

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
SCHOOL OF DIVINITY, HISTORY & PHILOSOPHY**

# **UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

## **2011–2012**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

This Handbook is produced in addition to the guidance given by the School in its individual Course Guides and Leaflets. All students have an obligation to familiarize themselves with the content of these, as well as with the contents of this Handbook.

A complete range of information covering academic study and resources, rights and responsibilities, money matters, various student support services, plus many others can be found on the InfoHub website: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/>

You can also drop in to the InfoHub and speak to someone. The InfoHub is located on the ground floor of The Hub, Elphinstone Road.

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## WELCOME FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

I am pleased that you have chosen to study one or more of the courses offered by the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy, and hope that you will find it a profitable and enjoyable experience.

This Handbook gives general information about our rules and requirements. Although we do our best to remind students of their obligations, we cannot always contact you personally and we will assume that you have read the instructions given in the Handbook. For each of our courses there is a Course Guide or Leaflet which gives details of course content and indicates the academic work we expect you to do.

I hope you enjoy the time you spend studying in the School.

*Dr Philip Ziegler*

Head of School

## INTRODUCTION

The School of Divinity, History and Philosophy is one of six Schools within the College of Arts and Social Sciences and is comprised of four disciplines – Divinity & Religious Studies, History (which includes Cultural History), History of Art, and Philosophy.

The School has a vibrant research community and has fostered the development of the Northern Institute of Philosophy, the Centre for the Study of Spirituality and Health, the Centre for the History and Philosophy of Science, and is a major contributor to the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies. The School includes over 50 full-time lecturing staff, several part-time teaching fellows and research fellows and a team of eight administrative staff.

More information about the School can be found on the School web pages: [www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp)

The web pages of the various disciplines within the School are to be found at:

Divinity & Religious Studies (DR)	<a href="http://www.abdn.ac.uk/divinity">www.abdn.ac.uk/divinity</a>
History (HI)	<a href="http://www.abdn.ac.uk/history">www.abdn.ac.uk/history</a>
Cultural History (CU)	<a href="http://www.abdn.ac.uk/ch">www.abdn.ac.uk/ch</a>
History of Art (HA)	<a href="http://www.abdn.ac.uk/hoart">www.abdn.ac.uk/hoart</a>
Philosophy (PH)	<a href="http://www.abdn.ac.uk/philosophy">www.abdn.ac.uk/philosophy</a>

## KEY STAFF

### Executive staff

Head of School	Dr Philip Ziegler
Deputy Head of School (DR; PH)	Dr Chris Brittain
Deputy Head of School (CU; HA; HI)	Dr Tom Nichols
School Director of Teaching & Learning	Dr Alastair J. Macdonald
School Director of Research	Dr Anthony Heywood

School Postgraduate Officer	Dr Andrew Clarke
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### Undergraduate Programme Co-ordinators

Dr Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer	Divinity & Religious Studies
Dr Mary Pryor	History of Art
Dr Andrew Mackillop	History and Cultural History
Dr Ulrich Stegmann	Philosophy

### Administrative staff

Mrs Kathleen Brebner (History of Art)	3733	k.brebner@abdn.ac.uk
Mrs Gillian Brown (History, Honours)	2454	gillian.brown@abdn.ac.uk
Mrs Barbara McGillivray (History, sub-Honours)	2199	b.mcgillivray@abdn.ac.uk
Mrs Breanna Quinn (Divinity & Religious Studies)	2366	divrs@abdn.ac.uk
Ms Lisa Roberts (Philosophy)	3986	philosophy@abdn.ac.uk

Further information about all School staff, including their email addresses, room numbers and telephone extensions, can be found on the School web pages.

### ACADEMIC STAFF OFFICES

Members of the School's academic staff have offices that are located in various buildings around the Old Aberdeen campus. Please refer to the campus map at:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/central/vcampus/kings/index.shtml> for further details.

Divinity & Religious Studies	King's Quadrangle, High Street
History and Cultural History	Crombie Annexe, Meston Walk
History of Art	Rear of King's Quadrangle
Philosophy	The Old Brewery, High Street

### SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

The School administrative offices are located in King's Quadrangle, KCG11 (rooms a, b and c) and are usually open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday. The offices are closed for lunch from 12.30 to 1.30 p.m. daily. It is at these offices that all students can leave messages for academic staff, submit essays and medical certificates, and speak to the secretaries about any queries they might have.

### NOTICEBOARDS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CONTACT

Notice boards are located in the corridor leading to KCG11 and display important information such as timetables and tutorial sign-up sheets, as well as more general notices and posters.

The first line of contact with students is through e-mail and we will write to your university e-mail account (xxx@aberdeen.ac.uk) regardless of any other email account you may inform us of. Please check it regularly.

If you receive e-mail for courses that do not concern you, it is important that you see your Advisor of Studies as soon as possible as being on the email distribution list indicates that you are registered for the course. If you are registered for a course you do not attend it will have an impact on your academic record. Your Advisor will ensure that you are properly withdrawn from that course.

You will have regular contact with your teachers at lectures and tutorials but if you wish to arrange a meeting, feel free to e-mail us. In addition, some staff members list on their doors particular times when they are available to meet students. Your tutor will give you his/her contact details at the first tutorial; you will meet your course co-ordinator at the first lecture, and will find his/her contact details on the relevant notice board.

Should you need to contact the School because you are sick, or for any other reason, you should telephone or email the relevant secretary and your Course Co-ordinator or your Advisor of Studies.

## **STUDENT PORTAL**

Course, timetabling and examination information, along with other important information, is available on the web through your Student Portal and you should make a habit of accessing this regularly:

[http://studportal.abdn.ac.uk/portal/page?\\_pageid=36,1&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://studportal.abdn.ac.uk/portal/page?_pageid=36,1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

## **ADVISORS OF STUDIES**

All undergraduate students are allocated an Advisor of Studies. Your Advisor is someone with whom you must discuss your choice of subjects, who can check that the programme you are registered for reflects your interests and needs, and who can advise you on how to meet the requirements of the degree programme for which you are registered. Your Advisor will also follow your progress. If you are missing classes or not performing to the required standard, your Advisor will be notified. Your Advisor will be able to advise about other problems that you have and will be able to put you in touch with someone from one of the many students support services who can help you.

## **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATORS**

Whilst matters specifically relating to the content of specific courses are the responsibility of the Course Co-ordinators, it is the duty of the Undergraduate Programme Co-ordinators (UGPCs) to promote quality assurance by ensuring a measure of equality and standardisation regarding student workloads, teaching, assessment and evaluation on all courses at the same level. The UGPCs are the only members of staff who can authorise extensions to course work deadlines of more than 1 week.

## CHANGES TO YOUR CURRICULUM

All changes of curriculum must be approved by your Advisor of Studies, who will also make the appropriate changes to your student record.

Undergraduate students at Levels 1 and 2 are normally permitted to change their curriculum for a particular half-session within 3 weeks of the start of teaching for that half-session (within 1½ weeks for 6-week courses). For Level 3 and 4 courses you are only be permitted to change your curriculum for a particular half-session within 2 weeks of the start of teaching for that half-session (1 week for 6-week courses). Thereafter, changes will not normally be authorised as it is unlikely you will be able to complete the attendance and in-course requirements.

A change of curriculum will usually entitle you to withdraw from a course for which you have been authorised to attend, and/or to be granted permission to enrol for an additional course, subject to the approval of the School.

## ATTENDANCE AND PROGRESS

Once enrolled on a course:

- Students are expected to attend all tutorials.
- Students are strongly advised to attend all lectures.
- Students are expected to attend individual consultations about their work when requested to do so by a tutor.

Remember that all lectures, tutorials and seminars offer opportunities to learn.

## MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESS

The University operates a system for monitoring student progress to identify students who may be experiencing difficulties with a particular course and who may be at risk of losing their class certificate. If the Course Co-ordinator has concerns about your attendance and/or performance, Registry will be informed. The Registry will then write to you (by e-mail in term-time) to ask you to contact the School who has reported you. The e-mail for the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy monitoring is [dhpmonitoring@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:dhpmonitoring@abdn.ac.uk). You will need to explain your absences and provide evidence where applicable. The School will then make a decision as to whether you may be reinstated on the course. Students may be required to attend a meeting with their Advisor of Studies in accordance with General Regulation 8 (<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar/generalregulations.shtml>)

Set criteria are used to determine when a student should be reported in the monitoring system. You will be asked to explain your absences if any of the following criteria apply:

Either:

- (i) if you are absent for a continuous period of 2 weeks or 25% of the course (whichever is less) without good cause being reported;

or

(ii) if you are absent from two small group teaching sessions (e.g. tutorial or seminar) without good cause;

or

(iii) if you fail to submit a piece of summative or a substantial piece of formative in-course assessment by the stated deadline.

If you fail to respond within the prescribed timescale (as set out in the e-mail or letter), you will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course concerned and will accordingly be ineligible to take the end-of-course assessment or to enter for the resit. Registry will write to you (by e-mail in term-time) to inform you of this decision. If you wish consideration to be given to reinstating you in the course you will be required to meet the Convener of the Students' Progress Committee.

## CLASS CERTIFICATES

A 'Class Certificate' is defined as 'a certificate confirming that a candidate has attended and duly performed the work prescribed for a course' (General Regulation 1).

Students who attend and complete the work required for a course are considered to have been awarded a 'Class Certificate'. Being in possession of a valid Class Certificate for a course entitles a student to sit degree examinations for that course.

Class certificates are valid for 2 years and permit a total of three attempts at the required assessment within that 2-year period (i.e. the first attempt plus up to two resits).

Students who have been reported as 'at risk' through the system for monitoring students' progress may be refused a Class Certificate. If you are refused a Class Certificate you will receive a letter from the Registry (e-mail in term-time) notifying you of this decision. Students who are refused a Class Certificate are withdrawn from the course. This means they cannot take the prescribed degree assessment in the current session, and are ineligible to be re-assessed the following session unless they regain a Class Certificate by taking the course again.

Students who are refused a Class Certificate in a course which is part of their Honours programme, will be awarded the equivalent of a No Paper (NP) for that course (i.e. a CAS mark of 0 (zero). Normally, a student in this position cannot gain a higher class of degree than a lower second-class honours (2:2).

Where a Class Certificate is refused in the first year of a 2-year honours programme, it may result in a student failing to satisfy the stated pre-requisite for one or more of the final year honours courses and/or being excluded from their honours programme by the Head of School (see General Regulation 18.5).

Where the Calendar prescription for an honours programme explicitly states that, in addition to satisfactory attendance, either appearance for assessment or a pass in a stated course is a compulsory requirement, a student refused a Class Certificate in that course cannot normally qualify for the award of the honours degree concerned.

If you wish to appeal against the decision to refuse you a Class Certificate, you must do so in writing within 14 days of receipt of the notification. If an appeal to the relevant Head of School is unsuccessful, you have the right to lodge an appeal with the relevant Director of Undergraduate Programmes within 14 days of the date you are informed of the Head of School's decision.

## ABSENCE FROM CLASS OR EXAMINATIONS

Candidates who wish to establish that their academic performance has been adversely affected by their health are required to secure medical certificates relating to the relevant periods of ill health (see General Regulation 17.3).

The University's policy on requiring certification for absence on medical grounds or other good cause can be accessed at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix7x5.pdf](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix7x5.pdf)

You are strongly advised to make yourself fully aware of your responsibilities if you are absent due to illness or other good cause. In particular, you are asked to note that self-certification of absence for periods of absence up to and including eleven weekdays is permissible. However, where absence has prevented attendance at an examination or where it may have affected your performance in an element of assessment or where you have been unable to attend a specified teaching session, you are strongly advised to provide medical certification (see section 3 of the Policy on Certification of Absence for Medical Reasons or Other Good Cause).

Students *must* contact the relevant secretary at the earliest opportunity to advise that they are sick (or have other good cause) and will not be attending class. If you do not advise the office that you will not be attending class this may result in receiving a fail for your course(s).

Documentary evidence of any medical or other extenuating circumstance that may affect your examination performance must be submitted to the relevant secretary within 3 days of the examination. This applies even if you have alerted an individual member of staff to your predicament. If no documentation has been submitted, your circumstances cannot be taken into account.

### Extenuating circumstances

All extenuating circumstances that might have an impact on a student's work are treated in the same way. In the case of circumstances known in advance, the School will make all reasonable adjustments to assist the student in preparing work. This might include extensions, proof-reading, transcription, and IT assistance. In some cases, it will not be possible to make reasonable adjustments in advance. In these cases, the School ensures that extenuating circumstances are taken into consideration.

The School collates all information it receives (for example, from students, their doctors and the Disabilities Office) and this information is presented to the School's External Examiners. Having considered the information provided about a given student the Examiners advise the School about what remedy, if any, should be applied. This process works to students' advantage in a number of ways:

- The work of each and every student is assessed in exactly the same manner.

- All extenuating circumstances that might have an impact on a student's work are treated in exactly the same manner.
- There is no attempt to quantify the effects of a given situation (i.e. assign a certain number of CAS points to a particular medical condition).
- The Examiners can, if applicable, consider the possible impact of extenuating circumstances on a student's entire performance in a course.
- The application of any remedies based on extenuating circumstances will be anonymous, uniform and transparent. It comes from External Examiners in the form of advice to the examination boards relating to students by their ID number not by name.
- Any remedy, if applied, will benefit the student.

## CLASS WORK AND PERFORMANCE

### Submission of coursework

Deadlines for the submission of both assessed and unassessed work are specific to each course and will be communicated to you by the Course Co-ordinator and detailed in the Course Guide. Failure to hand in, or the late submission of written work without extension, medical or other valid reason will result in the loss of marks.

All pieces of coursework must be submitted to the relevant secretary or placed in the labelled drop-box. Two copies of all work must be submitted with completed cover sheets (one of which should be anonymised); the following information must be included:

- Name of student
- Student ID number
- Course Code and Title
- Name of Tutor
- Title of Essay
- The plagiarism statement must be read, understood and signed.

The Office staff will accept no coursework unless two copies are submitted accompanied by correctly completed and signed cover sheets. These must be completed in advance, not in the Office.

### Extensions

Extensions of up to 1 week may be granted by the course co-ordinator; extensions exceeding 1 week may only be granted only by the undergraduate programme co-ordinator. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

If you are seeking an extension, you should contact either the Course Co-ordinator or relevant Undergraduate Programme Co-ordinator. You will be asked to meet with that person in order to discuss the reasons why you are seeking an extension. If an extension is subsequently granted, you will be given a signed form which should be attached to the coursework when you hand it in. If you do not attach the extension form to your coursework, you will incur a penalty for late submission.

Extensions must be sought before the essay deadline. An extension cannot be granted after an essay deadline is past; however, the Undergraduate Programme Co-ordinator may recommend the reduction or elimination of a late submission penalty if made aware of the extenuating circumstances.

Extensions are only granted where students have encountered exceptional or unforeseen difficulties, or are subject to illnesses, or are affected by any relevant impairment, in the period which they are expected to prepare the essay. Many of the disciplines set essay deadlines at similar points during term; and the availability of set and recommended texts from the Library cannot be guaranteed during times of high demand. Students are responsible for beginning their essay preparation in good time and apportioning their time appropriately. The lack of availability of texts, conflicting essay deadlines, mismanagement of time or computing problems are not grounds for extension.

### Late submission

Any work submitted beyond the due date (without an approved extension) will be penalised according to the following schedule: 1 CAS point deducted per 2 days or part thereof (Saturday, Sunday and other days when the University is closed are counted together as a single day). Thus, a piece of work due on a Friday no later than noon if submitted before noon on the following Monday will incur a penalty of 1 CAS mark; a further CAS mark would be deducted between then and noon on the following Wednesday, etc.

### The marking scale

All marks are determined in accordance with the University's Common Assessment Scale (CAS) as follows:

Common Assessment Scale (CAS) mark	Description for non-honours courses	Description for Honours courses
20, 19, 18	Outstanding	First Class Honours
17, 16, 15	Very Good	Upper Second Class Honours
14, 13, 12	Good	Lower Second Class Honours
11, 10, 9	Pass	Third Class Honours
8, 7, 6	Fail	Below Third Class Honours
5, 4, 3	Fail	Below Third Class Honours
2, 1, 0	Fail	Below Third Class Honours

### School pass mark policy

It is a School policy that in order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a CAS mark of at least 6 (six) on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CAS 8 (eight) for the course as a whole.

The mark of 6 must be achieved with any deductions for late submission being taken into account. So if an essay is awarded a mark of 9, but has 4 marks deducted due to late submission then it will be given a mark of 5. If you have failed to achieve a pass mark for a course for any reason you will be entitled to take a resit. This policy follows from the QAA expectation that a student who passes a

course must have achieved all the specified learning outcomes; such an achievement is not consistent with a CAS mark of 0–5 on any piece of assessed work.

## **Lectures**

While most students find it useful to take notes in lectures, in the first year many make the mistake of trying to take too many notes. A lecture is not an exercise in dictation. Rather, listen for the main points made by the lecturer and if you feel that something has not been adequately explained, feel free to ask, either after the lecture or on the middle of it. To get the most out of a lecture it should be followed up by reading. All course handouts include bibliographies with suggestions for further reading. Also, why not meet with some fellow students after the lecture and have an informal discussion? This, too, is an important learning experience as some students will pick up on points that others have missed and vice versa.

## **Tutorials**

Just as lecturers have different styles, tutors, too, have different styles and approaches. Some will ask for a brief introductory paper. Others might ask a student to chair the meeting. Some will get you to work in small groups. The fundamental aim of all tutorials is to generate discussion: a reasoned consideration of the topic under investigation. Tutorials are not lectures; they require your participation and to participate you must be prepared. Everyone should have done some preparatory reading before arriving at the tutorial. Do not expect to come away from a tutorial with ‘the answer’; tutorials are as much about asking questions as about providing an answer.

## **Oral presentations**

In some courses you will be required to make a brief tutorial presentation. Please do not write an essay and then read it out. If you do you will find it hard to engage your audience’s attention; instead focus on presenting your ideas well. Presentations are exercises in communication and one of their main purposes is to improve your oral communication skills. You may be rather nervous at first but try to speak clearly and steadily; it is difficult to follow people who speak too fast.

## **Required, recommended and suggested readings**

Students may be asked to purchase ‘required texts’. In addition they may be directed to recommended or suggested readings in bibliographies. The listing of works other than the required texts, whether for the entire course, specific essay topics or individual lectures/tutorials, is purely for guidance and is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.

## **Course materials**

All materials included in the official course materials can be found on MyAberdeen and will have been cleared by the relevant Course Co-ordinator with the Library for compliance with copyright law. Students are advised that any other materials that are circulated (whether electronically or in hard copy) that have not been cleared through this process, if under copyright, are illegal and such

copying/scanning and/or distribution is a criminal offence. The School cannot take responsibility for such materials privately circulated between individual members of staff and/or students.

## ESSAY WRITING

Essays are designed to test a number of competencies. These include knowledge of the topic; ability to understand the ramifications of the questions and arguments advanced by other academics; ability to order concepts and arguments; ability to identify and use appropriate resources; ability to present your thoughts imaginatively and coherently, and qualities of judgement. Academic writing is one of the cornerstones of university study. In all disciplines, students (and their teachers) need writing to express their ideas clearly.

### Referencing

Failure to reference sources correctly will lead to suspicion of plagiarism which is a very serious disciplinary matter (see below). In order to avoid suspicion of plagiarism, you must cite your sources correctly and use quotation marks for all direct quotations.

Please refer to the excellent fact sheet produced by the Library entitled 'Referencing and Citing', which can be accessed at: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/gen/uggen007.pdf>

### Help and advice

The Student Learning Service have an excellent 'Improving Your Writing' website which can be accessed at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sls/academicwriting/> and students are strongly advised to read this.

The Student Learning Service also run group workshops and one-to-one study advice sessions and provide a range of other academic support to help students make the most of their studies and exams. Go to their website at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alsu/>.

## PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a serious offence – both within and outwith the academic community. The University's definition of plagiarism is as follows:

'Plagiarism is the use, without adequate acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of another person in work submitted for assessment. A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where it can be shown that the student has taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as his/her own.'

When you submit coursework, you will be asked to sign the following statement on the coversheet:

*'I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood the above definition of plagiarism. I declare that all material from other sources used in this piece of assessed work, whether directly quoted or*

*paraphrased, has been clearly identified and attributed to the source from which it came by means of a footnote or endnote reference.'*

This states that you acknowledge that you have read, understood and accept the University's rules on plagiarism: your signature will be taken to mean that you certify the essay as being all your own work and that you have cited all sources. You should ensure that you have read and understood this statement, and are confident that your work complies with it before you sign it and submit your work.

### **Avoiding suspicion of plagiarism**

Identify all material cited from other sources (including websites) with quotations marks (inverted commas) and with a footnote or end note giving the reference to the source from which the quotation was taken. You must also acknowledge other sources from which you have used the thoughts or ideas of other people, even if you have not made a direct quote.

As well as the references, you must provide a bibliography at the end of your essay listing all sources – those of directly quoted material and of paraphrased ideas.

Note that it is not acceptable to submit essays, a large portion of which consists of quotations from other sources, even if acknowledged. Such essays are likely to score very low marks on the grounds that they constitute too little of the student's own work.

For more details on how to avoid plagiarism, along with examples of best practice in essay writing, visit the Student Learning Service's excellent website: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sls/plagiarism/>

### **Self-plagiarism**

While it is entirely legitimate for you to pursue a particular interest throughout the levels and courses of your degree, you may not resubmit substantial elements of any work previously submitted for assessment at this University or any other institution you have previously attended. That is, you may not submit an essay or paragraphs of an essay that you have already submitted for another course. Nor may you submit an essay or paragraphs of an essay that you have already submitted for the same course. Nor may you submit for assessment work that you have already published.

Not only might this constitute plagiarism, (i) unless the questions are identical, work that answers well one essay question is likely to be poorly fitted to another question: that is, there will be a relevance problem; (ii) work that fits well the parameters of one exercise (a short Level 1 essay for example) will fail to meet the requirements for level of details of a very different exercise (a Level 4 essay or a dissertation, for example); and (iii) we expect students to show intellectual progress across the years of study.

### **How will cases of suspected plagiarism be dealt with?**

All cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Head of School in the first instance and cannot be discussed with or determined by a tutor or Course Co-ordinator. Note that carelessness cannot be used as an excuse. Please refer to <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section7.shtml> for more details of the procedure that will be followed if plagiarism is suspected.

## **COLLABORATION AND OTHER FORMS OF CHEATING**

Collaboration is colluding with another person in the preparation or submission of work which is to be assessed. This does not apply to any collaborative work authorised by the Course Co-ordinator.

Collaboration is a serious academic offence and constitutes cheating. Please refer to:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x15.pdf> section 2.1 for details of what constitutes cheating and to section 7 for how cases of collaboration and other forms of cheating will be dealt with.

## **TurnitinUK**

TurnitinUK is an online service which compares student assignments with online sources including web pages, databases of reference material, and content previously submitted by other users across the UK. The software makes no decision as to whether plagiarism has occurred; it is simply a tool which highlights sections of text that have been found in other sources thereby helping academic staff decide whether plagiarism has occurred.

As of Academic Year 2011–2012, TurnitinUK will be accessed directly through MyAberdeen. Advice about avoiding plagiarism, the University's Definition of Plagiarism, a Checklist for Students, Referencing and Citing guidance, and instructions for TurnitinUK, can be found in the following area of the Student Learning Service website [www.abdn.ac.uk/sls/plagiarism/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sls/plagiarism/)

## **FEEDBACK**

Formative feedback is provided in general terms in tutorials and by a variety of means on an individual basis. The tutor provides written feedback on coursework and you should collect your work from the tutor who can then also give oral feedback. Tutors will endeavour to see each student individually at least once during the course in order to discuss or review progress. If at any stage you require additional or immediate discussion, tutors can be approached directly.

The University recognises both the importance of providing timely and appropriate feedback on assessments to students, and of enabling students to voice views on their learning experience through channels such as Student Course Evaluation Forms and Class Representatives. FAQs, guidance and resources about feedback can be found on the University's 'Enhancing Feedback' website at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/clt/feedback](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/clt/feedback)

## **STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION FORMS (SCEFS)**

SCEFs are distributed to all classes in Week 10 of each half-session. The School encourages students to write full comments at the end of these anonymous forms. The School carefully reflects upon the comments made, is obliged to report to the University regarding the comments made, and acts upon trends which become evident.

## **CLASS REPRESENTATIVES**

We value students' opinions in regard to enhancing the quality of teaching and its delivery; therefore in conjunction with the Students' Association we support the operation of a Class Representative system.

The students within each course, year, or programme elect representatives by the end of the fourth week of teaching within each half-session. In this School we operate a system of course and year representatives. Any student registered within a course/year who wishes to represent a given group of students can stand for election as a class representative. You will be informed when the elections for class representative will take place.

### **What will it involve?**

It will involve speaking to your fellow students about the course/year you represent. This can include any comments that they may have. You will attend a Staff–Student Liaison Committee and you should represent the views and concerns of the students within this meeting. As a representative you will also be able to contribute to the agenda. You will then feedback to the students after this meeting with any actions that are being taken.

### **Training**

Training for class representatives will be run by the Students Association. Training will take place in the fourth or fifth week of teaching each half-session. For more information about the Class representative system visit [www.ausa.org.uk](http://www.ausa.org.uk) or email the VP Education & Employability [vped@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:vped@abdn.ac.uk). Class representatives are also eligible to undertake the STAR (Students Taking Active Roles) Award, further information about the co-curricular award is available at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/careers](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/careers).

## **SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS**

The University is keen to help you successfully complete your studies. If at any time you feel you need assistance, there is a range of support services available to help you. These include support to assist with unexpected and/or exceptional financial difficulty, support for disabled students and academic learning support through the Student Learning Service. Further details about all these services are available at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/undergraduate/support.php> and <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/student-support/> or at the InfoHub <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/>.

If you have a personal problem which affects or is likely to affect your academic performance, it is important that you let someone know.

### **DISABILITIES (INCLUDING DYSLEXIA)**

We try to make our courses accessible to all students. If you have or develop an impairment of any kind which may impede your ability to fulfil any course requirements, you should contact the University Disabilities Advisor ([student.disability@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:student.disability@abdn.ac.uk)). Such contact should be made as near

the beginning of the course as possible and must be made well in advance of exams. Any non-academic obstacle to progress should be brought to the University's attention as soon as possible and before it leads to you failing to meet some requirement.

## **STUDENT LEARNING SERVICE**

The Student Learning Service provides on-line study guides, group workshops, one-to-one study advice sessions and a range of other academic support to help students make the most of their studies and exams. For information on the full range of support and guidance available go to their website at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alsu/>.

## **LIBRARY AND OTHER FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

Information about the new University Library and other facilities and resources available to you during your studies is available from the InfoHub 'one-stop shop': <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/>

### **New University Library**

The new University Library and the University's Historic Collections are at the heart of teaching, learning and research at the University of Aberdeen. The holdings extend to more than a million items gathered over five centuries of the University's existence and belong to collections which are important both nationally and internationally. For further information on how to register and access Library resources – both paper and electronic – go to: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/index.php>.

### **Divinity Library**

Undergraduate students studying Divinity & Religious Studies are also permitted to make use of the Divinity Library which is located in King's Quadrangle and is operated by Christ's College. The Librarian is Mrs Ina Strachan ([i.strachan@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:i.strachan@abdn.ac.uk)).

### **Aberdeen City Library**

The City Library, located on Rosemount Viaduct, possesses a good stock of general texts and is especially well provided with Scottish material. If resident in Aberdeen, you should consider becoming a member.

## **COMPUTING SERVICES**

The Directorate of Information Technology (DIT) supports a variety of web and computer-based resources, complementing your studies and allowing you to manage and review coursework at your pace and in your own time. Information on all DIT resources available to students, including help and support; training; PC classrooms; email; printing, photocopying and scanning; e-registration; and the Student Portal; can be found at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/dit/student/index.php>

Before you can use the University of Aberdeen's computing facilities, you must first register and obtain a personal username and password. You will retain the same username throughout your course of study at the University, but you will have to re-register and change the password at the start of each academic year. More information can be found at:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/dit/student/help/ereg.php>

### **Information Skills SK1003**

Information Skills SK1003 aims to familiarise new students with the IT facilities at the University of Aberdeen. Attendance is highly recommended, although it is voluntary.

All new entry MA, BMus, BEd, BTh, and BD students (at Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3) are given a course booklet and invited to attend an SK1003 workshop. Together, the booklet and course introduce the IT facilities such as the Student Portal, MyAberdeen, Student Mail, and how printing and file storage operate at the University. Students are able to self-assess their skill level with essential software, and to improve their skills in a supported environment.

In addition, the programme introduces the University's use of the TurnitinUK plagiarism detection software and shows how to apply IT skills to format and reference essays and coursework in a manner required at University level. More information can be found at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/infoskills](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infoskills)

### **MyAberdeen**

MyAberdeen is the University of Aberdeen's new Virtual Learning Environment (it replaces WebCT).

MyAberdeen is where you will find learning materials and resources associated with the courses you are studying. MyAberdeen also provides direct access to TurnitinUK, the originality checking service, through which you may be asked to submit completed assignments. You can log in to MyAberdeen by going to [www.abdn.ac.uk/myaberdeen](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/myaberdeen) and entering your University username and password (which you use to access the University network).

Further information on MyAberdeen, including Quick Guides and video tutorials, along with information about TurnitinUK, can be found at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/students/myaberdeen.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/myaberdeen.php)

## **ABERDEEN GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES**

Graduate Attributes are a wide-ranging set of qualities which students will develop during their time at Aberdeen in preparation for employment, further study and citizenship.

There are four main areas of the Graduate Attributes:

- Academic excellence
- Critical thinking and communication
- Learning and personal development
- Active citizenship

Students have many opportunities to develop and achieve these attributes. These include learning experiences on credit-bearing courses and co-curricular activities such as work placements, study

abroad and volunteering. In accordance with the University's commitment to Equality and Diversity, students can request support with any aspect of the Graduate Attributes framework.

The ACHIEVE website offers resources that enable students to assess and reflect upon their present skills and development needs. The website also contains resources to help students to improve their skills and links to a range of university services such as the Careers Service and the Student Learning Service. Students can access ACHIEVE from their MyAberdeen site in the 'My Organisations' section. More information about Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and ACHIEVE can be found at [www.abdn.ac.uk/graduateattributes](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/graduateattributes)

## THE CO-CURRICULUM

The co-curriculum enhances a student's employability and provides opportunities to develop and achieve Aberdeen Graduate Attributes. Co-curricular activities complement a student's degree programme and include: work placements, study abroad, enterprise and entrepreneurship activities, the BP Student Tutoring Scheme, career mentoring and the STAR (Students Taking Active Roles) Award initiative. Below are examples of credit-bearing co-curricular activities. It is anticipated that these types of activity will be included on an enhanced transcript for students graduating in, or after, 2012–2013. Further information about the co-curriculum is available at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/careers](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/careers)

## ERASMUS

ERASMUS is an exchange programme funded by the European Commission which enables students to study or work in another European country as part of their degree programme. Eligible students will receive a grant to help with extra costs while abroad and a number of our partner institutions teach through English. For more information, visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/erasmus/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/erasmus/)

The University also has opportunities for students to study in a non-European country as part of their degree through the International Exchange Programme. International partners include universities and colleges in North America, Hong Kong and Japan: [www.abdn.ac.uk/undergraduate/international-exchange.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/undergraduate/international-exchange.php)

The University aims to ensure full academic recognition for study periods abroad, therefore the credits gained from study abroad will count towards the Aberdeen degree programme for students participating in both ERASMUS and the International Exchange Programme.

## Work placements

Work placements can also form an integral part of a degree programme and attract academic credit. Placements are available locally, nationally and internationally, lasting from a few weeks to a full year and are generally paid. Visit the Careers Service website for further placement information and to find available work placements.

## CAREERS

The University's Careers and Appointments Service provides a range of benefits to students, particularly those in their Honours years. The resources the Service provides includes advice and information on career and employment options, information on over three hundred of the main employers of graduates in the UK, a regional information resource, and current vacancy information. The Service also provides opportunities for students to attend workshops on CVs, Application Forms, Interview Techniques and Assessment Exercises. All third and fourth year students are strongly encouraged to visit the Careers Service and consult a member of the Service's staff. Details of the Careers and Appointments Service and how to book an appointment can be found online at [www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/)

## EXAMINATIONS

### Revision

In week 13 of both half-sessions, all tutors will be available for the purpose of giving advice on revision to any student who desires it.

### Dates

The Registry will notify you of dates, times and venues of your examinations via your student portal. Although the Registry endeavour to ensure that all examinations are given different slots, very rarely there may be a clash. Please report any clash of examinations to the Course Co-ordinator and the relevant secretary.

### Results

Results can be accessed via your student portal. Please do not ask your Tutor, Course Co-ordinator or the secretarial staff to divulge your marks before they are available on the student portal; any such divulgence constitutes a breach of the University's regulations.

### School pass mark policy

In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a CAS mark of at least 6 (six) on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CAS 8 (eight) for the course as a whole and you will be required to take a resit in order to pass the course.

### Resits

For courses at Levels 1, 2 and 3, the date of the first resit opportunity will normally be the August resit diet. Subsequent resit opportunities will be available at the normal January and May diets and at the August resit diets in the following academic year, subject to you being in receipt of a valid Class Certificate.

Class certificates are valid for 2 years and permit a total of three attempts at the required assessment within that 2-year period (i.e. the first attempt plus up to two resits).

For courses at Level 4 and above, the date of the first and only resit opportunity will usually be during the normal (i.e. January or May) diets in the following academic year, subject to you being in receipt of a valid Class Certificate.

The onus is on you to register for the resit and pay the appropriate fee to the Registry at least 1 week prior to the resit examination. Further information is available at

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/examinations.shtml>

### Resit assessment

For some of the School's courses, assessment for resits is by examination alone (100% examination). This means that the marks you received for the continuous assessment element of the course will be disregarded. For some courses, assessment for resits is to submit a new piece of work (if it was a piece of coursework that was failed) or to resit the exam (if it was the exam that was failed).

Please check the course catalogue (<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/courses/>) for details of the resit policy for the course you are taking. This should also be stated in the Course Guide/Leaflet.

You should consult your Tutor or Course Co-ordinator in order to receive advice on how to perform better at the resit diet.

### Examination techniques

Before the exam:	Know the time and location of the exam Remember your ID card Aim to arrive with at least 10 minutes to spare
First few minutes:	Enter your personal details on the answer book Check that you have the correct paper Read the instructions slowly – at least twice Read the whole paper – all pages Note down the time you will allocate to each question
Choosing the questions:	Read each question carefully. What does the question expect you to do? How exactly does it relate to the course? Highlight key words in the question Note how many parts there are to the question Jot down notes about your chosen questions
Timing your answers:	Answer the required number of questions Do not spend more than your allocated time on each question
Writing your answers:	If writing essay-style answers there must be structure, organisation, evidence and a clear line of reasoning Marks are given for showing you can make sense of the question, not just for writing down everything you know
What if I go blank?	Try brainstorming: use lists, write words and phrases or any ideas quickly and in any order you like Keep writing: jot down any words that have anything to do with

	<p>the question</p> <p>Leave a space and try something else. It might come back to you later</p>
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The above advice is taken from the Student Learning Service website. For further information, see <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alsu>

## EXTERNAL EXAMINERS AND EXAMINERS' MEETINGS

All assessed work (including essays and examinations) is subject to scrutiny by the School's External Examiners.

At the end of the Senior Honours year internal and external examiners will meet to confirm the provisional marks for all courses which you have taken in your honours years and to consider the overall classification of your degree. When coming to decisions about classification, medical and personal problems may be taken into account, so it is important to inform your Advisor of Studies as early as possible before an examination of any problems which may adversely affect your performance: medical certificates, in particular, should be submitted to your Advisor.

### Viva voce examinations

In occasional circumstances the External Examiners call students for a viva voce examination (oral examination) to determine final marks and classification. This might happen if a candidate falls between two classifications or if a candidate missed substantial parts of the degree programme due to illness or other good cause. An oral examination can only work in favour of the candidate. No marks or grade lower than that initially given can be awarded. Those required to attend a viva voce examination will be informed the evening before and told which paper or papers (from those taken during the current academic year only) are to be examined. All students should therefore ensure that they are available to be contacted after exams and ensure that contact details are correct. You can amend details via the student portal.

## HONOURS CLASSIFICATION

### Requirements for the award of an Honours degree

All students who are admitted to an Honours programme are required to achieve 480 credits, of which 180 must be at Levels 3 and 4 and at least 90 at Level 4 (see below). These requirements ensure that Honours degrees are awarded in compliance with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). This is a common national Framework for all awards in Scotland. Further information is available at [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)

Honours Degree:	A minimum of 480 credit points, including at least 180 at Levels 3 and 4, of which a minimum of 90 must be at Level 4
Designated Degree:	A minimum of 360 credit points, including at least 90 at Level 3

Non-honours Degree:	A minimum of 360 credit points, including at least 60 at Level 3
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With the exceptions listed in Appendix 7.6 of the Academic Quality Handbook, students who fail, or who fail to attend or complete, a course, for whatever reason, and who wish to be awarded credit for the relevant course will be required to resit the assessment in question.

Further guidance is available in the 'Guidance Note for Students who either Fail, or who Fail to Attend or Complete, an Element of Prescribed Degree Assessment' which can be accessed at:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix7x6.pdf>

### Definition of honours results and classifications

All Honours Degrees (both Joint and Single) are classified using the University's Grade Spectrum which is available at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix7x4.pdf>. Marks obtained from overseas institutions are translated onto the Common Assessment Scale.

The Grade Spectrum, an extract of which is printed below, is used to determine degree classification on the basis of the CAS mark awarded for each element of Honours Degree Assessment.

FIRST	Marks at 18 or better in elements constituting half of the total elements; AND Marks at 15 or better in elements constituting three-quarters of the total elements; AND Normally marks at 12 or better in all elements.
2i (UPPER SECOND)	Marks at 15 or better in elements constituting half of the total elements; AND Marks at 12 or better in elements constituting three-quarters of the total elements; AND Normally marks at 9 or better in all elements.
2ii (LOWER SECOND)	Marks at 12 or better in elements constituting half of the total elements; AND Marks at 9 or better in elements constituting three-quarters of the total elements.
THIRD	Marks at 9 or better in elements constituting three quarters of the total elements.

Examiners have discretion (in the circumstances defined in Note 4 of the Grade Spectrum <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix7x4.pdf>) to depart from this and may choose to award a higher degree than that indicated by the Grade Spectrum.

### The designated degree

The designated degree is a non-Honours degree which can be completed in three years. It requires a minimum of 360 credit points. More details of the designated degree can be found in the University Calendar which can be viewed online at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar)

## PRIZES

Over the years a number of medals and prizes have been established within the School to reward special excellence. A list of prizes and medals can be viewed at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/prizes>

## PROGRESSING TO HONOURS

In the Spring of your second year you will be asked to decide which degree you want to aim for. In order to progress to Honours you will normally be expected to possess 240 credit points in total from Level 1 and 2 courses. The pre-requisites for each degree differ and you should check with your Advisor of Studies for specific details about degree regulations. The University Calendar holds full details of the requirements for each degree programme and can be found at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar)

All students are strongly advised to discuss their Honours options with their Advisor of Studies. Honours applicants will be invited to attend a brief interview, or are encouraged to meet with the relevant Undergraduate Programme Co-ordinator who will be able to answer any questions, check that you are in a position to fulfil the entrance requirements and consider whether you are in a position to cope with the demands of the Honours programme. You will be informed by letter in May or June of the result of your application.

The School makes every effort to meet course preferences. However, depending on demand and timetable clashes it may not always be possible to accommodate first preference. Courses with fewer than 12 students may not run, and in order to enhance the learning experience, no more than 25 students will normally be allocated to courses at Levels 3 and 4. All course selections must be approved by the Undergraduate Programme Co-ordinator.

## GRADUATION TRANSCRIPTS

It is anticipated that students who commenced their studies in, or after, 2009–2010, will receive a more detailed transcript of their studies on graduation. The increased details will include a record of all examination results attained. For students graduating in 2012–2013 transcripts will show details of all CAS marks awarded, including marks which are fails. Where a resit has been required as a result of medical circumstances or other good cause (MC/GC) this will not be shown, but all other circumstances (i.e. No Paper 'NP') will be included.

## POSTGRADUATE STUDY

The School is a major centre of Postgraduate Study. It has a vibrant research community and has fostered the development of the Northern Institute of Philosophy, the Centre for the Study of Spirituality and Health, and the Centre for the History and Philosophy of Science, and is a major contributor to the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies. For information on the Postgraduate Degree Programmes available within the School, see the School web pages.

## SCHOOL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The School has a Health and Safety Policy which is available from the School Office or online at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp/administration/office/Schoolpolicydocs.php>

The Policy provides information on what we do within the School to prevent circumstances arising which could cause injury or ill health. Health and Safety legislation imposes duties on both staff and students as well as on the School and University as a whole. It is important that you read the Policy carefully. Meeting our statutory obligations set out in the legislation requires the co-operation and involvement of everyone in the School. Each one of us has a part to play in ensuring that the School remains as safe as we can make it.

The Health and Safety arrangements are reviewed on a regular basis. Suggestions for improving these are welcome and students may contact the School Health and Safety Advisor with their ideas. The School's Health and Safety Advisor is Ms Rachel Hughes, who can be contacted at [r.b.hughes@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:r.b.hughes@abdn.ac.uk)

## INFORMING US OF PROBLEMS

For academic problems regarding your course, the first port of call is your Tutor. If the Tutor is the problem, contact the Course Co-ordinator, the Undergraduate Programme Co-ordinator or the Deputy Head of School. If you cannot find a member of academic staff, leave a message with the relevant Secretary.

## APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

The University's appeals and complaints procedures provide students with a framework through which to formalise their concerns about aspects of their academic experience or to complain when they feel that standards of non-academic service have fallen short of that which they expected.

The process has been designed to make the appeals and complaints process as accessible and simple as possible and to provide a robust, fair mechanism through which to ensure that all appeals and complaints are considered in the appropriate way at the appropriate level.

A major feature of the process is the emphasis it places on early or informal resolution. All students should note that there is an expectation that they will take responsibility for seeking resolution of their academic or non-academic concerns by raising and discussing them at the earliest possible stage with the relevant individuals in an academic School or administrative Service.

Further details of the processes for making an appeal or complaint, including where to find further help and support in the process, is given at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/appeals](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/appeals)

## CALENDAR DATES 2011–2012

Term dates and week numbers can be found here: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/term-dates.php>

## **COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

If you have any comments or suggestions as to how this Handbook can be improved, or have requests for additional information to be provided in the next edition, please e-mail them to Ms Sarah James, School Administrative Officer at [sarah.james@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.james@abdn.ac.uk)