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UNIVERSITY OF
ABERDEEN

UK Quality Code 2024: Institutional Mapping

Principle 11: Teaching, learning and assessment

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PRINCIPLE 11: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Introduction

The [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (Quality Code) articulates the principles of UK higher education for securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality. The Quality Code is a sector-led reference point which can be used in a range of flexible ways. It enables providers to evaluate their policies and practices with reference to Sector-Agreed Principles and it aligns with key international reference points including the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#) (ESG).

The Quality Code is comprised of two key elements: (i) sector-agreed principles; and (ii) key practices. Sector-agreed principles identify the features that are fundamental to securing academic standards and offering a high-quality student learning experience. Key practices set out how a provider can demonstrate they are adhering to the sector-agreed principles. There are 12 principles and each has a set of key practices which providers can follow to demonstrate how they are adhering to that principle.

Under the theme, implementing the approach to quality enhancement and standards, **Principle 11: Teaching, learning and assessment** provides the strategic principles to be applied in the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment in ensuring the enhancement of the student experience. In doing so, the Quality Code sets out the following: *Providers facilitate a collaborative and inclusive approach that enables students to have a high-quality learning experience and to progress through their studies. All students are supported to develop and demonstrate academic and professional skills and competencies. Assessment employs a variety of methods, embodying the values of academic integrity, producing outcomes that are comparable across the UK and recognised globally.*

In undertaking this mapping to the UK Quality Code, a number of stakeholders were consulted across the University to ensure that the information presented is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. Additionally, it should be noted that the information contained within each section of the mapping is current as at time of publication. Further updates to the UK Quality Code Mapping will follow on an annual basis and will be overseen by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).

Key Practices

Key Practices	University Commentary	Supporting Documentation
(a) Learning and assessment at all levels is informed by research and/or scholarship. Teaching, learning and assessment align to ensure students can demonstrate their achievements, reflect on and reinforce their prior learning, skills and knowledge, and fulfil their potential.	The University's Aberdeen 2040 University Strategy puts education and research at its heart alongside strategic themes of inclusivity, international, interdisciplinary and sustainability. Aberdeen 2040 provides a defining vision for Education at the University and sets out a number of commitments as outlined in the link to our Strategy. The University's Aberdeen 2040 Strategy is supported by an operational plan which provides details of the actions, supporting measures, and KPIs to address each strategic commitment. The University Education Committee has oversight of strategic matters relating to Education and the work in regard to delivery of Education commitments as set out in Aberdeen 2040. Education Commitments are detailed in the operational plan and have been or are being actioned through a series of Task and Finish Groups (TFGs). The TFGs align to specific Commitments within the Strategic Plan in order to deliver changes to further advance the educational and student experience. A number of these TFGs have concluded their work and reported via the University Education Committee. All Schools and Professional Services Directorates develop annual plans which are reviewed centrally by the Senior Management Team and inform budget setting and planning. Within these, Schools and Directorates are required to comment on their strategic priorities relating to Education and how these align to, and progress made towards Education-related performance indicators. These plans also seek comment on alignment to the Aberdeen 2040 Strategic themes. For every degree programme, the relevant regulations are in place to ensure that students can achieve and succeed in their learning. This includes assessment regulations to ensure that intended learning outcomes are achieved and assessed appropriately. Aims and intended learning outcomes, at a course and programme level, are considered for appropriateness as part of the approval process and are made available to students ensuring transparency for learners and providing an ability to gauge progress towards the stated outcomes. In addition, students are monitored at a course level in terms of their progress towards the stated outcomes and a system for support exists for individuals who are flagged 'at risk' in terms of not being able to meet the intended outcomes.	Aberdeen 2040 Strategy (Webpage) Annual Course and Programme Review (Webpage) Course and Programme Approvals (Webpage) Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee (Webpage) Inclusivity & Accessibility Reflection Document (Document) Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework (Webpage) Information Centre (Webpage) Quality Assurance Committee (Webpage) Setting Assessments, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Student Monitoring (Webpage) Student Support & Experience Committee (Webpage) Types of Assessment, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) University Calendar (Degree Regulations) (Webpage) University Education Committee (Webpage) Video Guidance: Devising Learning Outcomes Using Blooms' Taxonomy (Video) PORTAL (webpage)

The University operates a robust system of [Programme and Course approval](#) and review that ensures that [Intended Learning Outcomes](#) (ILOs) and assessment are aligned, and that appropriate teaching and learning strategies are then deployed to support students in meeting the ILOs to the best of their abilities. This system follows the principles of Biggs' Constructive Alignment model, setting learning and the assessment of that learning at the heart of the student experience.

Alongside the initial development of ILOs, academic and other teaching staff are provided with professional development opportunities by both the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) and their School / Discipline to understand more about how to write effective ILOs and their relationship with student learning and the wider SCQF Framework. These include introducing new staff to the various University Codes of Practice on Assessment and the Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment.

All courses and programmes are monitored annually through the University's [Annual Course and Programme Review](#) procedures. These procedures draw upon a range of feedback to inform the process of review including student feedback through the course feedback form, Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings, feedback from External Examiners, Programme Advisory Boards and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies together with analysis of course data and feedback from the course delivery team and input from class representatives. While Schools manage the Annual Course Review process reviewing these internally, all forms are submitted to the [Quality Assurance Committee](#) (QAC). Annual Programme Reviews are submitted by Schools to QAC and a School-wide response is provided to Schools with any policy issues being referred to relevant committees for consideration, as appropriate.

A [Framework for Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education](#) has been developed, which draws together existing policies, guidance, resources, support, and specialist training provided to staff and students. This responds to the commitments within the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy of inclusivity, aiming to provide all students with the opportunity to reach their full potential. This also takes into consideration elements of the Equality Act 2010 and The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

The [Planning Team](#) provide data to Schools on non-continuation, degree classifications, graduate outcomes and league tables, by means of the PowerBI system and specific reports. These data are used by Schools to enhance their quality processes and inform improvements. The data are also discussed at the [Student Support and Experience](#), and [Employability and Entrepreneurship](#) Committees, where data are scrutinised by academic and professional service members.

Student outcomes and achievement are discussed as part of the University's ITR process with implications for learning and teaching identified. Our virtual learning environment also supports the use of 'Goals' which can be effectively aligned with learning outcomes, making the attainment of relevant outcomes transparent to staff, students and external bodies.

Additionally, the University and Students' Union have worked together to create an Excellence Award for the Most Creative Assessment. This initiative allows the University to gather information from students on what assessments they value most, while also recognising and rewarding the efforts of staff in engaging with assessment enhancement.

In addition, the Community of Practice accessible through the former Enhancement Theme, has provided further opportunities for sharing good practise and access to peer support. In order to support learning, teaching and assessment in the effective use of technology and our virtual learning environment and to encourage the sharing of good practice, we have also set up a community of practice to regularly share ideas and resources (MyAberdeen User Group on Teams).

The University also communicates our Aberdeen 2040 Attributes & Skills (the 'MySkills' Framework) to students through various channels, including the Virtual Learning Environment (MyAberdeen), the University website, and through social media. The prescribed online course, *Getting Started at the University of Aberdeen*, for new Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students, includes interactive activities to help them understand and use the MySkills Framework to enhance their skills employability. Launched in September 2024, the MySkills Framework was designed to align with the

	University's commitments to sustainability, interdisciplinarity, inclusivity and international as set out in Aberdeen 2040. For Postgraduate Research Students (PGR), alongside induction, a comprehensive suite of training and professional development resources are provided to equip student with disciplinary knowledge alongside transferable and enterprise skills. This is delivered by the PGR College in partnership with schools and through PORTAL. PORTAL is an internal, collaboratively developed hub for research training and career development, supporting researchers. Resources are organised around core research activities, such as responsible research, open research, funding, project delivery, stakeholder engagement, and team leadership, making it easy for users to find what's relevant to them at any point in their career. Content can be navigated by career stage (e.g., PGR), job role (e.g., supervisor), or topic. For PGRs the award of the research degree is based on the assessment of the written thesis coupled with the oral examination (<i>viva voce</i>) involving internal and external examiners, to confirm it aligns with the University's regulations for the degree. Assessment processes are reviewed and revised via the Postgraduate Research Committee (PGRC) with recommendations being ratified by the QAC and Senate.	
(b) Students are given clear information about the intended modular and/or programme learning outcomes and the purpose of assessment and are enabled to use feedback/feedforward to support further learning.	The University committee structures related to Education include greater focus and collaboration with the academic Schools. This structure ensures that there is close integration and communication between School Education Committees and the University Education Committee, Quality Assurance Committee and their sub-committees. This ensures that decision-making relating to Education matters is appropriately informed by the discipline specific perspectives of all Schools. There is a range of communications that are provided to students prior to study and over the course of their studies that give detailed information on their teaching, learning and assessment. These are informed by the Student Communication Guidelines. These include: ▪ New Student Communications ▪ Ongoing student eZines; providing relevant information on the student and academic experience	Assessment and Feedback, Toolkit (Video) Common Grading Scale (CGS) (Webpage) Communicating with You (Webpage) Course and Programme Approvals (Webpage) Course Catalogue (Webpage) Examining Research Degrees, AQH (Document) Feedback (Webpage) Feedback on Assessment (Webpage) General Regulations for First Degrees (Webpage) General Regulations for Research Degrees (Webpage) Guidelines for Student Communications (Webpage)

- [Orientation](#); providing information to students about their studies and support services
- [New Student Events](#); which allow students to gain an insight into their studies, the University and life as a student.

An area within the [VLE](#) which outlines the [key policies and policy changes](#) relevant to the students' teaching and learning is highlighted to students. This contains information and addresses issues such as what to do when absent, how to raise an appeal or complaint and processes for degree classification, among other things. Information is updated at least annually, with a communication issued to students and broadcast on social media to alert them to this important information. This ensures the information is disseminated to students in a clear and accessible manner.

At a programme and course level, handbooks and information within [VLE](#) organisational areas provides students with specific information relating to their course and programme covering topics including intended learning outcomes, assessment arrangements, key contacts and deadlines. Assessments are detailed further in individual Course Handbooks or available on MyAberdeen (the University's Virtual Learning Environment) for every course. These provide ILOs, deadlines by which assessments must be completed, deadlines for feedback to be returned to students and any other relevant information. Together these documents facilitate transparency in assessment information for students.

Following positive feedback from students in Schools that piloted a new course institutional templated during 2024/25, all course areas in MyAberdeen for this academic year (2025/26) have been created from a [template](#) designed to provide a more consistent, accessible and structured learning experience for students. This approach ensures students are provided with an accessible and consistent learning experience while encouraging innovation in the design of learning materials as course materials are not automatically copied over. The course template has information that is managed institutionally, enabling the university to ensure this information is current and can be updated across all course areas efficiently and in a timely manner.

All assessments are available to view in the University's [Course Catalogue](#) for every course, ensuring students have the opportunity to review and consider

[Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment \(Document\)](#)
[Key Policies for Students \(Webpage\)](#)
[Markers, Double, Blind and Anonymous Marking \(Document\)](#)
[Moderation Procedures \(Policy\)](#)
[MyAberdeen \(Webpage\)](#)
[New Student Communications \(Webpage\)](#)
[New Student Events \(Webpage\)](#)
[Orientation and Welcome Events \(Webpage\)](#)
[PGR Examiner Guidance \(Webpage\)](#)
[PGR Supervisor Handbook \(Webpage\)](#)
[Postgraduate Taught Code of Practice on Assessment \(Document\)](#)
[Principles of Learning & Teaching in Higher Education \(Webpage\)](#)
[School Information & Induction \(webpage\)](#)
[Supplementary Regulations for Higher and Postgraduate Degrees \(Webpage\)](#)
[Toolkit \(Webpage\)](#)
[Undergraduate Code of Practice on Assessment \(Document\)](#)
[Code of Practice for Research Degrees. \(Webpage\)](#)
[Structured Management Frameworks for PGR \(webpage\)](#)

the assessments for optional and compulsory course choices in advance of starting their studies. The information advises students of the type of assessment, expected parameters in which the assessment will be conducted (e.g. word count) and the weighting of the assessment.

Assessments are approved via the [curriculum approvals process](#), with all relevant policies, procedures and codes of practice related to assessment available as part of the Academic Quality Handbook.

The [Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment](#) sets out our principles of feedback, namely that it is timely, rewards effort, is understandable, relevant, constructive, and supportive. The Framework goes on to outline the approach taken with regards to marking and feedback, ensuring a supportive, consistent and fair system. Assessments and associated feedback align with intended learning outcomes, ensuring assessments measure students learning.

[Feedback on assessment](#) should also identify areas for development ('feed-forward') and areas of good practice. Feedback should be constructive, helping students to understand what they have done well and providing them with information that will help them improve future work and assessment. Guidance has been created on feedback on assessment, which is provided to staff to ensure that feedback remains constructive and feeds forward. Further information on feedback is also available on the [University's webpages](#).

For research degrees, assessing the quality of the thesis is the primary function of the internal and external examiners ([General Regulation 38](#)). Degrees are awarded when it is confirmed that the thesis '*makes a distinct contribution to knowledge and affords evidence of originality as shown by the exercise of independent critical powers*' (for PhD, DPT, EdD, EngD, MD or ChM); or '*makes a contribution to knowledge and affords evidence of originality*' for MPhil); for a one-year Master's degree the thesis '*displays evidence of originality or that it is a satisfactory, orderly and critical exposition of existing knowledge within the field concerned*'. Annual assessment of progress requirements are outlined in [structured management frameworks](#).

The viva voce is conducted by an Internal and External Examiner to examine each thesis and report upon its merits. The Internal and External Examiner are

each nominated by the Head of School in which the candidate is based and are expected to be Professors, Readers, Senior/Lecturers or academic staff of an equivalent employment grade in the University. Where the candidate is also a member of academic staff, two External Examiners will be appointed together with an internal moderator. Detailed guidance for the examination of research degrees is provided in the Code of Practice for Research Degrees and Examining Research Degrees document.

The Internal Examiner is responsible for arranging the oral examination normally within two months of the thesis submission. The Internal and External Examiners are equal as examiners, and the External will usually conduct the examination.

Examiners are required to submit independent reports and to contribute to a joint report after the viva voce has taken place which gives an account of the oral examination and makes a recommendation of the overall outcome of viva. The decision made by the Examiners at the oral examination is a recommendation and must be approved by a member of the Quality Assurance Committee on behalf of Senate.

All internal examiners are provided with the guidance for examining research degrees as part of the Code of Practice and [supervisory handbook](#). [Documents](#) are provided as part of mandatory supervisor training. All internal examiners can attend specific training sessions delivered by the Dean for Quality Assurance & Enhancement and the PGR College. Supervisor training sessions provide guidance about the regulations and processes required for examination as set out in the guidance document linked opposite.

Students are provided with information around progression and examination through formal [induction](#) programmes run by the Postgraduate Research College (PGRC) and individual Schools. The University Regulations for research degrees and the Code of Practice are signposted for students through the PGRC webpages. In addition, individual schools offer Viva and examination prep workshops and the PGR College provides viva examination workshops as part of the core training programme.

CAD provides a range of development opportunities and interactive sessions for academic and other teaching staff, and PGRs who teach and support

	learning, which include assessment and feedback. These include our AdvanceHE-accredited PG Certificate in H.E. Learning & Teaching and the popular Principles of Learning & Teaching in H.E. short programme for PGRs and early career staff who teach and/or support learning. The Centre also hosts a range of open, drop-in discussion sessions addressing topics such as 'Providing Effective Feedback' and 'Designing Authentic Assessments' with a focus on appropriate discipline-specific skills development. Key resources and information about student support services are available through the University's Virtual Learning Environment. Information is also available in the University's Toolkit which provides a rich set of learning resources. Detailed information regarding our relationships and working practices with employers and other stakeholders in relation to work-based learning is available on the University webpages.	
(c) Staff involved in facilitating learning and supervising research are appropriately qualified and supported to enhance their teaching and supervisory practice. Research degrees are delivered in supportive environments that are conducive to learning and research.	The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) offers professional development (including programmes accredited by AdvanceHE) for all staff and PGRs who teach and/or support learning. Workshops, courses, networks and discussion fora encourage participants to focus on active student engagement. Further, the University encourages self-learning by use of the updated Toolkit resources. In addition, all academic staff new to the University of Aberdeen are required to participate in the mandatory course, Introduction to Learning and Teaching at the University of Aberdeen. Additionally, 12.8% of staff at the University hold AdvanceHE fellowship (as at July 2025). Hosted jointly by CAD and the relevant Programme Co-ordinator, storyboarding events involve constituent Course Co-ordinators in taking a strategic overview of the Programme and award, then viewing the individual component courses and their ILOs followed by key activities in each course which help students to meet these (assessment, teaching delivery, feedback). By plotting these constituents of each course as a timeline against each other, a visual representation of the Programme emerges, allowing all concerned to see how all of the courses link to create the Programme and support the award, plus where the potential pinch points are. Staff can then agree amongst themselves how to address these. Within this process, any particular requirements for involvement of employers, placement requirements or other	Academic Integrity (Webpage) Code of Practice for Research Degrees (Webpage) Doctoral Representatives Group (Webpage) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (Webpage) General Regulations for Research Degrees (Webpage) Guidelines for Supporting Disabled PGR Students (Webpage) HR Excellence in Research (Webpage) Inclusivity and Accessibility Framework (Webpage) Introduction to Learning & Teaching in Higher Education at the University of Aberdeen (Webpage) New Student Welcome (Webpage) Pastoral Support Staff Resource Centre (Webpage) PGR Supervisor Training (Webpage) PGR Training and Development (Webpage) Principles of Blended Learning (Webpage) Principles of Education (Webpage)

	time away from the University can be clearly seen by all involved and its implications discussed, and changes made as necessary. On the back of these storyboarding sessions, CAD also provides, on request, a range of bespoke sessions for specific Schools to promote robust assessment design (including elements of both academic integrity and alternative assessment both as part of support for wider curriculum design and specific to individual course assessments. CAD have been working with Schools to implement the TESTA programme (Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment). This is a method of reviewing the assessment and feedback practices at a programme level to identify areas of over-assessment / enhancement, aiming to improve the student learning experience and increase student engagement through more varied assessment and feedback approaches. Our Principles for Education, focusing on assessment, emphasize that assessments should “test learning outcomes and, where appropriate, be ‘authentic’—reflecting or recreating real-life situations and enabling students to demonstrate the applicability of their learning to various disciplinary contexts and scenarios. They should assess skills and critical thinking rather than relying solely on factual recall and be streamlined to avoid over-assessment.” A crucial aspect of designing authentic assessments is that they encourage thoughtful consideration of the assessment mode and enhance variety in a manner that is appropriate and relevant to students’ skill development. For research degree supervision, the General Regulations for Research Degrees outline that at least one supervisor must be a Professor, Reader or Senior/Lecturer employed by the University, and if a student’s research is conducted in one of the local partner institutions, one of the supervisors should be a member of staff from that institution. A statement of expectation addresses expectations of both doctoral students and supervisors alike. The Code of Practice for Research Degrees outlines that Supervisors are required to support research students throughout their period of supervised research and for up to twelve months thereafter if an extension period is required and has been approved, or to completion if sooner.	Research Culture (Webpage) Statement of Expectations for PGR Students and Supervisors (Webpage) TESTA (Webpage) Wellbeing Resources and Training (Webpage) Wellbeing Strategy and Policies (Webpage)
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Supervisors are supported through supervisor training and masterclasses through each academic year delivered by the [PGR College](#) with online information on PORTAL. The training enables all supervisors to meet the required standards for supervision, ethics, integrity and governance and skills training. All new PhD supervisors (new to supervising and/or new to the University) must undertake mandatory supervisor training and refresher training every five years to remain eligible to serve as supervisors. All supervisors and PGR interview panel members are expected to have completed Equality and Diversity and Research Integrity training. Aligning with our strategy for research cultures, a supervisors community of practice will consider good practice and share across the supervisor community. In addition, the PGR College co-host the UKCGE Scotland-wide PGR Supervisor Recognition Award writing group for supervisors who wish to engage in critical, structured self-reflection of their supervisory methods, to identify strengths and areas for development (closely linked to PGR College supervisor development programme).

The University's [Research Cultures Strategy](#) sets a clear vision for embedding integrity, openness, and accountability in research practice, articulated through four shared Ways of Working. Leadership for culture, development, and integrity is provided by the Vice-Principal (Research) and the Dean for Research Culture, ensuring a consistent institutional vision aligned to the Aberdeen 2040 strategy.

Working closely with the [PGR College](#), the specific needs of PGRs will be considered and actioned through the PGR Committee, associated committees and communicated to PGRs and supervisors via the Code of Practice.

The University's [Dean for Postgraduate Research](#) provides leadership and oversight to deliver an outstanding research and training experience for all PGR students and ensure effective governance around all aspects of the PGR journey.

[The Outstanding Postgraduate Research Supervisor Award](#) recognises an individual who has delivered outstanding supervision through providing a supportive, stimulating and inspirational research environment for doctoral students.

The University of Aberdeen's commitment to inclusive and accessible education, which is part of the University's 2040 Strategy, aims to provide all students with the opportunity to reach their full potential. The University recognises the importance of this in its education practices, learning environments and in addressing harmful stereotypes or limited perspectives.

Reflecting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, the University will not disadvantage or discriminate directly or indirectly in relation to education. All protected characteristics detailed in the Equality Act 2010 are covered in the [Inclusivity and Accessibility Framework](#). The Framework, which has recently been developed as a way of bringing together all information, guidance and support in this area, is used as part of the University's approach to creating consistency in its standards of inclusion and accessibility for PGR students. The Framework was communicated to all Schools, including the Postgraduate Research College, through the University Education Committee to ensure that all information is available for implementation.

Additional context and guiding principles for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) in relation to PGRs are drawn from our Aberdeen 2040 Strategy and companion strategies for Research Cultures, Athena SWAN, the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and Wellbeing. Commitment to EDI for doctoral education is driven by a deep understanding of the PGR community and the unique space in which it sits within our institution. We recognise that each of our PGR students are on an individual journey that cannot be only supported by blanket approaches. Working with teams across our academic Schools and Professional Services, the needs of PGRs are considered early to ensure fairness in recruitment and equity of access to critical support and professional development activities. New activities/policies/plans are discussed and approved within the PGR committee on which two PGR representatives are present at all meetings. PGR Committee actions/decisions are shared with the University Education Committee (UEC) and the Quality Assurance Committee. PGR representatives are drawn from the [Doctoral Representatives Group](#), a platform which brings together each of the School appointed PGR reps regularly to highlight PGR issues.

All PGR students have access to support structures and resources within the University that are underpinned by a [Wellbeing Strategy](#) that includes

	mechanisms for students to raise issues or challenges. The Strategy outlines our approach to supporting our community to maintain positive wellbeing, and to manage problems and support the prevention of mental and physical ill health, reinforcing the Aberdeen 2040 commitment to care for the wellbeing of our diverse community. All PGRs can access Student Support including Counselling Services and Disability Support teams where advice, guidance, interventions are tailored to PGR requirements and within the boundaries of regulations. A specific set of Guidelines for Supporting Disabled Student Researchers has been developed which clearly articulates how support can be actioned and implemented for PGRs. This recognises that PGRs operate very differently from traditional taught students and will have working patterns and environments more like academic members of staff. This also means that adjustments appropriate for UG/PGT students may not be suitable or applicable to PGRs. Specific PGR inclusive adjustments have been developed. Staff have access to a range of resources and tools to support them to support students. These include a supporting you to support students staff resource, centre and programme of wellbeing training.	
(d) Students are enabled and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to take an active role in shaping and enhancing the learning process. Providers offer ongoing advice and guidance about academic integrity to ensure that students and staff understand what is expected of them.	Within each Academic School, students are engaged in evaluation of their teaching and learning experience in myriad ways. Engagement is facilitated by AUSA Students' Union Class Representation System, in partnership with the academic schools. This includes the Staff-Student Liaison Committees, which include representation from all student cohorts, levels and degree programmes. The Course Feedback and Reflection Form process further allows students to provide feedback at a course level both on areas for improvement and areas of good practice. This form also provides feedback on the skills that students feel they are developing as part of the MySkills framework. As part of course design staff are encouraged to ensure that assessment strategies include sufficient opportunities for formative assessment and feedback, in addition to summative assessment. These provide students with opportunities to evaluate their own progress within a course. The University recognises the importance of feedback in supporting and developing students' learning and the value of self-evaluation as part of this	Class Representation, AUSA (Webpage) Class Representation, University (Webpage) Cognitive Presence (Webpage) Course Evaluation (Webpage) Design, Deliver and Evaluate your Teaching (Webpage) Feedback Framework (Webpage) Quality Assurance Committee (Webpage) Senate, Membership (Webpage) Student Monitoring (Webpage) Staff-Student Liaison Committees (Document) University Education Committee (Webpage) Research Governance Handbook

process. As such, the University operates a [Feedback Framework](#) which provides students with a clear set of expectations for this process.

The [Student Monitoring](#) process is used to highlight students who may be at risk of not meeting learning outcomes at a course level, as part of a supportive framework. Students are encouraged to meet with staff to discuss any issues they may be encountering and are signposted to additional sources of support.

The University places strong emphasis on the involvement of students on committees and in decision making. Each School has an Students' Union elected School Convener who is the lead student representative for each School. They work closely with the elected class representatives, who are linked with Students' Union, to feed any concerns about courses and programmes to the School. The School Convener (or other student representative) attends School-level committees (e.g. School Education Committee) where they are able to contribute to discussions around future courses and programmes, policy matters, feedback (e.g. NSS results) and other matters. At a University level, Students' Union representatives are also full members of all Education committees including the [University Education Committee](#) and the [Quality Assurance Committee](#) along with [Senate](#) which is the University's main academic decision-making body.

The Vice President for Education at Students' Union is included on the Vice-Principal, Education's informal education team. The Vice-Principal, Education also meets with the Students' Union Education Committee regularly, to foster good relations in the spirit of collaboration and transparency.

The Student Learning Service (SLS) offers academic skills advice and guidance to students to evaluate and manage their learning, through one-to-one sessions, workshops, and online resources.

For PGR Students: The University ensures high standards of research integrity through clear governance, visible leadership, and a focus on research culture. Strategic oversight sits with the Vice-Principal (Research) through the University Research Committee (URC). Our standards for research integrity are outlined in the 'Policy and Guidelines on Good Research Conduct', which are incorporated within the Research Governance Handbook (RGH). The RGH

	is shared with all research staff and postgraduate students during local induction sessions. The University is a signatory of the Concordat for Research Integrity. Training around research integrity for all staff and PGR students is delivered through a coordinated programme led by the Directorate of R&I working in partnership with other Professional Services teams. This ensures that training is aligned with institutional policies, sector expectations and is underpinned by mandatory online courses on Research Integrity (required for all researchers) and Research Ethics & Governance (required for those seeking ethical approval), ensuring consistent understanding of core standards across the University. PGR students are supported to take responsibility for their professional development through an annual Development Needs Analysis (DNA), undertaken at months 3, 18 and 30 for PGRs (month 3 only for Masters of Research (MRes) students). The DNA exercise is a structured process designed to support students in taking responsibility for their own development as researchers. It encourages active reflection and goal setting, enabling students to consider knowledge, skills, processes, techniques, networks, wellbeing, and career planning throughout their degree. The DNA is supported by training, and with appropriate signposting, and a toolkit so that PGRs can tailor their reflections to their stage of research and personal goals including onward employability and use these insights as the basis for discussions with their supervisors. This ensures development is strategic, proactive, and aligned with both individual ambitions and disciplinary requirements.	
(e) As students move through their learning journey, they are given the opportunity and support to transition effectively between academic levels, further study and employment. Providers enable students to recognise the progression they have made and steps they need to take to achieve their potential.	The University has established transition programmes with a focus on widening access students and these had expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic to be available to all students. Recruitment and academic colleagues collaborate closely on these programmes. These programmes provide students with an insight into the University experience (academic and wider) and students can be signposted to more specific training, such as in relation to maths. A staged orientation programme enables students (new and returning) to enhance their skills in working with the University systems (such as the Virtual Learning Environments and Toolkits) before teaching begins. Orientation is at central University level, and Induction at School level, and is reviewed	ABDN Internships (Webpage) Academic Writing Skills, Toolkit (Webpage) Accredited Programmes, CAD (Webpage) Assessment (Webpage) Centre for Academic Development (Webpage) Class Representation, AUSA (Webpage) Co-Curricular Activities (Webpage) Disability Services (Webpage) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (Webpage) Feedback (Webpage)

	constantly to ensure that it is as effective as possible for students to be aware of what is expected of them and how to meet this. When students join the University, Getting Started at the University of Aberdeen courses for UG and PGT students enable further development of professional and transferrable skills which students can use to ensure they engage actively in their studies. Welcome Week provides a variety of activities and support designed to offer both University-wide and subject-specific (School) information. These activities are tailored to help new students settle into university life, while also being accessible and relevant to returning students. This ensures that all students, whether new or returning, can benefit from the support and resources available. Pastoral support systems (such as the undergraduate Personal Tutor) and peer support systems provide a framework within which students can raise questions informally, and also access more specific support (for example Registry, MyCurriculum and Student Support) to ensure they have the necessary information and support. The Accessibility and Inclusivity in Education Framework draws together resource and practice to support staff in enabling all aspects of Education to be inclusive such that all students can take an active role. The Student Advice & Support team, School Inclusion Coordinators and academic staff collaborate, with support from staff in CAD, to ensure that any inclusion adjustments can be delivered in an effective and timely manner. Financial support is available through the Hardship Fund to all students in need. This incorporates both the Higher Education Discretionary and Childcare Funds, as well as funds generously donated to support students facing unexpected/exceptional financial hardship. The University's established policy regarding recording of lectures, alongside the practice of lectures only being recorded (and now captioned) has provided flexibility for students and more options for their active engagement in their studies. Support for students in transition from studies to further study or employment is provided by the Careers and Employability Service. All students can access	How Do I Encourage Active Learning in the Online Environment? (Webpage) Inclusivity & Accessibility in Education Framework (Webpage) Money Matters (Webpage) MyCurriculum (Webpage) MySkills (Webpage) Pastoral Support & Guidance (Webpage) Peer Support (Webpage) Personal Tutoring (Staff) (Webpage) Personal Tutoring (Students) (Webpage) Policy on Lecture Capture (Policy) Principles and Guidance for Blended Learning (Webpage) Student Feedback (Webpage) Student Learning Service (Webpage) Student Monitoring (C6 and C7) (Webpage) Student Orientation (Webpage) Students with Specific Support Needs (Webpage) Study Resources (Webpage) Support & Wellbeing (Webpage) Types of Assessments, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Widening Access (Webpage)
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qualified and experienced careers guidance professionals via individual appointments, and a range of careers education activities are embedded across a range of courses.

For [co-curricular activities](#), the Careers and Employability Service support a range of activities to enhance and support student learning. Some of these initiatives include the [ABDN Internship](#) paid internship scheme, volunteering opportunities, career mentoring, study abroad, and enterprise and entrepreneurship. Students are encouraged to record and reflect on their activities and their skills development journey via the [MySkills](#) Framework, aimed at surfacing skills that are developed in co-curricular and curricular provision. Returning students will also be provided with specific communications that highlight activities during Welcome Week that support their learning, as a way of them “Getting Set” for their new academic year. MySkills is also covered in Orientation for new students.

Building on the move to blended learning during the COVID-19 period, which has led to teaching, learning and assessment being delivered in different ways, providing a variety of means for students to engage actively, the delivery of education is underpinned by the [Five Principles of Education](#).

The University recognises the links between delivery of teaching and learning and the wider University experience. There is regular collaboration between students, Professional Services Directorates and School to ensure that students are provided with the best opportunities to engage actively with their studies, particularly in relation to students with particular experiences and characteristics (e.g. disabled, race, estranged from family).

The University has an established system of [monitoring engagement](#) with study to identify at an early stage those who may be struggling. This allows active engagement and support to be provided to ensure that students can be helped to get back on track with their studies. This activity is supported by the School Monitoring Leads Group which meets to monitor, review, and enhance monitoring procedures across the institution, chaired by the Dean of Student Support and Experience and includes School academic and administrative leads and professional service representatives.

The University operates a variety of support mechanisms for students to ensure that they are well-supported for study and prepared for assessment. These include:

- **Personal Tutoring:** Each student is assigned a personal tutor as a contact for providing general academic and primarily pastoral support.
- **Student Learning Service:** The student-facing part of CAD, the Student Learning Service (SLS), offers academic skills workshops and online resource sites in MyAberdeen. SLS also works with students on a one-to-one basis to improve understanding and help implement feedback from marked assessments. SLS provides support for students and staff, ensuring students can take an active role in their studies. SLS provides specialist academic skills support for neurodivergent students.
- **Academic Writing Course:** Some Schools provide Academic Writing Skills courses which are available to assess students' level of academic writing when they begin study in first year. These courses are facilitated by CAD.
- **Induction:** All Schools provide induction to their programmes during Welcome Week, during which students are informed of the support mechanisms available to them in terms of their teaching, learning and assessment. The University is implementing a new approach to broaden the scope of induction with the introduction of a week at the start of Terms 1 and 2 focussing on professional development and skills development of both new and returning students. These weeks will be in September and January to cover both our main undergraduate cohorts and January start cohorts, which also gives two opportunities through the academic year cycle for all students to focus on their professional development.
- **Course Coordinators:** Course Coordinators support students by offering office hours to discuss any issues that may arise over the course of completing an assessment.
- **Formative Assessment:** Schools make use of formative assessments, which do not count towards the final course grade, to allow students the opportunity to develop their skills and prepare them for the summative assessment.

Support also takes the form of previous feedback and feed-forward. These provide students with constructive ways to improve and enhance their work,

	while supporting them to enhance their academic skills. This information can be found on our feedback webpages ('Your Academic Feedback'). The Students' Union School Convenor system and Class representative system provides a formal structure for students to actively influence the ongoing and future delivery of teaching and learning (e.g. through Staff-Student Liaison Committees and Senate). Class representative feedback forms are submitted to the Students' Union each term to inform academic policy positions. The <i>You Shape UoA</i> feedback system, and the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey also provide other opportunities for feedback and academic and professional services colleagues work closely to ensure issues are considered by the relevant person.	
(f) Providers design assessments that test appropriate learning outcomes and are fair, reliable, accessible, authentic and inclusive. Where applicable, and sustainable, students are offered different options for undertaking assessments to promote accessibility and inclusion.	The University operates a robust system of Programme and Course approval and review that ensures that Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and assessment are aligned, and that appropriate teaching and learning strategies are then deployed to support students in meeting the ILOs to the best of their abilities. This system follows the principles of Biggs' Constructive Alignment model, setting learning and the assessment of that learning at the heart of the student experience. The system comprises the following stages: 1. Academic staff discuss informally a course or programme proposal with their relevant Head of School / Discipline. This might be a new provision or modification to an existing provision. 2. The University's Curriculum Management System (CMS) requires those submitting course proposals to set out the ILOs and align them with relevant assessments and teaching activities. The system utilises an inbuilt 'ready reckoner' to assist academic staff in ensuring that their ILOs are of an appropriate level, based on a 3D version of Bloom's Taxonomy. In this way, Schools are required to ensure that every assessment has associated intended learning outcomes for students to engage in their learning. At this stage, requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) are taken into account and alignment with these is ensured and highlighted. 3. Course and Programme proposals are submitted to the University's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for scrutiny and advice. Approvals of course and programme proposals are considered by a group of QAC members (themselves academic staff) to oversee and	Course and Programme Approvals (Webpage) Types of Assessment, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Setting Assessments, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Video Guidance: Devising Learning Outcomes Using Bloom's Taxonomy (Video) Undergraduate Code of Practice on Assessment (Document) Postgraduate Taught Code of Practice on Assessment (Document) Double, 'Blind' and Anonymous Marking and Return of Grades, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) Marking & Moderation Procedures (Policy) External Examining (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review (Webpage) Common Grading Scale (CGS) (Webpage) Inclusivity and Accessibility Framework for Education (Webpage) Rules for the Conduct of Prescribed Assessments and Written Examinations for Degrees or Diplomas (Document)

	scrutinise proposals and offer advice and support to applicants. This ensures that the focus is on process rather than subject. The designated QAC member is tasked with ensuring that the ILOs are appropriate to the SCQF level of the provision, that the assessment method(s) is /are realistic and appropriate and that the amount of assessment is consistent with other courses or programmes in other Schools / Disciplines elsewhere in the University (i.e. to avoid over- or underassessment for a similar amount of credits elsewhere). 4. Once approved by QAC, the Curriculum Team is informed and a course or programme code allocated. Alongside the initial development of ILOs, academic and other teaching staff are provided with professional development opportunities by both the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) and their School / Discipline to understand more about how to write effective ILOs and their relationship with student learning and the wider SCQF Framework. These include introducing new staff to the various University Codes of Practice on Assessment and the Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment. Through the curriculum management processes and approval via the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), assessments are scrutinised and reviewed to ensure that they are sufficient and manageable for students, as well as staff. Course coordinators and programme directors are encouraged to look holistically at programmes and constituent courses to ensure that assessment is sufficient, appropriate and that the scheduling is manageable and not ‘bunched’. The guidance documents in the form of Types of Assessment and Setting Assessments also provide relevant course coordinators information with regard to sufficient and manageable assessments. Setting assessments, and associated approvals, Schools must ensure that their assessments are fair, consistent and do not put any students at disadvantage. In setting assessments, the University has an assessment taxonomy which organises assessments based on key characteristics, format, structure, and intended skill outcomes. The assessment taxonomy allows for a clear, consistent framework for programme reviews, course design and accreditation. The approvals route for course proposals via the QAC provides balances and	Guidance for those with Responsibility for Making Examination Arrangements for Disabled Candidates (Document) External Examiners in relation to Marking (Document) Invigilation (Webpage) Exams Manual for Invigilators, AQH (Document) Alternative Assessment Modes (Webpage) Decolonising the Curriculum Resources (Webpage) Academic Calendar (Webpages) Exam Diet Dates (Webpages) Quality Assurance Committee (Webpage) Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment (Webpage)
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checks at a cross-institutional scale to ensure that assessments remain fair and inclusive.

The University's Codes of Practice on Assessment (both [Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate Taught](#)) outline the important principles of fairness, consistency and reliability of assessments. In terms of marking assessments, the University operates [marking and moderation procedures](#), with provision for anonymous marking, to ensure that students are not disadvantaged in the marking of their assessments. This ensures fair and consistent marking and feedback provided to students.

The [Common Grading Scale](#) (CGS) is a straightforward, accessible grading system that is used across different disciplines to help students to understand their grade (itself part of feedback). The Scale also includes a series of written descriptors against each grade band. These help students to understand their feedback in general terms (e.g. at what level they are performing) before then going on to read the more detailed comments on their assessments.

The [Institutional Framework for Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education](#) ensures that all teaching, learning and assessment is fair, inclusive and promotes equality. It presents a series of resources to assist with inclusivity in teaching, learning and assessment.

Alongside this, the subject [External Examiners](#) appointed by the School review assessments as part of the process of setting assessment and providing feedback to the School on their appropriateness. External Examiners are consulted as part of the assessment design process to ensure that assessments are appropriate, consistent and fair. External Examiners also provide feedback by means of formal Examiners' Meetings as well as their formal annual report. This report is shared widely with QAC to ensure institutional oversight of the issues raised in the report and feedback is provided to the External Examiner. The External Examiners' Reports are uploaded to MyAberdeen to ensure the closure of the feedback loop to students.

These individual elements, whilst robust in themselves, are in turn scrutinised in a holistic manner every five years as part of the University's [Internal Teaching Review](#) (ITR). Schools are required to complete and submit an evidence-based

	Critical Analysis and Curriculum Map as part of their ITR submission. Annual Programme Reviews, External Examiner Reports, and School learning and teaching metrics reviewed as part of the Annual School Planning Process are also considered. The ITR team comprises academic staff from different disciplines with the University, alongside QAC members and an appropriate number of external assessors (based on the number of QAA Subject Benchmark Statements represented). There is guidance available for invigilating examinations (for both handwritten and digital exams) to ensure that the arrangements in place are fair and inclusive. Training is offered before each exam diet. Online training is offered before each exam diet, including those out-with the normal timeframe. Tailored online training is also provided to staff based at our Transnational Education (TNE) partners in Qatar, South China Normal (SCNU) and Harbin Engineering Universities. The invigilation manual is maintained by Registry and available to all participants in advance to enable training to focus on the policies via a step-by-step presentation and a Q&A format. Alternative assessments are implemented across programmes, with support from the CAD and QAC. The assessments encourage academic and other teaching staff to think more broadly around assessing students and how to assess their ILOs through more authentic assessment modes that are not constrained by students' individual learning differences or cultural requirements. Resources are available for Schools in relation to the decolonising the curriculum work and assessments. Assessment is planned to ensure that the student learning experience is a holistic one. Timing of assessment is such that it takes place at appropriate points to assess learning, be that at the end of a course, at a mid-point or by continuous assessment. Timing of assessments across Programmes is considered through the process of storyboarding, where Schools seek such support. Hosted jointly by the Centre for Academic Development and the relevant Programme Co-ordinator, storyboarding events involve constituent Course Co-ordinators in taking a strategic overview of ILOs and then key activities in each course which help students to meet these (assessment, teaching, feedback). By plotting these constituents of each course as a timeline against each other, a visual representation of the Programme	
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	emerges, allowing all concerned to see where the potential pinch points are and then agree amongst themselves how to address them. Additionally, the University continues to support programmatic reviews through the Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment (TESTA) methodology, which focuses on the student experience of assessment and feedback across a programme, at UG and PGT levels of study. For teaching teams engaging with this process, TESTA facilitates discussions to initiate changes and enhancements of course and programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and assessment design, which are submitted for approval by the QAC. Previously, at a University level, the term dates identified a formal exam period at the end of each term alongside additional continuous assessment during the course. As a result of the revised academic year structure, implemented from academic year 2024/25, the formal exam diets have been replaced by assessment diets as well as use of other forms of assessments (e.g. essays, open book exams, online assessments) which has provided more flexibility in assessment. We ensure that modes of assessment delivery adhere to any PSRB requirements in relevant courses and programmes. In addition, some Schools offer students the opportunity for additional resit diets at PGT-level in response to UKVI visa restrictions across the programme, allowing a further opportunity for assessment prior to visa expiry. Additionally, the University and Students' Union have worked together to create an Excellence Award for the Most Creative Assessment. This initiative allows the University to gather information from students on what assessments they value most, while also recognising and rewarding the efforts of staff in engaging with assessment enhancement. For PGRs, the thesis and the <i>viva voce</i> remain the sector wide mechanism for research degree assessment. However, a working group has recently been established to develop guidelines for inclusive viva's and will report to the PGR Committee during AY 2025/26.	
(g) Providers establish coherent approaches to technologies that impact teaching, learning and assessment (such as Generative	The Centre for Academic Development works closely with the Vice-Principal (Education), Education Deans, Academic Services and Digital and Information Services to establish coherent approaches to emerging technologies that impact teaching, learning and assessment.	Academic Integrity (Students) (Webpage) Generative Artificial Intelligence (Staff) (Webpage)

Artificial Intelligence). These approaches are clearly communicated to staff and students, include how they are utilised and define misuse of such technologies.	For example, in March 2023, just over three months after the generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tool ChatGPT was made available to the public, CAD worked closely with the Dean for Educational Innovation to publish interim guidance for staff on GenAI and Assessment Practices and to make amendments to our Code of Practice on Student Discipline. This was then followed by guidance for students and for staff on the Use of GenAI Tools in Education and supporting resources (additional guidance, videos). Since AY 2024-25, this guidance for students and staff is reviewed and updated, if necessary, prior to the start of each term, and communicated to students through induction information and to staff through School communications and workshops/awareness raising sessions. For AY 2025-26, guidance for students on the use of GenAI and how to acknowledge the use of GenAI, if permitted, has been incorporated into the institutional course template used to create courses for the start of the AY. In addition, the establishment of an Advisory Group on Emerging Technologies was approved by the University Education Committee in April, to provide leadership and guidance to UEC on the integration of GenAI technologies in Education. The Advisory Group also liaises with the AI@ABDN group, which oversees institutional approaches to the use of AI technologies in research, education and professional services. For PGR students, guidelines around acceptable and unacceptable use of GenAI tools at all stages of the PGR journey are under development, combining input from teaching and research practices. Specific training around robust and effective use of GenAI tools will be available to students starting 2025.	Guidance for Acknowledging and Citing the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Document) Guidance for Staff on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools in Education (Document) Guidance for Students on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools in Education (Document) Guidance for Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Curriculum (Document) Matrix for Evaluating Potential Generative Artificial Intelligence in Assessments (Document) Student Discipline and Fitness to Practise (Webpage)
(h) Providers offer advice and guidance about academic integrity to ensure that students and staff understand what is expected of them throughout the learning journey. The advice is kept current.	A University-wide approach across Schools aims to encourage academic integrity. We actively promote academic integrity as an issue via a series of ongoing awareness raising workshops for teaching staff, exploring issues of assessment design to minimise opportunities for academic misconduct and developing students' academic literacies. Guidance for students and staff helps ensure that assessment is undertaken with integrity. Our approach to developing resources and guidance for students on ensuring academic integrity has been supported through the completion of a series of research projects. These projects aimed to understand the drivers and facilitators for students engaging in specific types of misconduct, such as	Academic Integrity (Webpage) Academic Integrity: Guide for Students (Document) Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) (Document) External Examiners in relation to Marking (Document) Markers, Double, Blind and Anonymous Marking (Document) Marking & Moderation Procedures (Policy)

	contract cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. By developing a better understanding of the specific challenges our students face, we have been able to further enhance our guidance and training resources. This ensures that they are directly relevant to the challenges our students encounter. Key findings from our research indicate that assessments designed to engage students in developing and demonstrating skills through tasks that mirror real-world challenges and applications significantly enhance student engagement and their perceived value of the assessment. This approach not only increases student motivation but also reduces the likelihood of engaging in poor academic practices. In terms of the assessments themselves, regulation takes the form of assessment design (including advice and feedback through discussion with External Examiners at this stage of the process), followed by marking and moderation, during which process the issues of academic integrity are foregrounded and open for discussion amongst the markers. Following this, both the internal pre-Examiners' meetings and the formal Examiners' Meeting involving the External Examiners provides further opportunity for discussion around the academic integrity of assessments. For Postgraduate Research Degrees additional guidance for research integrity is provided in the Research Governance Handbook and through mandatory research integrity and ethics training.	Research Governance Handbook (webpage)
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