

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
**QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

Minute of the Meeting held on 11 December 2025

*Present:* Steve Tucker (**Chair**), Will Barras, Isla Callander, Nadia DeGama, Isa Ehrenschwendtner, Lois Gall, Mark Grant, Jacqui Hutchison, Alex Menshykov, Piotr Niewiadomski, Gareth Norton, Cerni Roig Rabada, Samuel Seymour, Rachel Smith, Virtu Solano, Fiona Stoddard, with Scott Carle, Nick Edwards, Lucy Leiper, Megan McFarlane, Mary Pryor (*vice* Darren Comber), Rhiannon Thompson and Liam Dyker (**Clerk**) in attendance.

*Apologies:* Darren Comber, Susan Halfpenny, Faye Hendry, Sharon Palla, Thanga Thevar, Emma Tough.

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

*(copy filed as QAC/111225/001)*

- 1.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held in November 2025.

**MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LOG**

*(copy filed as QAC/111225/002)*

- 2.1 Dissemination of Good Practice from ITR (*minute 4.2, Dec 2024 refers*): The Committee heard a proposal in respect of a digest of good practice arising from each individual ITR report which will follow into the QAC digest and be disseminated by way of Staff Hub. The Committee was appraised of the ongoing work in respect of quality enhancement webpages.
- 2.2 Education Strategy Updates (*minute 5.3, Nov 2025 refers*): The Committee noted that updates have now been captured in the Education Strategy and as such, the action is complete.
- 2.3 Artificial Intelligence in UG and PGT Dissertations (*minute 8.2, Nov 2025 refers*): The Committee noted that the Chair had sought clarity from colleagues across the University regarding existing work in this area.
- 2.4 CMA Guidance Update Paper (*minute 11.2, Nov 2025 refers*): The Committee was reminded to share the paper with Education Committees, and the action is complete.
- 2.5 Curriculum Transformation (*minute 3.2, Nov 2025 refers*): The Committee noted that the project will progress to Senate in December for an academic view before returning to UEC in the new year for approval. The Committee was advised that following approval, the QAC can decide on the best means of appointing membership of the steering committee.

**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH ABSENCE AND PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES**

*(copy filed as QAC/111225/003)*

- 3.1 The Committee heard an overview of the proposed changes to the Postgraduate Research (PGR) Absence and Parental Leave Policies. It was noted that, following UKRI changes, the University has revised policies to ensure equity for all PGR students, including those funded by Schools. The Absence Policy now provides clearer guidance on categories of leave and entitlements, with funding aligned to UKRI standards. A new Family Leave Policy has also been introduced, offering specific guidance on family and carers' leave, processes, responsibilities, and optional templates, with funded leave provisions matching UKRI entitlements.

- 3.2 It was noted that a minor spelling correction is required on page 26 (“term” not “tern”). The revised policy framework was welcomed as supportive and providing clear guidance on types of leave. Members highlighted the importance of clarity for supervisors, particularly regarding visa implications, with UKVI requirements taking precedence and alignment ensured through collaboration with the immigration and compliance teams. The structure mirrors absence policies at UG and PGT levels, supporting consistency across student progression. Policies will be reviewed at least biennially, with consideration of impacts on research culture and EDI. Discussion emphasised the need for ongoing dialogue with students during absences to support return to study, recognising variability across Schools. Concerns were raised about students occasionally not returning from medical leave, and the importance of PGR administrators working with supervisors to prevent this. Sharing examples of good practice was suggested as a means of strengthening consistency and managing workload.
- 3.3 The Committee, for its part, was content to approve the PGR Absence and Parental Leave Policies.

### **PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS**

*(copy filed as QAC/111225/004)*

- 4.1 The Committee received a summary of the programme specifications update, noting that some further discussions were required with the curriculum and timetabling teams. The Committee was advised that current means of displaying programme information is non-compliant with the Competitions and Markets Authority Guidance, and as such, the proposals will bring the University in line with the guidance. The Committee noted that further guidance will be developed to support the programme specification template.
- 4.2 Discussion ensued regarding the proposed programme specifications, the tenets of which were:
- Whether the programme aims and intended learning outcomes were required elements of the specification, given many programmes have been running for many years and as such, will not have access to the programme proposal form; it was noted that aims and ILOs are compulsory parts of the specification;
  - Whether the completed specifications will require approval of the QAC, for which it was advised that this would be a decision of the QAC;
  - That the Centre for Academic Development can support the development of programme ILOs and that discussion should take place to discuss how this might be implemented; **Action: Chair / MP**
  - That the course catalogue also plays a part in compliance with the CMA Guidance, particularly ensuring it remains up to date;
  - Whether the Subject Benchmark Statements by QAA can provide support in developing programme level ILOs;
  - That consideration should be given to the display of joint degree programme prescriptions to avoid undue workload on curriculum and timetabling teams, for which it was also noted that a new student management system would also play a part;
  - That previous examples of Schools having developed programme level ILOs could be shared with the Committee;
  - That the nomenclature should be consistent across the board, including in all policy and regulations, and that a glossary might be helpful.
- 4.3 In summarising the Committee’s position, it was noted that further guidance was required for programme level ILOs and aims, but that work would take place with CAD and in accordance with QAA Subject Benchmark Statements to inform development of any supporting guidance. Following discussion, the Committee approved the recommendations set out in the paper.

## UPDATE ON POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT POLICY REVIEW TFG

*(copy filed as QAC/111225/005)*

- 5.1 The Committee received an update in respect of the Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Policy Review TFG. In particular, the policies and regulations under review were highlighted. It was suggested that the view of the QAC was sought at this stage to inform review of the policies. The Committee agreed to review each section of the paper in turn.

### Document Structure

- 5.2 In turning to document structure, the Committee was apprised of the proposal to combine the Code of Practice (PGT) and the Code of Practice on Assessment (PGT). In discussion, a variety of views were expressed both positively and negatively for the proposal. In favour of the proposal, arguments noted the complex and confusing structure of policies for both staff and students across the web and that streamlining this would be advantageous. The Committee heard that many policies are split up which creates undue confusion. Conversely, the specific focus of the Code of Practice on Assessment was highlighted and concerns that this might get lost if subsumed into a further document. Some members of the Committee highlighted the user-friendly nature of the current Code of Practice on Assessment.
- 5.3 More generally, the Committee discussed the clarity required between both documents and the need for there to be clear separation if the two-document model is adopted. It was suggested that hosting policies as webpages may be a more effective means of displaying the information. It was suggested that discussions take place outside of the meeting to discuss the best means of taking this forward.

### Award Classification and Borderline Candidates

- 5.4 In summarising the main issues in relation to classification and borderline candidates, the Committee was advised that feedback provided by Schools revealed inconsistent practice in relation to handling borderline candidates and the use of the project grade as a determinant in classification. The Committee noted the previously approved guidance to assist with this.
- 5.5 In discussion, generally the Committee favoured the move to GPA only, with the removal of the project grade as a determining factor in classification. The Committee advocated for more consistency across Schools. It was suggested that if the project grade was to be continued, that an equivalent borderline, as with taught courses, would be helpful. Some members of the Committee highlighted the double penalty on students of inclusion of the project grade as projects generally are heavily weighted in the classification already. It was agreed that more examples and scenarios in relation to borderline cases would be helpful.

### Resits and Compensatory Credits

- 5.6 Summarising, it was noted that some Schools currently arrange additional resit diets, with the current wording of the policy suggesting that students should be offered the opportunity to resit as soon as possible after the original submission. In discussion, the following was noted:
- That consistency would be better, however, there ought to be a level of flexibility built into the proposals to avoid any undue disadvantage to international students, noting that oversight could be made by the QAC;
  - That any proposal should be considered in line with PGT programme progression, as it may be the case that some Schools are arranging additional resit diets to allow students to progress;
  - That, given the visa issues particularly relate to January start PGT programmes, there might be an opportunity to arrange something specifically for January start students;
  - That additional flexibility might be provided for coursework as opposed to invigilated examinations.

5.7 In relation to resits for marginal fails only, the QAC was supportive of all fails being allowed to resit for projects and dissertations. There were no proposals to change the number of resit opportunities for PGT students.

5.8 In relation to compensatory credit, it was noted that there were no proposals to change the criteria.

#### Extra Credits

5.9 The Committee noted that proposals were for extra credits at PGT to be aligned with UG. It was suggested that discussion take place with Curriculum Team to ensure that MyCurriculum can facilitate what is sought.

5.10 Thanks were expressed to Jason Bohan and Isabella Fausti for the comprehensive update and for the discussions which ensued.

### **UPDATE ON TERTIARY QUALITY ENHANCEMENT REVIEW (TQER)**

6.1 The Committee heard an update in respect of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review, noting that the Initial Review Visit took place on 9 and 10 December 2025. The Committee was advised that the documentation submitted in October 2025 was the basis of the panel's review. It was highlighted that seven groups of staff and/or students was met with, including: (i) the Senior Vice-Principal (representing the Principal); (ii) Senior Leadership; (iii) Quality Contacts, including Education Deans; and (iv) four groups of students of various modes of study and demographics. Thanks were expressed to Emma Tough for her diligent organisation of the visit. The Committee was apprised of the style of the meetings and the manner of the panel, highlighting areas of focus including student voice and feedback.

6.2 In terms of next steps, it was highlighted that a summary of the initial review visit will be prepared by the panel and an additional documentation request received (if appropriate). The Committee was advised that updates will follow in this regard.

### **EDUCATION POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW**

7.1 The Committee was advised that the Education Policy and Regulations Review Schedule was not yet available and would follow either by circulation or to the next meeting of the Committee.

### **PSRB: GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND (BMUS EDUCATION)**

*(copy filed as QAC/111225/007)*

8.1 The Committee noted the update in respect of the reaccreditation of the BMus Education programme by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

9.1 Thanks were expressed to outgoing members of the Quality Assurance Committee, including Isa Ehrenschtendner, the current longest serving member of the Committee, wishing them well going forward. Thanks were also expressed to all members of the Committee for their hard work across the calendar and academic year, noting the challenges that the Committee has faced across the year.

9.2 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 18 February 2026 at 2:05pm in Committee Room 2, University Office and via Microsoft Teams.