

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

Minute of the Meeting held on 13 May 2024

Present: Jo-Anne Murray (Chair), Waheed Afzal, Euan Bain, John Barrow, Lyn Batchelor, Jason Bohan, Colin Christie, Stuart Durkin, Bill Harrison, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Helen Knight, Rona Patey, Michelle Pinard, Shona Potts, Anne-Michelle Slater, Susan Stokeld, Steve Tucker, Asha Venkatesh, Joshua Wright with Simon Bains, Scott Carle, Robin Cummins, Liam Dyker, Nick Edwards, Tracey Innes, Graeme Kirkpatrick, Rhianon Ledwell, Gillian Mackintosh, Rhona Moore, Patricia Spence, Louisa Stratton and Emma Tough (Clerk) and Morag MacRae (Minute Secretary) in attendance

Apologies: Harminder Battu, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Julie Bray, Alison Jenkinson, David McCausland, Stuart Piertney Amudha Poobalan, Sai Shradda S Viswanathan, and Brian Henderson, Graeme Kirkpatrick.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 MARCH 2024

(copy filed as UEC/130524/001)

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to the meeting of the University Education Committee (UEC). Members of the Committee considered the minute of the meeting held on 5 March 2024 and approved it as an accurate representation of discussions held.

MATTERS ARISING

(copy filed as UEC/130524/002)

- 2.1 Members of the Committee noted the actions arising following the meeting of UEC held on 5 March 2024. Members noted that the Risk Register remained outstanding and would be circulated prior to the next meeting of the Committee. They also noted that the Support for Study policy had been confirmed and hence was now complete.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON STUDENT APPEALS

(copy filed as UEC/130524/003)

- 3.1 Members of the UEC received a summary of the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals, including the introduction of a test for competency, clarification on group appeals, and the need for the promotion of the requirement to go through a frontline resolution process prior to submitting an appeal.
- 3.2 Members of the Committee regarded the enhanced policy as a positive move, although some members were concerned by the growing number of complaints with an academic outcome. It was highlighted that the University is bound by the Complaints Handling Procedure provided by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, but it was also noted that the University should provide a reason for the outcome of complaints and note the next steps.
- 3.3 Clarification was sought on group appeals and whether it would be possible to have different outcomes for different students, and it was agreed that the members of staff handling the appeal would need to provide a reason as to why the outcomes differed. Additionally, it was

noted that the procedure document would detail that the Head of School would meet with the lead appellant only.

- 3.4 Subject to a minor change in wording surrounding the definition of a senior academic, the members of the Committee were content to approve the proposal.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON EXTENSIONS AND THE LATE SUBMISSION OF WORK

(copy filed as UEC/130524/004)

- 4.1 Members of the Committee heard a summary of the Policy and Procedures on Extensions and the Late Submission of Work. The policy was welcomed by the Committee, subject to the inclusion of guidance detailing that dates of closure over the Winter break are exempt from counting towards a submission date.
- 4.2 Increased clarity was sought for the occasions when students are on work placements, and the requirements to report to both the University and the placement involved. There was some minor disagreement between Schools about whether students should automatically be given the full extension term (i.e. 7 days) or whether they should apply for only the number of days of extension required, should it be less than 7 calendar days. Discussion ensued, and it was agreed that the policy wording should be changed to state the extensions were to be 1 to 7 days in duration. Schools with an interdisciplinary aspect to their courses would be encouraged to agree the length of an extension between them, and an email to the course coordinator could also serve as a request for an extension.
- 4.3 A query arose surrounding the manner in which requests for extensions were processed, and it was confirmed there were variations between the Schools but the procedure document would give examples of good practice. Confirmation of the process for Tier 4 students and their extension requests and corresponding dates were sought.

Action: J Bohan/G Mackintosh

- 4.4 The Committee agreed that students would prefer a standard 7-day extension for clarity purposes. Members of the Committee raised concerns that School Admin teams may not have enough resource to make decisions on extensions of varying lengths, but the Dean for Educational Innovation replied that they would provide support.

Action: K Kiezebrink/S Preston

- 4.5 Subject to the amendments mentioned here, the Committee approved the proposed policy and procedures.

MARKING AND MODERATION PROCEDURES

(copy filed as UEC/130524/005)

- 5.1 Members of the Committee heard a summary of the Marking and Moderation Procedures. Most members of the Committee were broadly in support of the paper, with some concerns regarding Trans-National Education (TNE). These concerns were partly tempered with the provision that all measures would be handled on a case-by-case basis, but the Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement would reassess the 30% moderation threshold.

Action: S Tucker/G Mackintosh

- 5.2 Students are not in support of this policy but realise that it reduces workload while maintaining standards required by the QAA and External Examiners. The Chair queried what would provide

reassurance to students, and the Vice President for Education said she would need to consult with the Student Education Committee. The School of Biological Sciences provides mark distribution for their courses which could be rolled out across the institution.

Action: R Ledwell

- 5.3 Subject to changes as noted above, along with caveats for new markers and assessments being subject to increased moderation, members of the Committee approved these procedures.

SECTOR UPDATES

- 6.1 The Chair requested that this be done at the next meeting of the Committee.

RISK REGISTER

- 7.1 The Chair noted that this would be circulated before the next meeting of the Committee.

Action: Chair/Clerk

UPDATED DELIVERY OF EDUCATION PRINCIPLES

(copy filed as UEC/130524/007)

- 8.1 Members of the Committee heard a summary of the Principles for Delivery of Education and noted that this was an item for approval. Requests for changes of wording surrounding the terms “integrity” and “efficient” were received, but once they are completed, the Committee is content to approve the principles.

UPDATE ON WORK ON GENERATIVE AI IN EDUCATION

(copy filed as UEC/130524/008)

- 9.1 Members of the Committee heard an update on Generative AI in Education. Clarification was sought on what a “project” meant, and it was reported that the term referred to institutional projects and not student-led research. It was queried whether the student AI tools available on Blackboard had been enabled, and it was confirmed that guidance on how to effectively use Co-Pilot, an institution-specific AI tool, will be created shortly. It was also confirmed that some AI courses would run throughout the year, while others would run as an initial session during the University’s Induction, Transition and Employability Week (ITEW).
- 9.2 A further update from Sara Preston, Senior eLearning Advisor, would be shared with members of the Committee in due course.

(Note: This was made available shortly after the Committee meeting)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY RESOURCES

- 10.1 Members of the Committee heard an oral update on academic integrity resources. The update gave detail on the move away from a simple tick-box statement confirming whether students have used Generative AI, and detailed that there would be resources concerning what constitutes a student’s own work and what constitutes a breach in academic integrity. These resources would include guidance on having potentially difficult conversations with students about whether they had used an AI tool.

ONLINE EDUCATION FORUM UPDATE

(copy filed as UEC/130524/009)

- 11.1 Members of the Committee heard a summary of the paper on the Online Education Forum. The second session held did not work as well as intended due to the lack of academic staff. The Dean for Educational Innovation intended to share the Annex to the paper.

(Note: This was made available shortly after the Committee meeting)

EXTERNAL QUALITY PROCESSES: ELIR, QESR AND TQP UPDATE

(copy filed as UEC/130524/010)

- 12.1 Members of the Committee heard a summary of the paper on the External Quality Processes and the related ELIR, QESR and TQP update. It was confirmed to the Committee that there was currently no intention to undertake a review of the Professional Services, due to the fact that the Internal Teaching Review (ITR) process is suitably robust. A query arose concerning how Library Services was involved, which the Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement will address.

Action: S Tucker/G Mackintosh

UNDERGRADUATE NON-CONTINUATION DATA

(copy filed as UEC/130524/011)

- 13.1 Members of the Committee heard a summary of the undergraduate non-continuation data. A query was received about whether mental health and physical health could be separated, but it was confirmed that the field choices are linked to the HESA requirements. The Dean for Student Support will contact the Planning team about what they are able to do.

Action: J Bohan

INDUCTION, TRANSITION AND EMPLOYABILITY WEEK (ITEW)

- 14.1 Members of the Committee were advised that the Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship would circulate his presentation in due course.

Action: J Barrow

DATES OF NEXT MEETING

- 15.1 Members of the Committee noted that the next meeting of the UEC would take place on Monday 1 October 2024 at 1:05pm. The Chair closed the meeting by extending her gratitude to the staff who will have left before the date of the next meeting.

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW – REVIEW CHAIRS

(copy filed as UEC/130524/012)

- 16.1 Members of the Committee routinely approved the proposal which would temporarily waive the requirement of the Internal Teaching Review (ITR) Panel Chairs to be a member of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), and instead allow a member of the UEC to chair a review.