

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING**

DRAFT Minute of the Meeting held on 13 May 2015

*Present:* Professor P McGeorge (Convener), Dr B Connolly, Dr S Davies, Mr C Duncan, Mr P Fantom, Dr C Kee, Professor A Lumsden, Dr G Mackintosh, Mr D Philips, Dr M Pryor, Professor K Shennan, Ms K Christie, Dr R Bernard (Clerk), Ms E Hay (Minute Secretary)

*Apologies:* Ms E Beaver, Dr J Masthoff

Mr N Edwards was in attendance for item 3.

Professor W Naphy and Ms J Fernandes were in attendance for item 4(i).

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2014**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/001)*

- 1.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on the 21 January 2015. The Committee agreed that the minutes were representative of discussions held.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

- 2.1 The Committee identified no specific issues arising relating to Health and Safety other than noting no resolution to the previously identified issue of trips off campus as an area for investigation, an issue arising from a recent College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) business continuity exercise (*point 2.1 of UCTL/130515/001 refers*).
- 2.2 Members of the Committee requested consideration be given to a formal method of collecting information or data for consideration in this regard.

**Action: Clerk**

**CHANGES TO CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (ACADEMIC)**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/002)*

- 3.1 Mr Edwards presented to the Committee proposed changes to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic). The Committee were informed that the majority of changes has been made in an effort to simplify procedure, to ensure consistency of approach and to allow for a student to receive an outcome to a case as quickly as possible. Members of the Committee acknowledged key changes as follows:
- Introduction of a standard of proof, allowing for cases to be decided on the 'balance of probabilities'
  - Restructuring of Offences for clarity and the inclusion (and definition) of self-plagiarism
  - Greater discretion for Heads of School in dealing with all first offences
  - Change in the consideration of offences by programme year of the student concerned to the level of course concerned.
- 3.2 Members of the Committee noted the changes to the Postgraduate Resit Policy, allowing automatic resits, with a capped result of pass/fail. Members of the Committee acknowledged that while a student who failed and a student was found guilty of plagiarism at this level could

receive the same outcome, of a resit, they considered the fact the GPA would differentiate the mark received at initial result (0 in the case of the student who plagiarised) as a fair distinction between the two.

- 3.3 The Committee agreed that students who are found guilty of a first offence should receive as much support as possible in avoiding a second offence. The Committee agreed that students in this position should receive information on the support provided by the Student Learning Service.
- 3.4 The Committee, in approving the proposed changes, agreed the importance of gathering data at all stages of the process and of the reporting of this data, likely by way of the UCTL Annual Report to Senate.

**Action: Mr Edwards, Clerk**

## **STUDY OVERSEAS**

### **(i) ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS GOING ABROAD**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/003)*

- 4.1 Professor Naphy presented the paper on Entry Requirements for Students Going Abroad to the Committee, drawing the attention of members to option 2 (as detailed in section 1.4 of the paper) as the option recommended. The Committee noted the proposal that applications to study abroad are considered in a more holistic manner, with emphasis on the duty of care of the University to its students studying abroad.
- 4.2 Members of the Committee noted the matrix used in option 2 and its similarities to that of the model used by the University of Glasgow. The Committee were informed that the Heads of School had been supportive of the proposal to introduce the model, with the caveat that where exceptions occurred, these would be stipulated in the specifics of an agreement. Members of the Committee agreed to approve the proposal for use.

### **(ii) HONOURS CLASSIFICATION FOR STUDENTS GOING ABROAD**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/004)*

- 4.3 Members of the Committee acknowledged the issue of Honours Classification for Students Going Abroad and its discussion at an earlier meeting of the UCTL. Members reiterated their support for students going abroad in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year and agreed with Heads of School in approving that Students who undertake to go abroad in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year should not have the marks they earn counted towards classification.
- 4.4 Members of the Committee acknowledged that as a consequence of the structure of some programmes, such as Engineering programmes, this would result in students being classified on the basis of 120 credit points, only 90 of which would be discipline specific. The Committee agreed that the proposal should be approved, however, noted that expectations should apply where dictated by accrediting bodies.
- 4.5 Members of the Committee noted that this practice reflected that used at the University of Edinburgh. Members agreed to review the numbers of students going abroad and specifically in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year, going forward.

**Action: Clerk**

## RISK REGISTER

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/005)*

- 5.1 The Committee noted the Risk Register as attached, considering the entries for which the Committee has responsibility. Members of the Committee proposed the following potential amendments:
- The amendment of 'Online Advising' to 'MyCurriculum'
  - The amendment of the date of implementation of MyCurriculum to September 2015
  - The amendment of Student Expectations to include the effects of Voluntary Severance on the curriculum. Members of the Committee noted that this had been included in the risks associated with the MyCurriculum project.
  - The amendment of the Register to include a potential delay in Capital Projects
- 5.2 Members of the Committee agreed to refer issues such as that of Voluntary Severance and the Capital Projects to the specific Committees concerned before amending the Register on behalf of the UCTL.
- 5.3 Members agreed that further edits/scoring could be undertaken by way of circulation.  
**Action: Convener/Clerk**

## PROPOSED MODERATION PROCEDURES

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/006)*

- 6.1 Professor Shennan introduced the paper to the Committee, noting that the procedures had now been revised following consideration at the Quality Assurance, Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees and by Heads of School. Members of the Committee acknowledged the intention of the revised procedures to clarify procedure but also to ensure an overall reduction in second marking.
- 6.2 Members of the Committee noted the inclusion of section 4, addressing the issuing of agreeing marks where a discrepancy between markers exists. Members of the Committee agreed that where this difference is not substantial, the student should be awarded the higher mark. Where the difference is substantial, a case may involve a third marker.
- 6.3 Members of the Committee approved the procedures being forwarded to Senate, pending the clarification of section 3.6, which references 'moderation' and not 'second marking'.  
**Action: Professor Shennan/Clerk**

## PROVISIONAL MARKS

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/007)*

- 7.1 Members of the UCTL noted the paper on Provisional Marks and the proposal to consider all first half session course marks provisional until the meeting of the final examination board, not just those at levels 3 and above, as is current practice.
- 7.2 Members of the Committee agreed with the proposal, noting a positive step toward the more timely return of marks in addition to ensuring a rigorous marking process. The Committee noted the importance of communicating this change to students, by way of course handbooks and the student portal.

**Action: Clerk**

## **POLICY ON RECORDING OF LECTURES**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/008)*

- 8.1 The Committee were informed of the proposed Policy on Recording of Lectures. The Committee approved the policy, agreeing with the importance of ensuring University policy on the matter, in spite on difficulties in policing it.
- 8.2 Members of the Committee agreed that the policy should be checked in regards to UK Legislation, prior to final approval.

**Action: Clerk**

## **PERSONAL COMMENTS IN STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION FORMS**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/009)*

- 9.1 Members of the Committee acknowledged the paper on Personal Comments in Student Course Evaluation Forms (SCEF) and the proposal to redact negative comments prior to the circulation of documentation amongst course teams and Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs). The Committee acknowledged the reasoning behind the proposals, but expressed concern in the redaction of all negative comments, suggesting that only comments of a personalised, non-academic nature should be removed.
- 9.2 Overall, the Committee approved the proposal, noting that a transparent and consistent approach must be taken to the redaction exercise. The Committee noted the importance of informing students of appropriate ways of using feedback mechanisms.

**Action: Clerk**

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES FOR STUDENTS**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/017)*

- 10.1 The Committee noted the introduction of Professional Development Courses for Students and acknowledged their intention to engage students in positive development from as early a stage as possible.

## **MINUTES AND UPDATE REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/010)*

- 11.1 The Committee were issued copies of the minutes of the meetings of each of the sub-committees. No further issues were raised.

## **COURSE CAPPING REQUEST**

- 12.1 The Committee approved an amendment to the cap for Sixth Century SX3012 Appetite for Food and Health (as under). This is required as a result of the response to student feedback on the course: duration of group work is being extended but the groups will be smaller in size.

SX3012	Appetite for Food and Health	reduce from 150 to 120
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## **TERM DATES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/17**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/011)*

- 12.2 The Committee approve the term dates for academic years 2016/17.

**PROCESS FOR CONSIDERING STUDENT-FOCUSED PARTNERSHIPS**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/012)*

- 12.3 The Committee approved a revised process for the consideration of student-focused partnerships.

**STUDENT PROGRESS COMMITTEE REMIT**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/013)*

- 12.4 The Committee approved amendments to the Student Progress Committee remit required as a consequence of the amendments to Honours progression.

**CHANGES TO REGULATIONS**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/014)*

- 12.5 The Committee is asked to approve, for its part, the draft Resolution Changes in 'Regulations for Various Degrees'. The Resolution enacts the changes in degree regulations recommended by the Quality Assurance Committee since May 2014.

**CREDIT RECOGNITION FOR OUTGOING ERASMUS AND EXCHANGE STUDENTS**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/016)*

- 12.6 The Committee approved the process for credit recognition for outgoing ERASMUS and exchange students.

**STUDENT MATERNITY GUIDELINES**

*(copy filed as UCTL/130515/015)*

- 13.1 The Committee noted the Student Maternity Guidelines.

**ENHANCED STUDY EXEMPTION: SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

- 13.2 The Committee noted that the Convenor has approved a request from the School of Biological Sciences that the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science be exempt from Enhanced Study requirements.

**DATES OF MEETING IN 2015/16**

- 13.3 The Committee is invited to note that meetings in 2015/16 will be held as follows:

Wednesday 21 October 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

Wednesday 20 January 2016 at 2.00 p.m.

Wednesday 11 May 2016 at 2.00 p.m.

**AOCB**

- 14.1 The Committee noted the proposed changes to the course and programme approval system (SENAS). Members of the Committee were informed that due to the progression of the project

over the summer months, information was likely to be distributed for consideration and/or approval by way of circulation.

- 14.2 Members of the Committee welcomed Drs Baker, Tucker and Scharlau to act as members of the Committee, while undertaking the role of the Heads of three defined task groups tackling Retention,.
- 14.3 Members of the Committee acknowledged that this would be the last meeting attended by Mr Rob Henthorn, Student Association President for Education and Employability. The Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mr Henthorn for his valuable contribution over the last two academic years.