

ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK

SECTION 6

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICIES AND ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

This Section of the Academic Quality Handbook should be of general interest to all students and staff, and of particular interest to Heads of School, Advisers of Studies and Postgraduate Conveners/Supervisors. It does not cover assessment and external examining policies, which are described in Sections 7 and 9, respectively.

CONTENTS

6.1	Central Support and Guidance	3
6.2	Joining Instructions/Registration	3
6.3	Curriculum Approval	4
	Regulations and the University Calendar	4
	Catalogue of Courses	5
	Advising/Curriculum Approval	5
	<i>Honours Programmes by Part-time Study</i>	5
	<i>Study Abroad</i>	6
	Change of Curriculum	7
	Changes to Mode of Study (e.g. Full-Time to Part-Time)	7
6.4	Student Record System	8
6.5	Merit Certificates	9
6.6	Monitoring Student Progress (Undergraduate Students)	9
6.7	Class Certificates (Undergraduate Students)	9
	Deadlines for Class Certificate Refusal	9
	Procedures for Class Certificate Refusal	10
6.8	Class Lists	10
6.9	Candidate Lists	10
6.10	Examination Results	11
6.11	Medical Certificates	11
6.12	University Policies on Teaching and Learning Arrangements	11
	Start and Finish Times of classes	11
	Wednesday Afternoon Teaching	12
	Quotas for Honours Options	12
	Timetabling of Core Courses	12
	Student Feedback	12
	Course and Programme Proposals	12
	Relief Teaching	13
	Students' Work Affected by their Undertaking Paid Employment	13
	Disclosure Checking for Students	13

6.13	Progress and Academic Appeals	14
	Progress: Undergraduate Students	14
	Progress: Postgraduate Students	15
	Application Against Termination of Study or Candidature for an Award	15
	Academic Appeals	16
6.14	Complaints and Discipline	16
	Complaints	16
	Student Discipline	16
	Examination Offences (including plagiarism)	17
6.15	Transfer	17
6.16	Withdrawal	17
6.17	External Candidates/Readmission	18
6.18	Queries and Contact Details	18
6.19	Forms	18

Appendix

Appendix 6.1: Placement Learning

6.1 Central Support and Guidance

6.1.1 Following acceptance of an offer of admission, the majority of **undergraduate students** will be registered for a degree or other award which is assigned to one of seven areas of study, as indicated below:-

Area of Study	Constituent Degree(s)
Arts & Social Sciences	MA; BA; MSci
Education	MA (Education); BMus; PGDE Primary; PGDE Secondary; BA Professional Development ⁺ ; BA Early Childhood Studies ⁺ ;
Science	BSc (Pure Science); BSc (Biomedical Science); BSc (Forestry); BSc Marine and Coastal Resource Management; MChem; MEng; MGeol, MPhys, MSci
Engineering	BScEng; BEng; MEng
Divinity	BD; BTh
Law	LLB
Medicine	MBCbB; BDS, BSc Med Sci; BSc (Health Sciences)

* validated programme

+ in-service awards, including intermediate awards of Certificate or Diploma in Higher Education

6.1.2 A member of the University's administrative staff serves as Registry Officer for each of the above degrees and areas of study. The Registry Officers continually maintain contact with students and their Advisers of Studies in relation to students' curriculum and progress. Students may also maintain continual contact with the other officers within the Registry e.g. regard to tuition fees and Tier 4 matters (paragraph 6.18 refers).

6.1.3 The Registry Officers who support the relevant areas of study also provide administrative support and guidance to **non-graduating students** who are studying within their particular area, though visiting exchange students may also obtain guidance from the International Office within Student Recruitment and Admissions Services as appropriate.

6.1.4 **Postgraduate students** are admitted to a degree or to a specified programme of study e.g. one leading to a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma in a named area of study. Administrative support in relation to postgraduate students is provided by the Registry and the relevant College Graduate School.

6.2 Joining Instructions/Registration

6.2.1 **Undergraduate students** (both new and returning), including non-graduating students, will be sent (in hard-copy for new students and by email to returning students) Joining Instructions for the forthcoming session, which will provide details of when and where to

register. With the exception of MBChB students, details of a student's Adviser of Studies for the forthcoming session will be included for new students or available in the Student Portal for returning students. MBChB students are allocated a Regent for the duration of their programme of study, details of whom are included in the Joining Instructions for new students and confirmed at the beginning of each subsequent session. [Section 5](#) and [Appendix 5.1](#) refer.

- 6.2.2 **Undergraduate students** who have not satisfied the requirements for progression to the next normal year/level of study following the May/June examination diet will be sent Joining Instructions in September, provided that they satisfy the progress requirements following the August examination diet.
- 6.2.3 New and returning students are advised to consult a number of documents and/or webpages in advance of arriving in/returning to Aberdeen which include, *inter alia*, the following:-
- a document entitled Student Attendance, Performance and Assessment¹;
 - in the case of new students, the New Students' Website²
 - the University Calendar³
 - the Catalogue of Courses⁴
- 6.2.4 **Postgraduate students** (both new and returning) are required to register at the start of each session. Registration details are sent from April onwards for new students and in August for returning students, and will include, for new students, details of the *Code of Practice: Postgraduate Taught Students* or the *Code of Practice: Postgraduate Research Students*, as appropriate. See [Section 5](#), Appendices [5.3](#) and [5.4](#) respectively.
- 6.2.5 Having completed registration and having paid, or made arrangements to pay, the appropriate fees, new students can obtain their Student ID Card, at which point they become matriculated. Student ID cards are issued for life and will remain valid for the duration of a students' degree. Students do not receive a new one at the start of each academic year. If, however, the registration process required at the beginning of each academic year is not followed, the ID card will be de-activated.

6.3 Curriculum Approval

Regulations and the University Calendar

- 6.3.1 All study leading towards a degree, certificate or diploma, including progress requirements, is governed by Regulations approved by the Senate. These are published annually in the University Calendar, copies of which can be accessed on the University web pages⁵. The University Calendar includes programme specifications for all degrees offered and the Supplementary Regulations for each area of study.
- 6.3.2 **Non-graduating students** who register for one or more courses are subject to the same regulatory framework in regard to those courses as graduating students.

¹ www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/registration/sapa.php

² www.abdn.ac.uk/newstudents/

³ www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar

⁴ www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar

⁵ www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar/contents.shtml

- 6.3.3 With the exception of students admitted to the degrees of MBChB, BDS and BSc Med Sci, for which there is a fixed curriculum, the curriculum of all **undergraduate students** must be approved by an Adviser of Studies (or PPA) each year (paragraph 6.3.7 refers; see also [Section 5](#)).

Catalogue of Courses

- 6.3.4 Details of all **undergraduate** courses to be offered in a particular session are provided in the Catalogue of Courses which is published on the University website.
- 6.3.5 The Catalogue specifies the credit value for each course, and indicates any pre- or co-requisites. Summaries of the course content and assessment details are also provided.

Advising/Curriculum Approval

- 6.3.6 **Postgraduate taught and research students**⁶ are assigned a Supervisor who, where applicable, will be responsible for approving a student's taught curriculum at the start of each session. This will include the approval of taught courses taken as part of a modularised taught programme of study or as part of a research programme.
- 6.3.7 With the exception of MBChB, BDS and BScMedSci students (paragraph 6.3.3 refers), all **undergraduates** are assigned to an Adviser of Studies⁷ (or PPA) with whom they are required to agree their curriculum for that Session. Any subsequent change to a student's curriculum, or to their Mode of Study (e.g. from Full-Time to Part-Time, and vice-versa) (see below) must also be approved. Students must attend for interview with their Adviser upon request (e.g. to discuss progress issues). Students who are admitted/re-admitted at the start of the second half-session must have their curriculum approved in the same manner.

Honours Programmes by Part-time Study

- 6.3.8 Part-time registration on an Honours programme should normally be permitted, unless the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) has approved an application, on an individual programme basis, that part-time study should not be permitted for a particular programme. It should be for the QAC to judge the merits of an application not to offer part-time Honours programmes on academic grounds;
- 6.3.9 Where QAC has given permission for a particular Honours programme not to be offered on a part-time basis, the parent School(s) is required to indicate this prohibition in their level 1 and Honours handbooks i.e. that a named Honours programme could only be studied on a full-time basis; and that the degree programme prescription annexed to the relevant supplementary regulations should be amended to denote this restriction.
- 6.3.10 In the context of an Honours programme, periods of part-time registration must normally be continuous, and must not exceed twice the period of time required of a full-time student to complete the Honours programme (or the portion(s) of it in respect of which the student is registered part-time). Examples would be two years for a 1-year Honours

⁶ Further details on research student administration are provided in [Section 8](#)

⁷ In Education, Advisers are known as 'Personal & Professional Advisers'

programme and four years (or two years part-time and one year full-time) for a 2 year Honours programme.

- 6.3.11 The following are recognised as academic grounds on which the QAC *might* approve an application not to permit students to undertake an Honours programme on a part-time basis:-
- (a) where a 60-credit course required full-time study in a particular half-session;
 - (b) where two 30-credit core courses in a Joint Honours programme were only available in the same half-session;
 - (c) where offering a part-time Honours programme would require significant changes in the organisation of course delivery (i) which would have a detrimental effect on delivery to full-time students or (ii) where the relevant College Teaching & Learning Committee was unable to approve an application for restructuring to provide a separate organisational structure specifically for part-time delivery;
 - (d) where a course (e.g. a project course requiring experimental work) required extended periods of focused activity that would be incompatible with part-time study and where successful completion of such a course was dependent on it being carried out in the context of knowledge acquired concurrently in other elements of the Honours programme, all of which could not be available at the same time to a part-time student.

Study Abroad

- 6.3.12 In addition to some programmes requiring periods of study abroad, many taught programmes provide for students electing to spend between three months and twelve months of their programme at another institution. The two principal routes for study abroad are via the ERASMUS programme (introduced to increase student mobility within the member states of the European Commission) or through the University's long-standing International Exchange Programme.
- 6.3.13 The ERASMUS scheme and the International Exchange Programme are administered through the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service.
- 6.3.14 Study abroad is not permitted at Level 1 i.e. in the first year of a student's programme of study. Although students are not permitted to undertake their entire final year abroad, it is possible for some students to work on their Honours project abroad for part of their final year. The majority of students who study abroad therefore do so in either year 2 or year 3 of a four-year programme.
- 6.3.15 An ECTS transcript is submitted by ERASMUS students at the conclusion of their study abroad and they are awarded an equivalent number of unspecified Aberdeen credits. Students can then apply to the Head of the relevant School for specific exemption for compulsory courses taken abroad.

Change of Curriculum

- 6.3.16 Undergraduate students are normally permitted to change their curriculum for a particular half-session within two weeks of the start of teaching for the half-session (1 week for 6-week courses), though Schools may set earlier limits where in their academic judgement this is desirable. Thereafter, changes will not normally be authorised as a student would be unlikely to be able to complete the attendance and in-course requirements for a particular course. For students in their honours years, Schools may also prescribe a date in each half-session by which students who have elected to undertake more than the prescribed number of courses/credit points (as indicated in the degree regulations) must specify the courses they wish to count towards honours classification.
- 6.3.17 A change of curriculum will usually entail a student either withdrawing from a course for which they have been authorised to attend and/or being granted permission to enrol for an additional course, subject also to the approval of the relevant School.
- 6.3.18 All changes of curriculum must be approved by a student's Adviser of Studies, who should make the appropriate changes using the *Adviser's Change of Curriculum screen* on the Student Record. Any Adviser having a problem using this screen should contact the Help Desk (3636).
- 6.3.19 In approving a change of curriculum, an Adviser of Studies should be satisfied that any change:-
- complies with the required curriculum for the particular degree/level of study, as defined in the University Calendar, and should not affect a student's ability to obtain pre-requisites for courses to be followed in a subsequent half-session;
 - does not result in a student's mode of study being changed e.g. from full-time to part-time. This is particularly important for fees purposes. Mandatory awards from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) or a Local Education Authority (LEA) (which cover fees and, where appropriate, a contribution towards a student's maintenance) are only payable to eligible full-time students. It is essential, therefore, that authorisation of a student's withdrawal from a course does not result in the student being deemed to be studying part-time and could result in the student losing his/her mandatory award and being required to pay his/her own (part-time) fees;
 - does not result in the student attending more than 90 credit points in a particular half-session. The permission of the Quality Assurance Committee is required where a student wishes to register for more than this maximum full-time credit load.

Changes to Mode of Study (e.g. Full-Time or Part-Time)

- 6.3.20 The credit requirements for full-time and part-time study at Undergraduate level are stipulated in the General Regulations for First Degrees and, where relevant, in the Supplementary Regulations for particular degrees. Registered students may apply to change their mode of study for a variety of reasons. Examples would be due to a change in personal, including financial, circumstances necessitating a student wishing to undertake study on a part-time basis; and students who fail to satisfy the requirements to progress to the next year/level of study but who wish to continue on a part-time basis in

order to repeat courses/examinations to gain the required credits for progression before applying to transfer back to full-time study. Paragraph 6.3.8 also refers.

- 6.3.21 **Undergraduate** students who wish to change their mode of study must complete an Amendment to Mode of Study form available from the Registry (extension 3505) or from the web⁸. Once such an application has been approved by the Adviser and Director of Studies (Admissions) [or equivalent] the student will be sent a letter from the Registry Officer for their degree to confirm the change and confirm that their Student Record has been amended.
- 6.3.22 **Postgraduate** students who wish to change their mode of study should discuss this with their Supervisor in the first instance. Recommendations for such change should then be submitted to the Registry by the Supervisor, for consideration/approval.
- 6.3.23 Advice on the implications of changing from full-time to part-time study with respect to mandatory awards, student fees, and eligibility for student loans or other financial assistance can be obtained from the Registry.

6.4 Student Record System

- 6.4.1 The Student Record can be made available to any member of the University staff. Usernames and passwords are issued by the Help Desk (3636). The IT Trainers provide regular opportunities to attend courses on using the Student Record and provide *How To* guides.
- 6.4.2 At various times of the year, the following codes may be added to the record against a particular course:-
- C1. First Class Certificate of Merit
 - C2. Second Class Certificate of Merit
 - C4. Authorised Addition to Curriculum
 - C5. Unauthorised Addition to Curriculum
 - C6. Unauthorised Withdrawal from Class/At Risk
 - C7. Class Certificate Refused
 - C8. Examination only (i.e. external candidate)
 - C9. Authorised withdrawal from class
 - CX. Barred from entering a second half-session class as a consequence of refusal of a Class Certificate for a first half-session course which is a pre-requisite for the course
- 6.4.3 Subsequent authorised changes of curriculum, made using the Change of Curriculum screen (see above), will result in the student's record being updated. In such cases, the number "C4" will be inserted against a course to represent an "authorised addition". A "C9" will be added to denote an authorised withdrawal from a course.

⁸ www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/registration/mode-of-study-part-time-ful-time-66.php

6.5 Merit Certificates

- 6.5.1 Students are nominally awarded a First Class Certificate of Merit for any course for which they are awarded a CAS mark of 18 or above, and a Second Class Certificate of Merit for any course for which they are awarded a CAS mark of 15 to 17 provided that this is obtained at the first attempt at assessment following completion of the course concerned. The relevant code number (C1 or C2) is added to the student's record and will be indicated on a student's transcript ([Section 7 refers](#)). Individual Certificates of Merit are issued by Schools only on request.

6.6 Monitoring Student Progress

- 6.6.1 The University operates a monitoring system throughout the academic year to identify students who may be experiencing difficulties with their studies and to ensure that students remain on track for their degree and satisfy the minimum attendance requirements. A brief summary of the process is provided at www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/student-monitoring.php.

6.7 Class Certificates (Undergraduate Students)

- 6.7.1 General Regulation 1 for First Degrees defines a Class Certificate as “a Certificate confirming that a candidate has attended and duly performed the work prescribed for a course”.
- 6.7.2 Subject only to more restrictive conditions specifically mentioned in the appropriate degree regulations (e.g. for the MBChB degrees), a Class Certificate gives entitlement to admission to a degree examination in the session in respect of which it is awarded and in the session immediately following. Students holding a valid Class Certificate are permitted a total of three opportunities of assessment within this period. It is open to the Students' Progress Committee to determine whether, in extraordinary circumstances, any exception may be made to this rule in individual cases. Similar regulations operate for postgraduate taught students (PgT Regulations 5 & 6 refer)
- 6.7.3 No formal Class Certificate is given to students: rather, all students are deemed to have been “awarded” a Class Certificate unless they are deemed withdrawn from a course (paragraph 6.6.1 refers) or unless they are refused a Class Certificate (paragraph 6.7.5 refers).

Deadlines for Class Certificate Refusal

- 6.7.4 The deadline for refusal of a class certificate by Heads of School is approved at the October meeting of the University Committee on Teaching & Learning⁹. However, *early notification is encouraged*, particularly once it is clear that a student cannot obtain a Class Certificate e.g. when attendance is so unsatisfactory in the first few weeks of a course that good attendance during the remainder of the course could not redeem the situation. Such early notification ensures that the candidate lists available to Schools by weeks 12

and 26 (paragraph 6.9.1 refers) are as accurate as possible. The monitoring of postgraduate students continues over the summer.

Procedures for Class Certificate Refusal

6.7.5 Schools indicate “on screen” whether or not a student should be refused a Class Certificate, following the procedures described in the Student Record System Manual. The practical implications of such actions are that one of two possible codes will then be entered automatically on an individual student’s computerised student record against the relevant course(s):-

- Code C7 denotes that a Class Certificate has been refused;
- Although not used very often by Schools, the Student Record System has the capacity to enter Code CX which denotes that the Head of School has barred the student from attending a second half-session course as a consequence of being unable to fulfil the first half-session pre-requisite for which a Class Certificate has been refused.

6.7.6 Students who are refused a Class Certificate receive notification by e-mail or in hard copy letter (if the student’s email account is inactive) as part of the student monitoring system outlined in paragraph 6.6.1 that they have been refused a Class Certificate. The students are informed that they are ineligible to take the end-of-course written examinations for such courses and, in the case of first half-session courses, will indicate those second half-session courses for which a student has been debarred (where CX has been entered by the School). The email explains a student’s right of, and mechanism for, appeal against the Head of School’s decision.

6.8	Class Lists
------------	--------------------

6.8.1 Class Lists for each course are available on the Student Record. Course Organisers should check the Class Lists against actual student attendance. Up to the end of week two of teaching in each half session the computerised student record screens allow Schools to add or delete students. Pending authorisation by a student’s Adviser, such changes appear on the Student Record as “C5” (unauthorised entry) or “C6” (unauthorised withdrawal/at risk), respectively. The Student Record system also has the capacity to run ‘*Movements Since*’ changes to Class Lists.

6.8.2 Schools must ensure that students in their classes appear on the Class Lists generated from the Student Record system. Only then can the students be counted towards a School’s teaching load in terms of resource allocation.

6.9	Candidate Lists
------------	------------------------

6.9.1 Candidate Lists are available to Schools during term-time and are updated once per week on Sunday evening: these will take account of (a) the changes indicated on Class Lists, provided that these have been authorised by Advisers and (b) the changes to code “C7” referred to above. They will also include “external” candidates. Candidate lists for the August examination diet are available in the last week of July.

- 6.9.2 As candidate lists are updated regularly, lists should not be produced too long in advance of an examination.

6.10 Examination Results

- 6.10.1 Examination results should be entered on the Student Record using the Process Examination Results screens. The report produced after inserting the results should be completed and signed by two Examiners and delivered to the Registry.
- 6.10.2 The Registry will notify students, via the Student Portal, of their results for courses or other summative assessments taken at the University's three examination diets. Schools are responsible for informing students of any amended results. Full details of the assessment and examination policies and practices for taught courses and programmes are given in [Section 7](#).

6.11 Medical Certificates

- 6.11.1 Details of the requirements for certification by a medical practitioner are [Section 7](#) and [Appendix 7.5](#) refer).

6.12 University Policies on Teaching and Learning Arrangements

- 6.12.1 Periodically the University Committee on Teaching and Learning will reiterate existing, or recommend to the Senate new, policies and practices in regard to teaching and learning. Those that relate to quality assurance, assessment, external examining or research students will be incorporated into [Section 3](#), [Section 7](#), [Section 8](#) and [Section 9](#), as appropriate. An overview of the University's academic structures and practices is given in [Section 1](#).
- 6.12.2 Each summer, new or amended updates in teaching and learning policies and procedures, approved during the past session, for inclusion in course and programme handbooks are made available to Colleges, schools and students by way of publication on MyAberdeen. The Academic Quality Handbook, which was made available as an on-line version only from 2005, is updated to reflect any such changes, as soon as these have been approved.

Start and finish times of classes

- 6.12.3 It is University policy that, although classes are timetabled to commence on the hour, they should start at five minutes past the hour and finish at five minutes to the hour. This convention is intended to permit students sufficient time to move between classes in different buildings. It also assists academic and support staff to organise materials and technology for subsequent classes.

Wednesday Afternoon Teaching

- 6.12.4 The University's policy is that Schools may request that teaching activities be timetabled on a Wednesday after 1.00 p.m. in the Winter, Spring and Summer Terms provided that

the same activities are available at another time during the same week. This should ensure that students have the choice to attend on the Wednesday afternoon or at some other time. Requests for exemption from this policy (e.g. for School Placement or Clinical Teaching) should be submitted to the Deputy Academic Registrar, Registry for consideration by the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching).

Quotas for Honours Options

- 6.12.5 The University Committee on Teaching and Learning (26 March 1999) agreed that the general policy should be that quotas should not be permitted for any courses save in exceptional circumstances and that it was the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) to consider requests for quotas on an individual course basis.
- 6.12.6 In applying to the QAC for exemption to permit a quota being operated for a particular course, a School should include the following:-
- the reasons for requesting a quota, including a pedagogical case as to why it would be inappropriate or impracticable to design a course for delivery to a relatively larger number of students;
 - the proposed method of selecting students in order to apply a quota;
 - whether there would be any flexibility in the method of selection e.g. by ensuring that any student with a career intention in a particular speciality should not be prevented from registering for a particular course if they deemed that course to be essential for their career intention.
- 6.12.7 The QAC, in deciding whether or not to allow a quota for a particular course, will consider the level of the course (i.e. Level 1-5) and whether the proposed maximum number to be allowed to register on a course would be appropriate for that level.

Timetabling of Core Courses

- 6.12.8 The UCTL (21 October 1999) approved a reiteration of the University's policy that, unless there were extenuating circumstances, the timetabling of compulsory (core) courses for any degree programme should not be changed once publicised.

Student Feedback

- 6.12.9 The requirement to utilise student feedback as part of Course Review (via the Student Course Evaluation Form exercise) and Programme Review is described in [Section 3](#)

Course and Programme Proposals

- 6.12.10 The procedures for introducing new, or amending or withdrawing existing, courses and programmes are described in [Section 3.3](#). The various forms are listed in [Section 3.3](#) and available from StaffNet www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/senas-1034.php.

Relief Teaching

- 6.12.11 Details of the policy concerning the engagement of relief teachers are given in [Section 3](#), paragraph 3.7.20.

Students' Work Affected by their Undertaking Paid Employment

6.12.12 The University acknowledges the financial burden placed upon students and sympathises with those who encounter financial difficulties. It recognises that many full-time students have to undertake part-time paid employment to provide financial support for their studies. The University's guideline is that full-time students should spend no more than 15 hours per week undertaking employment during term-time. Where a potential conflict may arise in regard to fulfilling the attendance and/or performance requirements of a particular course, students should seek advice from the relevant Course Co-ordinator or Head of School, as appropriate, at the earliest opportunity. Notwithstanding this, academic standards cannot be compromised and students' first priority must be to fulfil the academic obligations of their studies. Consequently, students must ensure that their employment commitments do not conflict with the requirements of their studies.

Disclosure Checking for Students

6.12.13 The University of Aberdeen, as a public service provider, is committed to trying to ensure that its students pose no danger to those with whom they will interact during their studies at the University. In the University's context, individuals who are specifically employed for the majority of their time in caring for, supervising and advising children and/or protected adults will be required to satisfactorily complete a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check. Examples of these include students providing a welfare service to fellow students, and students whose programmes require contact with persons under 18 such as Medicine, Dentistry and Education.

6.12.14 The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 creates two main offences: - i) it is an offence for organisations to employ a person who is on the barred list for the type of regulated work they are doing with children or Protected Adults and ii) it is an offence for barred individuals to put themselves forward for regulated work while barred. Membership of the Scheme is not compulsory, but it is an offence to appoint a barred person to do regulated work.

The legislation uses the following definitions:

- Children all people under the age of 18
- Protected Adults individuals aged 16 or over who are provided with a type of care (including healthcare), support or welfare service.
- Regulated Work individuals who are specifically employed for the majority of their time in caring for, supervising and advising children and/or protected adults

6.12.15 One of the main mechanisms that the University uses to ensure students pose no threat to those whom they will be interacting with during their studies is a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check. Therefore, as a matter of course all 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 PVG check. Students admitted to programmes which currently have compulsory elements requiring contact with vulnerable groups, for example Medicine, Dentistry and Education are routinely subject to a PVG check; this process is dealt with as part of the University Admissions procedures. On all other degree

programmes PVG checks are required for students at point of first registration on to a course. Course co-ordinators work in conjunction with College representatives to ensure that checks are complete. Further information regarding instances where students *may* be required to complete a PVG check are detailed in [Appendix 6.2](#).

- 6.12.16 SENAS forms include a 'check box' to highlight the potential requirement of PVG check. Where a PVG check is required for a particular course, the information is displayed in the 'Notes' section of the University Catalogue of Courses. Each College is responsible for keeping a record of all courses requiring a PVG check and ensuring applications are processed correctly. Details of College contacts are provided in [Appendix 6.2](#). Colleges are also responsible for ensuring the appropriate PVG checks are undertaken for those doing research work involving contact with vulnerable groups. Outcomes of the PVG check (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) are recorded and held within the University Student Record System.

6.13 Progress and Academic Appeals

Progress: Undergraduate Students

- 6.13.1 The credit requirements for progression to the next year/level of an undergraduate degree programme and maximum period of study allowed are indicated in the General Regulations for First Degrees and any relevant Supplementary Regulations. These are published in the University Calendar and will often be summarised in documents provided for students by Schools. However, a student who is in any doubt about his/her progress requirements should discuss their position with their Adviser of Studies or the Registry Officer for the relevant degree.
- 6.13.2 Following the first half-session examinations, the Registry identifies all undergraduates who are considered to be potentially "At Risk" of failing to satisfy the end of year progress requirements as a consequence of their first half-session performance. Such students are contacted by the Registry and encouraged to contact their Adviser of Studies. Students who have submitted medical certificates or have other good cause to explain their absence from first half-session examinations are not included in this category.
- 6.13.3 Students who have not taken any of their first half-session prescribed degree assessments, except those who have submitted medical certificates, and who might therefore be assumed to have withdrawn from study, are contacted by the Registry and informed that the Convener of the Students' Progress Committee (see below) will recommend to the Senate that the student's studies be terminated in accordance with General Regulation 18 for first degrees unless the student confirms in writing that they wish to continue with their studies.
- 6.13.4 Students who are "At Risk" of failing to satisfy the progress requirements following the May/June examination diet are informed accordingly by the Registry. They are given notice that their case will be considered by the Students' Progress Committee (paragraph 6.13.9 below refers) in September if they do not satisfy the progress requirements at the August examination diet.
- 6.13.5 In the case of progressing to/within an Honours programme, Heads of School may stipulate progress requirements in addition to the minimum credit requirement.

Progress: Postgraduate Students

- 6.13.6 The Regulations for Postgraduate Study provide for the Senate to terminate a person's candidature provided that it is satisfied that there is sufficient reason for doing so (Senate approved Policy and Guidelines are available in Appendices [5.17a](#) and [5.17b](#)). Where appropriate, the University Calendar entry for a particular postgraduate taught degree/programme of study will indicate any specific requirements for progression (e.g. from the Diploma to the Master's stage) and may also specify the minimum level required for an award. Where specific details are not provided in the Regulations, these will be supplied by the relevant School to students relating to a particular programme. Research student progress is monitored formally through submission of 6-monthly Postgraduate Assessment Forms ([Section 8 refers](#)).
- 6.13.7 Postgraduate students who have any concerns about their progress should discuss these with the relevant Programme Co-ordinator or their Supervisor as soon as possible. If still dissatisfied they should approach first their Head of School and thereafter the Registry via the Infohub.

Application Against Termination of Studies or Candidature for an Award

- 6.13.8 Any undergraduate student, termination of whose studies or candidature for a degree or other qualification has been recommended or is being considered under the Regulations governing the qualification for which he or she is registered, has the right to submit an application against such termination to the **Students' Progress Committee**. The Senate has empowered the SPC to hear and determine cases on its behalf.
- 6.13.9 The undergraduate Students' Progress Committee meets annually in September to consider the cases of students who have not satisfied the requirements of General Regulation 17 governing termination of study. Students in this category following the August examination diet are informed by the Registry of the date of such committee meetings and are invited to submit written evidence, by way of an application form, including supporting medical documentation, as mitigating circumstances as to why they should not be required to discontinue attendance on courses in accordance with the Regulations. Students may attend the Students' Progress Committee, and may be accompanied/represented by a person of their choice.
- 6.13.10 Additionally, undergraduate students who fail to meet the requirements of General Regulation 16 governing students' progress may seek to proceed to the next programme year notwithstanding their shortfall of credits. Such applications are considered by the Students' Progress Committee.
- 6.13.11 The Students' Progress Committee will meet *ad hoc* to consider any undergraduate cases which may arise throughout the academic year.
- 6.13.12 The University's Policy and Guidance Note for Students in Relation to undergraduate Student Progress are provided as Appendices [5.17b](#) and [5.17e](#) to [Section 5](#).
- 6.13.13 A student has the right of appeal against the decision of the Student Progress Committee, but only on the basis which is outlined in Section 1 of the Guidance Note on

Undergraduate Student Progress. The *University's Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals* is provided as Appendix [5.18a](#) to [Section 5](#).

- 6.13.14 Postgraduate students termination of whose studies or candidature for a degree or other qualification has been recommended or is being considered under the Regulations governing the qualification for which he or she is registered, has the right to submit an application against such termination as laid out in the appropriate Code of Practice, provided as Appendices [5.3](#) and [5.4](#) to [section 5](#).

Academic Appeals

- 6.13.15 From time to time a student may seek to appeal against a decision involving academic judgement taken, in terms of the Regulations for the degree or other qualification for which he or she is studying, among others, by a Head of School refusing entry to or progression in an Honours programme, or the award of a Merit Certificate, or admission to a higher level course; by Examiners refusing to award a pass or awarding an unacceptable class of Honours (or making no award); by the Examiners appointed to examine a thesis for a higher degree; or in terms of decisions taken by the Students' Progress Committee in relation to terms of study. Specific rights of appeal are very limited indeed but the Senate has a general duty to regulate and superintend the teaching of the University.
- 6.13.16 Academic Appeals will be considered only on matters of procedure, competency and/or prejudice.
- 6.13.17 The *University's Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals* is provided as Appendix [5.18a](#). A form is provided for students wishing to submit an Academic Appeal (Appendix [5.18c](#) refers). The Students' Association is available to assist students wishing to submit an appeal.

6.14	Complaints and Discipline
-------------	----------------------------------

Complaints

- 6.14.1 The University's procedures for student complaints on academic and non-academic matters are described in the *Complaints Handling Procedure* detailed in [Appendix 5.19a](#).

Student Discipline

- 6.14.2 Disciplinary procedures are set out in the University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline. See Appendix [5.15](#) to Section 5.

Examination Offences (including plagiarism)

- 6.14.3 The Code of Practice on Student Discipline states the following:-

"Where there is reason to believe that cheating in a prescribed degree assessment has occurred a complaint should normally be made through the Head of the appropriate School; it should not be dealt with as part of academic assessment. The role of the internal

and external examiners shall be restricted to the presentation of evidence; they shall have no role in deciding whether a student is guilty of cheating. They may, as appropriate, submit evidence to a disciplinary hearing. The Head of the School shall investigate the allegation with the student by following the procedures detailed in [Section 7](#) of the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (see [Appendix 5.15](#) to Section 5).

6.14.4 For the purposes of the Code, cheating includes plagiarism: it is defined in the Code as:-

“Plagiarism is the use, without adequate acknowledgment, 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 or her own (Section 2.1.1(h) of [Appendix 5.15](#) refers).”

6.15 Transfer

6.15.1 Undergraduate students wishing to transfer from one degree to another are advised to discuss their position with the Admissions Selector for the proposed new degree. The names of the Admissions Selectors can be obtained from Student Recruitment and Admissions. Transfer forms can be obtained from the Infohub www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/administration/downloadable-forms.php.

6.15.2 Transfer forms for postgraduate students can be obtained from Infohub www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/administration/downloadable-forms.php. The form must be signed by the student, the Supervisor(s) and the Head of School(s).

6.16 Withdrawal

6.16.1 Students may elect to withdraw from the University at any time of year. All such withdrawals should be intimated using a standard Withdrawal Form. **Separate forms exist for Undergraduate and Postgraduate students.** Withdrawal Forms are available from the Infohub. Students considering withdrawing from study may be directed to a member of Registry staff to discuss their withdrawal.

6.16.2 Undergraduate students “At Risk” following the first half-session examinations may be advised to withdraw, to allow time for any problems which they may be experiencing to be resolved, with a view to being readmitted at a later stage (see below).

6.16.3 Undergraduate students suspending study are eligible to apply to register as an Associate Student. Postgraduate students who have suspended their studies for the year are also eligible to apply for Associate Student status. A fee is payable where the student’s tuition fees for that session have not been paid at their time of withdrawal. Associate Student status provides:-

- Receipt of an ID card
- Access to MyAberdeen
- Access to the Library and borrowing rights
- Access to the Computing Centre and an e-mail account

- Access to the student welfare/support facilities

6.16.4 Additionally, undergraduate students who withdraw from study are, if qualified, awarded either an Undergraduate Certificate or Diploma in Higher Education. This award does not prevent the student from subsequently returning to study.

6.17 External Candidates/Readmissions

6.17.1 Undergraduate students who withdraw or who are required to discontinue attendance on courses by a Students' Progress Committee (paragraph 6.13.9 refers) may take the prescribed degree assessments associated with any course for which they hold a valid Class Certificate (paragraph 6.7.2 refers) as an external candidate, with a view to gaining the necessary credits to satisfy the progress requirements and then seek readmission. Forms for taking examinations as an external candidate and for Readmission are available from the Infohub.

6.18 Queries and Contact Details

6.18.1 Queries concerning teaching and learning policies and academic administration should be referred to relevant staff in the Registry, contact details for whom are given at www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/staff-contact-information-1036.php.

6.19 Downloadable Forms

6.19.1 Teaching related forms can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/administration/downloadable-forms.php