

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

DRAFT Minute of the meeting held on 23 January 2013

Present: Professor P McGeorge (Convener), Dr R Bernard, Ms J Bjorkqvist, Dr B Connolly, Dr S Davies, Ms A Deseilligny, Mr P Fantom, Dr G Mackintosh, Dr J Masthoff, Professor B Naphy, Dr M Pryor, Dr K Shennan, Ms E Hay (Minute Secretary)

Apologies: Mr C Duncan, Professor A Lumsden, Mr D Paterson, Dr R Wells

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2012

(Copy filed as UCTL/230113/001)

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 31 October 2012 were approved as an accurate record of discussions held.

ANONYMOUS MARKING

(UCTL/230113/002)

- 2.1 Members of the Committee acknowledged the paper on anonymous marking and noted that it had been considered by other Committees including by the Heads of School.
- 2.2 With the addition of the caveat 'where appropriate' the Committee agreed to approve the proposed change.

Action: Clerk

REVISED POLICY ON MEDICAL CERTIFICATION FOR STUDENTS

(UCTL/230113/003)

- 3.1 The Committee considered the proposed revisions to the policy on medical certification for students. The Committee noted that the University was facing pressure from local GP surgeries to remove the requirement for medical certification for a missed exam or assessment.
- 3.2 The Committee agreed that a revised policy, allowing students at levels 1 and 2 to self-certify should be piloted. The Committee noted that the Heads of School had proposed bringing the policy for students in line with that of staff. The Committee noted that a policy, taking into account these proposals, would be brought to the next meeting of the UCTL.
- 3.3 The Committee noted that work with MyAberdeen was ongoing to allow students to report their absence(s) electronically. In this context, the Committee approved the proposed draft form for development in MyAberdeen.

Action: Clerk

COMMON ASSESSMENT SCALE / UNDERGRADUATE GRADE SPECTRUM

(Oral Update)

- 4.1 The Convener informed the Committee that discussions surrounding the proposed changes to the Common Assessment Scale and the Undergraduate Grade Spectrum were on going and that further information would follow in due course.

PEER MENTORING

(UCTL/230113/005)

- 5.1 The Committee noted the paper on peer mentoring and the pilots run in the Schools of Divinity, History and Philosophy and Medical Sciences.
- 5.2 The Committee discussed the proposal to roll the scheme out across the University and agreed that this proposal should be taken forward.
- 5.3 The Committee agreed that students could be encouraged at the point of advising to receive mentoring; however, the process would remain voluntary.

ANNUAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

(UCTL/230113/006)

- 6.1 The Committee noted the paper on annual programme monitoring, proposed following the approval of course review by UCTL and Senate. The Committee acknowledged the importance of Programme Monitoring and that its introduction was an ELIR recommendation.
- 6.2 The Committee noted some concern that completing the review form may appear as though extra work was being asked of Schools. The Committee acknowledged that the form sought to bring together several pieces of individual work already completed by Schools. The Committee recognised the importance of publicising the importance of programme monitoring.
- 6.3 The Committee noted that the next step in the review of the University's Quality Assurance processes was to examine the Internal Teaching Review process. The Committee noted that Programme Monitoring forms would inevitably form part of any revised ITR.

UCTL ANNUAL REPORT TO SENATE

(UCTL/230113/007)

- 7.1 The Committee approved the proposed UCTL Annual Report to Senate, specifically noting with concern the changes the University would be required to implement as a consequence of the SPSO's Model Complaints Handling Process.

Action: Clerk

ELIR UPDATE

(UCTL/230113/008)

- 8.1 The Committee were updated of the progress of preparations for ELIR by way of the attached paper. The Committee acknowledged they were content with the progress being made to date.
- 8.2 The Committee noted the proposed case study of the review of postgraduate provision and agreed with this proposal.

RISK REGISTER

(UCTL/230113/009)

- 9.1 The Committee acknowledged the Risk Register and were asked to return any proposed amendments to academicservices@abdn.ac.uk.

Action: Committee

REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

(Oral Update)

- 10.1 The Convener invited the Conveners of the UCTL Sub-Committees to report to the Committee. The Conveners of the Committees noted they had considered, in addition to the issues discussed by the UCTL, issues including that of proposed resits for PGT students.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 15 May 2013 at 2.00 p.m. in the Court Room, University Office.

FOR ROUTINE APPROVAL

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION

(UCTL/230113/010)

- 12.1 The Committee approved, for its part, the draft Resolution 'Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees', with one or two typographical revisions. The Resolution enacts the changes in degree regulations recommended by the Quality Assurance Committee since March 2012 which have not been the subject of separate resolutions. The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Convener to approve any amendments required subsequent to this meeting.

AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PROGRESS AND THE ASSOCIATED GUIDANCE NOTES ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PROGRESS

(UCTL/230113/011a)

(UCTL/230113/011b)

- 12.2 The Committee approved amendments to the *Policy and Guidance Notes on Undergraduate Student Progress*. The amendments are proposed as part of the process of rationalising academic appeals to permit all appeals to utilise the revised process introduced last year. The proposed amendments permit progress appeals to feed into the revised appeals process rather than requiring a separate Court appeal. The Committee approved (i) the revised policy, attached as paper number UCTL/230113/011a and (ii) proposed revisions to section 8 of the guidance note, including the removal of Annexes B and C, attached as paper number UCTL/230113/011b. The necessary amendments to the appeals process are included in item 12.3 below.

AMENDMENT TO THE POLICY ON APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

(UCTL/230113/012)

- 12.3 The Committee approved changes to the *Policy on Appeals and Complaints* arising as a result of (i) the streamlining of the process of appealing a decision taken of the *Code of Practice on Student Discipline* and the *Policy on Undergraduate Student Progress* (12.2. above) and (ii) a recommendation for clarification, requested by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, made following an appeal relating to termination of studies.

PERSONAL TUTOR UPDATE

(UCTL/230113/013)

- 12.4 The Committee noted the attached update on the implementation of the personal tutor system. For its part, the Committee approved the role descriptors for Personal Tutors and Senior Personal Tutors.

INSTITUTIONALLY VERIFIABLE CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: THE ABERDEEN INTERNSHIP

(UCTL/230113/014)

- 12.5 The Committee approved the proposal to include the Aberdeen Internship on the enhanced graduate transcript as an accredited role.
- 12.6 Members of the Committee did, however, raise concern over the inclusion of societies on the HEAR and proposed that in some cases it may not be appropriate (for religious or political reasons) to include the name of a society a student was a member of.

FOR INFORMATION

SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN MODEL COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

- 13.1 In December the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) published a model complaint handling procedure (CHP) for higher education. The model CHP is published as part of the SPSO Act (2002) and as such all universities are required to adopt the model CHP as soon as possible. The University will therefore be reviewing its procedures for handling complaints in the coming months to ensure compliance with the CHP by the required deadline of 30 August 2013.

RELIGION AND BELIEF POLICY

- 13.2 At the meeting of Heads of School in January 2013 there was discussion in relation to the need for an institutional Religion and Belief Policy. Heads of School agreed that a high level institutional policy would be helpful in ensuring that matters are dealt with consistently across the institution. It was agreed that a small group would be brought together to take this forward.