

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2004

Present: Dr JG Roberts (Convener), Professor M Baker, Professor G Burgess, Dr A Clarke, Professor MA Cotter, Ms J Duncan, Mr J Dunphy, Miss A Harper, Dr WF Long, Ms C Macaslan, Mr D Marr, Mrs D McKenzie Skene, Professor M Player, Professor T Salmon, Mrs L Stephen, Professor DW Urwin and Dr M Young with Ms B Madill (*vice* Dr D Comber), Mr JLA Madden, Ms D McDowall, Dr A Reid (*vice* Mr G Pryor), Dr N Spedding, Dr T Webb and Dr G Mackintosh (Clerk) in attendance

Apologies for absence were received from Dr D McCausland and Mr D Donaldson

The Convener welcomed Mr Marr who was attending his first meeting of the Committee and Dr Reid and Ms Madill who were attending in place of Mr Pryor and Dr Comber, respectively.

MINUTES

71. The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2004, subject to revision of "education" to "Education" in the last sentence of minute 54.

(copy filed as UCTL/260304/486)

MATTERS ARISING

- 72.1 In regard to minute 55.1, Ms Duncan reported that she had met with Ms McDowall with a view to taking forward the development of leaflets giving students advice on how to appeal or submit a complaint.

Action: JD

- 72.2 In regard to minute 65.6, the Convener informed members that the 5th Assessment Workshop on Online Assessment was scheduled to be held on 16 April in Edinburgh. The draft reports arising from the Focus Group Work conducted in December 2003 for the Responding to Student Needs Theme had been received from QAA. It was agreed that these would be circulated to members, for information, by e-mail. The Convener further informed members that an Outcome/Launch event for the Enhancement Themes was to be held in Dundee on 15 October.

Action: Clerk

- 72.3 In regard to minute 68.2, the Convener informed members that the Joint Equal Opportunities Committee had approved the establishment of a Race Equality Sub-Committee.

DRAFT UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2004-2009

- 73.1 The Committee received a paper on the Draft University Strategic Plan 2004-2009.

(copy filed as UCTL/260304/487)

- 73.2 As Mrs Schofield was unable to attend the meeting, the Convener proposed that members should forward any comments on the draft Strategic Plan to her by e-mail (e.c.schofield@abdn.ac.uk).

Action: All

INTERIM REPORT FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON ADVISING AND REGISTRATION

- 74.1 The Committee received an interim report from the Working Group on Advising and Registration.

(copy filed as UCTL/260304/488)

- 74.2 Dr Mackintosh outlined to members the key features of the recommendations being considered by the Working Group as summarised below:-
- Those administrative elements of student monitoring currently being undertaken by Advisers of Studies be undertaken by Registry staff.
 - Honours students making course choices before the summer vacation.
 - Offers for entry to Honours programmes being issued in conjunction with the Registry to ensure compliance with General Regulation requirements with a view, ultimately, to making Honours offers electronically via Portals.
 - MA students retaining one Adviser throughout their time as an undergraduate, except where they change degree intention.
 - A School-based system of Senior Advisers.
- 74.3 Dr Mackintosh further informed members that the recommendations, having been agreed in principle by the Working Group, were now being taken forward for wider consultation through the meeting of Heads of School, College Teaching and Learning Committees and through circulation of the document to all academic members of staff. She further reported that, to date, the responses received had been largely supportive of the recommendations. The comments received would be fed back to the final meeting of the Working Group on 20 April with a view to a final report being put to Senate on 3 May.
- 74.4 The Convener invited members to comment on the proposals. The comments received are summarised below:-
- While the move to the Registry becoming 'gate-keeper' of the student monitoring system was to be welcomed, concern was raised that sometimes an apparently simple reason for absence can hide a more major problem. Care will need to be taken to ensure that, where relevant, the contact between Adviser and advisee is maintained.
 - In regard to the introduction of a School-based system of Senior Advisers, the value of this was questioned as staff wishing advice in regard to advising matters contact the Registry Clerks.
 - The discipline-based system of advising should be maintained.
 - In some smaller areas of study, the role of Senior Adviser may continue to be most effectively performed by the UPC Convener, as is currently the case.
 - The importance of maintaining the link between the advising system and the student support services should be taken into account. This could be emphasised through Adviser training.
 - In regard to Honours students making course choices before the summer, the School of Law was generally supportive of this recommendation but would wish to maintain face-to-face meetings between Adviser and advisee.
- 74.5 It was agreed that these comments would be fed back to the Working Group on Advising and Registration.
- Action: Clerk**

INSTITUTIONAL C&IT STRATEGY

- 75.1 The Committee received the draft Institutional C&IT Strategy for consideration.
(copy filed as UCTL/260304/490)

- 75.2 In introducing the paper, Professor Rodger informed the Committee that the Strategy had been developed over the past 12 months. The Strategy emphasised the clear institutional investment in the area of C&IT and had been prepared with significant consultation. If approved by the UCTL, the paper would then be referred to the Information Management Committee (IMC) and the University Management Group (UMG) for consideration of the resource implications. Once agreed, a five-year action plan would be produced.
- 75.3 The Convener invited members to comment on the Strategy. The comments made are summarised below:-
- (i) C&IT is an area which has a major impact across the University. This is an area which is rapidly changing and while it is good to have a five-year plan, there will be a need to keep this under regular review. In view of this, UCTL agreed that a reference should be added to indicate that the Policy would be kept under regular review.
 - (ii) In paragraph 2 (Overall strategy objective) it states 'The quality and range of personal contact with students should be enhanced by the use of C&IT ...'. There was a general view that the importance of maintaining face-to-face contact of staff with students should be emphasised notwithstanding any C&IT developments.
 - (iii) In regard to paragraph 2.3, it was proposed that the use of C&IT in the administrative aspects of advising (e.g. the student monitoring system) could be included in here. Again, maintenance of face-to-face contact between student and Adviser was seen as important.
 - (iv) In regard to paragraph 9.1.3, in addition to auditing the implementation of the C&IT Strategy, we should also audit the impact of the Strategy on the quality of learning and enhancement of learning provided to students.
 - (v) It was proposed that the ITR Self-Evaluation Document should include a question about C&IT Strategy.
 - (vi) The College of Life Sciences & Medicine does not have a C&IT Committee – this needs to be reflected in the document. In this College, C&IT issues are dealt with in a different forum.
 - (vii) The SA gave their support to the statement in paragraph 5.1.1 concerning development of C&IT skills by students. However, it was noted that the model of using ECDL for the minimum target skills profile should emphasise that this would only be the minimum requirements of ECDL.
 - (viii) There was a view expressed that staff development activities in regard to C&IT should become mandatory (perhaps through the induction course for probationary staff).
- 75.4 Subject to incorporation of the points raised, the Committee approved the C&IT Strategy. The Committee thanked the Working Group for its work in developing the Strategy and, in particular, recorded its thanks to Dr Reid, Dr Arthur, Mr Hamilton and Mr Robertson for their significant input into the document. The Committee further agreed that as the Working Group had concluded its work it could be formally discharged.

REVIEW OF GRADE SPECTRUM AND PROVISION OF RESITS AT HONOURS LEVEL

- 76.1 The Committee received a paper on the review of *Grade Spectrum* and provision of resits at Honours level.
- (copy filed as UCTL/260304/489)
- 76.2 The Convener reminded members that discussion concerning the review of the *Grade Spectrum* had been ongoing for some time. Following agreement at the last meeting to bring the requirements for the award of an Honours degree in line with the SCQF requirement (480 credit points, including at least 180 credit points at Levels 3 and 4, of which at least 90 must be at Level 4) (minute 56 refers), a detailed paper setting out the ways by which this could be achieved had been considered by Heads of School at their meeting on 12 March. He informed members that Heads of School had agreed a number of proposals which they considered to be a workable way forward.

76.3 There followed a wide-ranging discussion in regard to the proposals brought forward by the Heads of School, the main points of which are summarised below:-

- Compensation at Level 5 may not be appropriate for MEng and MChem students. It was agreed that this matter would need to be taken into account in the proposals.

Action: Clerk

- If the proposals are implemented, there would effectively be three types of 2ii or Third Class degree:
 - where all courses have been passed at the first attempt
 - where some courses have been marginally failed and compensatory passes awarded at a lower level
 - where some courses have been failed and resat for the purposes of credit accumulation.

The distinction between these different mechanisms by which a degree had been achieved would need to be made clear to employers.

- If a system of compensatory passes is introduced for marginal fails (CAS 6, 7 or 8), the CAS 5 to 6 borderline will become important. It was queried whether such borderline marks would need referred to the External. It was agreed this matter would need to be taken into account in the proposals.

Action: Clerk

- Students failing a course on a programme prescribing only 90 credit points at Level 4 (the SCQF minimum) will have flexibility to take an alternative lower level course (assuming they have achieved 90 credit points at Level 4) whereas those on programmes prescribing 120 credit points at Level 4 will have no such flexibility. This is currently the case on Education programmes.
- Where students on Junior and Senior Honours are taught alongside one another on courses, it would be discriminatory to only offer resits to those students in Junior Honours. It was therefore agreed that the most equitable solution would be to offer resits for all Level 3 courses regardless of whether the student was in Junior or Senior Honours.
- Concern was expressed at the difficulty of providing resits for Level 4 courses. This was mainly on pragmatic grounds and also due to the difficulties in providing resit opportunities for some forms of Level 4 assessment (e.g. Honours thesis).
- It was proposed that one way to reduce the burden in the summer of having to produce an August resit paper at short notice would be to prepare two papers at the time the paper for the first exam diet is prepared. The second paper could be used, if required, at the August diet or carried forward to the next year. However, as courses can evolve considerably from one year to the next, this was not seen as a viable option.
- In regard to students unable to take an assessment on account of illness or other good cause, it was proposed that it should be for Heads of School, in consultation with the External Examiner and the ASC Convener, to propose an alternative form of assessment. It would be the student's decision whether to accept this alternative assessment or to take a resit.

76.4 Following this discussion, the following proposals were agreed:-

1. August resits would be available to students failing any Level 3 course as is currently the case for non-Honours students. Except where a student was unable to take the examination at the first attempt on account of illness or good cause, the resit would only count for credit accumulation purposes and not towards final degree classification.
2. Students achieving CAS 6, 7 or 8 in a Level 4 courses taken in Programme Year 4 would be compensated for their marginal fail by the award of the same number of credit points as assigned to the course but the award of these at Level 1 rather than 4. This award would be made as 'general' credit.

3. Students achieving less than CAS 6 or an NP in a Level 4 course would be required to resit or re-attend to achieve the credit. Except where a student was unable to take the examination at the first attempt on account of illness or good cause, the resit would only count for credit accumulation purposes and not towards final degree classification. No August resit would be available for courses failed at Level 4. Students failing at the first attempt would require to either register as an external candidate to resit the course at the appropriate diet in the following year or register to take an alternative course (which could be at a lower level if the student had achieved 180 credit points at Level 3 and 4 including at least 90 credit points at Level 4).
4. In the case of students being unable to take a Level 4 assessment on account of illness or good cause, it would be for Heads of School, in consultation with External Examiners and the relevant ASC Convener, to agree an appropriate alternative form of assessment. It would be open to the student to choose whether to take this alternative assessment (e.g. a viva) or to resit or re-attend at a later date.

76.5 It was agreed that a summary paper setting out the broad proposals would be put to the May meeting of the Senate. A final paper would then be brought to the next meeting of the UCTL with a view to the paper being put to the June Senate for final approval.

Action: Clerk

76.6 In regard to the timescale for implementing these recommendations, it was noted that, subject to achieving Senate approval in June, these revised procedures could be implemented for students embarking on an Honours programme in 2004/05.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM

77.1 The Committee received a report from the Students' Association on the Class Representative System.
(copy filed as UCTL/260304/491)

77.2 Mr Dunphy introduced the paper to the Committee. In doing so, he informed members that while, in most cases, the Class Representative System was working, the Students' Association were keen to work with the University to review and enhance the system. This was especially timely due to a key feature of new quality regime in Scotland being to enhance the student experience and encourage greater student involvement.

77.3 There followed a wide-ranging discussion in regard to the recommendations made in the paper as summarised below:-

- In regard to the suggestions set out in paragraph 1.5, it was proposed in regard to (a) that the establishment of 'common principles of representation' rather than a 'common system of representation' might be more realistic and would enable different systems to operate for different categories of student (e.g. distance learners).
- In regard to the issue of class representation for distance learners, it was noted that Ms Macaslan, Mrs McAndrews and Ms Duncan were currently discussing this.
- In regard to 1.5(c), it was queried how realistic it would be to have a student representative on all School Teaching & Learning Committees given the current difficulties in achieving student representation on College Teaching & Learning Committees. It was, however, noted that as the profile of student representation is raised, this may, in turn, encourage participation and attendance at such Committees.
- It was agreed that the proposed systems of support for class representatives set out in section 2, while welcomed, were ambitious. However, it was noted that, following the agreement to introduce a new sabbatical post of Vice-President (Education) in place of the current post of Vice-President (Services), the Students' Association would have the capacity to provide this level of support.
- The development of an agreement (paragraph 2.8) between the University and the Students' Association would be taken forward by the Working Group on Class Representation.

Action: NS

- In regard to the difficulties in obtaining class representative's contact details (as outlined in paragraph 3.6), it was agreed that the Assistant College Registrars (Teaching & Learning) should be asked to take responsibility for this.

Action: Clerk

- The proposed development of Guidelines for the Class Representative System was endorsed. It was noted that the Class Representative System and Staff-Student Liaison Committees work more effectively in the first rather than second half-session, in particular because the representatives often change between half-sessions.
- In regard to 4.8, it was queried whether the effectiveness of the system was monitored. It was noted that Internal Teaching Reviews does address this matter. It was further agreed that the UCTL should be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the system as a whole but that School and College Teaching & Learning Committees should be responsible for ensuring its implementation.
- In regard to paragraph 5.2, it was proposed that the first sentence should be reworded as 'the institution prescribed student representation on the UCTL' rather than 'the institution allows student representatives to sit on the UCTL'.

Action: JD

- Concern was expressed that, while the enhancements proposed to the system were to be welcomed, the key challenge would be to encourage greater participation by students in the process. It was agreed that this was an area which the Students' Association and the University would need to address jointly.

77.4 It was agreed that the points made, as outlined above, would be incorporated into the report. It was further agreed that the report should be included for discussion at the next meeting of Heads of School.

Action: Clerk

77.5 The Committee received oral reports from College Directors of Teaching and Learning on the Class Representative Report from SA (minute 55.2 refers)

77.6 The Director of Teaching & Learning for the College of Arts & Social Sciences reported that the key issues identified by his College centred on encouraging more active participation by students and moving away from the current system of self-selection.

77.7 In the College of Life Sciences & Medicine, the Director of Teaching & Learning reported that there was a general view that class representatives were not really representative, largely because they were primarily self-selected. She further highlighted the difficulty caused by the timing of feedback discussion as, in many cases, the issues were no longer pertinent to the students.

77.8 It was agreed that the problem of self-selection of class representatives should be considered by the Students' Association as part of their reviews of the Class Representative System.

Action: JD

SURVEY ON THE USE OF THE LTSN

78.1 The Committee received a report from the Educational and Staff Development Unit on their Survey on the use of the LTSN.

(copy filed as UCTL/260304/492)

78.2 In considering the report, the Committee noted that the use of the services provided by LTSN was patchy within Schools. As this is a major resource, there was a view that there should be much greater use made of this service. The Committee therefore agreed that College Directors of Teaching & Learning should encourage Schools to respond to the request from the Educational and Staff Development Unit for information on their use of LTSN.

Action: DirT&L

78.3 In regard to encouraging use of the LTSN, it was proposed that consideration should be given to inviting Brenda Smith from the LTSN to attend staff development event(s) at College/School level to explain the benefits of LTSN.

**PROPOSAL TO ENABLE STUDENTS TO OBTAIN MARKS AND/OR FEEDBACK FOR
ASSESSED COURSEWORK AND END-OF-COURSE ASSESSMENTS
VIA THE STUDENT PORTAL**

- 79.1 The Committee received a paper on a proposal to enable students to obtain marks and/or feedback for assessed coursework and end-of course assessments via the student portal.
(copy filed as UCTL/260304/493)
- 79.2 Dr Webb informed the Committee that the proposals were being brought forward by the Phase 2 Portals Project Board. The proposals had been considered by Heads of School at their meeting on 12 March 2004 and their comments were included in the paper.
- 79.3 In regard to Proposal 1 to change existing policy to allow disclosure of CAS marks for end-of-course assessments, the Committee noted that this proposal had met with general support from Heads of School. There was discussion as to whether this should be the overall CAS mark for the end-of-course assessment or the CAS marks for individual questions within a paper. While it was noted that there was sufficient flexibility within Portals to allow for variation in practice between Schools, it was agreed that as the CAS scale is not linear, release of individual questions may lead to students incorrectly attempting to calculate their overall CAS mark. Accordingly, it was agreed that only the overall CAS mark for the end-of-course assessment should be released via the Student Portal.
- 79.4 In regard to Proposal 2 to allow Schools to record CAS marks for assessed coursework that contributes to the overall result of a course on-line, it was noted that this proposal had met with varying support from Heads of School. Concern was raised by the Committee in regard to the additional administrative work required to input individual CAS marks for coursework into the Student Portal and also the fact that such CAS marks may subsequently be moderated by the External Examiner. It was noted that this facility could be made available to only those Schools wishing to make use of it and, accordingly, it was agreed to support its introduction for those Schools wishing to make use of it.
- 79.5 In regard to Proposal 3 to allow Schools to provide written feedback to students on their performance in both assessed coursework and end-of-course assessments on-line, it was noted that concern had been expressed by Heads of School about the additional burden that this would pose and the worry that, over time, students would come to expect such feedback. However, as both Medicine and Education were keen to utilise this facility, it was agreed to support its introduction in Medicine and Education.
- 79.6 In regard to Proposal 4 to allow on-line calculation of overall CAS marks for courses from assessed coursework components and end-of-course assessments using appropriate formulae, it was noted that this had met with mixed support from Heads of School. While it was noted that some Schools were using spreadsheets to calculate overall CAS marks using a formulaic approach, a move to such a system would require a review of the non-linearity of the CAS system. It was therefore agreed not to support the implementation of this proposal.
- 79.7 In regard to the issue of the non-linearity of the CAS system and the practice of some Schools to use a formulaic approach to calculate overall CAS marks, it was agreed that this matter should be considered at the next meeting of QUEST.

Action: DirT&L/NS

USE OF COMPUTER CLASSROOMS

- 80.1 The Committee received a paper on the use of computer classrooms.
(copy filed as UCTL/260304/494)
- 80.2 The Committee noted that this paper had been brought about following receipt of a complaint from a class representative who was concerned that students were being denied entry to computer classrooms when classes were taking place, despite the fact that there were many vacant PCs.

- 80.3 Dr Reid informed the Committee that she had also received the same complaint and had, in the light of this, drafted a proposed Code of Conduct for use of Computer Classrooms. This was currently being considered by College Teaching & Learning Committees with a view to the proposal being brought to a future meeting of the UCTL. In view of this, it was agreed to defer consideration of this matter until the May meeting.

Action: AR

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- 81.1 The Committee noted that the College Directors of Teaching and Learning had no comments to make in regard to the consideration at their Teaching and Learning Committees of the Report from Educational & Staffing Development Unit Annual (minute 55.5 refers).
- 81.2 The Committee received an oral report on discussions in regard to ILT Membership (minute 55.4 refers). Ms Macaslan reported that focus was currently moving away from the ILTHE and onto the HE Academy. She and Dr Comber would keep the UCTL supported in regard to developments in this area. Notwithstanding this, staff would continue to be encouraged to become members of ILT/HEA.

BRIEFING PAPER FOR QAA ANNUAL VISIT

- 82.1 The Committee received the draft briefing paper for the Annual Visit by the QAA. The visit is scheduled for Wednesday 21 April 2004. The QAA representative will meet with Dr Roberts, Dr Webb, Dr Mackintosh and a representative from the Students' Association.

(copy filed as UCTL/260304/495)

- 82.2 In discussion, the following comments were made in regard to the paper and it was agreed that these would be incorporated into the paper before being passed to the QAA:-

- Under 'Policy Development', it was proposed that reference should also be made to the role played by ASC and UPC Conveners in this area.
- In regard to Internal Teaching Review, it was proposed that the central role played by ASC and UPC Conveners in this process, in particular in convening the Panel, should be included.
- The list of 'other core features' included under the heading of 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement' should make reference to the role ASCs and UPCs play in these areas, particularly as many of these fall within the remit of these Committees.

- 82.3 In regard to these issues, it was also noted that similar revisions would also require to be made to paragraph 2.2 in the Strategic Review (paper 487 refers).

Action: Clerk

ELIR PLAN - DETAILED SCHEDULE FOR PRODUCTION OF REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

- 83.1 The Committee approved the detailed schedule for the production of the Reflective Analysis document for the Enhancement-led Institutional Review and noted that the QAA have confirmed that Part 1 of the visit will take place on 16 and 17 March 2005 with Part 2 taking place during the week beginning 25 April 2005.

(copy filed as UCTL/260304/496)

- 83.2 In regard to the identification of Case Studies which form an appendix to the Reflective Analysis document, the Committee agreed the following:-

- that Colleges, through their Teaching & Learning Committees, should identify possible Case studies by 21 June;
- that relevant support services (e.g. the Learning and Technology Unit and the Educational and Staff Development Unit) should be invited to submit possible Case Studies to the Clerk to the UCTL by 21 June;

- that QUEST, together with an SA representative, should consider all Case Studies submitted and agree which should be included in the Reflective Analysis.

Action: Clerk/DirT&L/DC

REMIT & COMPOSITION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON PROGRESS FILES AND PDP

83. The Committee approved the proposed remit, composition and reporting schedule for the Working Group on Progress Files and Personal Development Planning (PDP).
(copy filed as UCTL/260304/497)

QAA CODE OF PRACTICE ON ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT

- 84.1 The Committee approved the attached document which had been approved by the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee (SRAC) at its Meeting on 12 February 2004 and the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate) at its meeting on 12 March 2004 which outlined the University's compliance with the QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education: Section 10 - Recruitment and Admissions.
(copy filed as UCTL/260304/498)
- 84.2 In approving the document, SRAC agreed that the UCTL would be invited to consider the introduction of a formal induction programme for new students who commence their studies in August (PGCE), September and February. The UCTL agreed that, as the matter is already under consideration by the Retention and Progression Strategy Team (RAPT), this recommendation from SRAC be forwarded to RAPT.
- 84.3 The UCTL also noted the following:
- SRAC will be considering at their meeting in May 2004 an Admissions Policy for all admission gateways to the University of Aberdeen. SRAC will also consider draft documents on admissions procedures for each gateway and these documents will absorb elements of the QAA response where appropriate.
 - Some of the references to Postgraduate procedures in the QAA response may be revised in light of the ongoing review of postgraduate administration.
 - Section 4 - the matter of the procedures for notification of New and Withdrawn programmes is currently under review by SRAS, Colleges and Registry.
 - Section 9 - The complaints procedure will be fully covered in the Admissions Policy and procedure documents outlined above.

ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK (3RD EDITION)

85. The third edition of the Academic Quality Handbook would be produced by the start of session 2004/2005. The Committee approved the proposal that the new version of the Handbook be solely web-based (rather than also being provided in hard-copy) to enable it to be regularly updated as required though, in doing so, noted the comment that the availability of a small number of hard-copies might be helpful.

SCHEDULE FOR INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW 2004-2015

86. The Committee approved the proposed schedule for Internal Teaching Review for 2004/2005 to 2014/2015, which had been agreed with Colleges.
(copy filed as UCTL/260304/499)

POSTGRADUATE CATALOGUE OF COURSES

87. Heads of School, at their meeting on 12 March 2004, were asked to consider the possible establishment of a Postgraduate Catalogue of Courses. Heads of School did not consider there to be any need to develop such a document as all course-specific information is currently provided on School websites and most Taught Postgraduate Programmes utilise courses offered by the parent School. In view of this decision, in developing programme specifications (agenda item 12.2 refers), web links for postgraduate course information would be made between the programme specification in the University Calendar and the School website. The Committee endorsed the decision of Heads of School.

PUBLIC INFORMATION ABOUT QUALITY

88. The Committee noted the summary paper from Mr Jones in regard to Public Information about Quality together with the briefing paper prepared for members of Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee and the Teaching Quality Forum in regard to Public Information about Quality. The Committee expressed its support for the inclusion of the Scottish Sector in the quantitative information relating to Quality to be published, for England and Wales, through the HERO Portal.

(copy filed as UCTL/260304/500)

MONITORING STUDENTS' PROGRESS - REPORT FROM FIRST HALF-SESSION 2003/04

89. The Committee noted the report on the outcome of the student monitoring system in the first half-session 2003/04.

(copy filed as UCTL/260304/501)

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS - OUTCOME OF DISCUSSION AT UNIVERSITIES SCOTLAND TEACHING QUALITY FORUM

- 90.1 The Committee noted that the University's proposals in regard to the introduction of a revised format of Programme Specifications as discussed at the last meeting was discussed at the meeting of Universities Scotland Teaching Quality Forum (TQF) on 20 February 2004. This proposal to move from the existing format of Programme Specifications to a shorter web-based format with links to existing documentation (e.g. University Calendar, Catalogue of Courses, Course/Programme Handbooks) was broadly supported by members of the TQF. It was agreed that this revised format would enable these documents to be more student-friendly whilst still meeting the requirements for Enhancement-led Institutional Review.
- 90.2 In view of this support, the Registry would look to revise the current programme prescriptions in the University Calendar with a view to amending these to serve as Programme Specifications. This review may not be fully in place until 2005/06 due to the constraints of the timetable for the production of the University Calendar.

DRAFT QAA CODE OF PRACTICE ON COLLABORATIVE PROVISION AND FLEXIBLE AND DISTRIBUTED LEARNING (minute 64.2 refers)

- 91.1 The Committee noted the summary of issues arising from the review of the draft revised Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision, and Flexible and Distributed Learning published by the QAA.
- 91.2 Institutions were invited to submit comments on the draft code and the Convener had sent a response on behalf of the University. This response highlighted two main concerns:

(copy filed as UCTL/260304/502)

- (i) The definition of flexible and distributed learning being rather narrow and the proposal that the following 2 bullet points should be added to the definition:
- Responsive to the needs and aspirations of learners
 - Where there is scope to do so, allows for learners to have some say to ensure that they are comfortable with the pace of progression
- (ii) The emphasis given to a national, implicitly uniform, academic infrastructure is a cause for concern, and we should draw this to the attention of the QAA. Under the new QEF, Scotland has several features that are valuable to us, but not shared by the rest of the UK, notably an end to external subject review and the introduction of the quality enhancement engagements. In particular:
- At present, Scottish HEI's are looking to review the format and use made of programme specifications. It is possible, if not likely, that changes will undermine the QAA's notion of programme specifications as a ubiquitous feature of the academic infrastructure.
 - Flexible delivery has been selected as a QE theme for 2004/05, and a scoping study is now underway to frame what the Scottish HW sector understands by this, and to identify priorities for action. There is a risk that the outcome of this and QE activities next year will not match the expectations of a national Code.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY (HEA)

92. The Committee noted the notes from a meeting held between Lesley Wagner, Interim Chair, Higher Education Academy and representatives from all Scottish Higher Education institutions on 4 March 2004.

(copy filed as UCTL/260304/503)

QUALITY ASSURING BASIC MEDICAL EDUCATION (QABME)

93. The Committee noted that the MBChB programme was currently participating in a pilot of the new Quality Assuring Basic Medical Education (QABME) arrangements organised by the General Medical Council (GMC). In view of this, the formal review by the GMC under the new QABME arrangements had been deferred to the end of the GMC cycle.

TIMETABLING OF TEACHING IN THE CONTEXT OF ENHANCING THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

94. The Committee noted that a Working Group composed of the College Directors of Teaching and Learning and their Assistant College Registrars together with Dr Dale, Assistant Registrar (Registry Services) had been formed, under the convenership of Professor Cotter, to undertake a review of the timetabling of teaching in the context of enhancing the student learning experience.

WORKING GROUP ON STUDENT AND GRADUATE FEEDBACK

95. The Committee noted that the Working Group on Student and Graduate Feedback had held its first meeting on 17 February 2004. At this meeting, the Group had taken time to review the recently published Good Practice Guide on Collecting and Using Student Feedback by the LTSN. It was intended that an interim report on progress made by the Working Group would be brought to the May meeting of the UCTL.