

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING
(25 January 2012)

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING & LEARNING

DRAFT Minute of the meeting held on 21 October 2011

Present: Professor P McGeorge (Convener), Ms J Bjorkqvist, Dr B Connolly, Mr P Fantom, Professor W Long, Dr G Mackintosh, Mr D Paterson, Dr K Shennan, Ms P Spence, Dr R Wells, Dr R Bernard (Clerk), Ms E Hay (Minute Secretary)

Apologies: Ms J Batty, Ms T Birley, Dr S Davies, Professor P Edwards, Mr B Lockhart, Dr J Morrison, Dr P Murray, Professor W Naphy, Ms P Spence

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 18 MAY 2011 AND 31 AUGUST 2011

- 1.1 The minutes of the meetings held on 18 May 2011 and 31 August 2011 were both approved as accurate records of discussions held.

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/001a)

(copy filed as UCTL/261111/001b)

CENTRE FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/002)

- 2.1 The Committee considered the Centre for Learning and Teaching's Annual Report for 2010-11. The Committee acknowledged the wide range and quantity of activities undertaken by CLT across almost all areas of the University, including workshops, events, accreditation and support for staff, undergraduates, and both taught and research postgraduates.
- 2.2 The Committee noted the increasing numbers of staff registering for the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education offered by the Centre. Members of the Committee also noted the work completed to introduce the University to MyAberdeen, the work on graduate attributes (ACHIEVE) and ongoing projects with CASS to develop Academic writing and COPS for support for undergraduate maths students.
- 2.3 The Committee acknowledged the importance of the external roles of members of staff from the CLT, including representation on University Committees and appropriate sub-groups and several publications by Centre staff.
- 2.4 In acknowledging the work of the CLT, the Committee noted concern over whether the wider University community were aware of the provision offered and, as such, the importance of disseminating the information. The Committee acknowledged the benefit of the CLT advisory group and the new CLT website. Members of the Committee suggested CLT branding on documents and support material, in order that work done by the CLT could be identified as such. Members discussed the possibility of re-introducing a webpage specifically for 'Teaching and Learning'.

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IDENTIFICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICE IN LEARNING & TEACHING REPORT

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/003)

- 3.1 The Committee considered the Annual Report on the Identification and Dissemination of Good Practice in Learning & Teaching to the Committee. The Committee acknowledged the difficulty in disseminating good practice and measuring the success of practices across the University. The Committee agreed that the report should be sent to College Teaching and Learning Committees for information, under the banner of UCTL. The Convenor agreed to write a statement for the paper before circulation as Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning).

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/004)

- 4.1 The Committee considered the Mitigating Circumstances paper. Having already been presented to the Undergraduate Committee and Heads of School, members of the Committee noted a general agreement across the University for the introduction of the form. Members agreed that the form should be received centrally, by the Registry, and the information should then be cascaded down to the appropriate Schools and/or departments.
- 4.2 The Committee agreed that long term medical certificates cannot be used as a reason for failing to complete a course and that text to this effect should be included on the form. The Committee agreed the importance of including information on the form to advise students on what is and is not appropriate. The Committee agreed to remove question 4, 'action you would like us to take' from the form.
- 4.3 The Committee agreed that the changes, as suggested by UCTL, should be made to the form and that discussion with DIT on implementing the form should begin.

Action: Clerk to edit form and discussions with DIT to begin

HIGHER EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT RECORD (HEAR) SECTION 6.1 IMPLEMENTATION: UPDATE REPORT

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/005)

- 5.1 The Committee received an update on the progress of the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Section 6.1. The Committee acknowledged sections 1 and 2 of the update but noted concern regarding section 3. The Committee queried the possibility of the University holding the information listed in section 3, as laid out in Appendix 2 and the importance of producing information of quality. The Committee agreed that less on the list to begin with may be more appropriate, with the possibility to add to the list in the future. The Committee noted that 'ordinary' society members should perhaps not be included on the list and only those holding a named positions such as chair, secretary or treasurer should.
- 5.2 The Committee agreed that the list would be revised and sent to the Committee for information.

Action: PF, with input from JB, to revise list

REPORT FROM THE UNDERGRADUATE COMMITTEE

- 6.1 In the absence of the Convener of the Undergraduate Committee, it was confirmed that there were no concerns to report to the Committee from the last meeting of the Undergraduate Committee, held on 14 October 2011. It was confirmed that major discussion at the meeting had surrounded the issue of proposed amendments to the structure of the Academic Year.

REPORT FROM THE POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE

- 7.1 The Convenor of the Postgraduate Committee reported to the Committee that at its last meeting, on the 10 October 2011, members had held discussions on regulations, admission figures and the UKBA effect. Members of UCTL were informed that market research on the issue of admission figures has been commissioned by SRAS for which a report is due in early 2012. The Committee was also informed that PGT admission criteria and PGT and PGR surveys, including the poor response rate, had been subjects of discussion.

REPORT FROM THE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

- 8.1 The Convenor of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reported to the Committee on discussions held at the last meeting, which took place on the 28 November 2011. It was confirmed that the members of the QAC had held discussions on proposed changes to the University's Quality Assurance processes, which received general support. The QAC also discussed proposed changes to SENAS forms and the proposed introduction of a Key Information Set.
- 8.2 The issue of students carrying fail marks obtained from continuous assessment over to form part of a re-sit examination was raised. It was noted that during meetings of the Students' Progress Committee in September, some students had been unable to pass a re-sit due to a previous fail from continuous assessment. Members of the Committee acknowledged the concerns of the QAC and agreed that the issue would need to be considered. The Committee noted the issue could be improved by tightening up on the monitoring process.

HEADINGS FOR MINUTES OF EXAMINERS' MEETINGS

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/006)

- 9.1 The Committee approved the proposed Headings for minutes of Examiners' meetings.

REMIT & COMPOSITION 2011/12

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/007)

- 10.1 Committee members noted the Remit and Composition for 2011/12.

LATEST DATE FOR THE RETURN OF EXAMINATION RESULTS 2011-12

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/008)

- 10.2 The Committee noted the latest dates for the return of examination results, approved by Convener's action.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES RUN BY THE CENTRE FOR LEARNING & TEACHING: UPDATE TO UCTL OCTOBER 2011

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/009)

- 10.3 The Committee noted the update on Higher Education Academy accredited programmes run by the Centre for Learning and Teaching.

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES EVALUATION: UNDERGRADUATE LONGITUDINAL STUDY YEAR 1 REPORT

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/010)

- 10.4 The Committee noted the Graduate Attributes Evaluation: Undergraduate Longitudinal study Year 1 Report.

CAREER MENTORING PROGRAMME

(copy filed as UCTL/261011/011)

- 10.5 The Committee noted the update on the Career Mentoring Programme.

UNDERSTANDING ASSESSMENT: ITS ROLE IN SAFEGUARDING ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN HE

- 10.6 The Committee noted the QAA new guide, Understanding assessment: its role in safeguarding academic standards and quality in HE.

AOCB

- 11.1 The Committee acknowledged the issue of the change in Structure of the Academic Year which had been discussed at recent meetings of the Student Affairs Committee, the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees and Heads of School.
- 11.2 The Committee agreed that opinion on the proposed changes had been mixed, as they had been in previous years. The Committee acknowledged that in order to make a fundamental and appropriate change it would be necessary not just to make changes to the current model, but to start from the beginning. Members of the Committee noted the importance of researching Academic Year models used at other institutions.
- 11.3 The Committee agreed that a Sub-group of UCTL should be formed to take the issue forward.

Action: Sub-group of UCTL to be formed

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held as follows:
Wednesday 25 January 2012 at 2 p.m.