01%	0.87%	0.77%	0.48%	0.49%

Table 1.2:

Academic Misconduct Cases by Type of Misconduct													
	2022/23	% + or - ¹	2021/22	% + or -	2020/21	% + or -	2019/20	% + or -	2018/19	% + or -	2017/18	% + or -	2016/17
Plagiarism	223	-37	356	90	187	27	147	48	99	80	55	-21	70
Collusion	42	-7	45	137	19	111	9	-40	15	275	4	400	0
Cheating	11	450	2	n/a	0	-100	6	-71	21	17	18	200	6
Contract Cheating	12	100	6	200	2	-33	3	100	1	0	n/a	0	n/a
Ethics	0	n/a	0	-100	2	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	0

5.1.2 The total number of academic misconduct cases has decreased in academic year 2022/23 from those received in academic year 2021/22, however, cases are higher than was seen in the period up to 2020/21. However, the percentage of the student population with academic misconduct cases is low (1.28%).

5.1.3 The following specific trends are also noted:

- In any year, the majority of cases of academic misconduct relate to plagiarism. Since 2018/19, there has been a rise in the number of cases of plagiarism, with the steepest rise in 2021/22 (increase by 90% based on 2020/21). Though, this figure has fallen by 37% in 2022/23 to 223 cases. While the number of cases in 2022/23 has decreased, the numbers remain high, and are increased upon previous years (excluding 2021/22).
- Cases of contract cheating, whilst still relatively small in number, have doubled between 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- Cases of cheating (as defined in Section 3.5 of the [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\)](#)) have also risen to 11 cases, whereas in the preceding year, there were 2 cases. This can largely be attributed to the return to on-campus exams following the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.1.4 Table 2 below shows the number of cases split by domicile group as a UK, EU or International Student. The figure in brackets is the percentage against population headcount for that domicile group.

Table 2

Academic Misconduct Cases by Domicile							
Domicile Group	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
UK	68 (0.49%)	87 (0.62%)	54 (0.41%)	27 (0.24%)	36 (0.34%)	29 (0.29%)	29 (0.3%)
EU	12 (0.71%)	37 (1.68%)	22 (0.79%)	15 (0.48%)	27 (0.8%)	15 (0.45%)	20 (0.65%)
Inter	208 (3.07%)	285 (4.58%)	134 (2.81%)	124 (2.74%)	73 (1.9%)	33 (1.11%)	27 (1.07%)

5.1.5 Most significantly, Table 2 shows, that while the number of cases for international students has fallen, it remains high and the cohort with the largest proportion of cases. As a proportion of the total cases in 2022/23, international students make up 71.88% of all cases.

¹ % + or – represents the percentage increase or decrease upon the previous year's data.

5.1.6 While the number of cases has decreased since 2021/22, the numbers for 2022/23 remain high. It is important not to make assumptions about the reasons. The reasons for the high number of submissions remain unclear.

5.1.7 The University has increased its support of students, particularly in relation to academic integrity, across academic year 2022/23. It is possible that this work across the University is attributable to the decrease in cases seen in 2022/23. Most notably, this support includes:

- Information and training on good assessment practices continues. The University's [Student Learning Service](#) (SLS) has developed and is delivering workshops and offers online resources (in Achieve and Achieve+) with an increased focus on academic integrity in assessments.
- The SLS/Centre for Academic Development (CAD) have produced: (i) an [infographic on Academic Integrity](#) (for students and also for staff to use in course materials); and (ii) an [Academic Integrity: a guide for students](#).
- Enhancement of information provided to staff and students with respect of academic integrity, led by the Dean for Educational Innovation and supported by the Centre for Academic Development. Information provided on the [Staff](#) and [Student](#) webpages, as well as targeted social media campaigns by the Experience, Engagement and Wellbeing teams and enhanced induction materials, have increased awareness of matters of academic integrity to students.
- The Dean for Educational Innovation and Centre for Academic Development have also been providing opportunities for staff to engage in discussions around the importance of authentic assessment; including why it is better to redesign assessment to 'design out' opportunities for academic misconduct. These opportunities include discussion panels, the Micro-Credentials course delivered in preparation for the start of teaching, and Learning and Teaching Network sessions.

5.1.8 Members of the University Education Committee (UEC) are invited to **discuss** the paper, in particular the data outlined in *Appendix A*.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor (Vice-Principal (Education)), ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk or Liam Dyker (Acting Assistant Registrar (Academic Services)), liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk.

27 November 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
EDUCATION DATA SCHEDULE 2023/24

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides a summary of the Education Data Schedule for 2023/24, which will be considered by the University Education Committee; Quality Assurance Committee; Student Support & Experience Committee; and/or Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee.

The University Education Committee is invited to **note** the paper.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by	Student Support & Experience Committee	
	Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee	
	Quality Assurance Committee	
	University Education Committee	

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The **University Education Committee** is invited to **note** the paper.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Each year, a number of data is collated and analysed pertinent to the Education portfolio. This relates to (i) student withdrawal; (ii) student retention; (iii) degree classification; (iv) graduate outcomes; and (v) National Student Survey (NSS).

4.2 The schedule is outlined in the below table, which also highlights the relevant Committee cycle where the data will be made available for discussion.

Date	Area	Action	Notes	Committee Cycle
31 st October 2023	Wd	End-of-Year 2022/23 Withdrawals Report	Intended latest circulation date for the withdrawals analysis to cover whole academic year to 31 st Jul 2023.	REPORT CYCLE 3 (JAN)
13 th January 2024	Wd	In-Year 2023/24 Withdrawals Report	Intended latest circulation date for the withdrawals analysis to cover the first half of the academic year to 31 st Dec 2023.	REPORT CYCLE 4 (MAR)
31 st January 2024	DC	Degree Classifications 2022/23 data release by HESA	Date based on last year's release of data to the HeidiPlus platform.	

28 th February 2024	DC	Degree Classifications 2022/23 Report	Intended latest circulation date for the Degree Classifications analysis.	REPORT CYCLE 4 (MAR)
28 th February 2024	NC	Non-Continuation 2022/23 (Internal Data) Report	Intended latest circulation date for the Non-Continuation analysis for previous year.	REPORT CYCLE 4 (MAR)
Late June 2024	GO	Graduate Outcomes 2024 (2021/22 cohort) Sector data release by HESA	Likely latest date for HESA release of sector GO data to HeidiPlus platform	
Early July 2024	NSS	NSS 2024 Results data release by NSS	Possible date of release if same as 2022 (two years previous)	
Early July 2024	NSS	NSS 2024 Initial Analytical Report (circulated)	Possible latest circulation date for the initial NSS analysis.	REPORT CYCLE 1 (AUG)
Late July 2024	GO	Graduate Outcomes 2024 (2021/22 cohort) Report	Possible latest circulation date for the GO analysis.	REPORT CYCLE 1 (AUG)
Early August 2024	NSS	NSS 2024 Expanded Analytical Report	Intended latest circulation date for the expanded NSS analysis.	REPORT CYCLE 1 (AUG)
31 st August 2024	Wd	End-of-Year 2023/24 Withdrawals Report	Intended latest circulation date for the withdrawals analysis to cover whole academic year to 31st Jul 2024.	REPORT CYCLE 2 (OCT)

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Ruth Taylor (Vice-Principal, Education), ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk or Chris Souter (Head of Data & Business Intelligence), chris.souter@abdn.ac.uk.

10 October 2023

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REMIT AND COMPOSITION

- 1. COMMITTEE TITLE**
University Education Committee (UEC)
- 2. DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT**
25 May 2021 (as Joint Committee of Court & Senate)
- 3. CHAIR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AREA**
Chair: Vice-Principal (Education)
Clerk: Academic Services and Online Education (Registry)
- 4. PURPOSE**
A Strategy and Policy committee to support the University's overall educational objectives.
- 5. REMIT:** *(To be reviewed annually at last meeting of committee cycle and proposed changes considered by Senate for approval)*

To be responsible to the Senatus Academicus for the strategic oversight of:

- i. education matters relating to undergraduate, postgraduate taught and taught elements of postgraduate research;
- ii. the wider student experience relating to matters impacting on student success;
- iii. the development of approaches to educational innovation

The UEC shall:

- iv. be responsible for the oversight, development and monitoring of the University's strategic approach to educational provision, its associated operational plan and risk register, and the alignment of these with School plans and with Aberdeen 2040 and its associated operational plans;
- v. comment on draft education policy where input sought by the Quality Assurance Committee and drive forward its implementation working in partnership with School Education Committees;
- vi. highlight to the Quality Assurance Committee where policy related issues are identified requiring consideration;
- vii. be responsible for the innovation and ongoing enhancement of the quality of educational provision and for ensuring the effective dissemination of good practice including oversight of the University's engagement with the QAA Enhancement Themes;
- viii. Through its committees, be responsible for the development of actions at institutional level, and in Schools, based on analysis of national and internal data (e.g. National Student Survey, non-continuation, Graduate Outcomes, degree classifications and awarding gaps).
- ix. Ensure that Education and the wider student experience is delivered inclusively.
- x. Through the Centre for Academic Development (CAD), develop, review and promote professional staff development opportunities in regard to the delivery of education, including assessment and feedback;
- xi. Through the Centre for Academic Development, inform the support required by Schools for the development of educational innovations.
- xii. consider recommendations from the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) in regard to the quality of provision of careers education, employability and the co-curriculum;
- xiii. consider recommendations from the Student Support & Experience Committee (SSEC) in regard to the quality of the delivery of effective, appropriate and consistent student support and the wider student experience;
- xiv. be responsible for the oversight of teaching-related credit-bearing activity related to student mobility;
- xv. engage in horizon scanning to anticipate and prepare for new opportunities and likely future developments in education and the wider student experience;

Members' Responsibilities:

Each member of the committee will contribute to discussions and feedback on these to their respective areas for comment and further input. School leads ensure that they use their School Education Committees and other School forums to inform feedback into UEC and to raise matters relevant to UEC or for referral onto QAC as

appropriate.

6. COMPOSITION AND QUORUM:

Chair:	Vice-Principal (Education)
Membership:	Student President of the Students' Association (or nominee) Vice-President for Education of the Students' Association School Directors of Education Dean for Student Support and Experience Dean for Educational Innovation Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement Dean for Postgraduate Research School Director of Studies (Qatar) Dean for International Student Pathways Dean for Widening Access, Articulation and Outreach Dean for Portfolio Development and Programme Promotion Two representatives nominated by Senate (2 year terms) QAA Enhancement Theme Lead Academic Representative of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee
In attendance:	Director of Academic Services and Online Education Head of Quality Academic Registrar Head of the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) Head of Online Education Head of the Careers and Employability Service Head of Student Support Head of the Language Centre Director of Digital and Information Services (or nominee) University Librarian School Administration Manager Students' Association Staff Member
Quorum:	50%

ACCOUNT TO BE TAKEN OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP

7. MEMBERSHIP

Vice-Principal (Education)/Chair	Ruth Taylor
Student President of the Students' Association (or nominee)	FBC Sai Shradda S Viswanathan
Vice-President for Education of the Students' Association	Rhiannon Ledwell
School Directors of Education:	
Biological Sciences	Michelle Pinard
Business	David McCausland
Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History	Ken Jeffrey
Education	Leigh Bjorkvoll
Engineering	Euan Bain
Geosciences	Joshua Wright
Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture	Shona Potts
Law	Susan Stokeld
Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition	Rona Patey
Natural and Computing Science	Bill Harrison
Psychology	Helen Knight
Social Science	Stuart Durkin
Dean for Student Support and Experience	Jason Bohan
Dean for Educational Innovation	Kirsty Kiezebrink
Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship	John Barrow
Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Steve Tucker

Dean for Postgraduate Research School	Graeme Nixon
Director of Studies (Qatar)	Lyn Batchelor
Dean for International Student Pathways	Harminder Battu
Dean for Widening Access, Articulation and Outreach	Alison Jenkinson
Dean for Portfolio Development and Programme Promotion	Anne-Michelle Slater
Two representatives nominated by Senate (2 year terms)	Amudha Poobalan
	Afzal Waheed
QAA Enhancement Theme Lead	Steve Tucker
Academic Representative of the EDI Committee	tbc

In attendance

Director of Academic Services and Online Education	Gillian Mackintosh
Head of Quality	tbc
Academic Registrar	tbc
Head of the Centre for Academic Development (CAD)	Patricia Spence
Head of Online Education	Rob Cummins
Head of the Careers and Employability Service	Tracey Innes
Head of Student Support	Nick Edwards
Head of the Language Centre	Julie Bray
Director of Digital and Information Services (or nominee)	Susan Halfpenny
University Librarian	Simon Bains
School Administration Manager	Rhona Moore
Students' Association Staff Member	Graeme Kirkpatrick / Scott Carle

8. REPORTING LINE/PARENT COMMITTEE AND INTERFACE WITH OTHER COMMITTEES

Formal reporting line: Senate which then provides assurance to Court

Sub-committees: Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC)
 Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC)

Steering Groups and Task and Finish Groups: VLE Steering Group, Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group, Aberdeen 2040 Delivery of Education TFG, Graduate Attributes and Skills TFG, [Online Education Forum](#)

Interface with other committees: Quality Assurance Committee,
 School Education Committees,
 Postgraduate Research Committee,
 Student Recruitment Committee,
 Student Support & Experience Committee,
 Online Education Development Committee,
 Digital Strategy Committee,
 Qatar Partnership Management Group
 SCNU Joint Institute Academic Committee.

9. FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS

A minimum of five meetings per session, *normally* preceding meetings of the Senate.
 Meetings between 10am – 4pm in accordance with University Policy.

10. PUBLICATION OF PAPERS

The agenda and meeting papers will be made available on web pages/StaffNet at least one week prior to meetings of the UEC. Where these papers are draft, this will be clearly identified.

11. DATE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVED/RECORDED:

Proposed as Senate Committee – September 2022

EMPLOYABILITY & ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMMITTEE (EEC)Minutes of the meeting held 05th December 2023

Present: Tracey Innes (Co-Chair), Lenka Mbadugha, Helen Pierce, Amir Siddiq, Alan Macpherson, Alisdair Macpherson, Stuart Durkin, Monika Gostic, Lucy Leiper, Danielle Grieve, Jenna Stuart, Ijeoma Obiagwu, Heather May Morgan, Alisdair McKibben (Clerk).

Apologies: John Barrow (Co-Chair), Lindsay Tibbetts, Alyson Young, David Green, Oliver Hamlet, Rafael Cardoso, Vanessa Mabonso Nzolo (Student Association President), Rhiannon Ledwell (Vice-President for Education of the Students' Association), Joy Perkins, Susan Halfpenny.

1. Approval of the minutes (September 18th, 2023) (EEC/051223/001)
Minutes approved.

2. Matters Arising including review of Action Log (EEC/051223/002)
No matters arising. All items up to date and all outstanding actions now complete.

3. Update from Members

All committee members actively participated in providing concise updates on Employability and Entrepreneurship activities for this semester. The discussions were informative and fruitful, covering headline updates and future expectations. There were also some challenges shared by members which were noted and will be discussed in our next EEC meeting.

Actions: Tracey and John to consider challenges shared by EEC members and consider ways to address said challenges during next EEC meeting. Challenges noted were:

- New to role: helping those new to EEC role find ways to impact School.
- Celebrating wins: a lot of great things happening through EEC and Schools but is impact being shared across the institution?
- Colleague support: how to engage other colleagues regarding the importance of employability and gain their practical support in implementing strategies.

4. Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills (EEC/051223/003)

Tracey spoke briefly to the paper highlighting the attributes and skills outlined in page 3 which have been developed through multiple sessions with employers, staff, and students. They have been considered at UEC and Senate. EEC members are being asked to approve the proposals for the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills and approve the proposed plans for implementation via circulation.

Action: Alisdair McKibben to email all members asking to approve the proposals for the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes and Skills and approve the proposed plans for implementation. Please let John Barrow know, no later than **12 noon, Friday 22 December 2023**, if you have any concerns or if you are not content to approve the above.

5. My Skills

Tracey gave an update on My Skills - the piloting of a framework that enables students to manage their skills development journey. This framework allows students to conduct skills audits, follow development pathways, and record and tag their experiences. The system was launched with a soft launch in September and has seen engagement efforts through targeted emails and in-person sessions.

Engagement has been moderate, with approximately 400 students completing the skills assessment. Challenges with engagement are acknowledged, and the team seeks insights and ideas to incentivise students to participate.

Lessons learned from the pilot will inform the implementation of Aberdeen 2040 skills and attributes. Feedback indicates that engagement is higher when students are directly informed about the system during class time.

Action: Tracey to send student feedback slide to Danielle for her to show to AUSA presidents. Danielle sent tentative date for next AUSA Presidents meeting (2 February 2024) and offered option for member of Careers Team to showcase My Skills. Alisdair to arrange with CES team.

6. Upscaling Work-based Learning

(EEC/051223/004)

Due to financial challenges and recruitment freeze, plans to recruit three Work-Based Learning coordinators are currently paused. As a result, the upscaling WBL workstream which was due to commence work has been paused. In the meantime, some aspects of the workstream remit are continuing to proceed, such as the already funded project to develop an experiential learning system. Efforts to map existing work-based learning initiatives happening in Schools are ongoing. Due to capacity constraints, priority in the medium term will be placed on supporting existing initiatives in Schools and centrally rather than pushing for new plans. An existing member of the Careers and Employability team is now “acting-up” in the role of Work-Based Learning coordinator, which will support with this work and seeks collaboration with Schools interested in enhancing work-based learning.

7. Careers and Employability Engagement Annual Report

(EEC/051223/005)

The Careers and Employability Engagement Annual Report was presented, highlighting a busy semester with increased appointments and interactions with students compared to previous years. The report includes data on engagements by school, showcasing a 13% higher engagement rate in the first half of the current session. The document also touches on internship activities and summarises the types of vacancies available for students in the careers system, particularly emphasising stability and significant numbers, albeit concentrated in specific sectors. Feedback on the report's usefulness and suggestions for additional information are welcomed for future updates, with another comprehensive report planned for May 2024 to cover the entire academic year.

8. AOB

[Saint Andrew's Society of the State of New York Scholarship](#): The Saint Andrew's Society for the State of New York Scholarship offers funding to the total value of \$70,000 for Scottish graduates to study in the United States. Up to two scholarships will be offered of up to \$35,000 each.

Applications for 2024/25 are currently open and will close on Friday 23rd February 2024.

[Career Mentoring](#): The University of Aberdeen Career Mentoring Programme is a rewarding opportunity for students to be matched with an experienced professional to gain one-to-one employability advice, support and guidance in a specific profession and/or sector.

Applications now open.

The Saint Andrew's Society of the State of New York Scholarship and the University of Aberdeen Career Mentoring Programme were both mentioned during the meeting as informational items. The scholarship offers funding for Scottish graduates to study in the United States, with applications open until February 23, 2024. The Career Mentoring Programme provides students with the opportunity to receive one-to-one employability advice and guidance from experienced professionals, and applications are currently open. Members were informed about these opportunities during the meeting and encouraged to disseminate to and departments.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 20th February @ 14:05 by way of Microsoft Teams. In-person location to be confirmed.

FOR INFORMATION

10. Education Date Schedule 2023/24

(EEC/051223/006)

Disseminated for information.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STUDENT SUPPORT & EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (SSEC)

Minute of the Meeting held on Monday 27th November 2023

Present: Jason Bohan (Chair), Erin Ferguson, Sai Shraddha S Viswanathan, Rhiannon Ledwell , Jemma Murdoch, Lesley Muirhead, Lyn Batchelor, John Cavanagh, Wendy Lowe, Melanie Viney, Tim Baker, Kelsey Pierce, Jena Stuart, Mary Prior, Jackie Tuckwell, Martin Mills, Graeme Kirkpatrick, Martin Barker, Susan Halfpenny, Natalie Kinchin-Williams, Sally Middleton, Heidi Mehrkens, Margaret Jackson, Stevie Kearney (Clerk).

Apologies: Nick Edwards, Duncan Stuart, Lucy Leiper, Helen Pierce, Julie Timms, Steve Tucker, Martin Mills, Lindsey Tibbetts, Katrina Foy, Charlotta Hillerdal, Julie Timms, Iain Grant.

Welcome and chair's update

- 1.1 Jason Bohan (JB) welcomed committee members to the meeting and asked the group to look over the previous minutes.

2) Approval of the minute of the SSEC held on 21st September 2023

(copy filed as SSEC/210923/002)

- 2.1 Rhiannon Ledwell (RL) noted initials were wrong on a comment, so Stevie Kearney (SK) made a note to amend the error. The minutes of the SSEC meeting held on 21/09/2023 were approved.

3) Review of Action Table from meeting held on 21.09.2023

- 3.1 JB noted that the planned action to break down data by Widening Access groups will be implemented for all data going forwards. Lesley Muirhead (LM) has spoken to the Library team about provisions, so that action is completed. Graeme Kirkpatrick (GK) and Iain Grant (IG) were to follow up on a previous agenda item around KPIs and are meeting in December and will report back to the group at the next meeting. Susan Halfpenny (SH) had an action to provide information on Library Services for School Action Plans, and this is in progress.

Action: GK and IG to report back at the February SSEC to update on the KPI discussion

4) Support for Study policy draft

- 4.1 Jemma Murdoch (JM) introduced the paper on the Support for Study Policy, as this has not been updated since 2016, but has been used more regularly in the last two years. The policy needed to better reflect the way it is being used, but also to ensure it links with the revised Code of Practice, which was recently updated. The paper is currently an internal working draft and takes into account best practice across the sector, to ensure the terminology used best captures the purpose of the policy. In tandem with the redraft, Student Support Services have worked to revise risk assessment procedures and policies around complex casework. The Student Case Management Group meets weekly to assess cases raised through the Support for Study Policy, the Code of Practice and the Student of Concern procedures. JM will also set up a group to create a more formal draft for the next SSEC meeting. JM asked for any further volunteers to be involved in the working group, particularly from the academic teams. JB noted the policy would be particularly helpful for colleagues within individual schools, to help manage complex challenges. Lyn Batchelor (LB) said Marwa from her team would be able to join the working group and JM made a note to make contact as an action from this meeting. John Cavanagh (JC) asked about the policy and the mixing of two groups; struggling students and disruptive students, and how these groups are supported. JM said students who are disruptive are rare but it identifies a support need, so the policy keeps both groups together due to the support needs. The policy is designed to assist students to succeed in their studies, alongside other policies, and it will be advertised to students accordingly. Jenna Stuart (JS) can help in the short term but will be off from the spring onwards, so is keen to ensure online students' needs are included and can send a colleague to future meetings if she is unable to attend. Kelsey Pierce (KP) also volunteered to input from the Registry Team. JM suggested the policy could go to the Monitoring Group for comments as well, to ensure academic input, and JB agreed this would be a good idea.

5) Education Action Plans

- 5.1 JB introduced the agenda item on Education Action Plans, which are all saved on the SSEC Teams site for committee members to view. Schools were asked to look at a number of areas, including NSS scores, graduate outcomes, non-continuation and other data. The first issue to address was the NSS feedback, where the University is underperforming, at 65th nationally, so there is room for improvement. JB asked for school input, particularly with regards to assessment and feedback. Martin Barker (MB) from SBS noted that feedback timing is crucial, so the school is putting measures in place for quicker feedback responses and so the students are not left waiting, and this has been communicated to academic colleagues as a priority matter. There are also some inconsistencies in the way feedback is provided. Some colleagues are providing extensive feedback, which is time consuming, while others are providing feedback which students feel is insufficient. This is especially important with regards to Honours courses. Templates have been created to guide colleagues in providing feedback. Additional training has also been provided. Staff workload is also an issue being looked at, as part of this process. The school is also looking to reduce the number of assessments, which should ensure remaining assessments are marked quickly and appropriate feedback is provided.

Heidi Mehrkens (HM) from DHPA said the action plan is in place and all feedback is being reviewed alongside Mary Prior from the Centre for Academic Development (CAD). The school will be adding a feedback timetable to manage student expectations and to provide additional transparency. DHPA is also looking to facilitate more opportunities for sharing of best practice. Communication will focus on the purpose of feedback for students, which includes meetings and emails as well, to cover informal and formal feedback. JB noted it would be good to share this information with the wider SSEC group.

JC noted he only saw the plan on the morning of the meeting and wasn't involved in its production, but was happy to share the information he has on the action points. There is a timetable in place so students know when feedback will be provided and the school is also working to ensure there are no overlapping assignments. School policy is to provide feedback within 2 weeks and those who do not meet that deadline will be contacted by the school office. Emphasis has been placed on providing positive feedback, which has been well received by students. JC noted that there's a trade-off between speed and quality, and that students like to get feedback as soon as possible, but this is not always possible if more comprehensive feedback is to be provided.

Tim Baker (TB) said his school is focussing on fewer in-course changes, and to try and standardise processes across programmes, especially to help manage the expectations for joint-honours students. The main goal is not to change processes, but to ensure all programmes within the school are doing the same thing. JC agreed, that students compare one course to another, so feel feedback is slow, even within it is delivered within the University's planned timeline. Those who give extensive feedback also risk setting unrealistic expectations for other academics, if they are going above and beyond the required level of feedback.

MB agreed inconsistency is an issue which comes up regularly and should be proactively approached, with colleagues open to feedback. HM said giving comprehensive feedback is important and it's helpful to not dumb down feedback through a standardisation process. JB noted some students feel overwhelmed by extensive feedback, but MH noted she warns students in advance that extensive feedback will be provided but students have the option to receive less feedback, but none have ever taken up this option. GK said the feedback to the Students' Association hears a lot from students about inconsistencies, so an element of standardisation is useful. Rhiannon Ledwell (RL) said feedback is often not clear for students in terms of knowing how to improve their performance.

Erin Ferguson (EF) from the Law School said colleagues had undertaken focus groups to get more information and the students didn't seem to understand the common grading scale and how this relates to individual performance. Workload pressures often lead to inconsistencies, especially with academics who have to give feedback to several hundred students.

Wendy Lowe (WL) said MMSN has had a good response to the feedback issued, despite large numbers of students. Exam assessments are the main issue, with students then getting individual feedback in meetings after the initial responses. The school has a regular staff-student meeting where the school responds to the "you said, we did" policy. The clinical skills sessions provide more immediate feedback and this is well received by students.

Within the School of Psychology, Madge Jackson (MJ) said an element of standardisation has been introduced with rubrics, which added to the standard feedback and this is being trialled

with her Year 3 students. There is also a comprehensive review of all undergraduate courses, in terms of content and assessments, with some assessments streamlined, focussing on Year 1 at the moment. The interpretation to the grade can sometimes be a point of confusion for students, so the rubrics will hopefully help on that point.

On non-continuation data, JB said a sense of belonging is seen as a priority and several schools have this built into their action plans. HM said it was an issue within DHPA, especially within the History course and there's a compulsory module included in Year 1 to address this issue, which as worked well.

JB said several schools have built in additional support roles, to help students with the sense of belonging to the University and this will be followed up with school later to share best practice. MB said within SBS, they are looking to ensure the role of the personal tutor is prioritised and to try and provide further support to those from vulnerable groups, such as widening access students. This allows a proactive approach to students who are at risk of dropping out. JB said this is an issue being looked at and will be followed up. Allocating students to a particular member of the team is a manual process, so there are some practical issues to be worked through.

6) NSS Professional Services comments and responses

- 6.1 JB said Nick Edwards was due to summarise this agenda item but was unable to attend the meeting today. JM said it is being followed up by Student Support. Some of the challenges in responding to the comments is contradictory feedback, which makes it difficult to provide adequate responses. Many of the comments from the NSS related to challenges faced during the pandemic, so those students didn't have a typical experience during their studies. There were many positive comments on our support services, but a common thread was students not being aware of the support available. This communication need has been identified and is being progressed.

Natalie Kinchin-Williams (NKW) said her team have had good conversations with course leads, to pick up on any specific feedback and that while the results have been positive, her team are available to assist and look for ways to improve our services. Mary Prior (MP – CAD) said they have an initiative called Transforming the Student Experience Through Assessment and it is designed to work with academic staff and students, through a survey and focus groups, to gather information on their experience of feedback. Where potential over-assessment exists, this is being looked at both for staff workload and student workload. The accessibility of learning resources has had a full audit of online resources for both Achieve and Achieve+, for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. There is also provision for PGR students who are also often early-stage staff members, to ensure learning materials are fully-accessible. MP noted the connections with the Student Support team have been significantly strengthened recently to ensure students with additional support needs, to provide a more joined-up service for students.

7) Survey Season and Planning for NSS

- 7.1 JB directed the committee to the papers attached for information, particularly with regard to the NSS, plus the PTES for postgraduate taught students and PRES for postgraduate research

students. There is also a new survey for Undergraduate Student Experience, for Year 1 to 3 students. Schools will also be asked to check the correct students are being entered into the NSS data pool.

MB asked about low uptake, as postgraduate students often do not reply. JB noted that the timing and short window contributed to this, so adjustments have been made and there will be a longer response window this year and communication on the survey season will hopefully increase response rates. It's also important that students see the results of the surveys and what changes have been implemented, so students see the value in completing the surveys.

8) Student Welfare Committee

- 8.1 As part of the University's commitment to mental health and wellbeing, it is proposed that each school appoints a mental health and wellbeing champion, so it's useful to make school aware this will be implemented in the new term, with formalised roles for each school's nominee. LB noted that in Qatar, there are cultural issues around identifying mental health issues and so the school would be unable to participate at this time. However, there is good uptake of use of the Student Helpline, which indicates a possible need to be explored in the future. Sai Shraddha S Viswanathan (SV) noted she took this point on board but was happy to look at any ways to provide this support in the future, in a way which addresses the sensitivities. JM said it would be helpful to work to de-medicalise issues such as stress and anxiety, to reflect the understanding of study-related stress and remove the stigma. LB said making it about study-related stresses would be useful, also taking into account religious festival such as Ramadan, where students cannot fully-focus if they have not eaten, so the re-framing of the discussion is useful. JB asked any feedback be sent directly to SV.

Action: Committee members are encouraged to send any feedback to SV on the Student Welfare Committee proposals.

9) Education Data Schedule 2023-24

- 9.1 This item was included for information and there were no comments.

10) AOCB

- 10.1 EF asked about disability provisions for the forthcoming exam period, due to a lot of requests for extra time, with the exam deadline approaching soon. Lesley Muirhead (LM) said there is a deadline in place to be guaranteed adjustments. After that deadline, it is at the discretion of the schools and the exam team, to see if it's possible to put the support in place. If it's not possible to make an adjustment, Student Support will advise on Good Cause processes, which are also up to the school to determine if it meets the criteria.

11) Date of Next Meeting

- 11.1 The date of the next meeting of the Committee is Thursday 15th February at 10:05am, via Microsoft Teams or in person, University Office, Court Room.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ACADEMIC STUDENT SURVEYS

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This is a paper providing updated information relating to Student Surveys. This paper is provided for **information**.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The University collects feedback throughout the year, capturing students' views of both academic and non-academic experiences. Student survey results are an important source of information when making decisions about delivery of services.

3.2 The Academic "Survey Season" will be run in the second semester, where students are given the opportunity for students to provide feedback on academic related matters over a specific period of time.

Survey Season comprises of the following:

- National Student Survey (NSS)
- (new) Undergraduate Experience Survey (UES)
- Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)
- Postgraduate Research Survey (PRES)

3.3 In addition, the New to UoA survey will be sent in January, to new January intake, asking for feedback on welcome experiences.

3.4 No other surveys to large cohorts of students are sent out within the Academic Survey Season timeframe. The specific survey timeframe supports a more cohesive marketing and promotion plan where students are encouraged to drive positive change that improves delivery of teaching and learning so that they, and future students, all benefit. See Appendix 1 for timeframes.

3.5 NSS, UED, PTES, and PRES data will be analysed by Planning and shared with Schools via Power BI dashboard and summary report. Schools will be able to utilise this data when developing their School Education Action Plans.

3.6 Closing the feedback loop is an important factor for student engagement in the feedback process. The survey season marketing will provide reassurance that the University is listening, and we will respond to all the feedback we receive, ensuring that details of proposed changes are shared with the University community so they can see the value of providing feedback. It is assumed that Schools will be communicating to their students on how their feedback has been utilised, for example via "You Said, We Did" summaries within their disciplines. Similarly, we hold an institutional "You Said, We Did" page on the [Student Voice](#) webpage. To ensure that this page is kept up-to-date with current examples to inform the marketing campaign, Schools and Services will be asked to submit examples of how feedback has been acted on in response to student feedback via SSEC members.

3.7 An Academic Survey Season web page will be created that will direct students to the survey applicable to them. The surveys will be incentivised with sustainable water bottles for 2024 to encourage engagement.

3.8 A marketing plan will be developed with activities to encourage responses and promote the benefits of giving feedback on academic experiences. The plan will aim to effectively build awareness of Survey Season and promote all surveys and opportunities surrounding them. Information will be tailored to how students can participate, case studies and opportunities for increasing feedback. The plan will use a mix of marketing channels including pre-launch emails,

student newsletters, social media, VLE announcements, printed and digital materials. An example of the Survey Season concept is shown in Appendix 2.

4. KEY DATES

4.1 To support the continued monitoring of the academic related experience for all years of students, the following timeframe is recommended for Survey Season. Also see Appendix 1.

Survey	Target audience	Open Date	Closing Date
National Student Survey (NSS)	Final year UG	29 January 2024	30 April 2024
Undergraduate Experience Survey	UG 1-3 years	29 January 2024	30 April 2024
Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey	September 2023 intake	5 February 2024	13 June 2024
Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey	January 2024 intake	4 March 2024	13 June 2024
Postgraduate Research Survey	PGR students	5 February 2024	16 May 2024
New to UoA	January 2024 intake	8 January 2024	30 January 2024

4.2 The Academic Survey Season would open on 1 February for the NSS, UES, PTES and PRES.

4.3 To allow for students in the January intake to fully experience academic matters and be able to provide meaningful feedback, they will be targeted slightly later.

4.4 No other surveys to large cohorts of students should be promoted during this period.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from **Morag Beedie, Marketing and Engagement Manager, Experience, Engagement & Wellbeing** or **Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support**

[15/11/23] [version 1] [Open]

APPENDIX 1

Figure 1 below shows the schedule of pre-approved student surveys. Any surveys not detailed below should be submitted through the [survey request process](#).

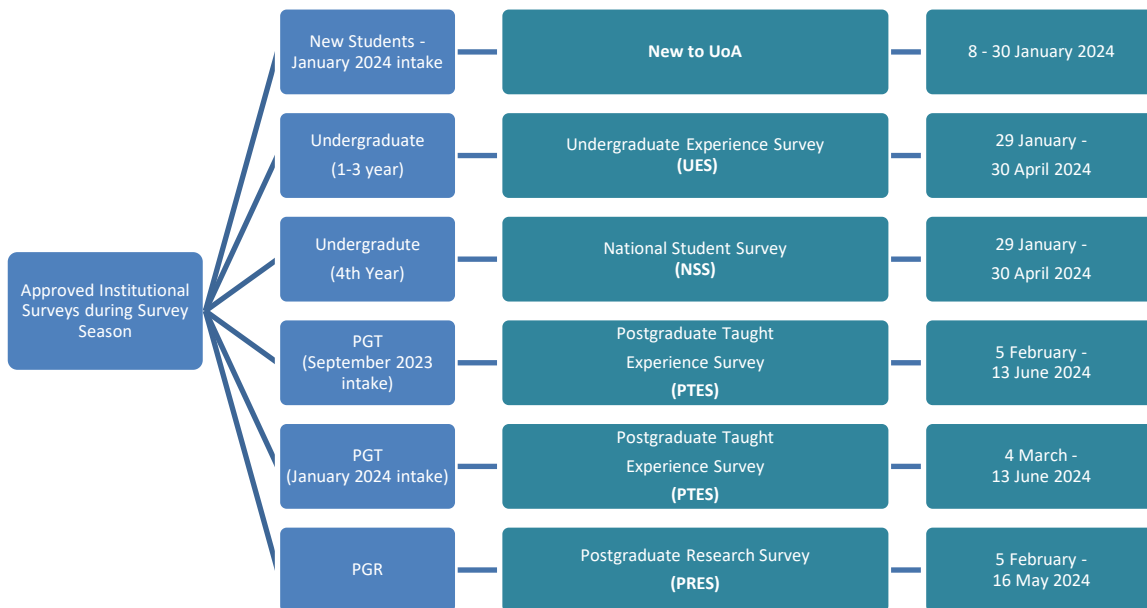


Figure 1: Academic student survey schedule.

Appendix 2

Figure 2 below shows the Survey Season concept.



CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY UPDATE

Annual Report - November 2023

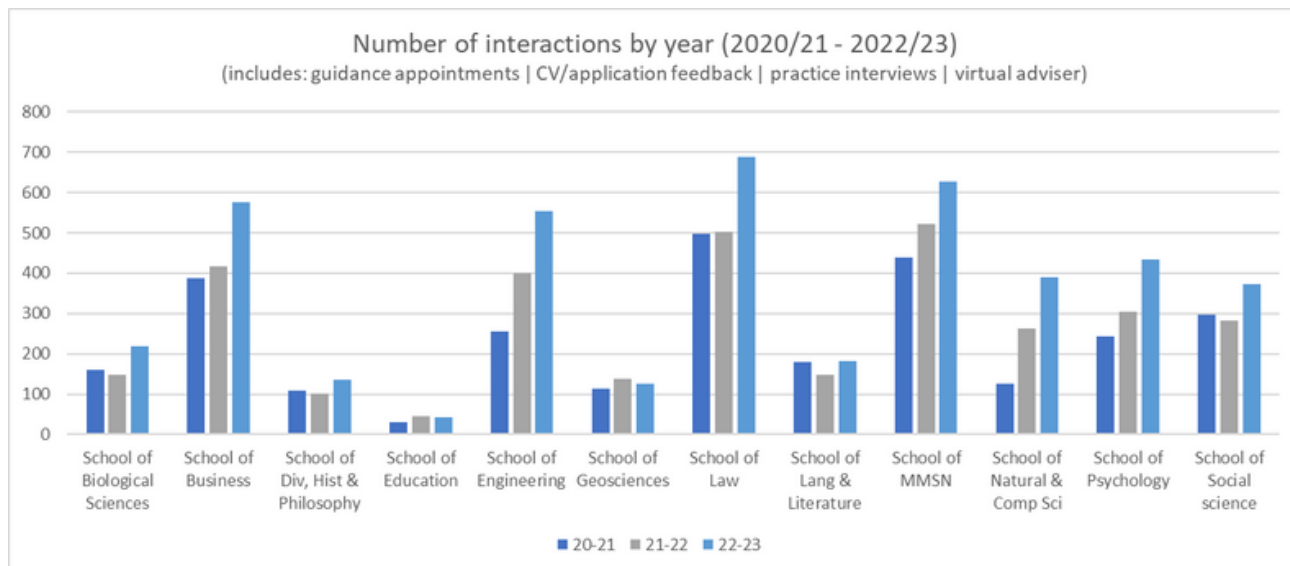
INTRODUCTION

This annual report summarises the range of careers and employability services available, and engagement levels, for the 2022-2023 academic year. Previous years and some headlines from the first half-session of 2023-2024 are provided for comparison. Engagement in careers and employability services increased significantly over the last three years, and continues to increase in the current year. The report also provides some early insights into the first full set of Career Readiness data.

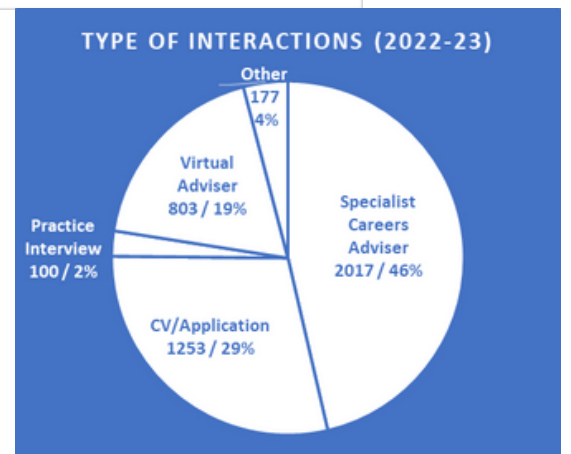


Tracey Innes, Assistant Director and Head of Careers and Employability

INDIVIDUAL INTERACTIONS UP BY 33% IN 2022-2023 (4350)



- Students can book careers appointments (run in person or online) and submit queries online.
- The chart above shows the dip in one to one interactions during the pandemic, with engagement increasing in 21/22 and returning pre-pandemic levels in 2022-23.
- Early signs for 2023-24 are for a further increase.
- First half-session interactions are up by 13%.



THE CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE IS PROVIDED BY:

- A professionally qualified and experienced team of 15, including Careers Advisers and Employer Engagement Advisers dedicated to supporting each School.
- Meet our team here: www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/about/Meet-the-Team

WORK-BASED LEARNING AND INTERNSHIPS

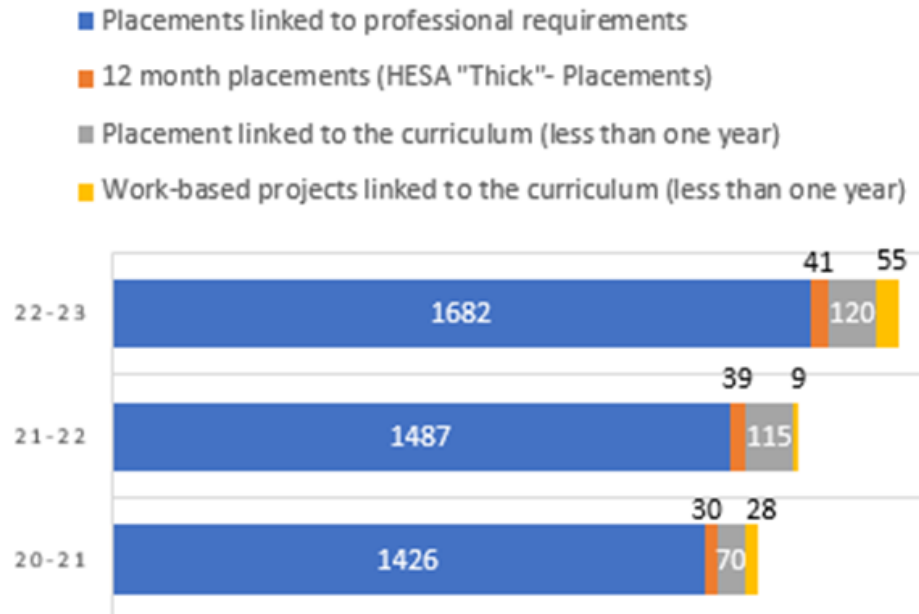
WORK BASED LEARNING REMAINS A KEY ABERDEEN 2040 PRIORITY

Institution Vision: All undergraduate and postgraduate taught University of Aberdeen students have the option to gain experience via a flexible menu of work-based and work-related learning opportunities (time-frame under review).

WORK BASED LEARNING IN CURRICULUM (UNDERGRADUATE)

Work based learning (at UG and PGT level) is currently being mapped across all Schools. Mapping has been challenging as it isn't currently recorded centrally. New fields in SRS, once built (reporting now required via HESA Data Futures project), will help progress this in the future.

The chart shows known WBL activity for the last 3 years.



SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF A NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY, TEAM-BASED, PAID INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME FOR UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN STUDENTS (SUMMER 2023)

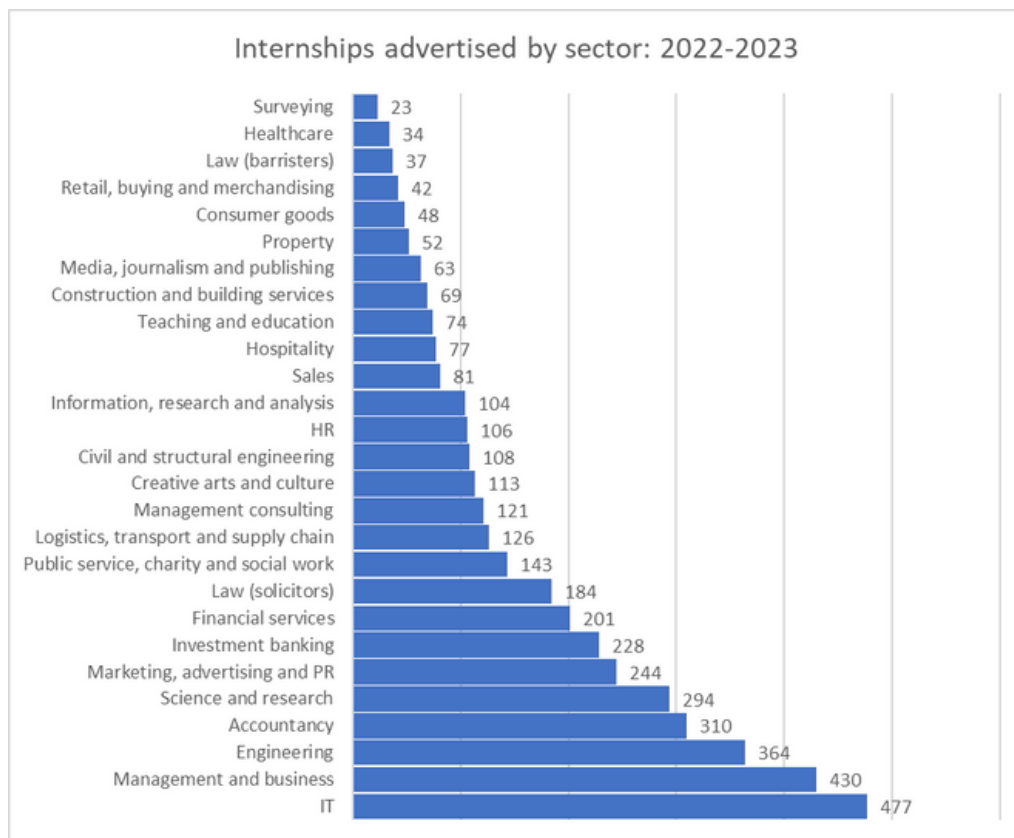
Internships aligned to University of Aberdeen 2040 commitments to sustainability, inclusivity and internationalisation were completed by 31 PGT and UG students in summer 2023. Demand was high with over 130 applications for 16 undergraduate and 15 postgraduate places. Employers praised the streamlined application and selection process: 'I do believe your selection process positioned the project for success from the start'.

THIS PROGRAMME PROVIDES A SCALABLE MODEL OF WORK-BASED LEARNING WHICH WILL BE REPEATED IN 2024, AND COULD BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF A CURRICULAR COURSE.

'THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING YOUR TEAM OF STUDENTS TO WORK ON A REAL AREA OF IMPROVEMENT FOR OUR BUSINESS AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE, SOMETHING WE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LOOK AT INTERNALLY FOR AT LEAST 12-18 MONTHS' - PROFILE TREE

'Not sure where you get these students or what you are teaching them, but they rock and more importantly – deliver'.

INTERNSHIP VACANCIES ADVERTISED 2022-2023



This chart shows the number of internship vacancies advertised via CareerConnect in academic year 2022-2023. Future work is needed to grow the number of opportunities in sectors we know are of most interest to students:

1. Science and research
2. Teaching and education
3. Healthcare
4. Public service, charity and social work

EXCLUSIVE INTERNSHIPS PLANNED FOR 2024:

- 16 exclusive paid internships in: nature jobs, art/cultural sector, SME's. Open to all, part-time, 10 hours per week, 7 weeks, February - April 2024.
- 12 "Interns with Impact" paid summer internships (funded by Wood Foundation). 300 hours, summer 2024.
- 30+ Interdisciplinary, team-based, paid internship opportunities for UG/PGT. 2 weeks full time (UG), 4 weeks part time (PGT), summer 2024



FURTHER ABERDEEN 2040 WBL ACTIONS:

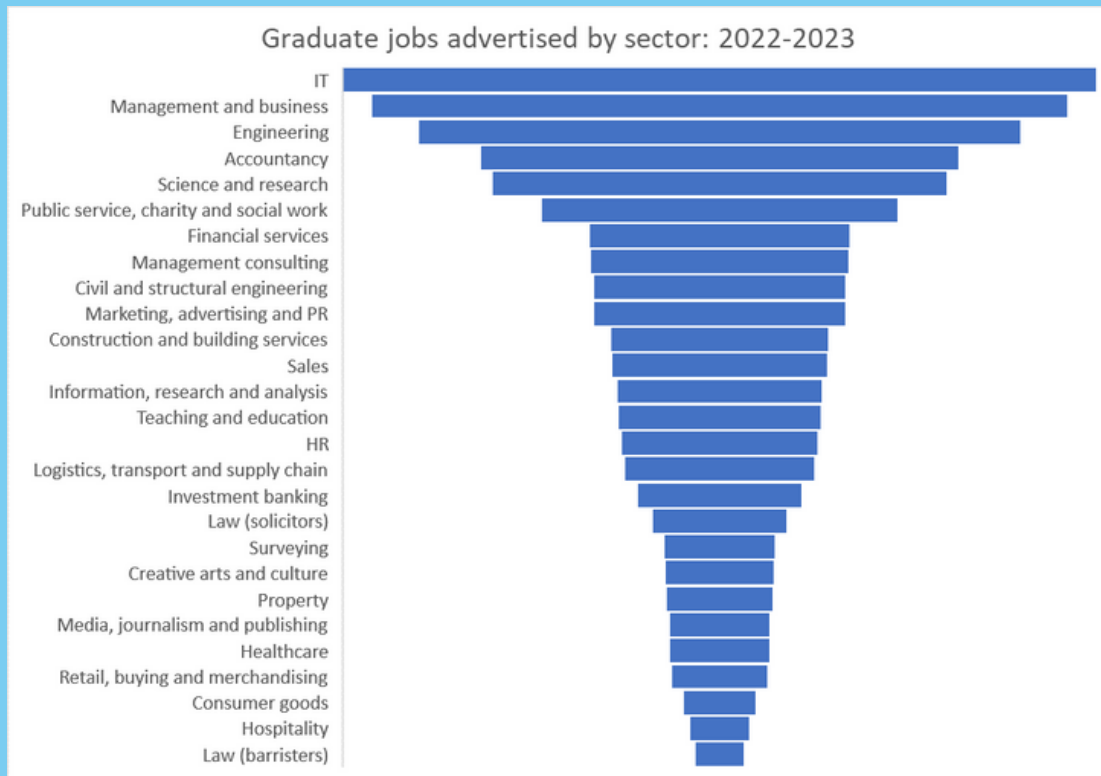
Action to continue "Upscaling Work Related Learning Project" to develop systems to support work-based learning delivery at scale: PROJECT ON TRACK.

Action to develop School work-based learning growth plans: PROJECT DELAYED. Timeline slower than anticipated due to recruitment pause (3 work-based coordinator posts).

CONNECTING WITH EMPLOYERS

GRADUATE JOB VACANCIES

This chart shows the number of graduate job vacancies advertised via CareerConnect in academic year 2022-2023. Future work is needed to grow the number of opportunities in sectors we know are of most interest to students, such as healthcare.



PART TIME JOBS

With the cost of living, students are increasingly seeking part time work.

- 61% of students are planning to work part time in the next 12 months (Career Readiness Survey 2023).
- Over 600 students (and 24 organisations) attended our first part time jobs fair in October 2023.



FIRST HALF-SESSION 2023-24 CONNECTED OVER 1700 STUDENTS WITH EMPLOYERS

Autumn 2023 activities included:

- Part Time Jobs Fair (24 employers)
- North of Scotland Careers Fair (60 employers)
- Law Fair (28 employers)
- 6 employer events and campus stalls
- 411 Internship vacancies live (Nov 2023)



FAIRS COMING UP FEB/MAR 2024:

- LIFE SCIENCES
- ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
- CHARITY SECTOR

**career
connect**

IN NOVEMBER 2023 THERE ARE OVER 2000 LIVE GRADUATE JOB, PART-TIME JOB AND INTERNSHIP VACANCIES AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS TO BROWSE ON CAREERCONNECT

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & CO-CURRICULAR PROVISION

CAREER MENTORING PROGRAMME AVAILABLE 2023-2024



- Refreshed programme connecting students with an experienced professional to gain one-to-one employability advice, support and guidance in a specific profession and/or sector.
- Supported by a new system, the programme opened for student applications November 2023. Closing date for student applications: 26/1/24
- Over 200 mentors currently registered. Recruitment is ongoing.
- Programme to start in February 2024.
- Medical Career Mentoring Stream opening for applications February 2024.



FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENTS TO RECORD, REFLECT AND DEVELOP SKILLS

MySkills enables students to:

- Assess and compare skills in 10 key areas
- Develop skills using activity pathways
- Record and reflect on experiences using skills statements and tags
- Export a record of engagement and achievements to refer to when making applications using Career Passport

Student feedback:

I think its really good, especially preparing to answer for interview questions (tagging the skills to the experience).

It was good to identify areas for improvement and organise application question responses around my strengths

Since the pilot launched in September 2023:

- 354 students completed a skills assessment
- 55 students engaged with the pathway activities

BP STUDENT TUTORING PROGRAMME



- The bp Student Tutoring Scheme is a voluntary scheme supported by bp, the University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University, North East Scotland College, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council.
- The scheme aims to provide positive role models to local school pupils and to raise their aspiration and motivations towards continuing education beyond their compulsory schooling.
- Over 40 students are expected to be placed in schools from January 2024.

30 years!

The bp Student Tutoring Scheme is proud to be celebrating its 30th year

“I have gained the confidence to stand in front of a class and run a revision quiz with the pupils. This experience has given me an insight into planning a lesson and the workload of a teacher. I am glad to have pushed myself to go into a new environment.”

bp Student Tutor, 2022/2023, University of Aberdeen

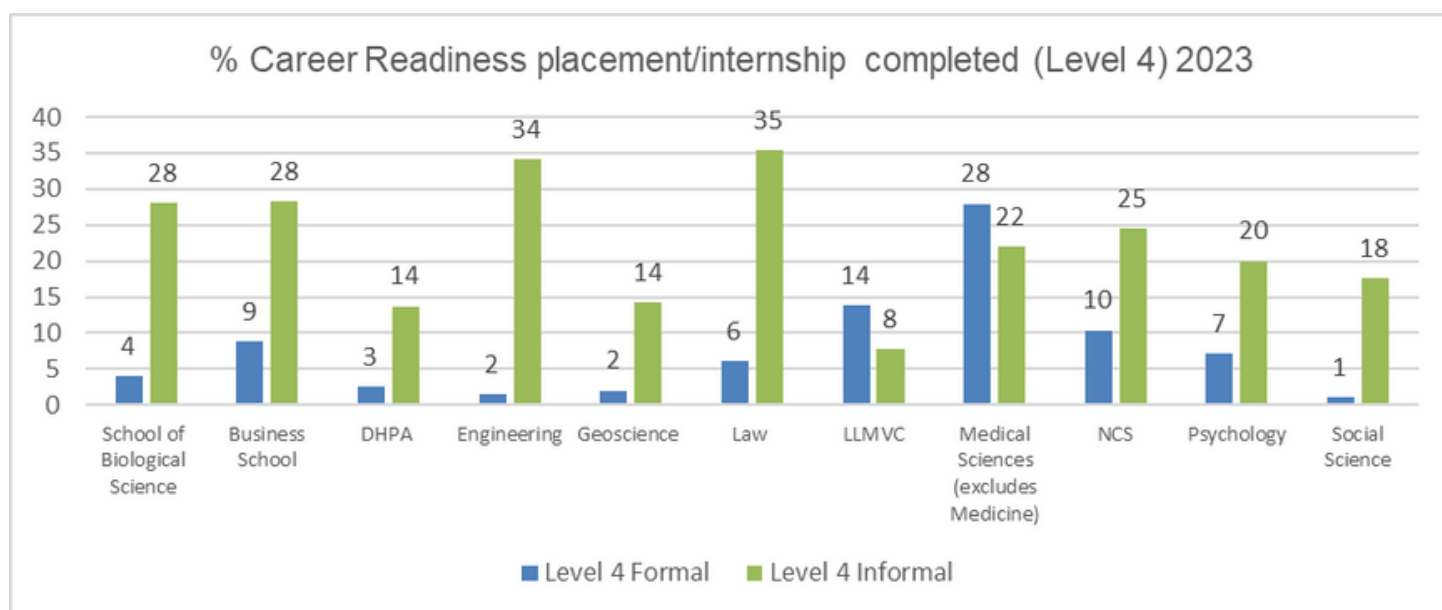
CAREER READINESS DATA INSIGHTS

CAREER READINESS SURVEY FULLY LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 23

The survey is completed by all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students annually as part of online registration. The survey asks students to:

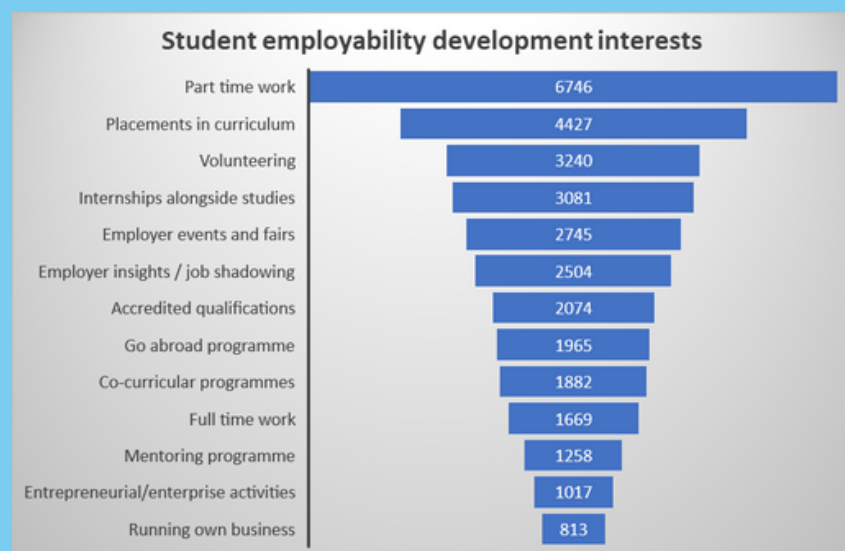
1. Select which employability enhancing activities they have engaged in over the previous 12 months
2. Select which employability enhancing activities they wish to engage in over the next 12 months
3. Rate their confidence against four career readiness statements
4. Select which areas of career support they would like to receive in the next 12 months

ENGAGEMENT IN PLACEMENTS AND INTERNSHIPS



This chart shows engagement of our current level 4 students in formal placements (curriculum) and informal internships (alongside studies). With our Aberdeen 2040 priority to increase work-based learning, these results provide a useful baseline from which to increase reported placement and internship engagement in future.

CAREER READINESS: EMPLOYABILITY DEVELOPMENT INTERESTS



Top 3 employability experiences students are planning for 2023-24:

1. Part time work (61% of respondents)
2. Placements (40% of respondents)
3. Volunteering (29% of respondents)

Full results are available via a PowerBI dashboard here:

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/staff/engagement-and-outcomes-data-1735.php>

CAREER READINESS DATA INSIGHTS

CAREER CONFIDENCE HEADLINES:

- Students are most confident about how their skills, values and motivations relate to their professional development and career growth.
- Students are least confident about finding suitable opportunities for work experience, graduate jobs and/or further study. 70% of all respondents would like support in this.
- 61% of students want support for planning the development of their skills, experiences and career next steps.
- PGT students are marginally more career confident than UG students
- 1st year UG students have higher career confidence (60%) than 4th year UG students (52%).

MAXIMISING THE VALUE OF CAREER READINESS:



Career readiness insights are already informing planning and decisions about future careers service provision.

- Targeted career readiness emails are sent to students based on their survey responses
- Emails sent since September 2023 achieved up to a 65% open rate.
- Emails have been sent covering a wide variety of topics from volunteering, placements and internships, to study abroad, enterprise and entrepreneurship and employer events and fairs.

Staff interested in finding out more are welcome to explore the data dashboard, and to get in touch with the careers team to discuss the results further.

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/staff/engagement-and-outcomes-data-1735.php>

SUMMARY AND FURTHER INFORMATION

This report provides an insight into the range and scale of careers and employability provision available to University of Aberdeen students and graduates. It also shows the level and extent of employer engagement and opportunities available to our students.

The team would welcome the opportunity to discuss the report, and any other feedback or questions you have. Further detailed insights are available by school, discipline and level of study.

Please get in touch with anyone in the team. We look forward to hearing from you.

**INSPIRING CAREER SUCCESS FOR ALL THROUGH COLLABORATION,
INNOVATION AND PROFESSIONALISM**