

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING & LEARNING

DRAFT Minute of the meeting held on 16 May 2012

Present: Professor P McGeorge (Convener), Ms J Batty, Ms T Birley, Ms J Bjorkqvist, Dr B Connolly, Dr G Mackintosh, Dr J Morrison, Professor W Naphy, Dr K Shennan, Ms P Spence, Dr R Wells, Dr R Bernard (Clerk), Ms E Hay (Minute Secretary)

Apologies: Dr S Davies, Mr P Fantom, Mr B Lockhart, Dr J Masthoff, Mr D Paterson

MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2012 AND 21 MARCH 2012

(UCTL/160512/001)

- 40.1 The Committee approved the minutes of 25 January and 21 March 2012, subject to a typographical revision to section 19.3 of the January minute. The Committee agreed that the minutes were representative of discussions held.

ACTION: CLERK

FEEDBACK LOGS

(UCTL/160512/002)

- 41.1 The Committee considered the paper on feedback logs and noted the intentions to make feedback more productive, to encourage self reflection and to make more information available to students.
- 41.2 The Committee were informed that discussions are ongoing with the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) regarding ways of using MyAberdeen to make feedback logs available to students. The Committee agreed that discussions would also take place regarding raising awareness of feedback logs to students.
- 41.3 The Committee noted that the mechanism was intended to run for first year Undergraduate students and optionally open to Undergraduates at higher levels. The Committee acknowledged that there was no obvious reason why Postgraduate students could not also make use of the mechanism. Dr Morrison agreed to send the relevant information on feedback logs to Dr Connolly for consideration.

ACTION: JM

CURRICULUM REFORM

(i) Discipline breadth exemption requests

(UCTL/160512/003a and UCTL/160512/003b)

- 42.1 The Committee considered an application from the School of Education for exemption from Enhanced Study for some of its programmes. The Committee noted that the School had applied for exemption in 2010, at which point the application had been deferred. The School had not been aware of this, and were of the view they had exemption.
- 42.2 The Committee noted that the case submitted by Education was founded on the fact that they do not have control over School placements, which are imposed by General Teaching Council (GTC) requirements. The Committee noted that for the Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Music Education and Bachelor of Music: Music and Communities at levels 3 and 4, placement

time cuts through the standard course structure, preventing students on these programmes from taking Enhanced Study.

- 42.3 The Committee noted that the School of Education will revise all their programmes in light of Curriculum for Excellence in 2013. The Committee agreed that there was currently little alternative for the students affected and agreed to award exemption for these programmes for one year. The Committee recommended that the School of Education take a lead in devising a sixth century course which would be compliant to the needs of these students to avoid this situation recurring in future years.
- 42.4 The Committee noted that, additionally, the School of Education requested exemption for all four years of the Bachelor of Arts in Childhood Practice and the Bachelor of Arts in Professional Development. The Committee agreed to exemption for one year, at which point the exemption should be reviewed.
- 42.5 The Committee considered an application from the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy for exemption for the Bachelor of Divinity from Enhanced Study. The Committee noted that the programme attracts students training for the ministry, who often already have first degrees. In light of this, these students often feel that they have complied with Enhanced Study by way of prior degree.
- 42.6 The Committee agreed that Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) to cover Enhanced Study would require a formal policy with clear guidelines. The Committee noted that this situation was likely to affect other students and not just those undertaking the BD. The Committee agreed that where it is clear that a student demonstrates prior Enhanced Study, they can be given APL, the consideration of which should be completed on an individual basis rather than on a blanket basis for the programme as a whole. The Committee noted that the Admissions selectors had been asked to come forward with a formal APL policy.

(ii) Honours Classification following Curriculum Reform

(UCTL/160512/004)

- 42.7 The Committee considered the paper on honours classification and curriculum reform. The Committee approved the proposal that where Enhanced Study courses taken by a student are drawn from courses at levels 3 and 4, these should contribute towards Honours degree classification. The Committee agreed that in the case where a student elects to take a level 1 or 2 course to make up their Enhanced Study requirement, these should not contribute towards Honours degree classification and in such cases, a student's degree should be classified on 180 or 210 credits (for a two year honours programme) or 90 or 105 credits (for a one year Honours programme) depending on the amount of Enhanced Study taken at level 1 or 2.
- 42.8 The Committee noted the concern that degrees in a discipline could be raised, or equally downgraded, by a mark included in the grade spectrum from Enhanced Study. The Committee agreed that where this situation may occur, the discretion of the examination board should be used.

(iii) Feedback Framework and (iv) Partnership Agreement

(UCTL/160512/005 and UCTL/160512/006)

- 42.9 The Committee noted the Feedback Framework and Partnership Agreement previously discussed by UCTL and approved by Senate. The Committee recognised the importance of ensuring the documents are kept up to date and relevant and agreed that the documents should be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 42.10 In considering the Feedback Framework, the Committee noted concern at the three week timescale for the return of feedback to students. The Committee agreed the importance of feedback being provided as quickly as possible and in advance of the next piece of assessed work, or the course examination. The Committee agreed that Schools should make clear in course guides when feedback would be returned to students.

- 42.11 Members of the Committee sought clarity on the Feedback Framework's section on providing exam feedback to students, specifically on whether if students are provided with generic feedback they can still request individual feedback. The Committee agreed that all students have the right to receive individual feedback, should they request it.
- 42.12 The Committee agreed that the Feedback Framework should be updated to replace PDP with information on Achieve and Feedback logs.
- 42.13 In regard to the Partnership Agreement, the Committee queried the purpose and title of the Partnership Agreement and also expressed concern about the limited awareness of the document by students and staff. The Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to undertake a review of the document and agreed to establish a small sub-group to undertake this work.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

(UCTL/160512/007)

- 43.1 The Committee noted the paper on the Recognition of Prior Learning (APL) and the importance of a University wide policy. Dr Shennan agreed to arrange a meeting of the Admissions Selectors to discuss a possible way forward. The Committee noted that the School of Education currently charge for the assessment of APL, and agreed to consider whether this policy should be adopted by the University.

PERSONAL TUTORS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

(UCTL/160512/008)

- 44.1 The Committee noted that the Personal Tutor paper was considered by Senate in May, where it had received generally positive review. The Committee noted that Senate had not agreed to the implementation of the process in 2012. The Committee noted that an implementation plan, addressing issues such as training, was prepared with a view to implementation in September 2013.
- 44.2 Members of the Committee noted concern over whether everyone, including senior management, would be expected to advise. The Convener confirmed to the Committee that that is currently the understanding.

HIGHER EDUCATION ONLINE

- 45.1 The Committee noted that the University is currently in the process of discussions with Higher Education Online, and that work was ongoing with HE Online to develop a final version of sample conversion to provide a clearer example of what the HE Online project might look like.

UKBA UPDATE

- 46.1 The Committee were informed that there was a heightened interest by UKBA in Universities and that an audit by UKBA was a high possibility. The Convener stressed to the Committee the importance of highlighting the need for awareness and good record keeping.

RISK REGISTERS

(UCTL/160512/009)

- 47.1 The Committee approved the updated entries in the University's Risk Register for which the Committee has responsibility.

REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

- 48.1 The Convener invited the Convener of the UCTL Sub-Committees to report to the Committee. The Conveners of the Quality Assurance Committee and the Undergraduate Committee had nothing further to add. The Convener of the Postgraduate Committee reported that the

Postgraduate Committee at its most recent meeting had given consideration to a proposal for PhDs by publication.

OFF CAMPUS STUDY

- 49.1 The Committee noted that discussions were ongoing regarding the possibility for US Military Chaplains to undertake PhDs at the University while serving in the US Army. The Committee noted that the Army were prepared to give reduced duties if students were permitted to register full-time. The Committee endorsed continuation of these discussions.

AOCB

- 49.2 The Convener acknowledged that this was the last meeting Tessa Birley would attend as President of the Students Association. The Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Ms Birley for her contribution over the past year.

FOR ROUTINE APPROVAL

CHANGES TO THE ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK

(i) Student Course Evaluation Form (SCEF) and (ii) External Examining

(UCTL/160512/010 and UCTL/160512/011)

- 50.1 The Committee approved the proposed changes to the Academic Quality Handbook. The changes reflect those previously approved by the Committee, in relation to sections 3, 7 and 9.

AMENDMENTS TO THE GUIDANCE NOTES ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PROGRESS

(UCTL/160512/012)

- 51.1 The Committee noted that experience of operating the revised Code of Practice has highlighted the fact that the Code of Practice is out of line with the University Policy and Procedure on Appeals in that there is no bar on students drawing to the Disciplinary Investigating Officer's or Disciplinary Committee's attention medical or other personal circumstances which they have not previously drawn to the attention of the Head of School. In order to rectify this anomaly, the Committee approved the amendments to the Guidance Notes on Undergraduate Student Progress.

TERM DATES

(UCTL/160512/013)

- 52.1 The Committee approved the Dates of Term for 2013-2012 and, provisionally those for the sessions to 2022-2023.

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE

(UCTL/160512/014)

- 53.1 The Committee approved the amendment to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline.

RE-ADMISSION FOR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

(UCTL/160512/015)

- 54.1 The Committee approved the proposal for re-admissions for taught postgraduate students to be brought in from 2012/13, in place of suspensions of study.

SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL BACHELOR OF SCIENCE FOUNDATION PROGRAMME

(UCTL/160512/016)

- 55.1 On the recommendation of the Quality Assurance Committee, the Committee approved the supplementary regulations for the International Bachelor of Science Foundation Programme.

UK QUALITY CODE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION PART C: INFORMATION ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION PROVISION

(UCTL/160512/017)

- 56.1 The Committee noted Part C of the UK Quality Code published by the Quality Assurance Agency in March 2012.

REVIEW OF THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN SOCIAL PEDAGOGY

(UCTL/160512/018)

- 57.1 The Committee noted the review report on the Bachelor of Arts in Social Pedagogy (BASP). The Committee noted the request to treat the report as Strictly Confidential.

MYABERDEEN STEERING GROUP

(UCTL/160512/019)

- 58.1 The Committee noted the remit and composition of the MyAberdeen steering group.

MONITORING

- 59.1 The Committee noted that the Convenor approved an amendment to the monitoring deadlines for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. The deadline for reporting students as 'at risk' (C6) has been extended to Tuesday 15 May to allow those with coursework deadlines in the final week of term to be monitored. The class certificate refusal deadline (C7) has also been amended appropriately.

SETTING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES IN CONTEXT

- 60.1 The Committee noted that it is proposed to undertake work across the Colleges in the first half-session 2012/13 to develop statements at course level for students to contextualise how the graduate attributes will be delivered by each course. It is intended that this work be supported by workshops run at College-level supported by the Centre for Learning & Teaching to assist staff in developing these Graduate Attribute statements. It is intended that these statements will be in place for the start of the second half-session courses in January 2013. Consideration is currently being given to how this information might best be communicated to students (e.g. through MyAberdeen).

DATES OF THE MEETINGS IN 2012/13

- 61.1 The Committee noted that meetings in 2012/2013 will be held as follows (all at 2 p.m. in the Court Room):

Wednesday 31 October 2012

Wednesday 23 January 2013

Wednesday 15 May 2013