Guidance on Completion of Undergraduate New Course Proposal (SENAS) Form (2010 Onwards):

**SENAS 1: NEW COURSE PROPOSALS**

New course proposals are required:-

- where the content being proposed is entirely new or
- where the content of an existing course is being substantially modified such that a student could not reasonably be assessed on it without re-attendance.

After scrutiny and approval at the School level, all proposals to offer a new undergraduate course should be submitted online to the relevant College Registrar. The proposal will be considered initially by the relevant College Committee and, subsequently, by the Quality Assurance Committee.

In completing the new course proposal, please would you note the following:-

**All boxes must be completed, where appropriate;**

2 - Course Co-ordinators MUST be either a member of academic staff or an Honorary member of the academic staff of the relevant School. This is because the Head of School is ultimately responsible for the course. It does not preclude “bought-in”; (including relief) teachers having a major role in organising and delivering a course (but not a programme).

5 – The provision of Sixth Century Courses (6CC) and Sustained Study Programmes (SSP) is determined at College level and reviewed on an annual basis by Colleges and QAC. Design guidance for Sixth Century Courses and Sustained Study Programmes is available at https://www.abdn.ac.uk/cref/implementation/enhanced-study/

6 - An existing course may be replaced by a new course in one of two ways: (a) when it is no longer appropriate to offer a course (e.g. when the course content is no longer applicable or if the Course Co-ordinator has left the University) and the School wishes to withdraw the course and replace it by a new course on a different topic; (b) when a new course covers similar material to an existing course but the content is sufficiently different to require a different assessment. In both cases there may be implications of withdrawing a course in regard to pre- and co-requisites and to the degree programme(s) associated with the course. **While it is not necessary to complete a separate course withdrawal proposal, you should confirm in 6b whether this course is to be withdrawn. You should indicate in 28 those programmes that are sponsored by your School for which the course being withdrawn is either a compulsory or optional component (the Registry can help to identify those programmes offered by other Schools for which the course is prescribed, if necessary). Details of the programme(s) to be associated with the NEW course should be given in 20.**

7 - Although the University’s courses (and programmes) are consistent with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), all of the University’s systems and publications relate to Aberdeen (UoA) levels. Thus, UoA Level 1 is equivalent to SCQF Level 7; UoA Level 5 is equivalent to SCQF Level 11, etc. Full details of the SCQF Levels Descriptors are given in the SCQF Handbook which is available at http://www.scqf.org.uk/AbouttheFramework/LevelDescriptors.aspx

If a course is to be offered to at more than one level i.e. at levels 3 and 4, details of the enhanced teaching and/or assessment arrangements for higher level students must be included as appropriate in 19.

8 - Enter the academic year in which the course will be offered for the first time (e.g. 2010-2011). The precise date of commencement of the course will be deduced from 9.
9 - The first half-session teaching period runs from Week 12 to Week 23, and the second half-session teaching from Week 30 to Week 45. If the course spans both first and second half-sessions, please indicate the week numbers in which it runs under ‘Other’. Details of University week numbers are available at https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staff/term-dates.php

10 - 1 credit point should equate to 10 hours of notional effort that an “average” student would be expected to devote in order to achieve the learning outcomes. This includes time spent in attending the course, in private study and in revision for the assessment. See also 22 below.

11 - Examples of the rationale for a proposal include:-

- in response to feedback (e.g. from students, External Examiners, employers, professional or statutory bodies etc.)
- as a consequence of teaching staff changes
- as a consequence of course review
- to meet strategic objectives
- as part of programme review undertaken for Curriculum Reform

12 – There is a range of external reference points that exist outside the University, to which courses co-ordinators are directed (see below). Please list in the box provided those to which you have aligned your course.

Subject benchmark statements (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp) are a useful point of reference for a new course. These have been generated by panels of expert practitioners in each field represented (lists are provided at the end of each), and provide a framework of topics typically covered in each subject, wherever it is taught in the UK. They should not be viewed as prescriptive; rather they provide a snapshot of the broad themes that a subject might be expected to cover. Clearly specific research specialisms are concentrated in particular Schools and areas, and the flavour of the curriculum and the diet of courses developed will quite rightly reflect this. Also to note is that many subjects are cross- and multidisciplinary, hence course co-ordinators are advised to be aware that their course proposal might span more than one of the statements.

The ten QAA Codes of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (henceforth Codes of Practice) (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp) are important documents that all course-co-ordinators need to be aware of. In the context of course design sections two, three, six and nine are of particular relevance. The Codes are laid out as a series of precepts followed by guidance and further information. Much of the information contained within the Codes of Practice has informed existing University policy detailed in the relevant section of the Academic Quality Handbook (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/).

The Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) is a unique approach to balancing both quality assurance and enhancement. This replaced the old quality assurance process of Subject Review in 2005, and is unique to Scotland. The five elements of the QEF are outlined at http://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/qualityframework/default.asp. Course co-ordinators’ attention is drawn here to the Quality Enhancement Themes (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/qualityframework/enhancementthemes.asp), the outcomes from which provide a range of resources, developed by academic colleagues in Universities across Scotland that can be adapted and used in the course design process.

Professional & statutory body requirements and/or guidance: whilst not applicable to all subjects, course-co-ordinators will be aware of their own particular professional and/or statutory body (PSB) requirements. Please indicate which, if any of these have been referred to during the production of the course.

Notwithstanding all of this information, course co-ordinators will be aware of other external points of reference from their own practice (e.g. from working as an external examiner, from other informal contacts with colleagues etc.) which can also be referred to at this point.
13 - Resource implications are primarily a College concern although QAC approval for a course is conditional upon the relevant College(s) being satisfied that the course can be sufficiently resourced.

14 – College specific guidance on the minimum numbers of students required for the course to run is available from the appropriate Assistant College Registrar.

15 - There should be good and specific reasons to seek permission to cap courses (e.g. limitations imposed by laboratory space). A sound academic case for capping should be included in 28 for consideration by the QAC. In the event that permission to cap a course is granted by QAC, it should be noted that the operation of any capping system will be regularly reviewed by the Committee to ensure that students’ choice of curriculum is not being significantly restricted and/or any particular groups of students are not being unfairly disadvantaged.

16 – Courses may be designed wholly for delivery on campus, wholly for delivery at a distance, or adopt a blended approach, enhancing the flexibility of traditional delivery modes with eLearning. eLearning includes provision of web based course materials, use of tools for synchronous and asynchronous communication between students and course delivery team, interaction with rich learning objects, and computer aided assessment.

On campus delivery might typically include lectures, tutorials, laboratory practicals etc.

Some activities are clearly off campus, e.g. field trips, site visits, placements etc. However, off campus delivery may be based around eLearning, paper based course materials, video conferencing, lecture recordings, and video or audio media.

17 - Where delivery is to be the responsibility of more than one Discipline, it is essential that all relevant Heads of School give their approval to the proposal to deliver the course. The information supplied in 17 will also be used in the calculation of Student Load.

In regard to the JACS code, the Higher Education Statistics Agency on behalf of the Funding Councils also requires the subject classification of each course. Details of the full range of JACS codes available, together with the nationally-agreed descriptors applicable to each, are available on, and can be downloaded from, the HESA website: http://www.hesa.ac.uk/dox/jacs/JACS_complete.pdf. Courses can be split between different JACS codes where appropriate; in which case the percentage split between codes as well as providing Disciplines should be indicated i.e. C181 – 50%; C185 – 50%.

18 - If bought-in teachers are to be used, details should be provided in 28, including an indication of whether or not an individual(s) has given provisional agreement to teach on the course or that potential personnel have been identified. If appropriate, give details of the course and session where an individual has previously taught on a University course(s).

19 - Refer to the Catalogue of Courses (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/courses/) for details of format, as the information provided here will form the basis of the Catalogue entry. It is essential that all relevant information is provided, including the course content.

Pre- and co-requisites can be useful in ensuring that staff do not spend a lot of time teaching something that the students have already covered elsewhere in their curriculum. However, in order to maintain the flexibility of the wider Programme within which this course will sit, please try to keep pre- and co-requisite courses to a minimum.

Pre-requisites include any course which has to have been undertaken in order for a student to progress onto the current course. It is important for course co-ordinators to check on an annual basis that pre-requisite courses are running, and that the necessary course elements are still being delivered (e.g. staff changes may lead to changes in individual courses).
Co-requisites refer to any parallel courses which need to be undertaken by a student at the same time as following the current course. As far as possible, care should be taken to ensure that teaching is timed and placed in sequence in order to take advantage of co-requisite elements in parallel courses. It is important for course co-ordinators to check on an annual basis that co-requisite courses are running, that the necessary course elements are still being delivered (e.g. staff changes may lead to changes in individual courses), and are being delivered at an appropriate time.

The box for Notes can be used to indicate, for example, the degree or Honours programme to whose students the course is restricted or the proposed availability if the course is not to be offered each academic year.

The course aims and main learning outcomes will not appear in the Catalogue but should form the basis of the information to be given to students who register for the course (e.g. in the Course Handbook). These details are requested in 19 to allow the relevant College Committee and the QAC to properly exercise their approval roles in regard to the academic content and University policy aspects of a proposal.

**Course Aims**

The course aims indicate the broad, general statement of educational intent that indicates the overall desired goal of the course.

Examples:

- This course deals with the ways in which molecular events within cells are organised and controlled.

- The course provides an introduction to the key features of the French Legal System, its historical development and classification, and structure of law.

- This course focuses on the fundamental relationship between the stresses and strains within engineering components and the load and displacements imposed at their boundaries.

**Main Learning Outcomes**

Course learning outcomes are statements of intended learning that may take the form of acquired knowledge, understanding, or higher level intellectual, practical or transferable skills, and which is intrinsically linked to assessment.

Learning outcomes should articulate what the student will have learned or be able to do as a result of successfully completing a particular course. The “art” of producing meaningful learning outcomes lies in producing statements that are intrinsically important to a course, but at the same time sufficiently specific so that they can be readily understood and tested. A good rule of thumb which can help you to write learning outcomes that mean something is “Could I assess this?” If it’s not clear that it could be assessed with the resources available, it probably isn’t an effective learning outcome.

Examples:

The vocabulary used in this area of course design is prone to change, and frequently causes confusion. Previously, the terms “objective” and “learning outcome” have been used, sometimes interchangeably. As the notion of “outcomes-driven” courses has become prevalent, the use of objectives in course descriptors has now been abandoned.
Content
This section should include the disciplinary content of the course only. This should be sufficiently detailed to provide students with a clear idea of what the course covers, **but should not exceed 100 words**. Details of the intended modes of delivery are requested under “Teaching”; please do not enter this information here.

Teaching
This section should include details of the mode of delivery of teaching (e.g. lectures, tutorials, laboratory classes), the indicative time to be spent on each (e.g. 3 one-hour lectures and one three hour practical per week). Please do not enter details of the discipline content here; this should be included under “Content” above.

Summative assessment (including resit attempts)
Summative assessment refers to assessed elements of a course that are used to deliver a graded assessment of students’ performance, and that are formally recorded. Course co-ordinators are encouraged to consider methods of assessment that test a range of student abilities, in line with the course learning outcomes. All summative assessments are marked using the University’s Common Assessment Scale (CAS). Guidance on the correct use of CAS is provided at [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section7.shtml](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section7.shtml), section 7.7.6. Course co-ordinators are alerted to the fact that in determining CAS, Schools may have locally-agreed routines for generating the final CAS score on a student's work, and are advised to seek clarification on this point from within their own School.

It should be noted that whilst an assessment may be summative, it may also perform a formative role by providing feedback to students on their performance. The use of such feedback will be tempered by the timing of return; returning work once the course has ended will provide little opportunity for a student to act on the feedback provided. Course co-ordinators are alerted to the need for a balance of both summative and formative assessment in providing students with the most effective diet of opportunities to support their learning.

**Details of the resit assessment** should be included for Level 1, 2 and 3 courses Although it is not necessary to supply details of the resit arrangements for Level 4 courses, it may be necessary for resits to be arranged for those students who require to resit for credit accumulation purposes in order to satisfy SCQF requirements. In such cases, the timing and format of the assessment will be determined by the QAC on the recommendation of the head of the relevant school. The Catalogue of Courses contains standard wording covering these circumstances.

Formative assessment
Formative assessment refers to assessed elements of a course that are used to provide feedback to students on their progress, rather than being used to deliver a graded assessment of their performance that is formally recorded (i.e. the marks don’t go forward to be counted). Formative assessment can be formal or informal.

Feedback
Feedback is an area that students repeatedly point out as one area in which some staff could provide better input. Effective feedback should be:

- In sufficient time to be able to be used by students to improve their work (**typically** within two weeks of hand-in, in line with the University’s guidelines on Assessment [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section7.shtml](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section7.shtml)).
- Appropriate and relevant to helping students understand where they have both gained and lost marks, and how to improve their mark (if appropriate).

The University’s Feedback Framework is available at ????????
20 - ALL degree programmes to be associated with a course should be identified to ensure that the University Calendar is edited correctly. Also, state whether the course will be compulsory or an elective for each degree programme.

21 – Course content and structure are elements that are under the close scrutiny of the course co-ordinator at all times. Within this overarching scheme, however, it can be possible to involve the students themselves in contributing to the content or structure of a course in some way. The most obvious examples of this are during the production of a project or dissertation, when students can choose the topic that they wish to study and the methods to be employed to carry it out.

However other opportunities may lend themselves to providing opportunities for student involvement in the content and structure of a course element, examples including:

- Fieldwork projects
- Course delivery through student-led seminars
- Student-selected presentations
- Poster presentations on selected topics

22 – The information should be consistent with that in 10(see above). Each course will be assigned credit points in terms of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) in which full-time undergraduate students (including PGDE) would normally be expected to register for 120 credit points or.

Thus, the notional student effort (which includes the revision and assessment period, in addition to that required during the 6 or 12 week teaching period) required to complete a course (Q22(a)) should comply with the following framework, irrespective of level:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Credit Points</th>
<th>Notional Effort (hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 credit course</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 credit course</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 credit annual load</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 credit annual load</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regard to the hours of timetabled teaching sessions (Q22(b)), it will be assumed that, these will relate to the guidelines given below:-

**Guidelines on the relationship between contact hours, level and credit points**

**Non-Practical Based Courses:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Normally 15 credit points requiring 36 contact hours for the course (pro rata).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Normally 30 credit points, requiring at least 48 contact hours for the course (pro rata).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>No fixed rule concerning contact hours except that they should be reasonable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practical-Based Courses:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Normally 15 credit points requiring 36 contact hours for the course (pro rata).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Normally 15 credit points requiring 48 contact hours for the course (pro rata).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No fixed rule concerning contact hours except that they should be reasonable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For information, **Private Study** is the estimated time required to complete (a) in-course assignments e.g. writing-up practicals/essays/projects, (b) Self-Directed Learning, i.e. work which is part of the course syllabus and which may include time spent on tasks undertaken (including group work) for discussion at a timetabled session e.g. tutorial or time to be spent in researching a topic, (c) other work, including library work, which a student would need to undertake in order to achieve the course learning outcomes and (d) time that students are expected to devote to revision for end-of-course examinations and the acquisition, development and enhancement of knowledge, which will vary between individuals.

23a – Employability is much wider than graduates securing employment on completion of their degree programme or providing careers advice to students. Employability spans issues such as:

- Enhancing students’ subject specific skills, generic skills and career management skills through different styles of teaching (e.g. problem-based learning) and provision (e.g. work placements);
- Developing students through personal development planning; introducing creativity and enterprise, facilitating students to taking control of their learning and future plans;
- Engaging employers and professional bodies in meaningful contributions to the undergraduate curriculum, for example through employer-hosted projects, work shadowing opportunities etc.

How does your course include or address any of these areas?

23b - Work-related learning involves students learning about themselves and the world of work in order to empower them to enter and succeed in employment and includes:

- Work Placements (paid or unpaid), where the learning outcomes are intended as part of a student’s degree programme. Credit is not awarded for undertaking work, but for the learning and skills achieved and demonstrated as a result of the experience. Work placements vary in length from 6 weeks to 12 months and also location and can be local, national and international.
- Professional mandatory placements or attachments, for example in primary or secondary schools to fulfil professional body requirements.
- **Work shadowing** where a student observes a member of staff working in an organisation, and gains an increased understanding of what a particular job entails.
- **Work simulations** such as role play, business games and work-based problem solving exercises carried out in the classroom.

Further information regarding establishing a work placement provision as part of a course/programme is available from the University’s Careers Service.

**Study Abroad Opportunities include:**

ERASMUS an EU-funded programme which gives students an opportunity to study in another European country without lengthening their degree.  
[http://www.abdn.ac.uk/newstudents/erasmus/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/newstudents/erasmus/)

Bologna a process designed to create a European Higher Education area promoting study abroad.  
[http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/international/bologna](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/international/bologna)

North American exchange opportunities.  
[http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sras/international/north_america.shtml](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sras/international/north_america.shtml)

How does your course include or address any of these areas?
The purpose of this section is to ask staff to consider which elements of the four clusters of Aberdeen Graduate Attributes the course allows students to acquire.

Clearly, all courses will differ in the attributes included and so there is no expectation that all courses will include all categories. However, it is the expectation that all programmes, through their constituent courses, will provide opportunities for students to develop a full set of attributes.

Here are examples of topics which you might wish to consider and then include in each of the four clusters of graduate attributes. Does your course include any or all of the following? If so, please provide a brief indication of how they are developed, with examples. Please also add any other details that you consider relevant.

1. **Academically excellent**
   a) In-depth and extensive knowledge, understanding and skills
   b) A breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills beyond their chosen discipline(s)
   c) An ability to participate in the creation of new knowledge and understanding through research and inquiry
   d) A contextual understanding of past and present knowledge and ideas
   e) An intellectual curiosity and a willingness to question accepted wisdom and to be open to new ideas

2. **Critical thinkers and effective communicators**
   a) A capacity for independent conceptual and creative thinking
   b) A capacity for problem identification, the collection of evidence, synthesis and dispassionate analysis
   c) A capacity for attentive exchange of views, informed argument and reasoning
   d) An ability to communicate effectively for different purposes and in different contexts
   e) An ability to work independently and as part of a team
   f) A diverse set of generic skills

3. **Open to learning and personal development**
   a) An openness to, and an interest in, lifelong learning through directed and self-directed study
   b) An awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses
   c) A capacity for self reflection, self discovery and personal development

4. **Active citizens**
   a) An awareness and appreciation of ethical and moral issues
   b) An awareness and appreciation of social and cultural diversity
   c) An understanding of social and civic responsibilities, and of the rights of individuals and groups
   d) An appreciation of the concepts of enterprise and leadership in all aspects of life
   e) A readiness for citizenship in a civilised and inclusive society
For further information about the background to the development of Aberdeen-specific Graduate Attributes consult the final report of the Curriculum Reform Project (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/curriculum-reform/documents/Final_report_minus_appendices.doc).

25 – Students who are required as part of their course of study to be in unsupervised contact with persons aged under 18, will be subject to a Disclosure (Scotland) check. Students admitted to programmes which already have compulsory elements requiring contact with persons under the age of 18 are routinely subject to a Disclosure check as part of the admissions process. Colleges keep a record of all courses requiring a check and ensure that applications are processed correctly. Further details, including College contacts, are provided in Appendix 6.2 of the Academic Quality Handbook.

Appropriate wording to indicate that a check will be required should be included in the notes section of the entry for the Catalogue of Courses in 19.

26 – If there are components of the course, including methods of delivery and assessment, that may be inaccessible to students with disabilities or which they may find difficult or impossible to complete, please detail in 28 the alternative arrangements that would be made to allow such students to complete the course successfully [only in exceptional circumstances should the nature of a course be such as to make it impossible for alternative arrangements to be made for students with disabilities: in these circumstances, full details must be provided].

Any resource implications should be addressed in 18.

Appropriate wording should be included in the notes section of the entry for the Catalogue of Courses in 19.

**Schools are strongly advised to consult the Student Support Officer/Disabilities Adviser in Student Support Services (extn 3935) in completing this information.**

27 – Assess the course and assessment methods in terms of race, religion and belief, disability, sexual orientation, age and gender. If you believe that there may be an adverse impact for one or more of the equality groups you may need to reconsider elements of the course. The University has a legal duty to ‘promote equality of opportunity’ in relation to race, gender and disability (although the University’s policies also cover age, sexual orientation and religion and belief). This means that we need to look proactively at the content, delivery and assessment of our courses to ascertain opportunities to promote equality. If you have any queries or would like further guidance please contact the Equality and Diversity Adviser.

28 - Use this box to provide any additional information requested elsewhere.

29 – The proposal must be approved by the Heads of all relevant Schools have approved the proposals before it is sent to the relevant College Registrar. Where approval is required by more than one Head of School, enter date of final approval.