

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) will be held on **Wednesday 19 February 2025** at **2:05pm in Committee Room 2, University Office** and **via Microsoft Teams**.

Mr Liam Dyker (Administrative Officer and Clerk to QAC)
(email : liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk)

**AGENDA
FOR DISCUSSION**

1. **Approval of the Minute of the QAC Meeting Held on 11 December 2024** (QAC/190225/001)
Presenter: Chair

2. **Matters Arising and Action Log** (QAC/190225/002)
Presenter: Chair

Members of the Committee are invited to note the Action Log.

3. **Articulation Pathways 2025/26** (QAC/190225/016)
Presenter: Megan McFarlane

Members of the Committee are invited to **approve** the Articulation Pathways for 2025/26.

4. **Computer-Based and Online Assessments TFG**
(i) **Assessment Taxonomy** (QAC/190225/003)
Presenter: Jason Bohan and Kirsty Kiezebrink

Members of the Committee are invited to **discuss** the Assessment Taxonomy.

- (ii) **Online Assessment Guidance** (QAC/190225/004)
Presenter: Jason Bohan

Members of the Committee are invited to **discuss** the Online Assessment Guidance.

5. **Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment: Presentation** (Oral Item)
Presenter: Mary Pryor

Members of the Committee will receive a presentation regarding the ongoing work in relation to TESTA.

6. **Omnibus Resolution 2025/26** (QAC/190225/005)
Presenter: Emma Tough

Members of the Committee are invited to **discuss** and **approve** the Omnibus Resolution 2025/26.

7. Student Casework Data 2023/24

(i) Appeals and Complaints

(QAC/190225/006)

(ii) Academic Discipline

(QAC/190225/007)

Presenter: Emma Tough

Members of the Committee are invited to **discuss** the student casework data for 2023/24 in respect of (i) appeals and complaints; and (ii) academic discipline.

8. Updates on Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework

(i) Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER)

(Oral Update)

(ii) Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)

(Oral Update)

Presenter: Steve Tucker

Members of the Committee will hear an oral update in respect of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework.

9. Undergraduate Annual Monitoring

Members of the Committee are invited to **discuss** the responses to the Annual Programme Reviews, and to highlight any areas of good practice or areas of enhancement for further discussion or wider dissemination. Members of the Committee are invited to **reflect** on their own experiences with their oversight and home Schools.

(i) Biological Sciences

(QAC/190225/008a)

(ii) Business

(QAC/190225/008b)

(iii) Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History

(QAC/190225/008c)

(iv) Education

(QAC/190225/008d)

(v) Engineering

(QAC/190225/008e)

(vi) Geosciences

(QAC/190225/008f)

(vii) Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture

(QAC/190225/008g)

(viii) Law

(QAC/190225/008h)

(ix) Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition

(QAC/190225/008i)

(x) Natural and Computing Sciences

(QAC/190225/008j)

(xi) Psychology

(QAC/190225/008k)

(xii) Social Science

(QAC/190225/008l)

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 5 March 2025 at 2:05pm in Committee Room 2, University Office or via Microsoft Teams.

11. Items for Routine Approval – see below/overleaf

12. Items for Information – see below/overleaf

Any member of the Committee wishing an item for routine approval or for information to be brought forward for discussion may ask at the meeting for that to be done. Any such item will be taken after item 1.

Declaration of interests: Any member and individual in attendance (including Officers) who has a clear interest in a matter on the agenda should declare that interest at the relevant meeting, whether or not that interest is already recorded in the Registry of Member's interests.

11. FOR ROUTINE APPROVAL

11.1 UK Quality Code Mapping

Presenter: Faye Hendry (if required)

(i) Section 1: Admissions, Widening Access and Recruitment (QAC/190225/009)

(ii) Section 5: Enabling Student Achievement (QAC/190225/010)

(iii) Section 11: Student Engagement (QAC/190225/011)

Members of the Committee are invited to **approve, by routine approval**, the various sections of the UK Quality Code Mapping.

11.2 Term Dates for Academic Year 2026/27 (QAC/190225/012)

Presenter: Emma Tough (if required)

Members of the Committee are invited to **approve, by routine approval**, the term dates for academic year 2026/27.

11.3 Term Dates for BA in Childhood Practice 2025/26

Presenter: Chair (if required)

Members of the Committee are invited to **approve, by routine approval**, the term dates for the BA in Childhood Practice for 2025/26, which have been amended since previous approval, as follows:

Term 1 Opens	Monday 25 August 2025
Term 1 Closes	Friday 19 December 2025
Term 2 Opens	Monday 26 January 2026
Term 2 Closes	Friday 29 May 2026

11.4 Deadlines for the Return of Results 2025/26 (QAC/190225/013)

Presenter: Chair and/or Emma Tough (if required)

Members of the Committee are invited to **approve, by routine approval**, the deadlines for the return of results in academic year 2025/26.

11.5 Summer Graduations 2025 (QAC/190225/014)

Presenter: Chair and/or Emma Tough (if required)

Members of the Committee are invited to **approve, by routine approval**, the arrangements for Summer Graduations 2025.

12. FOR INFORMATION

12.1 Report from Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG) (QAC/190225/015)

Presenter: Faye Hendry (if required)

Members of the Committee are invited to **note** the report from the Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG).

12.2 Matters Approved by Convenor's Action

(i) Term Dates for MSc Global Business Communication (Qatar)

Presenter: Chair (if required)

The Committee is invited to **note** that the term dates for the MSc Global Business Communication (Qatar) were approved by Convenor's Action. The approved plan is to move the delivery week of Intercultural Communication from 9 February to 6 April.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2024

Present: Steve Tucker (**Chair**), Will Barras, Isla Callander, Selma Carson, Nadia DeGama, Isa Ehrenschwendtner, Lois Gall, Flora Groening, Jacqui Hutchison, Chukwuadinula Kachikwu, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Alex Menshykov, Gareth Norton, Miles Rothoerl, Fiona Stoddard, Thanga Thevar, with Scott Carle, Darren Comber, Lucy Leiper, Ann Simpson, Emma Tough and Liam Dyker (**Clerk**) in attendance.

Apologies: Debbie Dyker, Mark Grant, Faye Hendry, Rachel Smith.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(copy filed as QAC/111224/001)

- 1.1 The Committee approved the minute of the previous meeting held in September 2024.

MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LOG

(i) ACTION LOG

(copy filed as QAC/111224/002a)

- 2.1 Qatar Representation for Decolonising the Curriculum Community of Practice (*minute 2.1.3 refers*): Complete. The Decolonising the Curriculum Community of Practice is not meeting frequently, but is currently reviewing the Toolkit resources and colleagues from Qatar are involved with this.
- 2.2 Vacancies on the APRG and the Senate (*minute 5.1 refers*): The QAC noted that one vacancy remained on the Senate, and expressions of interest should be made to the Clerk.
- 2.3 Business School Graduations (*minute 17.1 refers*): Although the action was complete, a question was asked regarding whether cohorts which may have studied together but have differing titles (i.e. which mean they are in different graduation ceremonies) could be considered. It was agreed that this would be reviewed.

(ii) ACADEMIC POLICY & REGULATIONS GROUP REMIT & COMPOSITION

(copy filed as QAC/111224/002b)

- 2.4 The Committee approved the remit and composition of the Academic Policy and Regulations Group, following the appointment of two QAC members and a Student member.

UNDERGRADUATE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

(copy filed as QAC/111224/003)

[Clerk's Note: Megan McFarlane and Sally Middleton joined the meeting for this item.]

- 3.1 A summary of the paper was provided to the QAC, noting that the Committee had previously seen various changes to standard and contextualised admissions entry requirements. The Committee noted that the proposed changes referred to higher tariff degrees, given the previously made changes had resulted in a widened gap between the standard and higher degree tariff entry requirements. It was noted that approval was not sought for the changes to the Law entry requirements at the current stage as discussions were ongoing with the School

of Law. The higher entry requirements for the International Baccalaureate were noted, given the status of the award. It was suggested that the proposed changes align with current practice. The governance route was highlighted, noting that approval had been obtained from Student Recruitment Committee (SRC), but Heads of School endorsement was awaited.

3.2 The Committee discussed the proposals, noting the following:

- That a print deadline of 2 December was stipulated; responding, it was accepted that the deadline was aspirational and that there would still be time to amend the prospectus.
- That the proposals seemed logical and that the consistency across the entry requirements was welcome.
- That the IB requirements appeared out of line with other requirements; responding, it was noted that the University reputation would suffer if the IB requirements were lowered any further.
- Clarity was sought regarding international requirements; responding, it was noted that international entry requirements were constantly under review and that the admissions team sought to be agile in making changes in-year. It was agreed that discussions will take place following the meeting to agree an appropriate process, ensuring appropriate governance and oversight.

Action: Chair

3.3 The Committee was content to approve the proposals set out in the paper.

3.4 An overview was provided in relation to a proposal to accept the Malaysian Unified Examination Certificate (UEC), which is offered by private Chinese High Schools, and which the University's competitors are accepting. The Committee was advised that the University was proposing a similar approach to that of competitors. It was agreed that further details would be circulated to the Committee and approval sought by circulation.

Action: Clerk

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW REPORT

(copy filed as QAC/111224/004)

[Clerk's Note: Jason Bohan joined the meeting for this item.]

4.1 The QAC heard a summary of the key matters raised within the School of Education Internal Teaching Review report. The QAC was advised that the review had ultimately been positive with good practice identified in abundance. The themes for the review were identified as (i) School structure and staffing; (ii) teaching, learning and assessment; (iii) student experience; and (iv) student support and EDI. In summarising the commendations, the sense of community, assessment practices, feedback and facilities were praised. The Committee was advised that workload and resource pressures were the largest issue facing the School. The wider issues identified in the report were summarised. The action plan was highlighted.

4.2 In discussion, the Committee discussed the importance of disseminating good practice within other Schools. It was suggested that the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) could have a role in collating good practice. Caution was urged in respect of collating good practice which is not used or can be outdated quite quickly. It was suggested that the MyAberdeen User Group might be an appropriate place to store this information. Engagement in the TESTA process was also highlighted. It was agreed that separate discussions would take place to identify the best means of achieving effective dissemination of good practice.

Action: Chair

4.3 The Committee was content to approve the report.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH MATTERS
(i) POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH READMISSION PROCEDURE

(copy filed as QAC/111224/018)

[Clerk's Note: Robert Findlay joined the meeting for this item.]

- 5.1 The Committee heard an overview of the paper pertaining to the Postgraduate Research readmissions procedure, noting a formal procedure for readmission of PGR students did not currently exist. The QAC was advised that the procedure served two primary cohorts of students: (i) where a student requires to return to study to complete further research under supervision; and (ii) where a student may have exhausted their period of study and is not eligible for further extensions but has undertaken to prepare their thesis to a standard which is ready for submission. It was suggested that the approval route would be the supervisor, relevant Head of School, with ultimate approval from the Dean for Postgraduate Research.
- 5.2 Discussion ensued, the tenets of which were:
- That a typo was identified in section 1(d) in respect of 'in order to submit...';
 - Clarity was sought regarding whether the current procedure required payment of fees (*section 15 refers*), to which this was confirmed;
 - That it appears the School Director of Postgraduate Research was not included in the approvals process; to which it was noted that the Head of School should have oversight, particularly in relation to workload allocations, however, may opt to delegate the responsibility, noting that structures differed between Schools;
 - Clarity was sought regarding whether it was possible to change supervisors upon readmission; responding, it was confirmed that supervisory arrangements will be adjusted following staff departures.
- 5.3 The Committee discussed in detail the proposed timeframe beyond which readmission applications would not normally be considered. In discussion, it was suggested that research in some disciplines will have progressed significantly within the five year period. Conversely, it was suggested that the five year period was helpful and consistent with other readmissions policies and with part-time study. Clarity was sought why a time period was necessary. In response, the QAC was advised that primarily, a time period was enacted to manage student expectations and to ensure that only meaningful applications were considered. It was suggested that it will be kept under review and that it remains at the discretion of the Schools to readmit students.
- 5.4 Following a lengthy discussion, the Committee approved the proposed procedure.

(ii) POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRESSION

(copy filed as QAC/111224/005)

- 6.1 The Committee discussed the paper pertaining to Postgraduate Research progression, noting the proposal to remove the biannual progression exercise in light of the significant associated workload. The QAC was advised that students and supervisors are waiting for the six-monthly progression meetings to highlight issues, which is challenging where theses and projects are not on track. The range of mitigations, including a Research Development Audit, enhancing induction, and clear expectations regarding the supervisory relationship, were highlighted. It was suggested that there would be more opportunities to be in contact with students and supervisors through the new process.
- 6.2 General support for the proposed changes was expressed, noting the positive impact on workloads. Clarity was sought regarding the form of assessment for the Annual Progression Exercises (APE), to which it was suggested that these were still at the discretion of the Schools. It was highlighted that the three-month audits would remain within the School. Additionally, it was clarified that students will remain responsible for preparation of the paperwork.

- 6.3 Concerns were raised regarding the impact of a negative supervisory relationship or where a supervisor is not engaged. It was clarified that there will be multiple opportunities to contact students regarding supervisory relationships. The Committee noted that it should be made clear to students and staff their role within the supervisory arrangements, particularly in terms of appeals and complaints. Further, the feedback sought from students was clarified, noting that internal and external survey data is gathered.
- 6.4 The QAC was advised that discussions will take place regarding the appropriate approval route and timeline for implementation for these proposals, and the Committee will be updated in due course. The Committee thereafter approved the proposals. **Action: Chair / Clerk**

MYABERDEEN GRADES JOURNEY: TRANSPARENCY AND ENHANCING THE RETURN OF GRADES TO SRS

(copy filed as QAC/111224/019)

[Clerk's Note: Sara Preston joined the meeting for this item.]

- 7.1 A summary of the paper in relation to the MyAberdeen Grades Journey was presented to the Committee, noting that approval was sought for Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4 of the paper, with Section 4.3 for discussion. The proposals to reduce staff workload were noted, while improving the consistency of how grades are presented and the process by which marks are transferred between systems. The establishment of a Task and Finish Group for the implementation of a more efficient marks transfer process was highlighted.
- 7.2 General support for the proposals was expressed. Comments in relation percentage grades conversion were noted. A variety of views were expressed, with some suggesting that where components of assessment are separate, separate CGS grades should be provided. Inconsistencies in the mapping of percentage grades to the CGS were highlighted. It was suggested that guidance would follow to Schools in this regard.
- 7.3 The Committee approved the proposals set out in Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4, with further discussion to be had in relation to Section 4.3.

PROFESSIONAL DECLARATION FOR MSc PHYSICIAN'S ASSOCIATE STUDIES

(copy filed as QAC/111224/006)

- 8.1 The Committee heard an overview of the paper in respect of a Professional Declaration for the MSc in Physician's Associate Studies, noting the recent introduction of regulation by the General Medical Council. It was noted that the declaration will take place during graduation, at which students will be invited to stand and collectively respond 'I do' following the declaration being read out.
- 8.2 The Committee approved the proposed professional declaration.

EXTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW

(i) UPDATE ON TERTIARY QUALITY ENHANCEMENT REVIEW ([TQER](#))

- 9.1 The Committee heard an update on the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER), noting that the review for the University will take place in February 2026. It was noted that additional resource to support the preparation of the review had been requested, and that discussions will take place in the next calendar year regarding preparations. It was noted that while there are

similarities between the former ELIR process and the new TQER process, guidance was still being issued and that substantial lead-in time will be required.

(ii) UPDATE ON SCOTLAND'S TERTIARY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME ([STEP](#))

- 10.1 The Committee heard an update on Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP). The QAC was advised that a four-year theme had been identified as Supporting Diverse Learner Journeys. The Chair's selection as Staff Topic Lead was highlighted. The Committee was advised that funding had been received for Learning & Teaching Enhancement Projects (LTEPs), with eight projects funded in 2024/25, which are aligned to the STEP theme. Additionally, the Annual Academic Symposium was highlighted, due to take place on 30 April 2025, and will also be aligned to the STEP.

(iii) SELF-EVALUATION AND ACTION PLAN (SEAP)

(copy filed as QAC/111224/007)

- 11.1 The Committee noted the submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in respect of the Self-Evaluation and Action Plan, which replaced previous reporting to SFC. The QAC was advised that the report was designed to collate all quality activity across the previous academic year. It was noted that this is the first year where Higher Education and Further Education sectors are both aligned. It was further noted that feedback was awaited from SFC. Thanks were expressed to all who provided information for the report, and particularly, Emma Tough who prepared the report. In discussion, it was noted that the MSc Real Estate and Master of Land Economy programmes were both reaccredited but appeared to be omitted; the comments were noted.

EDUCATION POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW SCHEDULE

- 12.1 The Committee heard an update in respect of the Education Policy and Regulations Review Schedule, noting Senate's consideration and endorsement of the plan on 4 December 2024. A summary of the key areas of focus for this academic year was provided to the Committee, in respect of (i) assessment and feedback; (ii) undergraduate student progress; and (iii) academic discipline. The QAC was advised that the schedule was prepared against the context of embedding the new enhancement framework and TQER.

UK QUALITY CODE MAPPING

(copies filed as QAC/111224/008, 009, 010 and 011)

- 13.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the amendments to the UK Quality Code Mapping in respect of:
- Section 4: Course Design and Development;
 - Section 8: Monitoring and Evaluation;
 - Section 9: Partnerships; and
 - Section 10: Research Degrees.

STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEES REMIT & COMPOSITION

(copies filed as QAC/111224/012 and 013)

- 14.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the amendments to the Remits and Compositions for (i) Students' Progress Committee and (ii) Students' Progress Committee (Healthcare Programmes).

UPDATES TO COURSE FEEDBACK AND REVIEW FORMS IN RESPECT OF MYSKILLS

(copy filed as QAC/111224/014a and 014b)

- 15.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the amendments to the (i) Course Feedback and Reflection Form (CFRF) and (ii) Annual Course Review Form (ACR).

REPORT FROM ACADEMIC POLICY AND REGULATIONS GROUP

(copy filed as QAC/111224/015)

- 16.1 The Committee noted the report from the Academic Policy and Regulations Group.

REPORT FROM THE STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEE

(copy filed as QAC/111224/016)

- 17.1 The Committee noted the report from the Students' Progress Committee.

MATTERS APPROVED BY CONVENOR'S ACTION: TERM DATES FOR BSc MEDICAL SCIENCES HONOURS PROJECTS

- 18.1 The Committee noted a change to the term dates for the BSc Medical Sciences honours projects, which will commence a week earlier than Term 2 is scheduled to begin, opening instead on 13 January 2025, which was approved by the Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement on behalf of QAC.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

(copy filed as QAC/111224/017)

- 19.1 The Committee noted the matters pertaining to partnerships and collaborative provision in respect of (i) the Partnerships and Collaborative Register, and (ii) that the partnership with the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) has now concluded following UHI obtaining degree awarding powers.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 20.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 19 February 2025 at 14:05 at Committee Room 2, University Office and via Microsoft Teams.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

ACTION LOG

Meeting	Minute Point	Identified Action	Individual(s) Responsible	Action Status/Update
25 Sept 24	5.1	To contact the Clerk if interested in either the 2 vacancies for APRG, and 3 vacancies for QAC representation on the Senate.	All	Partially Complete: APRG has no vacancies, and Senate only has one vacancy.
12 Dec 24	3.2	To discuss the appropriate approval routes and approaches for in-year changes to entry requirements.	Chair	Pending: A discussion is scheduled for 10 February.
	3.3	To circulate information pertaining to Malaysian Unified Examination Certificate (MUEC) for approval of the QAC.	Clerk	<p>Complete, pending QAC approval: Information has been provided from Student Recruitment as follows:</p> <p>Malaysia: Unified Education Certificate (UEC) According to ENIC (UK National Information Centre) UEC exams are equivalent to AS-levels and Highers, so we can accept them for direct entry into 1st year. It is offered at the Middle School level and then normally students would go onto 6th Form Colleges to get the Malaysia Higher School Cert. According to research undertaken by the undergraduate admissions team, the UEC is graded from A1 down to C8. To remain consistent with sector colleagues, we should look for a minimum of 4 Bs to consider/accept them (not for Medicine). As usual, depending on the degree, they would need to have specific subjects i.e. Maths/Physics for</p>

				Engineering, etc. We can show flexibility at confirmation stage if students fail to meet the published 4 Bs tariff but this is what we believe we should publish. We hope this addition to our published requirements will encourage more undergraduate applications from Malaysia.
	4.2	To take forward discussions pertaining to the dissemination of good practice, particularly in relation to ITR and for School QA representatives to disseminate good practice within their Schools.	Chair / School QA Reps	Pending
	6.4	To take forward discussions pertaining to the approval route and timeline for implementation for PGR progression proposals.	Chair / Clerk	Complete: The PGR progression proposals are included in the Omnibus Resolution 2025/26.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
ARTICULATION PATHWAYS POLICY 26/27

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides details of the Articulation Pathways Policy for applicants studying SQA Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Diploma (HND) qualifications.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Further consideration/ approval required by	SRC	March 2025
Further consideration required by	Senate	

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Committee is invited to approve the Articulation Pathways Policy as entry requirements to the University.

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The university has made a commitment to encourage students from the widest possible range of backgrounds to participate in university studies. Not all students have the same opportunities at school or feel ready for university study straight from school so we have built a portfolio of articulation pathways which allow students to study for an Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Diploma (HND) and articulate into the University with advanced entry.
- 4.2 The University revised its approach to entry requirements for 2025-26 and is aiming to be more transparent in its offer making. The articulation pathways have always been available on the University's web site but will now be added to the admissions policies section to increase visibility.

5 QUALIFICATION MAPPING

- 5.1 An HNC is credit rated at SCQF Level 7 and an HND is credit rated at SCQF Level 8. It is possible to study 120 credits in each qualification therefore universities are strongly encouraged where possible, by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), to create full credit pathways, HNC to Level 2 and HND to Level 3. Only full credit pathways are defined as articulation by the SFC.
- 5.2 Our SFC Outcome Agreement includes articulation and National Articulation Database data is used to define the number of students entering the University by Articulation. A notional 75% target has been discussed but is currently under review by the SFC.
- 5.2 Academic content is as valuable as credit points at the correct SQA level therefore HNC/D qualifications are mapped, by our academic schools, against the University's degree programmes and where sufficient compulsory content has been covered in an HNC/D a pathway is created.
- 5.3 Whilst all the pathways in Appendix 1 are not full credit pathways they do deliver routes to the highest possible level given the scale of overlap of the HNC/D and our degree programmes.

6 ANNUAL CYCLE FOR APPROVAL OF ARTICULATION PATHWAYS

- 6.1 This is the second year of a new system of approvals for the Articulation Pathways, formerly articulation agreements were approved by QAC with a list of pathways attached. These documents are typically 5 years in length and changes in both degrees and HNC/D programmes typically happened within this timeframe.
- 6.2 Last year set a new baseline for pathways. Now every School in the University is asked annually to reapprove the pathways for entry to degree programmes offered by the School, taking into account of any changes to the HNC/D programmes, degree programmes and student performance. The resulting Articulation Pathway Policy can be viewed in Appendix 1.
- 6.3 This process starts at the end of the first semester allowing time to build any changes into the new prospectus and update admissions policies prior to the start of the new recruitment cycle.
- 6.2 All new and renewed Articulation Agreements will refer to the Policy document on the University web site rather than detailing pathways within the agreements, meaning new/renewed agreements will be approved by the University Partnership Committee (UPC) every five years while pathways will be approved by QAC in advance of each new recruitment cycle.

7 CHANGES IN THE 26/7 POLICY

- 7.1 Changes made to the 26/27 policy are as follows:

HNQ	Change	Additional Information
All	Changes to some unit codes	UCAS has updated some unit codes
HNC/D Applied Science	Changes to Medical Science pathways as per the approved changes to their degree programmes	In line with the approved changes to degree programmes
HNC Coaching & Developing Sport	2nd year pathway added	HND pathway already approved. Aware of future changes to these degrees and will present new pathways if required.
HNC Computing	New pathways to MA Computing and BSc Computing Science	This was formerly a pathway and students struggled with the lack of maths so the school have trialled and are now adding the requirement for a maths Higher at B)
HNC/D Music	Small changes to the wording of entry requirements	
HNC/D Fitness Health & Exercise	Pathway to BSc Sport & Exercise Science added	Aware of future changes to these degrees and will present new pathways if required.
HNC Legal Services	New pathway to Year 1 of Law	
HNC Social Sciences	New pathway to Year 1 of Law	
HNC Social Sciences	MSci Counselling, Psychology and Education (C9B9)	

HNC/HND Wildlife & Conservation Management	Added to policy document	Pathway already approved by QAC mid cycle
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8 NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 If the proposed policy is accepted by SRC and QAC then the Articulation Pathways Policy 2026/27 will be added to the University web pages. (Note: Schools have already signed off on the pathways.)

9 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 9.1 Further information is available from Megan McFarlane, Deputy Director of Student Recruitment (megan.mcfarlane@abdn.ac.uk)

12 February 2025

Fol status: Closed – policy under development.



The University of Aberdeen Articulation Pathway Policy Entry in Academic Year 2026/2027

The University of Aberdeen has a long-standing commitment to widening access to higher education. A key part of this commitment is the University's Articulation Pathway Policy.

The university has made a commitment to encourage students from the widest possible range of backgrounds to participate in university studies. Not all students have the same opportunities at school or feel ready for university study straight from school so we have built a portfolio of articulation pathways which allow students to study for a 120 credit, Higher National Certificate (HNC) or 240 credit, Higher National Diploma (HND) and articulate into the University with advanced entry. The information below refers to students sitting SQA Higher National Certificate and Diploma qualifications, for all other qualifications please contact ugadmissions@abdn.ac.uk

1. Pathway Creation

The Scottish Qualification Framework (SCQF) is a way of quantifying the level a programme of study is taught at. Both HNC and 1st Year at University are taught at SCQF Level 7 and both HND and 2nd year at University are taught at SCQF Level 8. Therefore, the University has mapped the academic content of the most common HNC/HND courses to our degree programmes and, where there is sufficient overlap, a pathway has been created which gives students advanced entry to our degree programmes.

We are advocates for student choice so even if a pathway exists students may still enter a lower year of study by selecting this on their UCAS form or contacting us during the UCAS cycle at ugadmissions@abdn.ac.uk

2. Next Gen HNC/HND Programmes

The University welcomes the Next Generation of HNC/HND programmes but recognises that these programmes are still in the pilot phase and therefore content and assessment may still be subject to change. Therefore, we encourage students sitting Next Gen qualifications to contact us directly for more information about pathways at accessaberdeen@abdn.ac.uk

3. Policy Documents

Information relating to all the University's Admissions Policies can be found at the following webpage:

www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy

4. More information

For more information about Widening Access at the University of Aberdeen, please contact the [Access and Articulation Team](#).

5. Pathways

The following pages detail the pathways which we currently offer, if the HNC/D you are studying is not listed we encourage you to contact us at accessabaerdeen@abdn.ac.uk to discuss your situation further.

**SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED
STANDING:**

26/27 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 26/27. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php>)

HN qualification level and title	HNC Accountancy
Degree programme(s) and title	MA Accountancy (N400)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

**SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED
STANDING:**

26/27 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HND Accountancy
Degree programme(s) and title	MA Accountancy (N400)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: Research Skills ((J1NC 34/F60A34) Company Law (DE5H35)
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

**SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED
STANDING:**

26/27 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Animal Care
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Animal Behaviour (C349) BSc Biological Sciences (C901) BSc Biology (C100) BSc Conservation Biology (C161) BSc Ecology (D430) BSc Marine Biology (C350) BSc Plant and Soil Science (CD27) BSc Zoology (C300)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) B in Graded Units Curriculum to include: either Ecology unit (H39A 34/J4RA 34) or Aberdeen University Online Introductory Ecology Course
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

26/27 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HND Animal Care
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare (C345) BSc Biological Sciences (C901) BSc Biology (C100) BSc Ecology (D430) BSc Zoology (C300) MA Education (Biology)*
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) B in Graded unit 1 A in Grade unit 2 Curriculum to include: either Ecology unit (H39A 34/J4RA 34) or Aberdeen University Online Introductory Ecology Course and Statistics for Science (H8XT 33) or Aberdeen University Online Statistics Course (BI2021) *Satisfactory Completion: Interview, PVG Check, Higher English and Nat5 Maths (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Applied Sciences
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Biochemistry (C700) BSc Biological Sciences (C901) BSc Biology (C100)* BSc Biomedical Sciences BSc Chemistry (F100)** BSc Conservation Biology (C161)* BSc Ecology (D430)* BSc Marine Biology (C350)* BSc Molecular & Cellular Biology (C720) BSc Pharmacology (B210) BSc Physics (F300)*** BSc Physiology (B120) BSc Plant and Soil Science (CD27)* BSc Zoology (C300)*
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) B in Graded Unit A in Graded Unit (for BSc Biomedical Sciences only) Curriculum to include (see above degree titles): *Statistics for Science 1 (H8XT 33) and Ecology and Ecosystems (J4RA 34/H93A 34) or University of Aberdeen online Introductory Ecology course **Mathematics for Science (H8XP) Inorganic Chemistry (B) (H92Y) Physical Chemistry (B) (H936) *** Mathematics for Science 1 (H8XP 33) Mathematics for Science 2 (H8XR 34) Physics for Life Sciences (J5RT 34/H93F 34) Physics Principles: Heat and Thermodynamics (H93G 34) Physics Principles: Mechanics (H93H 34) Electricity and Magnetism (H93L 34) Physics: Light and Optics (H93J 35)
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

26/27 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HND Applied Sciences
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare (C345)* BSc Biochemistry (C700)** BSc Biological Sciences (C901)* BSc Biology (C100)* BSc Biomedical Sciences** BSc Chemistry (F100)*** BSc Ecology (D430)* BSc Genetics (C400)** BSc Human Embryology and Developmental Biology (CC71)** BSc Immunology (C552)**** BSc Microbiology (C500) BSc Molecular Biology (CC74)** BSc Pharmacology (B210)**** BSc Physiology (B120)**** BSc Physics (F300)***** BSc Zoology (C300)* MA Education (Biology)***** MA Education (Chemistry)***** MA Education (Physics)*****
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) B in Graded unit 1 A in Grade unit 2 AA in Graded Units for Biomedical Sciences only Curriculum to include (see above degree titles): * either Ecology unit (H39A 34/J4RA 34) or Aberdeen University Online Introductory Ecology Course and either Statistics for Science (H8XT 33) or Aberdeen University Online Statistics Course (BI2021) ** Human Metabolism (H92D 35) *** Organic Stereochemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H934 35) Instrumental Techniques 1 (J5R2 35/H930 35) Inorganic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H932 35/H92Y 34) Aromatic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H92N 35) **** Human Metabolism (H92D 35) preferred but not essential ***** Statistics for Science 1 (H8XT 33)

	<p> Physics 2 (H93E 35) Electronics (H93M 35) Relativity and Quantum mechanics (J676 35/H93K 35) Dynamical Phenomena (J4C0 35) Linear Algebra 1 (J81W 34/J2RB 34) Linear Algebra 2 (J5WF 35/J2RC 35) Programming Foundations (H17X 34) or Equivalent </p> <p> ***** provisions for standard degree programme (*, ***, *****) and Interview, PVG Check, Higher English and Nat5 Maths (or equivalent) </p>
Additional conditions	<p> All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php) </p>

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

26/27 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HND Applied Biological Sciences
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Biochemistry (C700) BSc Biological Sciences (C901) BSc Molecular Biology (CC74) BSc Pharmacology (B210) BSc Physiology (B120) MA Education (Biology)*
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) B in Graded unit 1 A in Graded unit 2 Curriculum to include: * either Ecology unit (H39A 34/J4RA 34) or Aberdeen University Online Introductory Ecology Course and Satisfactory Completion: Interview, Audition, PVG Check, Higher English and Nat5 Maths (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

**SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED
STANDING:**

26/27 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Business
Degree programme(s) and title	MA Business Management (N200)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

**SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED
STANDING:**

26/27 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HND Business
Degree programme(s) and title	MA Business Management (N200)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

26/27 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Chemical Process Technology
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Chemical Engineering (H813)* BSc Chemistry (F100)** BEng Petroleum Engineering (H851)**
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include (see above degree titles): * Engineering Maths 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent) Physics Principles Mechanics (H93H 34) ** Engineering Maths 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent) Inorganic Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H92Y 34) Physical Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills (H936 34)
Additional conditions	Engineering students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Chemical Process Technology
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Chemical Engineering (H813)* BSc Chemistry (F100)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) AA in Graded Units Curriculum to include (see above degree titles): * Engineering Maths 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Engineering students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

**SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED
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HN qualification level and title	HNC Coaching and Developing Sport
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Exercise & Health Science (C603)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Coaching and Developing Sport
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Exercise & Health Science (C603)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units
Additional conditions	Students must sit <i>Academic Skills for Sport Science Professionals</i> as part of their third year curriculum. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Computing
Degree programme(s) and title	MA Computing (G402) BSc Computing Science (G400)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units And B in Higher Maths (or equivalent) Mathematics units encouraged
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Electrical Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (140 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: * Engineering Maths 1, 2 & 3 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Electrical Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: * Engineering Maths 1, 2 , 3, 4 & 5 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Engineering Systems
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Chemical Engineering (H813) BEng Engineering (H100) BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220) BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221) BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200) BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620) BEng Engineering (Electronic and Software) (H6H4) BEng Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical) (HH36) BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8) BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300) BEng Petroleum Engineering (H851)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: Engineering Maths 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent) Contact selector to discuss exact unit requirements
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Engineering Systems
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Chemical Engineering (H813) BEng Engineering (H100) BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220) BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221) BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200) BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620) BEng Engineering (Electronic and Software) (H6H4) BEng Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical) (HH36) BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8) BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300) BEng Petroleum Engineering (H851)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: Engineering Maths 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (or equivalent) Contact selector to discuss exact unit requirements
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

**SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED
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HN qualification level and title	HNC Fitness Health and Exercise
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Exercise and Health Science (C603) BSc Sport and Exercise Science (C600)*
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units * and Advanced Higher Chemistry (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Fitness Health and Exercise
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Exercise and Health Science (C603) BSc Sport and Exercise Science (C600)*
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units * and Advanced Higher Chemistry (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Students must sit <i>Academic Skills for Sport Science Professionals</i> as part of their third year curriculum. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Legal Services
Degree programme(s) and title	All LLB Degrees apart from accelerated pathways
Year of entry to University	Year 1
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in Graded Unit 1
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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HN qualification level and title	HND Legal Services
Degree programme(s) and title	All LLB Degrees apart from accelerated pathways
Year of entry to University	Year 1
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) B in Graded Unit 1 A in Graded Unit 2 A in Graded Unit 3
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

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26/27 ENTRY

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HN qualification level and title	HNC Mechanical Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220) BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221) BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200) BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620) BEng Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical) (HH36) BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8) BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: Engineering Maths 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

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HN qualification level and title	HND Mechanical Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220) BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221) BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200) BEng Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (H620) BEng Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical) (HH36) BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8) BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300)
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include: Engineering Maths 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

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The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 26/27. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php>)

HN qualification level and title	HNC Music
Degree programme(s) and title	BMus Music (W300)* BMus Music Education (XW13)**
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	<p>Satisfactory completion of HND (120 SCQF credit points)</p> <p>Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">*Satisfactory Completion, Interview, Audition</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">**Satisfactory Completion: Interview, Audition, PVG Check, Higher English and Nat5 Maths (or equivalent)</p> <p>Studying Music or Music Education at the University of Aberdeen requires an ability to read and write musical notation. Entry to these degrees is conditional on your academic achievements so far, as well as your performance at interview and audition.</p> <p>For the audition, you will be expected to play or sing a short piece of music of your choice. Choose something that enables you to demonstrate your technical ability on your instrument or voice, and be prepared to answer questions about the piece you have chosen. Your interview will focus on the breadth and depth of your knowledge of music and your interest in it. Be prepared to be asked about music in different genres to the one that you have performed, including classical music (which is an important ingredient of the Music and Music Education degrees at Aberdeen, amongst many other styles and genres).</p> <p>Please note that entry to Year 2 is not guaranteed, and in some cases entry to a lower year may be offered.</p>
Additional conditions	<p>All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)</p>

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HN qualification level and title	HND Music
Degree programme(s) and title	BMus Music (W300)* BMus Music Education (XW13)**
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	<p>Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points)</p> <p>Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">*Satisfactory Completion, Interview, Audition</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">**Satisfactory Completion: Interview, Audition, PVG Check, Higher English and Nat5 Maths (or equivalent)</p> <p>For the audition, you will be expected to play or sing a short piece of music of your choice. Choose something that enables you to demonstrate your technical ability on your instrument or voice, and be prepared to answer questions about the piece you have chosen. Your interview will focus on the breadth and depth of your knowledge of music and your interest in it. Be prepared to be asked about music in different genres to the one that you have performed, including classical music (which is an important ingredient of the Music and Music Education degrees at Aberdeen, amongst many other styles and genres).</p> <p>Please note that entry to Year 3 is not guaranteed, and in some cases entry to a lower year may be offered.</p>
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

26/27 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 26/27. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php>)

HN qualification level and title	HNC Petroleum Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Chemical Engineering (H813)* BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220)** BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221)** BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200)** BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8)** BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300)** BEng Petroleum Engineering (H851)*
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include (see above degree titles): * Engineering Mathematics 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent) Fundamental Chemistry: An Introduction (H92W33) Fundamental Concepts of Organic Chemistry (H933 34/DP2P34) **Engineering Maths 1, 2 and 3 (or equivalent)
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

26/27 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 26/27. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php>)

HN qualification level and title	HND Petroleum Engineering
Degree programme(s) and title	BEng Engineering (Civil and Environmental) (H220)* BEng Engineering (Civil and Structural) (H221)* BEng Engineering (Civil) (H200)* BEng Engineering (Mechanical with Oil and Gas Studies) (H3H8)* BEng Engineering (Mechanical) (H300)* BEng Petroleum Engineering (H851)**
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) A in all Graded Units Curriculum to include (see above degree titles): * Engineering Mathematics 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (or equivalent) ** Engineering Mathematics 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (or equivalent) Fundamental Chemistry: An Introduction (H92W33) Fundamental Concepts of Organic Chemistry (DP2P34/H933 34) Petroleum Geology and Geophysics: An Introduction (F53034)
Additional conditions	Students are strongly advised to take part in the university's Engineering Transitional Summer School. All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

26/27 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 26/27. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php>)

HN qualification level and title	HNC Social Sciences
Degree programme(s) and title	<p>Single Honours MA Anthropology (L600)** MA Criminology and Sociology (MLC5)*** MA General Studies (Y001) MA Geography (L700) MA History (V100) MA Philosophy (V500) MA Politics and International Relations (L240) MA Psychology (C802) MA Sociology (L300) MSci Counselling, Psychology and Education (C9B9) All LLB Degrees apart from accelerated pathways*</p> <p>Joint Honours MA Geography and International Relations (LL72) MA Geography and Sociology (LL73) MA History and International Relations (VLC2) MA History and Philosophy (VV15) MA History and Politics (VL12) MA History and Sociology (VL13) MA International Relations and Sociology (LLF3) MA Philosophy and Politics (VL52) MA Philosophy and Psychology (VC58) MA Philosophy and Sociology (VL53) MA Politics and Sociology (LL23) MA Psychology and Sociology (LC38) MA Psychology with Counselling (C8B9)</p>
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	<p>Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points)</p> <p>B in all Graded Units *A in Graded Units</p> <p>Curriculum to include (see above degree titles): Students should take units A and B of the discipline/s they wish to study at university e.g Psychology A (FK8D 34) & B (J030 34) For joint honours programmes, students must take A and B for both disciplines.</p> <p>**Where Anthropology units are not available students may still be permitted to enter the single honours degrees conditional on them taking both first and second year University compulsory courses consecutively in their second year. Entry</p>

	<p>to Joint honours will not be permitted under these circumstances.</p> <p>*** Students must take LS1020: Criminal Law as an extra course alongside the compulsory Level 2 courses.</p>
Additional conditions	<p>All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)</p>

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

26/27 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 26/27. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php>)

HN qualification level and title	HND Social Sciences
Degree programme(s) and title	MA History (VI00)* MA Sociology (L300)** MA History & Sociology (VL13)***
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	<p>Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points)</p> <p>BBA in Graded Units, where A is the Graded Unit Project in the discipline/s you wish to continue to study</p> <p>Curriculum to include (see above degree titles):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * History A: Introducing Topics within a Historical Period (FK7V 34) History B: Analysing Topics within a Historical Period (J02X 34) History C: Evaluating Topics within a Historical Period (J0LS 34) History D: Specialist Study (FK7T 35) <p>**Sociology A: Introduction to Sociology (FK8R 34)</p> <p>Sociology B: Applying Sociological Theories and Studies to Sociological Topics (J031 34/J038 35)</p> <p>Social Science: Research Issues (J038 35/J0NA 35)</p> <p>Sociology C: Analysing and Evaluating Sociological Debates (J0NA 35)</p> <p>Sociology D: Specialist Study (FK8P 35)</p> <p>*** A combination of as many of the above courses as is possible at your College.</p>
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED STANDING:

26/27 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 26/27. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php>)

HN qualification level and title	HNC Wildlife & Conservation Management
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Animal Behaviour (C349) BSc Biological Sciences (C901) BSc Biology (C100) BSc Conservation Biology (C161) BSc Ecology (D430) BSc Marine Biology (C350) BSc Plant and Soil Science (CD27) BSc Zoology (C300)
Year of entry to University	Year 2
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HNC (120 SCQF credit points) B in Graded Units Curriculum to include: Biology: An Introduction (J4R8 34)
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

**SPECIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN WITH ADVANCED
STANDING:**

26/27 ENTRY

The following specification prescribes the eligibility requirements for students to apply for entry to a degree programme offered by the University of Aberdeen for academic year 26/27. Entry is not guaranteed but is governed by the University's Admissions Policy (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php>)

HN qualification level and title	HND Wildlife & Conservation Management
Degree programme(s) and title	BSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare (C345) BSc Biological Sciences (C901) BSc Biology (C100) BSc Ecology (D430) BSc Zoology (C300))
Year of entry to University	Year 3
Academic conditions	Satisfactory completion of HND (240 SCQF credit points) B in Graded unit 1 A in Grade unit 2 Curriculum to include: Biology: An Introduction (J4R8 34)
Additional conditions	All offers are subject to standard University Admissions Policy (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
ASSESSMENT TAXONOMY

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper proposes a new approach to defining assessment types to improve clarity for both staff and students. Currently, no official list or definitions exist, leading to confusion—especially when discussing assessments across disciplines.

The QAC is asked to **discuss** the creation of a standardised taxonomy with clear definitions for each assessment type.

If approved, the taxonomy will be integrated into university systems so that course catalogues and Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) display assessment information consistently. To keep the taxonomy relevant, definitions will be reviewed and updated annually if needed.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee (for discussion)	19 February 2025
	University Education Committee (for discussion)	26 February 2025
	Quality Assurance Committee (for approval)	16 April 2025
	University Education Committee (for information)	22 April 2025

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The **Quality Assurance Committee** is invited to **discuss** this paper.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 In higher education, traditional distinctions between "exams" and "coursework" have typically hinged on the timing of the assessment — exams occurring at the end of a course and coursework being distributed throughout the term. However, this model has become increasingly outdated. Many courses now implement substantial assessments at term's end that do not follow the format of conventional exams. Additionally, many courses include assessments with all the features of exams delivered during the term, often called "class tests." This shift has created ambiguity around what defines an "exam" versus "coursework" and whether these categories remain useful in capturing the purpose and structure of modern assessments.
- 4.2 This paper proposes a new taxonomy (Appendix A) of assessments grounded not in the outdated exam-coursework binary but rather in the distinct features and purposes of the assessments themselves. This taxonomy organises assessments based on key characteristics, format, structure, and intended skill outcomes. Such an approach will allow for a clearer, more consistent framework for program reviews, course design, and accreditation.

- 4.3 The current table of assessment types reflects a variety of formats tailored to specific learning outcomes and school requirements, leading to an extensive list of assessment types with no clear definitions (see appendix B). This variety, while responsive to pedagogical needs, has also created challenges for students and staff alike. Students may struggle to understand what each assessment entails, and staff may find it difficult to clearly communicate expectations.
- 4.4 Unclear assessment descriptions make it difficult for those responsible for maintaining assessment standards to ensure alignment with university policies. This affects the work of the Quality Assurance Committee, Internal Teaching Review, and the TESTA Programme for Assessment Enhancement. Additionally, inconsistent use of terms such as "exam" and "test" across schools or disciplines creates confusion, making it harder for students to make informed decisions about their degree pathways.
- 4.5 The proposed taxonomy would also improve the university's ability to tailor support for students who require adjustments. Clear assessment definitions would allow adjustments to be better aligned with the specific requirements of each assessment type, rather than relying on more generic applications.

5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 5.1 Integrate the new taxonomy into MyCurriculum
- This will be incorporated into the same project planned for the Graduate Outcomes update, ensuring efficient use of resources
- 5.2 Update course change and new course proposal forms
- 5.3 Support implementation across all schools and disciplines.
- 5.4 Collaborate with Student Support Services to embed the taxonomy into reasonable adjustment processes to improve accessibility.
- 5.5 Collaborate with Students' Union (AUSA, Aberdeen University Students' Association) to develop clear communication and training to help students understand the changes in assessment descriptions.
- 5.6 Evaluate sector-wide acceptance assessing the feasibility of broader adoption across the university sector.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Professor Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support and Experiences (jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk), or Professor Kirsty Kiezebrink, School of Medicine Medical Sciences and Nutrition (k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk).

5 February 2025

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Appendix A: Assessment taxonomy

Part A – Structure

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invigilated: Assessments carried out with monitoring ensure adherence to regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Closed : Assessments without access to any additional materials. ○ Open: Assessments that allow the use of textbooks, notes or digital resources. ○ Lockdown: Digital assessment where specialist software to prevent students from accessing unauthorised resources during the assessment. • Non invigilated: Assessments that are taken without supervision, allowing students to complete them independently, often in a setting of their choice, and typically without real-time monitoring for academic integrity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timed: These assessments must be completed within a specified time limit, which could be a single set time (e.g., a two-hour exam scheduled at 10 a.m.) or a flexible window (e.g., a two-hour exam available to start anytime within a 24-hour period). Timed assessments emphasise time management and a student's ability to perform under pressure, often reflecting real-world scenarios where responses need to be both accurate and time-efficient. • Non-Timed: Assessment that provides students the flexibility to complete activities without a fixed time constraint still includes a clear submission deadline. This approach allows students to work at their own pace within the allocated timeframe, emphasizing the quality and depth of their responses over the speed of completion while ensuring timely submission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-released: Assessments where students receive the questions or topics in advance, allowing them to prepare responses using their study materials ahead of the assessment submission. This description specifically refers to situations where students are given the actual questions they are required to address in the assessment. • Unseen: Assessments where students are presented with questions they have not encountered ahead of the assessment, requiring them to demonstrate their knowledge and critical thinking skills without prior preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand written: Assessment format in which students respond to questions using written answers, typically involving the use of pen or pencil • Digital: Assessments administered on electronic devices, where students complete questions using software applications(not scanning of paper based) may also be conducted via the internet, where students complete questions and submit their responses using electronic devices • Oral: Assessment where students are required to verbally respond to questions posed by an examiner or a panel.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group – any assessment which involves students collaborating in teams to complete (can be pairs or larger groups) • Individual - any assessment which where each student is responsible for completing a task or project independently

Part B – Descriptor

<p>Extended Writing Tasks: Assessments requiring in-depth written responses (minimum 1000 words) example include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essays: Analytical or argumentative pieces on a specific topic. • Research Papers: In-depth studies on a topic, often requiring literature reviews and original research. • Reports: Structured report format, often simulating the expectations and standards of professional practice in their field. • Lab book/research journal: Detailed record of practical work, including experiments, procedures, observations, results, and analyses • Dissertations/Theses: Comprehensive, original research projects that contribute new knowledge to a field.
<p>Brief Writing Tasks: Assessments requiring brief written responses (less than 1000 words), examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Answer Questions: Students respond to questions with concise answers, typically a few sentences or brief paragraph long.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Posts: Online platforms where students write brief responses or contributions to discussion prompts, engaging with their peers. • Response Papers: Brief written responses to prompts or questions about a specific reading or topic, focusing on key ideas
<p>Objective Assessments: Assessment where the questions or tasks have predetermined correct answers they usually test specific knowledge or skills rather than subjective analysis or extended explanations Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple-choice questions (MCQ) • single-best-answer (SBA) • true/false • fill-in-the-blanks • matching exercises • very short answer (maximum 10 words)
<p>Performance-Based / Practical Assessments: Evaluations that measure students' ability to apply skills often reflecting real-world scenarios example could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Practice Assessments: Evaluations in fields like healthcare or education, assessing practical skills and decision-making in professional settings, or role play within these types of settings. • Practical Assessments: Evaluations based on the application of skills or knowledge, often in a laboratory, field setting, placements or performance space • Musical Performance: Evaluating students' proficiency in playing an instrument or singing, focusing on technical skill, interpretation, and expression. • Computer Programming Exercise: Evaluating student coding skills by writing, testing, or debugging software to complete specific tasks or solve problems.
<p>Presentations: Assessments that require students to prepare and deliver an oral or visual presentation on a specific topic. Examples include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral: Delivered in person or via video, these presentations assess students' verbal communication skills, confidence, and ability to effectively convey information. • Poster presentations: Students create visual posters that concisely summarise research, findings, or ideas, may or may not also be accompanied by a brief oral explanation • Musical or Artistic performance: Involve a live performance (in person or recorded) where they showcase technical or interpretive skills, such as playing an instrument, acting, or dance, assessed on aspects like skill, expression, and creativity.
<p>Portfolios / Cumulative Assessments: Portfolios may include a range of materials—such as written assignments, projects, creative works, reflections, and feedback—that collectively illustrate the student's progression within a subject area, portfolios often involve progression marking.</p>
<p>Peer Assessment: Evaluation of a student's work by fellow students, providing feedback and grading. Can also assessment of student ability to provide peer assessment</p>
<p>Self-Assessment: Students evaluate their own work and learning processes. Can also assessment of student ability to self-assess</p>

Where an assessment consists of more than one type, such as a test with both multiple-choice elements and short-answer questions, it should be categorised based on the predominant type. The predominant type is determined as the question format that contributes the greatest proportion of marks. Additional descriptions of the question types must be clearly communicated to students alongside the standard description.

1. Is the Assessment Invigilated?

- Yes (Invigilated)
 - is the assessment Open
 - Is the assessment conducted under Lockdown browser
- No (Non-Invigilated)

2. Is the Assessment Timed?

- Yes (Timed)
 - is this a specified limit,
 - Is this conducted at a fixed time or within a time window
- No (Untimed)

3. Is the Assessment Seen?

- Yes (Pre-released)
- No (Unseen)

4. What is the Format of the Assessment?

- Handwritten
- Digital
- Oral

5. Is the Assessment Individual or Group-Based?

- Yes (Individual)
- No (group based)
 - self selected groups
 - assigned groups

6. What is the format of the assessment?

- Extended Writing Task
- Brief Writing Task
- Objective assessment
- Performance-Based / Practical Assessment
- Presentation
- Portfolios / Cumulative Assessment
- Peer Assessment
- Self-Assessment

Appendix B: Current List of Assessment Types

Assessment Type	Assessment
Coursework	Class Test
Coursework	Class Test - Multiple Choice Questions
Coursework	Design Project: Group
Coursework	Design Project: Individual
Coursework	Essay
Coursework	Field Trip Log
Coursework	Lab Book
Coursework	Lab Report: Group
Coursework	Lab Report: Individual
Coursework	Language Exercise
Coursework	Mapping Exercise
Coursework	Other
Coursework	Report: Group
Coursework	Report: Individual
Coursework	Portfolio
Coursework	Project Plan, Summary or Abstract
Coursework	Project Report/Dissertation
Coursework	Reflective Report
Coursework	Take Home Exam
Coursework	Tutorial/Seminar Participation
Practical Exam	Computer Programming Exercise
Practical Exam	Design Project: Group
Practical Exam	Design Project: Individual
Practical Exam	Oral Exam
Practical Exam	Oral Presentation: Group
Practical Exam	Oral Presentation: Individual
Practical Exam	Other
Practical Exam	Poster Presentation
Written Exam	Class Test
Written Exam	Exam
Written Exam	Exam - Multiple Choice Questions
Written Exam	Other

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

GUIDANCE FOR THE DELIVERY OF DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to develop clear School guidance on the delivery of digital based assessments. Whilst the use of both invigilated and non-invigilated digital assessments are commonly employed during term-time and exam weeks, there is no clear guidance on the procedures Schools should follow in delivering these assessments.

Further the paper has reviewed and updated the invigilator guidance for computer-based exams as well as the Guidance for Exam Arrangements for Students with Disabilities.

The QAC is asked to **discuss** and **provide feedback** on the development of the guidance document.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee (for discussion)	19 February 2025
	University Education Committee (for discussion)	26 February 2025
	Student Support and Experience Committee (for discussion)	17 March 2025
	Quality Assurance Committee (for approval)	16 April 2025
	University Education Committee (for information)	22 April 2025
	Senate (for information , via QAC Report)	14 May 2025

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The **Quality Assurance Committee** is invited to **discuss** this paper.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Schools regularly employ a range of digital assessments such as invigilated computer-based class tests / exams or non-invigilated open-book online tests. The use of these types of assessments have grown substantially post-covid when teaching and assessment pivoted to online delivery. However, whilst the expansion of assessment types has been welcomed by students and staff, we have also witnessed inconsistency in practice, call for greater school guidance, and support/advice for students on a range of issues.

4.2 Member of the University Exam Planning Group reported a number of concerns around the running of computer-based invigilated assessments, including that the exam guidance wasn't applicable to computer-based exams (e.g. the additional time needed to physically get students in the room and logged-on to computer versus a traditional paper and pen exam format). Furthermore, students and schools reported increasing numbers of timetabling clashes between invigilated and non-invigilated assessments during exam weeks as well as inconsistent practices

in the delivery of non-invigilated assessments and application of provisions for these assessments.

- 4.3 In response to this the Dean for Student Support and Experience established a short-lived digital assessment working group to investigate the range of issues surrounding digital-based assessments comprised of School leads, CAD, Student Support, DDIS, Students Union, QAC representatives (see Appendix D for full list of membership).
- 4.4 This group oversaw a survey of Schools conducted by Sara Preston to better understand current School digital assessment practices and identify specific issues that Schools are facing and where they require additional support. The survey results are summarised in Appendix C, however Schools reported that they wanted additional Guidance / Policy on the provision of digital assessments to address issues around timetabling, academic integrity, inclusivity. Furthermore, the survey results suggest that Schools increasingly wish to be able to deliver invigilated computer-based assessments with large L1/2 cohorts but are concerned about the lack of suitable spaces to efficiently deliver these forms of assessments.
- 4.5 The group reviewed current University policies contained within the Academic Quality Handbook in relation to the [setting and arranging assessments including exams](#) and identified that current policies relate to written invigilated exams but not invigilated computer-based exams or non-invigilated exams. An informal sector-review by this group further identified that such guidance is common in other universities.
- 4.6 The group identified a number of actions that would support university guidance and procedures for digital assessments:
 - 4.6.1 Develop institutional guidance to support the delivery of digital assessments.
 - 4.6.2 Develop a more detailed assessment taxonomy to summarise the range of assessments to capture the range of assessments currently employed across the institution.
 - 4.6.3 Develop invigilator guidance for computer-based assessments.
 - 4.6.4 Review the guidance for exam arrangements for students with disability provision
- 4.7 Institutional guidance for the delivery of digital assessments was written by the working group and summarised in the next section (see Appendix A).
- 4.8 The assessment taxonomy was developed by Professor Kirsty Kiezebrink and is appended to the Digital Assessment Procedures document.
- 4.9 [Invigilator guidance for digital assessments](#) was developed by Dr Mary Pryor (CAD) and published on the university assessment webpages.
- 4.10 Guidance for exam arrangements for students with disability provision was reviewed by Lesley Muirhead (Student Advice and Support) and Steven Sangster (Assistive Technology Adviser) and is attached in Appendix B with track changes.

5. GUIDANCE FOR THE DELIVERY OF DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

- 5.1 The full guidance document can be found in Appendix A. The document provides clear guidance on the delivery of both invigilated and non-invigilated digital assessments to ensure a more consistent institutional approach as well as to rectify some of the issues identified by students and schools.
- 5.2 The guidance is separated into sections relating to invigilated and non-invigilated assessments. For ease the main elements where there could be changes to current School procedures are summarised below:
 - This guidance is applicable to all students studying on any undergraduate and postgraduate taught course regardless of mode of study or delivery and should be read in conjunction with the University's Codes of Practice on Assessment ([Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate Taught](#)). Further information on Assessment at the University is available in the [Academic Quality Handbook \(AQH\)](#).
 - In the provision of extra time for students with disability provision the guidance states that Students with the inclusion adjustment, 'extra time' must have this adjustment applied to both invigilated and non-invigilated timed assessments but are not subject to un-timed

assessments which may be submitted during a longer time window (e.g. 48, 72 hours etc) where the assessment has been designed to be inclusive (Section 3.8 for invigilated assessments and Section 5.14 for non-invigilated assessments).

- In relation to timetabling, Section 4.1.2 requires Schools to inform Central Timetabling of all computer-based assessment requirements as part of the annual timetabling process to ensure room availability and coordination with other services (e.g. digital). In non-invigilated assessments during exam weeks, Section 5.1.2 states that timed assessments or those that have to be completed within a 24 hour time window must be timetabled alongside invigilated exams to avoid clashes.
- Section 4.1.5 The guidance requires schools utilise lockdown browsers for invigilated digital assessments which would reduce workload for colleagues in DDIS manually installing exam software on to individual machines.
- Section 4.2.5 states that students should enter the exam hall 20 minutes prior to the start to allow sufficient login time and testing of computing equipment.
- Section 4.2.10 (invigilated) and Section 5.4.4 (non-invigilated) requires that there is an upload time of 30 minutes added to the exam time if required (e.g. if the exam is 2 hours in length then an additional 30 minutes to permit upload of documents).
- Section 4.4.2(invigilated) and Section 5.3.3 (non-invigilated) stipulates that students are not permitted to share exam content with other students, for example sharing screenshots of questions, to address concerns integrity concerns raised by staff and students.
- In non-invigilated assessments Schools must ensure that there is appropriate level of support available to candidates. Guidance should clearly indicate who to contact if student's have questions/difficulties and what they should do if they have difficulties out with working hours (e.g. if an assessment is scheduled over 24, 48 + hours) and when they will receive a response. (Section 5.22)

6. NEXT STEPS

6.1 The QAC is asked:

- to provide feedback on the proposed digital assessment guidance.
- to provide advice on whether the digital assessment guidance should be considered as guidance or guidance requiring Senate approval.
- to provide feedback on the updated guidance for exam arrangements for disabled students.
- to provide a view on whether this work should aim to review and unify all section of the AQH for the [Setting and Arranging of Assessments \(incl exams\)](#). For example, should there be a separate policy on written and digital exam arrangements, should the Type of Assessment section include the proposed Assessment Taxonomy etc.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Professor Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support and Experience (jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk), or Professor Kirsty Kiezebrink, School of Medicine Medical Sciences and Nutrition (k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk).

13 February 2025

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

APPENDIX A

GUIDANCE FOR THE DELIVERY OF DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

1. PROCEDURES

- 1.1 The Guidance for the Delivery of Digital Assessments was originally approved by the Quality Assurance Committee on xxx. These procedures apply to all students studying on any undergraduate and postgraduate taught course regardless of mode of study or delivery.¹
- 1.2 These procedures set out the University's requirements and procedures for digital assessments. It is an expectation of all Schools that the requirements detailed within these procedures are adhered to, and appropriate records maintained. These procedures are only part of the processes used to ensure integrity of the assessment process.
- 1.3 These procedures are designed to be read in conjunction with the University's Codes of Practice on Assessment ([Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate Taught](#)). Further information on Assessment at the University is available in the [Academic Quality Handbook \(AQH\)](#).
- 1.4 These procedures apply to invigilated assessments during term time (e.g. class tests) and exam diet, as well as non-invigilated assessments scheduled during exam diet. This does not apply to general coursework.

2. TYPES OF DIGITAL ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 The University encourages a mixed method of assessment, as appropriate to the nature of individual courses. The use of different forms of assessment has been encouraged, as outlined in the Assessment Taxonomy (*Appendix A refers*).
- 2.2 Digital assessments relevant to this guidance include:
 - (i) Invigilated or non-invigilated assessments requiring the use of a computer to complete or submit answers
 - (ii) Timed or non-timed assessments requiring the use of a computer to complete or submit answers
 - (iii) Open or closed-book assessment requiring the use of a computer to complete or submit answers

3. INCLUSION ADJUSTMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

- 3.1 This section is in accordance with the guidance outlined in the University's [Guidance for Those with Responsibility for Making Examination Arrangements for Disabled Candidates](#).
- 3.2 Additional support measures, such as any assistive technology, also apply to both invigilated and non-invigilated digital assessments.
- 3.3 Candidates are responsible for ensuring that any inclusion adjustment requirements are appropriately flagged to Student Advice & Support.
- 3.4 Candidates with disabilities must ensure that appropriate assessments and/or medical certificates to support the need for any inclusion adjustments are obtained and that these

Commented [CW1]: Link to be provided once updates made to this guidance.

¹ This Policy does not apply to postgraduate research students (they should consult the [PGR Handbook](#) for this information).

are received by Student Support Services at the earliest opportunity. Late submission of these may result in lesser arrangements being made.

- 3.5 It is the responsibility of the Student Advice and Support Office to ensure that details of the academic provisions and/or examination arrangements required by the student are recorded on the Student Record System.
- 3.6 It is the responsibility of the School Inclusion Coordinator and the Registry Timetabling team to ensure that assessment arrangements, as specified in the Student Record System, are implemented.
- 3.7 It is the responsibility of the School Inclusion Coordinator to inform candidates about how inclusion adjustments will be organised and what is required of them. This should be done with at least one week's notice, if possible.
- 3.8 Students with the inclusion adjustment, 'extra time' must have this adjustment applied to both invigilated and non-invigilated timed assessments but are not subject to un-timed assessments which may be submitted during a longer time window (e.g. 24, 48, 72 hours etc) where the assessment has been designed to be inclusive.
- 3.9 Students with inclusion adjustments in place must not sit any invigilated assessment within the same hall/room as those who do not have special adjustments. Students with additional time for assessments may only sit an assessment in the same hall/room as those who have the same assessment duration.

4. INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

4.1 SCHEDULING OF INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

- 4.1.1 All scheduling of prescribed assessments must follow the procedures described in the University's [Rules for the Conduct of Prescribed Assessments and Written Examinations for Degrees or Diplomas](#).
- 4.1.2 Invigilated Assessments-to be scheduled outside of the main assessment diet (e.g. class tests) are to be highlighted to the Central Timetable team during the annual timetable setting to ensure that appropriate teams are aware of the additional requirements and colleagues in Digital, Assistive Technology are notified of the requirements.
- 4.1.3 Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that there are no Central Timetable clashes with Invigilated assessments, candidates must make their School aware of any such clashes within one week of the Exam Timetable being published so that Registry can make alternative arrangements.
- 4.1.4 Candidates are responsible for checking their assessment schedule prior to the assessment to ensure that no location changes have been made. Candidates are required to attend in-person invigilated digital assessments. Failure to attend an assessment may prevent progression/graduation. If a student is unable to attend an assessment, they should refer to the University's [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#).
- 4.1.5 Invigilated digital assessments must utilise a suitable lockdown browser (e.g. Respondus) unless the assessment is open book by design. Assessments that do not use a lockdown

browser and are not open book may require additional digital support. In these situations, Schools must notify Registry when scheduling the assessment diet.

4.2 DELIVERY OF INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

4.2.1 The University is responsible for ensuring that all computing equipment is fully operational prior to an assessment diet. The Central Timetabling team will ensure that assessments taken in computer clusters are at no more than 90% capacity to ensure that additional machines in the eventuality of individual machines not working.

4.2.2 The student is responsible for ensuring that their personal computing equipment that they are using for digital assessments are fully operational and configured to the required conditions of the individual assessment.

4.2.3 Invigilators appointed for digital assessments must familiarise themselves with the current guidance for invigilators, which can be found here: [Digital-Exams-Guidance-for-Invigilators.docx](#).

4.2.4 Schools are responsible for ensuring that each candidate has access to a suitable computer for all computer-based assessments. If a digital assessment allows use of a candidate's personal computer, Schools must also ensure that the system requirements for the assessment are published in advance of the examination.

4.2.5 Students attending an invigilated digital exam are required to enter the exam hall 20 mins prior to the start of the assessments (please see [Digital Exam Guidance](#)) to log on and ensure that all equipment is working correctly.

4.2.6 Students sitting an invigilated digital exam who arrive late or have not logged on/ensured that equipment is working correctly prior to the start of the exam will NOT be provided with additional time at the end of the assessment.

4.2.7 Schools should ensure that digital assessments permit candidates to submit their answers online via the VLE wherever possible rather than saving to portable devices, e.g. USBs. This would also apply to candidates with adjustments for the permitted use of computer during written exams.

4.2.8 As outlined in the [Rules of Conduct of Prescribed Assessments and Written Examinations For Degrees or Diplomas](#), when sitting invigilated digital assessments:

(i) candidates are responsible for the following:

- Candidates attending an invigilated digital exam are required to enter the exam hall 20 minutes prior to the start of assessments (please see [Digital Exam Guidance](#)) to log on and ensure that all equipment is working correctly.
- Displaying their student identity card on the corner of the examination desk.
- Reading and adhering to the instructions on the front sheet of the examination answer book (whether in paper or digital form).
- Ensuring that only permitted materials are on their persons at their examination desk and for the entire duration of the examination.

(ii) candidates must note the following:

- Candidates will not be admitted to an examination hall after the assessment has been in progress for thirty minutes.
- Candidates sitting an invigilated digital exam and attend late or have not logged on/ensured that equipment is working correctly prior to the start of the exam will NOT be provided with additional time at the end of the assessment.
- Candidates will not be permitted to leave during the first thirty minutes and the last thirty minutes of any examination.
- Candidates may be permitted to leave an examination hall temporarily with the consent of the Invigilator,
- Candidates must not leave the examination hall until either they are directed to do so by an Invigilator, or their work has been submitted through the necessary VLE and shown as such to an Invigilator. At the end of an examination, the Invigilators will either request all candidates then present to remain in their places until all work has been submitted or direct candidates to leave quietly.
- Candidates will not be admitted to an examination hall after the examination has been in progress for thirty minutes.

4.2.9 If a student sits an exam, or submits an assignment, it will be assumed that the student is fit to sit and there are no extenuating/mitigating circumstances (defined as exceptional, serious, acute and unforeseen problems, both medical and not). If a student believes that they are not fit to sit an exam or to submit an assignment due to an extenuating circumstance, or subsequently realises that they were not fit to do so, they should advise the School by completing the absence form on the Student Hub at the first possible opportunity, in line with Section 2.1 of [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#), and in any case **before** any results are published. Failure to follow this may undermine any future appeal.

4.2.10 At the end of the assessment duration, a time allocation must be provided to allow for the upload of the assessment submission, if required. Upload times will be clearly indicated to the candidate on the assessment instruction page.

4.3 PERMITTED MATERIALS DURING INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

4.3.1 In relation to permitted materials, invigilated digital assessments follow the guidelines set out in the University's [Rules of Conduct of Prescribed Assessments and Written Examinations For Degrees or Diplomas](#).

4.3.2 Candidates may only take printed or other written materials to the examination desk when it has previously been advertised by the School and when it is stated in the rubric to the question paper that such material may be used.

4.3.3 All bags and other objects must be deposited where the Invigilators direct.

4.3.4 Examination papers shall either prohibit calculators or allow those only as specified under:

- (i) When there is any restriction on the type and use of calculators permitted, examination papers will state this.
- (ii) No calculator instruction manuals will be allowed in examination rooms under any circumstances.

(iii) Candidates are responsible for the performance of their own calculators.

(iv) Calculators must not be graphical, programmable, able store text or formulas and cannot be able to communicate with other devices. It is not permitted to use a mobile telephone as a calculator.

4.3.5 No candidate may consume any food or drink (except bottled water) in the assessment hall/room or room other than what may be medically required/prescribed, e.g. cough lozenges, etc. or for adjustments.

4.3.6 Any electronic or smart device, including those that can send and/or receive information or store data are not permitted during an assessment. This includes, but is not limited to, mobile phones, smart watches, e-readers, wearable technology items, fitness trackers and smart glasses. Such devices should be turned off completely and placed in a jacket or bag and left in the area designated by the Invigilators or placed under the examination desk, turned completely off. Invigilators may ask to see such devices and examine them at any point in the assessment room.

4.3.7 Students are permitted to have an analogue or simple digital watch with them during the assessment for the purposes of timekeeping. Watches must be taken off and placed on the examination desk for the duration of the assessment. Such watches must not have any smart capabilities (regardless of them being turned on) such as messaging, internet access, data storage, calculator or other connectivity abilities. Invigilators may ask to see watches and examine them at any point in the assessment room.

4.3.8 Candidates may refer to English/native tongue (excluding electronic) dictionaries when permitted by their Schools to do so. Such dictionaries must, if so requested, be presented to an Invigilator for inspection prior to examination.

4.4 CONDUCT DURING AN INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENT

4.4.1 All candidates undertaking an assessment are expected to comply with the rules and regulations set out by the Universities' [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\)](#). Any candidate found in breach of the Code of Practice will be reported to the Head of the relevant School in the first instance.

4.4.2 For all individual invigilated digital assessments, candidates must comply with the following regulations:

(i) There must be no communication, either spoken or written, between candidates during the period of examination.

(ii) In the case of invigilated computer-based assessments, candidates are not allowed to leave the hall during the first 30 minutes and the last 30 minutes of an invigilated computer-based assessment.

(iii) Candidates must not share information about the contents of the assessment with other students or third parties.

- (iv) Candidates must not save, replay, post or take screenshots of assessments or suggest answers in any capacity. This includes, but is not limited to, the sharing of assessment content on social media, chat platforms, gaming platforms, etc.
- (v) Any assessment must be completed by the candidate personally and any work submitted must be the candidate's own work.

4.5 TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES DURING AN INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENT

- 4.5.1 The University reserve the right to cancel any digital assessment due to technical difficulties. Assessments cancelled in this regard will be rescheduled at the earliest possible opportunity. Schools are responsible for ensuring that candidates are informed in good time regarding the new date for their assessment.
- 4.5.2 In instances where a candidate experiences technical difficulties during an invigilated assessment, they must raise their concerns with an invigilator in the first instance, who will then advise on the next course of action.
- 4.5.3 In the event of submitting a claim for late or non-submission due to technical issues, students must support their claim with their Service Desk ticket number if they have logged the issue via [MyIT](#).

5. NON-INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

5.1 SCHEDULING OF NON-INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

- 5.1.1 All scheduling of prescribed assessments must follow the procedures described in the University's [Rules for the Conduct of Prescribed Assessments and Written Examinations for Degrees or Diplomas](#).
- 5.1.2 Non-Invigilated Assessments that are timed and/or to be completed within a 24-hour window and to be scheduled during the main exam diets are to be sent to the Central Timetable team to avoid conflicts with other invigilated/non-invigilated assessments.
- 5.1.3 Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that there are no Central Timetable clashes with Invigilated assessments, candidates must make their School aware of any such clashes within one week of the Exam Timetable being published so that Registry can make alternative arrangements.
- 5.1.4 Non-invigilated assessments that are not timed and/or may be completed over a longer time window than 24 hours (e.g. take-home exams, online tests available for 48, 72 + hours) may run alongside other assessments and will not be considered as clashing. No additional time will be permitted in these situations. Therefore, a non-invigilated and an invigilated assessment may be scheduled on the same day without further adjustments to the schedule or additional time provided.

5.2 DELIVERY OF NON-INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

- 5.2.1 The School must provide candidates with clear instructions on how to access, complete and submit digital non-invigilated assessments. Instructions should be published on relevant course pages of the VLE.

- 5.2.2 Schools must ensure that there is appropriate level of support available to candidates. Guidance should clearly indicate who to contact if student's have questions/difficulties and what they should do if they have difficulties out with working hours (e.g. if an assessment is scheduled over 24, 48 + hours) and when they will receive a response.
- 5.2.3 The student is responsible for ensuring that their personal computing equipment that they are using for digital assessments are fully operational and configured to the required conditions of the individual assessment.
- 5.2.4 Candidates must ensure that they access their online assessment at the appropriate Scheduled time.
- 5.2.5 Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they have an appropriate internet connection for successfully completing the assessment. If candidates do not have a suitable internet connection, they should refer to the School Guidance.
- 5.2.6 Candidates should ensure that they have read all assessment information on the course page prior to the assessment prior to the due date to ensure that they are familiar with the assessment's requirements and timing.
- 5.2.7 If a student sits an exam, or submits an assignment, it will be assumed that the student is fit to sit and there are no extenuating/mitigating circumstances (defined as exceptional, serious, acute and unforeseen problems, both medical and not). If a student believes that they are not fit to sit an exam or to submit an assignment due to an extenuating circumstance, or subsequently realises that they were not fit to do so, they should advise the School by completing the absence form on the Student Hub at the first possible opportunity, in line with Section 2.1 of [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#), and in any case **before** any results are published. Failure to follow this may undermine any future appeal.

5.3 CONDUCT DURING A NON-INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENT

- 5.3.1 Online assessments which do not require a candidate to be on campus for their duration should still be conducted under conditions as if they were being sat on campus.
- 5.3.2 All candidates undertaking an assessment are expected to comply with the rules and regulations set out by the University's [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\)](#). Any candidate found in breach of the Code of Practice will be reported to the Head of the relevant School in the first instance.
- 5.3.3 For all individual invigilated computer-based assessments, candidates must comply with the following regulations:
- (i) There must be no communication, either spoken or written, between candidates during the period of examination.
 - (ii) Candidates must not share information about the contents of the assessment with other students or third parties.

- (iii) Candidates must not save, replay, post or take screenshots of assessments or suggest answers in any capacity. This includes, but is not limited to, the sharing of assessment content on social media, chat platforms, gaming platforms, etc.
- (iv) Any assessment must be completed by the candidate personally and any work submitted must be the candidate's own work

5.4 CONCLUDING A NON-INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENT

- 5.4.1 Candidates are responsible for following all school guidance and ensuring that their assessment submission is the correct version. All submissions will be marked according to the Universities' marking and moderation procedures.
- 5.4.2 Candidates are required to ensure that they write their answers in English, unless a foreign language has been approved for use within the assessment due to either the assessment's nature or special arrangements.
- 5.4.3 Candidates are required to upload their assessment by the due date and time. Failure to do so, and blank or unreadable submissions, will be treated as a non-submission, and marked as such. If a candidate fails to submit an assessment, they should contact the School as soon as possible and complete an Absence Report as outlined in the [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#).
- 5.4.4 At the end of the assessment duration, an additional time allocation must be provided to allow for the upload of the assessment submission, if required (e.g. to upload a written document). Upload times should be at least 1 hour and will be clearly indicated to the candidate on the assessment instruction page.

5.5 LATE SUBMISSIONS OF NON-INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENTS

- 5.5.1 Schools will be responsible for ensuring that information regarding submissions windows, and upload times, are effectively communicated to candidates and that the appropriate settings are applied within the VLE.
- 5.5.2 Submissions received after the end of a scheduled assessment will be regarded as a late submission and penalties applied as outlined in the [Policy and Procedures on Extensions and Penalties for Unauthorised Late Submissions of Coursework](#).
- 5.5.3 Where a candidate uploads their submission after the end of the specified upload time, they must provide further information the School contact as identified in the Assessment information for the reason for their late submission and complete an Absence Report as outlined in the [Policy and Procedures on Student Absence](#).

5.6 TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES DURING A NON-INVIGILATED DIGITAL ASSESSMENT

- 5.6.1 The University reserve the right to cancel any digital assessment due to technical difficulties. Assessments cancelled in this regard will be rescheduled at the earliest possible opportunity. Schools are responsible for ensuring that candidates are informed in good time regarding the new date for their assessment.

5.6.2 A candidate who experiences technical difficulties with accessing, checking, submitting or completing an online assessment should immediately contact the School contact as identified in the Assessment information. Schools should ensure that this information is made available to candidates via the front page of their assessment.

5.6.3 In the event of submitting a claim for late or non-submission due to technical issues, students must support their claim with their Service Desk ticket number if they have logged the issue via [MyIT](#).

Appendix A: Assessment taxonomy

Part A – Structure

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invigilated: Assessments carried out with monitoring ensure adherence to regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Closed : Assessments without access to any additional materials. ◦ Open: Assessments that allow the use of textbooks, notes or digital resources. ◦ Lockdown: Digital assessment where specialist software to prevent students from accessing unauthorised resources during the assessment. • Non invigilated: Assessments that are taken without supervision, allowing students to complete them independently, often in a setting of their choice, and typically without real-time monitoring for academic integrity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timed: These assessments must be completed within a specified time limit, which could be a single set time (e.g., a two-hour exam scheduled at 10 a.m.) or a flexible window (e.g., a two-hour exam available to start anytime within a 24-hour period). Timed assessments emphasise time management and a student's ability to perform under pressure, often reflecting real-world scenarios where responses need to be both accurate and time-efficient. • Non-Timed: Assessment that provides students the flexibility to complete activities without a fixed time constraint still includes a clear submission deadline. This approach allows students to work at their own pace within the allocated timeframe, emphasizing the quality and depth of their responses over the speed of completion while ensuring timely submission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-released: Assessments where students receive the questions or topics in advance, allowing them to prepare responses using their study materials ahead of the assessment submission. This description specifically refers to situations where students are given the actual questions they are required to address in the assessment. • Unseen: Assessments where students are presented with questions they have not encountered ahead of the assessment, requiring them to demonstrate their knowledge and critical thinking skills without prior preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand written: Assessment format in which students respond to questions using written answers, typically involving the use of pen or pencil • Digital: Assessments administered on electronic devices, where students complete questions using software applications(not scanning of paper based) may also be conducted via the internet, where students complete questions and submit their responses using electronic devices • Oral: Assessment where students are required to verbally respond to questions posed by an examiner or a panel.

- **Group** – any assessment which involves students collaborating in teams to complete (can be pairs or larger groups)
- **Individual** - any assessment which where each student is responsible for completing a task or project independently

Part B – Descriptor

<p>Extended Writing Tasks: Assessments requiring in-depth written responses (minimum 1000 words) example include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essays: Analytical or argumentative pieces on a specific topic. • Research Papers: In-depth studies on a topic, often requiring literature reviews and original research. • Reports: Structured report format, often simulating the expectations and standards of professional practice in their field. • Lab book/research journal: Detailed record of practical work, including experiments, procedures, observations, results, and analyses • Dissertations/Theses: Comprehensive, original research projects that contribute new knowledge to a field.
<p>Brief Writing Tasks: Assessments requiring brief written responses (less than 1000 words), examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Answer Questions: Students respond to questions with concise answers, typically a few sentences or brief paragraph long. • Discussion Board Posts: Online platforms where students write brief responses or contributions to discussion prompts, engaging with their peers. • Response Papers: Brief written responses to prompts or questions about a specific reading or topic, focusing on key ideas
<p>Objective Assessments: Assessment where the questions or tasks have predetermined correct answers they usually test specific knowledge or skills rather than subjective analysis or extended explanations Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple-choice questions (MCQ) • single-best-answer (SBA) • true/false • fill-in-the-blanks • matching exercises • very short answer (maximum 10 words)
<p>Performance-Based / Practical Assessments: Evaluations that measure students' ability to apply skills often reflecting real-world scenarios example could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Practice Assessments: Evaluations in fields like healthcare or education, assessing practical skills and decision-making in professional settings, or role play within these types of settings. • Practical Assessments: Evaluations based on the application of skills or knowledge, often in a laboratory, field setting, placements or performance space • Musical Performance: Evaluating students' proficiency in playing an instrument or singing, focusing on technical skill, interpretation, and expression. • Computer Programming Exercise: Evaluating student coding skills by writing, testing, or debugging software to complete specific tasks or solve problems.
<p>Presentations: Assessments that require students to prepare and deliver an oral or visual presentation on a specific topic. Examples include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral: Delivered in person or via video, these presentations assess students' verbal communication skills, confidence, and ability to effectively convey information. • Poster presentations: Students create visual posters that concisely summarise research, findings, or ideas, may or may not also be accompanied by a brief oral explanation

- **Musical or Artistic performance:** Involve a live performance (in person or recorded) where they showcase technical or interpretive skills, such as playing an instrument, acting, or dance, assessed on aspects like skill, expression, and creativity.

Portfolios / Cumulative Assessments: Portfolios may include a range of materials—such as written assignments, projects, creative works, reflections, and feedback—that collectively illustrate the student's progression within a subject area, portfolios often involve progression marking.

Peer Assessment: Evaluation of a student's work by fellow students, providing feedback and grading. Can also assessment of student ability to provide peer assessment

Self-Assessment: Students evaluate their own work and learning processes. Can also assessment of student ability to self-assess

Where an assessment consists of more than one type, such as a test with both multiple-choice elements and short-answer questions, it should be categorised based on the predominant type. The predominant type is determined as the question format that contributes the greatest proportion of marks. Additional descriptions of the question types must be clearly communicated to students alongside the standard description.

GUIDANCE FOR THOSE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISABLED CANDIDATES

1. It is University policy to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged by ~~the~~ examination arrangements. The onus is, however, on the student to notify the University of ~~his/her~~their requirements at the earliest opportunity. The University will advise all students of the support available and how to access this.
2. The purpose of adjustments to the examination arrangements is to ensure every student has an equal opportunity to effectively complete their assessments. ~~not to advantage the candidate but rather to ensure that disabled students are not placed at a disadvantage, in comparison to persons who are not disabled.~~
3. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that if they require inclusion adjustments, they engage with Student Advice & Support~~appropriate assessments of their requirements are issued by their GP or medical consultant and received by the Student Advice and Support Office.~~
4. It is the responsibility of ~~the~~ Student Advice ~~and &~~ Support ~~Office~~ to ensure that details of the ~~academic provisions~~inclusion adjustments ~~and/or examination arrangements~~ required by the student are recorded on the Student Record System.
5. It is the responsibility of the School ~~Disability-Inclusion~~ Co-ordinator and the Registry Timetabling team,~~on behalf of the Head of School,~~ to ensure that examination arrangements, as specified in ~~the provisions form~~the student records system, are implemented. Subsequent delivery of IT and Assistive Technology arrangements may be delivered.
6. It is the responsibility of the School ~~Disability-Inclusion~~ Co-ordinator,~~on behalf of the Head of School,~~ to inform the candidates about how ~~the special arrangements~~inclusion adjustments will be organised and what is required of them. This should be done with at least one week's notice, if possible.
7. If a reader and/or~~a amanuensis scribe~~ is ~~used~~required, this person will be appointed centrally by the Registry Timetabling Team who will in turn inform the ~~Heads of School and~~ School ~~Disability-Inclusion~~ Co-ordinators. It is the responsibility of the School ~~Disability-Inclusion~~ Co-ordinator to inform the ~~amanuensis~~reader and/or scribe of the location of the examinations.
8. Any additional time allowed will depend on the ~~recommendations made in any assessment/medical certificate.~~assessment made by Student Advice & Support.
9. The School ~~Disability-Inclusion~~ Co-ordinator, ~~on behalf of the Head of School,~~ should ensure that ~~separate~~private examination accommodation is arranged, where appropriate, and that appropriate invigilation arrangements are made.
10. If ~~word-processing/computer~~a computer ~~equipment is needed~~and assistive software is required, it should be provided by the University. Enquiries should be made to Registry at least 2 weeks in advance of the examination if possible. It is important to consider software, as well as hardware, requirements. If specialist~~e~~ computing facilities are required, advice should be sought from the Assistive Technology Advisers in IT Services within the 2-week period. Assistive Technology will inform Registry of requirements prior to the exam.
11. Where a candidate has returned their answers in some other form than is immediately accessible, a transcript should be produced after the end of the examination. The candidate's original version should be available to the examiner if required.

12. All members of staff should give due consideration to confidentiality and sensitivity at all stages of the examination process. Unnecessary attention should not be drawn to a [disabled](#) student ~~with a disability or medical condition~~ in the examination hall [or computer classrooms](#).

School Survey Results on use of Digital Assessments

A survey on the use of digital assessments was sent to School Directors of Education and School Administration Managers, and further distributed internally to relevant School discipline leads. There were in total 26 responses representing 11 Schools (no response from LLMVC) and Qatar. Whilst the majority of Schools submitted one response on behalf of the whole School, three Schools included individual response from discipline/education leads within their School, totalling 6 responses from Geosciences, 3 from NCS, and 8 from MMSN.

Survey Summary

All Schools reported that they employed a mixture of invigilated and non-invigilated digital assessments which ranged from automatically marked MCQs, short answer questions, and longer pieces of work (e.g. essays/reports for upload). For non-invigilated assessments, assessments were either open for a short time window (i.e. 1 to 6 hours), however most kept the exams open for longer window of 24 or 48 hours, or up to 7 days. All Schools report that digital assessments were delivered via the VLE with some instances of more specialised software being used as well (e.g. MSCAA Exam-Write platform / Exam Soft (SMMSN), or use more technical software related to their discipline (e.g. e.g. C/C++ is used in Engineering with outputs submitted via MyAberdeen).

The majority of Schools reported that to support students with reasonable adjustments they were mostly providing additional time in tests or providing single rooms for those with adjustments in place. The main challenges are providing invigilators for students requiring individual rooms which is especially challenging when assessments are during teaching weeks and room availability is limited.

Schools employ a range of methods for policing academic integrity, such as similarity checkers (Turnitin) and limiting the time available for assessments to a shorter time window (i.e. less than 6 hours). However, randomisation of questions/answers is the most common for MCQs/short answer questions, as well as the use of LockDown browsers where appropriate.

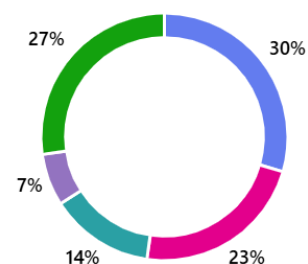
Schools reported that they felt they needed further guidance / policy on their use of digital assessments. Their concerns related to how to monitor academic integrity, ensuring that assessments were inclusive and how they should apply provisions, as well as practical issues such as dealing with technical difficulties and avoiding timetabling clashes. Some Schools specifically requested clear guidance on how to set up/run digital assessments and a request for specific guidance on whether exam / test answers must be published.

Schools were asked to comment on their future assessment plans. 8 Schools explicitly stated that they were currently using or would like to introduce invigilated computer based assessments with large classes (SBS, Business, NCS, Psychology, MMSN, Social Science, Geoscience, DHPA). However they raised concern about the lack of computer lab spaces for running large computer-based exams, especially if tests were during teaching weeks. They also requested more appropriate spaces for invigilating disability students in private room, as well as requiring more technical support during exams. Finally, a range of training requests were identified, e.g. how to use lockdown browsers and question banks in MyAberdeen, as well as staff training on how to design assessments / write questions that were gen-AI proof.

Survey results by question

What type of Digital Assessments do you use?

● Exams consisting of automatically graded questions such as MCQs	13
● Exams involving typing a short or long response into an answer box	10
● Exams involving the upload of files e.g. Word files	6
● In person oral viva exams in Taught Programmes only	3
● Other	12

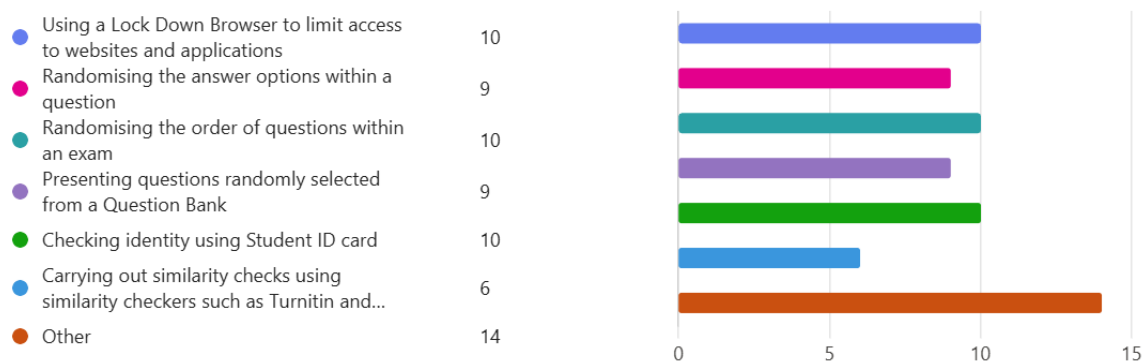


Whilst the majority of Schools used a mixture of invigilated digital assessments across their programmes that involved MCQs (30%), short/long answers (23%), or the upload of files (14%), five Schools reported that they did not currently employ invigilated digital assessments (Psychology, Law, Education, Social Science, DHPA).

The majority of Schools set up assessments integrated into the VLE, either in Blackboard/MyAberdeen, MSCAA Exam-Write platform / Exam Soft (SMMSN), or use more technical software related to their discipline (e.g. e.g. C/C++ is used in Engineering with outputs submitted via MyAberdeen).

Academic Integrity

Schools were asked: How do you ensure academic integrity in invigilated exams?



Three Schools report using a lockdown browser (MMSN, Engineering, NCS) with the majority of Schools using randomisation of questions/answers.

Applying Reasonable Adjustments

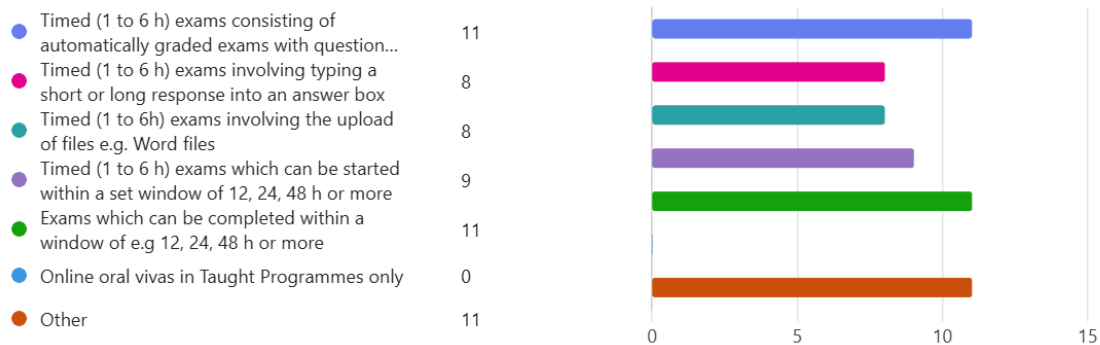
Schools were asked: Can you provide information on how you manage the provision of reasonable adjustments for invigilated digital exams and any challenges or approaches that need reviewing? (For example, identifying sufficient invigilators, adjustments requiring the use of a single room, accessing support)

The majority of Schools reported using traditional approaches of providing additional time and the provision of single rooms for those with adjustments in place. The challenges they report are the large number of students requiring individual rooms which require a lot of invigilators. This is compounded further for Class Tests whereby room availability during teaching time provides an additional challenge.

Non-Invigilated Digital Assessments

Schools were asked: What types of non-invigilated digital examinations do you currently use?

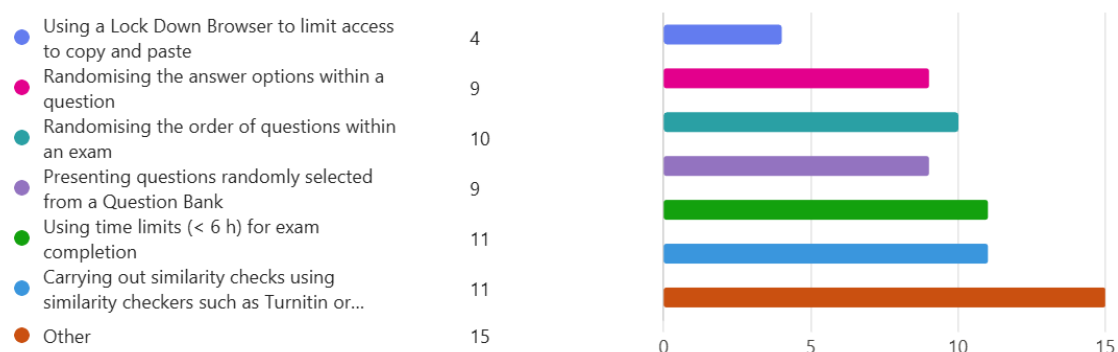
11 Schools reported the use of variety of non-invigilated digital assessments including both automated MCQs / short answers etc., that must be completed within a range of time windows. This applies to both timed exams within a short period of time (1 to 6 hour window) or open for a longer period of time (24+ hours). The most common time windows reported were either 24 or 48 hour windows, but may also be open for longer, with one School reporting 7 days. All Schools report that non-invigilated assessments are delivered via the VLE.



Academic Integrity

Schools were asked: How do you ensure academic integrity in non-invigilated digital exams?

They report using a range of methods for policing academic integrity, most frequently the use of similarity checkers and limiting the time available for assessments within a shorter time window (i.e. less than 6 hours). However, randomisation of questions/answers is the most common for MCQs/short answer questions, as well as the use of LockDown browsers where appropriate. One School reports that they begin their approach with the question design as well as clear communication to students in regards to academic integrity, “Design questions so that not easy for a high quality answer to be generated using AI e.g. including in question \"based on material covered in thsi course\", running questions through AI, designing questions so that have to synthesise knowledge and display understanding rather than regurgitation of lecture material, etc. Ensure students are aware that sharing questions papers would constitute academic misconduct.”



Policy development

Schools were asked: Do you feel that current policies and guidance contained within <https://abdn.site/assessment-policies-guidance> are sufficient to support digital / computer based exams?

Of the 26 responses 6 replied that the current policy was good enough for their needs, however the remaining 20 responses covering the 11 schools within the survey replied either No or unsure/mixed. One participant wrote, “The university's policies on assessment and examinations have been assembled piecemeal over many decades and are now split across various web sites and PDFs. They need to be thoroughly rewritten and brought together in one place.”

Further, Schools were asked what issues they felt needed to be covered by a new policy relating to digital assessments, (Q: In developing a policy on digital examinations, what areas do you think the policy should address? (e.g ensuring academic integrity, managing inclusive measures).

A range of issues were identified:

- Academic integrity was the most common issue mentioned
- Inclusivity and advice on how to include provisions
- Timetabling (avoiding clashes with non-/invigilated exams)
- Advice on dealing with technical issues (e.g. failure to submit due to IT issues/failed uploads).
- Providing “rules” on how to set-up and deliver non-invigilated digital assessments
- Specifically in relation to MCQs guidance on whether exam questions can be re-used and how feedback (if any) should be provided (students request to see the answers).

When asked what specific guidance they would like, schools reported:

- Standard instructions on how to run computer based exams especially for large cohorts
- Training on a range of topics:
 - How to set up a lockdown browser
 - How to design gen-AI proof online exams
 - How to write non-googable exam questions
 - How to set up question banks
- More technical support available during exam seasons
- More private rooms for disability students

Going Forward

Schools were asked to comment on:

- Are you thinking of introducing more digital exams in the future?
- What should the University be planning for, to support future digital examination requirements?
- Do you have any further comments?

8 Schools explicitly stated that they were currently using or would like to introduce invigilated computer based assessments with large classes (SBS, Business, NCS, Psychology, MMSN, Social Science, Geoscience, DHPA).

The main concerns raised were:

- Physical space – for large cohorts there is a need for suitable venues where there is space to accommodate class sizes of 300-500 students.
- Accessibility to physical space is also a concern with some subjects running in-term Class Tests or national exams (Medicine) where access to these spaces is in competition with teaching.
- Concern was raised about the software – one School questioned whether Respondus was actually reliable, and another School that uses ExamSoft requested this was installed across campus.
- Repeated request for clear guidance on how to run digital assessments.

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
COMPUTER-BASED ASSESSMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP
REMIT AND COMPOSITION**

1. Committee/Group Title:

Computer-based assessment task and finish group

2. Chair and Professional Services Area:

Chair: Dean for Student Support and Experience

Clerk: Academic Services

3. Purpose and remit:

To oversee the efficient and effective running of computer-based exams / class tests (both online and on-campus). Issues to review:

- Review relevant exam related policies to reflect computer-based exams/class tests
- Review Invigilator instructions so that they are relevant for both computer-based and written invigilated assessments.
- Review the processes for scheduling of online and in-person assessments.
- Review school practices for organisation / running of online assessments (standard practices/guidelines/length of exams) for both invigilated and non-invigilated assessments.
- Review of spaces for computer-based assessments
- Review of procedures for invigilated assessments allowing bring-your-own devices
- Scheduling / timetabling of computer-based exams and class tests during term time
- Identify and make suggestions for overall assessment policy with respect to invigilated online assessments
- Identify issues and solutions to how students with provisions are supported for computer-based assessments (both online and on-campus).
- Review of assistive technology available for computer-based assessments.
- Review of IT support for computer-based assessments and procedures surrounding single-room/disability provision.

4. Composition and Quorum

Chair: Dean for Student Support and Experience

Composition:

- 4 x School leads (academic and administrative leads)
- AUSA representatives for Education and Welfare
- Professional Service representatives from Student Support, CAD, DDIS, Registry.

Quorum: 50%

Consideration to be given to Equality and Diversity in Membership

5. Membership 2023_2024:

Chair: Dean For Student Support and Experience	Jason Bohan
Clerk: Academic Services	Chris Weir
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition Representative	Colin Lumsden Donna MacCallum
School of Psychology Representative	Helen Knight Jacquie Hutchison
Qatar Representative	Lyn Batchelor
AUSA representative	Miles Rothoerl Karim Hurtig
DDIS Technical Representative	Derek Findlay
Centre for Academic Development Representative	Sara Preston
DIS Relationship Manager (Teaching and Learning)	Natalie Willams- Kinchin
Dean for Educational Innovation	Kirsty Kiezebrink
QAC Representative	Will Barras
Academic Services Representative	Liam Dyker

6. Members' Responsibilities:

Each member of the committee will contribute to discussions and feedback to their respective areas. School representatives will ensure that they use their School Education Committees and other School forums to inform feedback into computer-based assessments processes and procedures and to raise matters relevant to the School Exam Planning Group or for referral onto other committees and Groups as appropriate.

7. Reporting line/parent committee and interface with other committees

Formal reporting line: Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC)

Interface with other Committees/Groups: Exam Planning Group, Quality Assurance Committee; University Education Committee; SAM network; School Inclusion Group.

Digital Exams Guidance for Invigilators

The purpose of invigilation

The main purpose of invigilation is to regulate the exam environment to be as quiet, comfortable, and relaxed as possible, so students can do their best in answering the questions asked of them.

Invigilators are required to ensure that the regulations associated with exams are acted upon; that the instructions relating to the exam protocol are explained clearly and fully to the students; and that illegal activity is discouraged using a system that makes it obvious and likely that any cheating will be detected.

If cheating is detected, then it is the responsibility of the invigilator to deal with the situation as quickly, effectively and fully as possible, always acting to minimise any impact on the other students present. Judgement as to whether cheating has taken place will follow the exam and will depend on the evidence collected at the time, so invigilators must be scrupulous in the gathering of this evidence.

Inclusion adjustment-related exam arrangements

The Central Timetabling Team in Registry and Schools are responsible for organising inclusion adjustment-related exam arrangements including:

- Provision of a computer for word processing (for Exam Mode)
- Extra time
- Scribe/reader
- Private exam venue (or room with fewer than 20 students)

The School Office will advise you if you are invigilating an exam for a student with inclusion-adjustment-related exam requirements. Registry provides their invigilators with a rota and students list(s) the week prior to the start of the exams.

Before the exam

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring there are sufficient invigilators for each exam, usually two. For exams with over 100 students there may be three invigilators allocated.

Invigilator checklist

If you are invigilating for your School check with your School Office which digital exam(s) you are to invigilate, noting dates, times and location, and which digital platform is to be used:

- **MyAberdeen** with lockdown browser (Respondus lockdown browser)
- **MyAberdeen** without lockdown browser
- **ExamWrite** with lockdown browser SEB (Safe Exam Browser) (Medical Schools Council Assessment Alliance [MSCAA] for the MBChB programme)
- **ExamSoft** for the Physician Associates (PA) and the Dental School programmes
- **Exam Mode, which does not allow access to the internet** (for inclusion adjustment-related exams involving the use of a word processor e.g., Word)

Also check:

- whether submission at the end of the exam will be automatic (timed) or manual (by instruction from the Senior Invigilator)
- whether you should take stationery (for notes) to the exam venue
- you have a mobile phone or laptop to bring with you to the exam(s) in order to make any necessary calls
- you have installed the SafeZone app on your mobile phone, and programmed into your mobile phone / have a list of useful telephone numbers, including your School Office
- you know how to call a first aider in the exam venue building (the SafeZone app can also be used)
- you are aware of how to exit the building safely and where to congregate in case of a fire alarm
- whether there is a Teams site for supporting invigilation and the running of digital exams
- whether there are student instructions for the steps they need to take when accessing their digital exam. For example, in the case of an exam delivered via MyAberdeen using Respondus Lockdown Browser, Schools may have customised the basic [student instructions for an exam on MyAberdeen with Respondus lockdown browser](#).

Use of electronic devices: what you need to know

Use of dictionaries

Students whose first language is not English may refer to English/native tongue dictionaries, when permitted by their Schools. Electronic dictionaries are not permitted in the exam venue. Invigilators are entitled to request inspection of dictionaries prior to the exam, thumbing through them to check that there is no extra written material present.

Smart technology

During an exam students are not permitted on their person any electronic or smart device, including those that can send and/or receive information or store data. This includes but is not limited to mobile phones (unless there is a medical exemption e.g., for diabetic monitoring of blood glucose), smart calculators, smart watches, e-readers, wearable technology items, fitness trackers and smart glasses. Such devices should be turned off completely and placed in a jacket or bag and left in the area designated by the Invigilators. Invigilators may ask to see such devices and examine them at any point in the exam venue.

Students are permitted to have an analogue or simple digital watch with them during the exam for the purposes of timekeeping. Watches must be taken off and placed on the exam desk for the duration of the exam. Such watches must not have any smart capabilities (regardless of them being turned on) such as messaging, internet access, data storage, calculator or other connectivity abilities. Invigilators may ask to see watches and examine them at any point in the exam venue.

Use of calculators

Exam instructions should either prohibit calculators or allow those as specified on the exam instructions. No calculator instruction manuals will be allowed in examination venues in any circumstances.

- Mobile phones and devices are **not** permitted to be used as calculators
- Calculators should be hand-held, quiet, self-powered and not capable of connection to any other devices, including through Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or any other means
- Calculators must not be programmable or have graphing capabilities
- Calculators must not have the ability to store text or formulas or data

Exam venue set-up

Invigilators' arrival

Invigilators should ensure they are present in the digital exam venue **at least 30 minutes** before the start of the exam to ensure:

- all arrangements are in place (e.g., adequate seating, extra computers (in case of log-in issues), lighting, ventilation, and spare stationery (for students to make notes, if requested). Attention should be given to the location of fire exits, toilet facilities
- that you identify an area of the venue, usually at the front, for students to leave their bags and other belongings
- that there is sufficient time for the students to enter (**approximately 20 minutes** before the start of the exam), deposit their bags and other belongings in the identified area in the venue, and log in to the computers
- that if you don't have your mobile phone with you, you have a laptop (for Teams calls) with a list of useful contact numbers, including your School Office.

Routine conduct of digital exams

Admission of students to exam venue

Students should be allowed to enter the venue prior to commencement of the exam (**approximately 20 minutes**) to allow sufficient time for them to leave their bags and other belongings in the safe place, settle, and log in before the start time.

An announcement should be made as students enter the venue, to inform them:

- where to leave bags and other belongings
- that mobile phones and devices should be switched off and left in their bags
- that they are not permitted to use their mobile phones as a clock
- which part of the exam venue to find a seat
- that they should put their university ID card on the desk

Late arrival of student(s)

Students are not permitted to enter the exam **more than 30 minutes** after the start. Students are not to be given extra time for late arrival.

Inclusion adjustment-related exams

Invigilators of sole students are required to wait **30 minutes** from the scheduled start of the exam. If the student has not arrived, the invigilator may then leave. Please inform the School

Office or Registry as soon as possible if a student has not arrived for the exam.

Start of Exam

Announcement 1: The Senior Invigilator should generally be the person who makes the announcements. The standard announcement for the start of digital exams is below, but can be tailored for individual circumstances (e.g., **inclusion adjustment-related exam** venues where there may be different exams in one venue):

Good morning/afternoon.

The exam(s) for ___COURSE CODE(S) AND NAME(S)___ is/are being held in this venue.

Please note that at the end, this exam is set to have timed automatic submission **OR** is set for manual submission. (Tailor as appropriate)

Please read the instructions for your exam carefully and follow these fully. Please raise your hand if you require attention at any time during the exam.

Please place your university identity (ID) card on your desk.

You are not permitted to leave the examination in the **first or last 30 minutes**.

When your time allowance is up, please wait for further instructions.

Should there be any individual IT issues during the exam, the Senior Invigilator will exercise discretion to allow additional time at the end.

The time is now ___ANNOUNCE THE TIME___ and this is the start of the exam.

Inclusion adjustment-related exams

For exams in extra time venues, ensure each student is aware of their extra time allowance.

During the exam

Invigilators should:

- Always remain vigilant. Where possible at least one invigilator should be present at the back of the examination venue.
- Periodically patrol the venue, taking care not to disturb students.
- Only talk to students or to each other when necessary and then in a quiet manner to avoid disruption.

Invigilators are responsible for:

- Checking student university identity (ID) cards against the Student List during the exam and marking students as in attendance at the exam. Any additional students should be added to the Student List. Any student who cannot display a university ID card should be permitted to take the exam, but a note should be made that no university ID card was displayed, and the student should be informed that a university ID card must be displayed at all exams.
- Ensuring that students do not consume any food or drink (except bottled water) in the exam venue, other than what may be medically prescribed, e.g., cough lozenges, etc.

- Ensuring that there is no communication, either spoken or written, between the students during the period of the exam.
- Ensuring that exam stationery is available for notes (if requested)
- Taking appropriate steps to curtail activities in the vicinities of the exam venue, which they consider detrimental to the performance of students.

Students requiring to leave the exam venue

If possible, one invigilator should accompany the student out of the venue, as far as it is appropriate to do so. The invigilator should note the time of the student's departure and re-entry. The student must not leave the venue with any exam materials. You cannot prevent a student going to use the toilet, if they wish to do so, bearing in mind that some medical conditions may make this necessary. Students should not leave the exam venue in the **last 30 minutes** of the exam, but invigilators should exercise some discretion if the student requires a bathroom break.

What to do if cheating is suspected

- If an invigilator has reason to suspect that cheating has occurred, then, if possible, a second invigilator should be immediately involved, so that there is independent corroboration of the circumstances.
- Inform the student of this action and that a report will be made to the relevant Head of School, who may refer the case to the University Disciplinary Committee.
- If cheating involves the use of written or electronic material, this should be confiscated, labelled and stored securely. If the student will not give up the material, then a full note should be made to explain the circumstances, witnessed if possible.
- If a student is suspected of using a mobile phone during the exam it should be confiscated for the duration of the exam and returned to the student at the end of the exam. A second invigilator should witness the removal and return of the phone if possible.
- If the cheating involves communication between students, then both should be warned that this is illegal and asked to desist and a full note made about the circumstances
- The student(s) can be permitted to continue with the exam. If the student(s) does/do not wish to continue with the exam, they can leave the exam venue (but not in the **first or last 30 minutes** of the exam, unless it is deemed desirable for the other students).
- As far as possible, no disturbances should be caused to other students in the exam venue.
- All evidence, plus a full account of the circumstances and any actions taken, should be passed to the relevant Head of School as soon as possible after the exam finishes.

Inclusion adjustment-related exams

Registry invigilators should report back to the Registry at the end of the last exam in their venue, and their account of any incidences will be forwarded to the relevant Head of School(s).

30-minute advice before the end of the exam

Announcement 2: In the digital exam venues, this should be made 30 minutes before the end of the exam:

Please note that there are now **30 minutes remaining** and so no-one is now permitted to leave until the exam is finished.

This announcement may not be required in **inclusion adjustment-related** exam venues where students with extra time will finish at different times.

End of the digital exam

At the end of the exam, the students must submit their work (unless the exam has auto-submission). Any notes made on paper must not be removed from the exam room; please state whether they will be collected before students leave OR should be left on the desk when students leave the room.

Announcement 3 should be made:

You must now submit your work. Please remain in your seats and listen to the instructions on how to complete the exam:

Please make sure that after submitting your work, you log out of the platform e.g., **MyAberdeen / ExamWrite / ExamSoft**, and finally log out of the computer

EITHER: Wait until all written exam notes are collected

OR: Leave all written exam notes on the desk when you leave

When requested, please collect your belongings, and leave the exam room quietly.

Examination Security

Invigilators are expected to maintain maximum security in the exam room with respect to any exam materials (e.g., written notes).

Invigilators should return attendance lists to the School Office or designated location.

Invigilators should report to the Head of the relevant School any infringement of the rules by a student. Notes taken by an invigilator regarding any incidents during the exam should be retained for the resultant report to the Head of School.

Fire alarms during the exam

Estates do not plan routine fire drills during official exam periods. If fire alarms sound, safety of persons takes precedence:

Senior Invigilator / Invigilator to ask all present to:

- Leave any exam materials on the desks (including in computer rooms)
- Leave all coats/bags/belongings in the designated area
- Leave the exam room as quietly and quickly as possible

- Follow instructions from fire wardens on evacuating the building (do not use lifts)
- If deemed safe to return by a fire warden, the exam may resume depending on the time lost:
 - Students should be reassured that a no detriment policy will be agreed if the exam cannot be resumed
 - Students should be reassured that the School will contact them as soon as possible to explain what will happen about this assessment

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

REGULATORY CHANGES FOR INTRODUCTION IN 2025/2026

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to seek the **approval** of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), for onward consideration of the Senate, for the attached *appendix A* comprising Changes to Regulations for Various Degrees.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/ approved by:	Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG)	29 January 2025
Further consideration/ approval required by:	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)	19 February 2025
	Senate	19 March 2025
	Court	30 April 2025
	Business Committee of the General Council	19 June 2025
	Court	25 June 2025

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Quality Assurance Committee is asked to **approve** the regulatory changes in the attached *Appendix A*.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 The regulatory changes to be introduced with effect from 2025/26 are included in the attached *Appendices A and B*. These Resolutions enact the changes in Degree Regulations recommended by the Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG).

4.2 Key changes included in the regulatory changes are noted as follows:

(i) **General Regulations for First Degrees**

The amendment of General Regulation 16.1 to provide a criterion below which progression will not be normally considered by the Students' Progress Committee (SPC). This proposed change is supported by the Students' Progress Committee, where it is unlikely that students missing more than one course additional to the minimum progression hurdle are to be allowed to progress to the next academic year.

(ii) **General Regulations for Research Degrees**

The proposed changes to the General Regulations for Research Degrees comprise:

- **Regulation 6:** The amendment of the existing regulation regarding the supervisory team.

- **Regulation 16:** The amendment of the existing regulation to update the cross-referencing.
- **Regulation 18:** The amendment of the existing regulation to include the requirement for a thesis plan to be provided where an extension is sought.
- **Regulations 21, 24 and 25:** The amendment of the existing regulation to remove reference to local institutions, given their scope is beyond the locality.
- **Regulation 27:** The amendment of the existing regulation to remove the requirement for bi-annual progression, resulting in an annual progression exercise (*as considered by the QAC on 11 December 2024*).
- **Regulation 31:** The amendment of the existing regulation to provide clarity in respect of data protection legislation and the use of artificial intelligence.
- **Regulation 34:** The amendment of the existing regulation to include the creation of a degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Media and Communication.
- **Regulation 39:** The minor amendment of the existing regulation to provide clarity in respect of full-time equivalent, recognising the pathway for part-time study.

(iii) Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Music (BMus)

The amendment of Regulation 5, for the BMus (Honours) programme only, in respect of progression to reflect the updates made to the General Regulations in academic year 2024/25 (*Resolution 309 of 2023 refers*). No changes have been made to the BMus Education progression regulations, recognising the restrictions in respect of accreditation.

(iv) Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)

The proposed amendments to the Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery comprise:

- **Regulation 2:** The amendment of the existing regulation to allow discretion on behalf of the School admissions.
- **Regulation 5(i):** The amendment of the existing regulation to include reference to the Dental Progress Committee.
- **Regulation 13(i):** The amendment of the existing regulation to remove reference to the Director of the Institute of Education in Healthcare and Medical Sciences and replace it with a representative, recognising that the Institute of Dentistry is separate to that of the Institute of Education in Healthcare and Medical Sciences.

(v) Supplementary Regulations for the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology

The introduction of new Regulations governing the 'Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) in Dental Technology'. The DipHE in Dental Technology is an undergraduate diploma, the regulations for which will be held within the regulations for Medicine and Dentistry.

(vi) Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Master of Arts (MA) and Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Secondary Education with STEM Subjects

The introduction of new Regulations governing the 'Master of Arts (MA) in Secondary Education with STEM Subjects' and 'Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Secondary Education with STEM Subjects' (*Appendix B refers*), for which the regulations will be held within the regulations for Education degrees. Should the reaccreditation process with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) be successful in academic year 2024/25, the regulations of the MA in Secondary Education will supersede those of the BA in Secondary Education.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Steve Tucker, Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement (s.j.tucker@abdn.ac.uk), Liam Dyker, Administrative Officer (liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk) or Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar (e.tough@abdn.ac.uk).

20 January 2025

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: *Open*

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

DRAFT RESOLUTION NO x OF 2025 [CHANGES IN REGULATIONS FOR VARIOUS DEGREES]

After consultation with the Senatus Academicus, the University Court, at its meeting on < > passed the following Resolution:

1. On the recommendation of the Senatus Academicus, the following changes to Degree Regulations are hereby approved.
2. This Resolution shall come into force on the fifteenth day of September, two thousand and twenty-five, but the requirements under it shall also be binding on students proceeding for the first time to First Degree study from the Access HE programme, or from Programme Year 0 of the MA or BSc with Foundation Studies.

1. GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR FIRST DEGREES

Regulation 16.1

In the existing regulation, after 'equivalent.', insert 'The Senatus Academicus will normally only permit candidates to progress in instances where they have no more than one course outstanding, valued at either 15 or 30 credit points.'

- 16.1** Studies for each degree are arranged to extend over a number of programme years, each of which for a full-time student normally occupies two terms. Except with the permission of the Senatus Academicus or where Regulation 17.1 applies candidates may not progress:
- a. from programme year 1 to programme year 2 unless they have accumulated, by award or recognition, or been exempted from, at least 90 credit points at level 1 [including those courses required to enter programme year 2 for the degree programme for which they are currently registered]; or
 - b. from programme year 2 to programme year 3 unless they have accumulated, by award or recognition, or been exempted from, at least 210 credit points at levels 1 and 2 [including those courses required to enter programme year 3 for the degree programme for which they are currently registered]; or
 - c. from programme year 3 to programme year 4 of an Honours degree programme where the degree programme for which they are registered allows, unless they have achieved at least 330 credit points by the end of level 3, including those courses required to enter programme year 4 for the degree programme for which they are currently registered and any courses at levels 1 and 2 which were outstanding at the time of progression to programme year 3.
 - d. in all cases, unless they have satisfied such further requirements governing progression between programme years as may be prescribed in the Supplementary Regulations governing award of the degree programme for which they are registered.

Exceptionally, the Senatus Academicus may allow candidates to progress with less than the number of credit points stated, if it is satisfied (a) that they would have obtained the necessary credit points to progress save for medical or other good cause; (b) that they are capable of satisfying the progression requirements of the next programme year within two further terms of full-time study or the equivalent. Notwithstanding regulation 16.1 (a)-(c), the Senatus Academicus will normally only permit candidates to progress in instances where they have no more than one course outstanding, valued at either 15 or 30 credit points.

2. GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

Regulation 6

In the existing regulation, after 'minimum of' insert 'two supervisors (the supervisory team)',.

In the existing regulation, after 'one', delete 'main', and insert 'of whom is designated lead'.

In the existing regulation, delete 'They will be part of a supervisory team.'

6. Every candidate admitted shall undertake a programme of supervised research and training for a period to be specified in accordance with Regulation 8(ii). A programme of research may be in any field of study, provided that the programme: is capable of leading to scholarly research, which may include appropriate creative work, and can be assessed by the presentation of a dissertation and an oral examination. Every candidate will have a minimum of two supervisors (the supervisory team), one of whom is designated lead~~main~~ supervisor, appointed under Regulation 8(iii) for the purpose. ~~They will be part of a supervisory team.~~ There must always be one clearly identified point of contact for the student. All research students must complete the required programme of mandatory training and undertake regular skills and training audits throughout their prescribed period of study to determine research, transferable and generic skills requirements. Students in receipt of funding from any of the UK Research and Innovation funding bodies must, in addition, undertake a skills audit at the beginning of their programme of study which is to be completed by month six of study. Candidates admitted to European doctoral programmes must comply with additional requirements regarding overseas study, non-UK external examiners, an oral and submission of a thesis summary in a second language prescribed for the relevant doctoral degree, and on completion of their degree will be awarded the *European Doctorate* certificate in addition to their PhD of the University of Aberdeen. The Senatus Academicus will ensure that the requirements of both Aberdeen and European research degree regulations, as regards admission, supervision, progress and examination, are met.

Regulation 16

In the existing regulation, for '13' substitute '15'.

16. The Senatus Academicus may on application by candidates for the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy, or Doctor of Engineering, or Master of Philosophy reduce the period specified under Regulation ~~13~~15, provided that:
- (i) no application to reduce the period of study may be submitted until a thesis is submitted for examination;
 - (ii) for full-time candidates the period shall not be reduced to less than 24 months (PhD, EngD) or 12 months (MPhil);
 - (iii) for part-time candidates the period shall not be reduced to less than 48 months (PhD, EdD, EngD) or 24 months (MPhil);
 - (iv) for the degrees of Doctor of Medicine– not less than 18 months full-time or 24 months part-time;
 - (v) for part-time candidates for the degree of PhD (by publication) the period shall not be reduced to less than 3 months.
- The period specified for those part-time candidates who are currently employed as members of the teaching and/or research staff of the University may be reduced similarly, allowing such candidates to submit after not less than 36 months (PhD, EngD), 24 months (MPhil) or 12 months (in the case of any other Master's degree), as appropriate.

Regulation 18

In the existing regulation, before 'MPhil' insert '(iii)'.

In the existing regulation, before 'Other' insert '(iv)'.

In the existing regulation, for 'make' substitute 'must submit a thesis plan giving target dates for completion of each chapter making'.

18. Extensions can be granted up to a maximum of 12 months in the first instance, but the combined period of supervised study and Extension Period will not normally exceed the following:

- (i) PhD, EdD (part time only) 48 months (for previously full-time students) or 84 months (for previously part-time students)
- (ii) EngD 60 months (for previously full-time students) or 96 months (for previously part-time students)
- (iii) MPhil, MD or ChM 36 months (for previously full-time students) or 60 months (for previously part-time students)
- (iv) Other Master's 24 months (for previously full-time students) or 36 months (for previously part-time students)

Students submitting an application for an extension within the above time frames, following the completion of their supervised study, must be able to demonstrate evidence of progress in their research and must submit a thesis plan giving target dates for completion of each chapter making ~~make~~ clear the feasibility of submitting their thesis within the period of extension being sought.

Applications for an Extension to the period off study must normally be made at least 3 months in advance of the termination of period of study.

Regulation 21

In the existing regulation, after 'following' delete 'local'.

21. The research required by Regulation 8 shall, for full-time candidates, be conducted in the University of Aberdeen or in one of the following ~~local~~ institutions:

A Unit within the University whose director is a member of the University
Marine Directorate
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Aberdeen
NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Hospitals of the Grampian Health Board
Hospitals of the Highland Health Board in Inverness
Regional Centres of the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
James Hutton Institute
Trinity College Bristol with Bristol Baptist College

The project for the degree of Doctor of Engineering shall be undertaken in an approved industrial location.

Regulation 24

In the existing regulation, after 'the' delete 'local'.

24. Of the persons appointed to supervise the candidate's research at least one shall be a Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer or Lecturer currently employed by the University, and if the candidate's research is conducted in one of the ~~local~~ institutions named in Regulation 21, at least one shall be a member of the staff of that institution. Of the persons appointed to supervise, normally, one will be appointed as lead supervisor. The lead supervisor will, normally, be an employee of the University. For candidates undertaking their studies within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition (MMSN), the lead supervisor appointed must be an employee of the University. The supervisors for the degree of Doctor of Engineering shall include an industrial supervisor engaged in Engineering practice.

Regulation 25

In the existing regulation, after 'the' delete 'local'.

25. All University employed supervisors, and supervisors employed at the ~~local~~ institutions named in Regulation 21, are required to have undertaken mandatory supervisor training and refresher every 5 years to remain eligible to supervise. External supervisors are recommended to undertake supervisor training. All supervisors involved in recruitment interview panels are required to have completed Equality and Diversity and Recruitment and Selection training.

Regulation 27

In the existing regulation, after 'obtain', delete 'bi-'.

In the existing regulation, after 'progress', insert 'and development'.

In the existing regulation, for 'reports', substitute 'report'.

27. The Senatus Academicus shall in respect of candidates admitted for degrees by research obtain ~~bi~~ annual reports as to whether their progress and development has been satisfactory. If the Senatus Academicus is of the opinion on consideration of the ~~reports-~~ report that a candidate's progress is unsatisfactory, it shall have the power to recommend to the Senatus Academicus that their candidature for the degree be terminated, or moved to a lower award, as appropriate. It is the duty of every candidate whose performance has been or is likely to be impaired by any circumstances to inform the Senatus Academicus and the Head(s) of the relevant School(s) accordingly in writing at the earliest opportunity, but in any case not later than the date on which the candidate submits the thesis for examination.

Regulation 31

In the existing regulation, for 'that, unless,' substitute 'and is an accurate record of the research that was undertaken. Additionally, that any personal data has been processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, and that all quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged. If any results were obtained partly in association with others, the nature and extent of this help, if substantial, must be specifically acknowledged in the declaration. The use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools for any aspects of the thesis and the research undertaken must be disclosed in the declaration. This also applies to a thesis that is'.

In the existing regulation, after 'institution,' delete 'the work of which it is the record has been done by themselves, that any personal data have been processed in accordance with the UK General Data

Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018, and that all quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged. If any results were obtained partly in association with others, the nature and extent of this help, if substantial, must be specifically acknowledged in the declaration.'

31. All candidates shall present a thesis embodying the results of their research, which must be accompanied by a declaration signed by the candidates that it has been composed by themselves, ~~that, unless~~ and is an accurate record of the research that was undertaken. Additionally, that any personal data has been processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, and that all quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged. If any results were obtained partly in association with others, the nature and extent of this help, if substantial, must be specifically acknowledged in the declaration. The use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools for any aspects of the thesis and the research undertaken must be disclosed in the declaration. This also applies to a thesis that is submitted as part of a programme, approved by the Senatus Academicus, as designed specifically to lead to the award of conjoint but separate degrees of the University of Aberdeen and of another institution, ~~the work of which it is the record has been done by themselves, that any personal data have been processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018, and that all quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged. If any results were obtained partly in association with others, the nature and extent of this help, if substantial, must be specifically acknowledged in the declaration.~~

Regulation 34

In the existing regulation, for 'the', substitute 'an'.

In the existing regulation, after 'Culture', insert ', or Media and Communication'.

34. The thesis of a candidate for ~~the an~~ MPhil/PhD in Film and Visual Culture, or Media and Communication may take the form of a written dissertation (of approximately 50,000-70,000 words in length) accompanied by a practice-based film or other visual culture element.

Regulation 39

In the existing regulation, after 'full-time' insert 'equivalent'.

39. The Senatus Academicus shall not approve a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Education, Doctor of Engineering or Doctor of Medicine unless it is satisfied, having considered the reports of the examiners, that it makes a distinct contribution to knowledge and affords evidence of originality as shown by the exercise of independent critical powers. Nor shall the Senatus Academicus approve a thesis for the degree of Master of Philosophy unless it is satisfied, having considered the reports of the examiners, that it makes a contribution to knowledge and affords evidence of originality. Nor shall the Senatus Academicus approve a thesis for a one-year Master's degree unless it is satisfied, having considered the reports of the examiners, either that it displays evidence of originality or that it is a satisfactory, orderly and critical exposition of existing knowledge within the field concerned.
- In applying these standards the Senatus Academicus will consider what can be properly achieved in the one, two or three years' full-time equivalent work which is required for the

various degrees. Further, the Senatus Academicus shall not approve a thesis for any degree unless the thesis meets acceptable standards in the use of English, in quotation and citation, and in presentation.

3. SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF MUSIC (BMus)

Regulation 5(b)

In the existing regulation, after 'the', delete 'Designated'.

In the existing regulation, after 'those', insert 'courses'.

5. (b) from programme year 2 to programme year 3 of the ~~Designated~~ BMus or Designated BMus (Education) unless they have accumulated, by award or recognition, at least 210 credit points at levels 1 and 2 [including, by award, recognition or exemption those courses required to enter programme year 3 for the degree programme for which they are currently registered]; or

Regulation 5(c)

In the existing regulation, for 'an', substitute 'the BMus'.

In the existing regulation, following 'Honours', insert '(Education)'.

In the existing regulation, after 'those', insert 'courses'.

5. (c) from programme year 2 to programme year 3 of ~~an the~~ BMus Honours (Education) programme unless they have accumulated, by award or recognition, at least 240 credit points at levels 1 and 2 [including, by award, recognition or exemption those courses required to enter programme year 3 for the degree programme for which they are currently registered]; or

Regulation 5(d)

In the existing regulation, after 'BMus', delete 'Honours, or Designated BMus'.

In the existing regulation, after 'those', insert 'courses'.

5. (d) from programme year 3 of the BMus ~~Honours, or Designated BMus~~ to programme year 4 of the BMus Honours unless they have accumulated, by award or recognition, at least 330 credit points at Levels 1,2 and 3 [including by award, recognition or exemption those courses required to enter programme year 4 for the degree programme for which they are currently registered].

Regulation 5(e)

In the existing regulation, after 'those', insert 'courses'.

5. (e) from programme year 3 of the Designated BMus (Education) or BMus Honours (Education) to programme year 4 of the BMus Honours (Education) unless they have accumulated, by award or recognition, at least 360 credit points at Levels 1, 2 and 3 [including by award, recognition or exemption those courses required to enter

programme year 4 for the degree programme for which they are currently registered].

4. SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF DENTAL SURGERY (BDS)

Regulation 2(ii)

In the existing regulation, for 'will' substitute 'may'.

2. (ii) Applicants must also meet the requirements of the General Dental Council for fitness to practice including screening for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV infection. Admission to the School ~~will~~ may not be possible for those who may pose a risk of blood borne virus infection to patients.

Regulation 5(i)

In the existing regulation, for 'have' substitute 'are confirmed by the Dental Progress Committee as having'.

In the existing regulation, delete 'attendance'.

In the existing regulation, after 'monitoring' insert 'by the Dental Progress Committee'.

5. (i) Candidates shall not normally be permitted to present themselves for an end of course assessment unless they ~~have~~ are confirmed by the Dental Progress Committee as having appropriately undertaken all required instruction and activities in that academic year, and subsequently obtained a class certificate. The validity of a class certificate shall be limited to the academic year in which it is awarded. Any candidate who has been subject to ~~attendance~~ monitoring by the Dental Progress Committee and warned of being 'at risk' of losing their class certificate) may lose their class certificate with no further warning if this behaviour is repeated for the course concerned.

Regulation 13(i)

In the existing regulation, for 'the Director of the Institute of Education in Healthcare and Medical Sciences' substitute 'their representative'.

13. (i) Any health, conduct, behaviour or other issue that could give rise to the question of whether or not a candidate's fitness to practise is impaired will be considered and determined through the School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition's Fitness to Practise Processes. Senate, on the recommendation of the Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine & Dentistry), may suspend or terminate the studies of candidates for the degree who, following Fitness to Practise Processes, are judged to have fitness to practise impairment. In exceptional circumstances only, the Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition or ~~the Director of the Institute of Healthcare and Medical Sciences~~ their representative may suspend the matriculation of, or exclude from specified programme activities, any candidate in respect of whom there is a question of whether or not their fitness to practise is impaired, pending further process. If candidates are pre-registered with GDC the University is obliged to inform it of any such process since it may impact on registration. In this Regulation, any reference to impaired fitness to practise is to be taken as a reference to that concept as defined in s.27 of the Dentists Act 1984, and as explained in the General Dental Council's current published guidance.

5. SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS FOR THE DIPLOMA OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN DENTAL TECHNOLOGY

Insert new regulations as follows:

1. The DipHE DT may be conferred by the University of Aberdeen.
2.
 - (i) Every candidate for the DipHE DT is required to comply with the academic requirements of admission to the diploma programme. Possession of these qualifications does not of itself guarantee admission.
 - (ii) Applicants must also meet the requirements of the General Dental Council for fitness to practise. Admission to the School will not be possible for those who may pose a risk to patients.
 - (iii) In the rare circumstance that an applicant has a notifiable health condition, relevant Occupational Health Service advice will be followed
 - (iv) Normally all students must have and maintain employment (minimum 80% FTE) as a trainee dental technician in an MHRA registered laboratory providing all three dental technology disciplines (Dentures, Crown and Bridge and Orthodontics). In addition, students must be supervised in the workplace by a GDC registered workplace supervisor. Continued registration on the programme will be subject to appropriate workplace supervision being maintained for the duration of the programme.
3. The curriculum for the diploma can be undertaken by part-time study only.
4. The programme for the diploma shall cover three years. The subjects to be followed and credits shall be as prescribed in the Programme Specifications listed in the University Calendar on <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar/medicine.php>
5.
 - (i) Candidates shall not normally be permitted to present themselves for an end of course assessment unless they are confirmed by the Dental Progress Committee as having appropriately undertaken all required instruction, activities, attendance and demonstrated professional behaviour in that academic year, and subsequently obtained a class certificate. The validity of a class certificate shall be limited to the academic year in which it is awarded. Any candidate who has been subject to monitoring by the Dental Progress Committee and who is warned of being 'at risk' of losing their class certificate) may lose their class certificate with no further warning if this behaviour is repeated for the course concerned.
 - (ii) The Student Progress Committee (SPC), on behalf of the Senate, may exceptionally determine the conditions under which a candidate, who has previously achieved the requirements for the award of a class certificate or successfully completed a course, may be exempted in whole or in part from instruction and/or assessment in any component for the diploma.
 - (iii) The SPC, on behalf of the Senate, may terminate, at any time, the studies of a candidate who persistently fails to meet the minimum attendance requirements or to satisfactorily perform the required work of the courses, for which they are registered.
6.
 - (i) In any academic year a candidate shall not normally be afforded, in any course, more than two opportunities of summative assessment, including continuous assessment, technical and/or written examinations, as appropriate. Only results obtained at the first available opportunity of assessment in any academic year shall contribute towards class grading.
 - (ii) Notwithstanding the provisions of University regulations which permit candidates to present themselves for assessment in the same subject at two diets of assessment in any one session, or in the same subject a total of three times, candidates may be required to

- undertake an additional period of technical study or a repeat period of study, specified by the Examiners, before being permitted to present themselves at a second diet of assessment in that subject. This would be subject to 7 (ii).
- (iii) Where a candidate successfully completes a course on more than one occasion, only the credit points obtained at first sitting may be counted toward the requirements necessary for progression and graduation.
- (iv) Where a candidate is undertaking a repeat year, a maximum of three opportunities of assessment for any course is permitted, including those taken in previous years.
7. (i) Candidates shall not be permitted to progress to the next programme year unless they have successfully achieved all summative assessments in one academic year. Any student required to resit a programme year must achieve all assessments within that academic year.
- (ii) Candidates who fail to achieve all summative assessments within one academic year, and/or have not met the level of performance required, shall normally be entitled to a maximum of one repeat year across the programme. This applies to all programme years.
- (iii) Candidates must normally satisfy all requirements for the award of the diploma within a maximum of four calendar years of the date of their first registration. This excludes where a candidate has been unable to complete a full academic year, or has taken a full gap year, for health, personal or other reasons and has had this absence approved by the University.
- (iv) Unless regulation 6(ii) applies, candidates who are required to undertake a resit, must do so within the same academic year. Candidates who fail to achieve the requirements of a repeat year, or any subsequent year shall be required to discontinue their studies for the diploma and be excluded from further assessment.
- (v) Where a candidate (due to medical reasons or other proven good cause) has taken the resit examinations as a first diet, and/or for these same reasons been unable to take the resit examinations at the prescribed time, the candidate will be eligible to sit at the next available sitting, which is normally in the following academic year.
- (vi) Where candidates withdraw from the programme for a period covering more than one academic year, the SPC on behalf of Senate may require the candidate to repeat any previously achieved year of study, including the requirement to pass any assessments on conclusion of that repeat year.
- (vii) If a student has approval for a period of withdrawal from the programme then the student will be required to rejoin the programme year from which they suspended at the start of the next academic year. The student will be required to complete agreed points of contact during the period of time that they are off from their studies. In exceptional circumstances a second withdrawal year could be allowed however in this circumstance it may be necessary that the student will be required to go back a year to allow for missed practical time and for patient safety concerns. If the student requires more than two years suspension from studies, they will be required to re-start the programme.
8. (i) The University's Policy and Procedures on Student Absence provides a framework through which a candidate can report absence and/or establish that their academic performance has been adversely affected by medical circumstances or other good cause.
- (ii) It is expected that a student who undertakes to sit an exam or submit an assignment, is fit to do so and there are no known extenuating/mitigating circumstances.
- (iii) Acute illness and/or other personal circumstances which affect a candidate's performance at examination must be notified in writing, along with supporting documentary evidence, to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee for review. However, the decision to waive the regulation on discontinuation following failure of a repeat year shall lie with the Student Progress Committee on behalf of Senate.
9. The examiners for the diploma shall be academic staff, Clinical Tutors, Dental technicians,

Teaching Fellows and NHS staff who are involved in the delivery of courses qualifying for the diploma, and such external examiners as may be appointed by the University Court.

10. The diploma shall not be conferred on candidates who have not passed all the assessments prescribed by Regulation 4, by the end of the period allowed.
11. Candidates who are unsuccessful in completing the Diploma will have their completed courses and credits evaluated to determine if a certificate of Higher Education award can be granted.
12. (i) Any health, conduct, behaviour or other issue that could give rise to the question of whether or not a candidate's fitness to practise is impaired will be considered and determined through the School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition's Fitness to Practise Processes. Senate, on the recommendation of the Fitness to Practise Committee (Medicine & Dentistry), may suspend or terminate the studies of candidates for the diploma who, following Fitness to Practise Processes, are judged to have fitness to practise impairment. In exceptional circumstances only, the Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition or their representative may suspend the matriculation of, or exclude from specified programme activities, any candidate in respect of whom there is a question of whether or not their fitness to practise is impaired, pending further process. In this Regulation, any reference to impaired fitness to practise is to be taken as a reference to that concept as defined in s.27 of the Dentists Act 1984, and as explained in the General Dental Council's current published guidance.
(ii) The above will apply during any time away from the diploma programme if it is the candidate's intention to return to programme and ultimately seek graduation.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

DRAFT RESOLUTION NO x OF 2025 [CHANGES IN REGULATIONS FOR VARIOUS DEGREES]

After consultation with the Senatus Academicus, the University Court, at its meeting on < > passed the following Resolution:

1. On the recommendation of the Senatus Academicus, the following changes to Degree Regulations are hereby approved.
2. This Resolution shall come into force on the fifteenth day of September, two thousand and twenty-five, but the requirements under it shall also be binding on students proceeding for the first time to First Degree study from the Access HE programme, or from Programme Year 0 of the MA or BSc with Foundation Studies.
3. The University may award the degrees of Master of Arts (MA) and Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Secondary Education with STEM Subjects. The MA and BA will be subject to the regulations as set out in the General Regulations for First Degrees and the relevant Supplementary Regulations.
4. The Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education with STEM Subjects will be superseded by the Supplementary Regulations for the Degree of Master of Arts in Secondary Education with STEM Subjects, upon successfully achieving the professional accreditation.

1. SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION WITH STEM SUBJECTS

Insert new regulations as follows:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>The Degree of Master of Arts (MA) in Secondary Education in STEM Subjects may be conferred as the Master of Arts (Honours) in Secondary Education, the Degree of Master of Arts in Secondary Education, or as the Degree of Master of Arts in Educational Studies. Candidates who have satisfactorily completed a programme accredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland shall be awarded either a Designated Degree of Master of Arts in Secondary Education or the Degree of Master of Arts (Honours) in Secondary Education, in accordance with Regulation 5. Within which, four programmes are offered, as follows:</u>

 <u>MA in Secondary Education with Biology</u>
 <u>MA in Secondary Education with Chemistry</u>
 <u>MA in Secondary Education with Computer Science</u>
 <u>MA in Secondary Education with Physics</u> 2. <u>Before being admitted to the programme leading to the degree, all candidates must, in addition to satisfying any academic requirements for admission, become a member of Disclosure Scotland's Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme, and would also normally be required to attend for interview.</u> 3. <u>The programme of study leading to the degree, which is accredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland, shall be as approved by the Senatus Academicus and is contained in the programme prescription. The Honours programme for the degree comprises programme years 3 and 4.</u> 4. <u>Except with the permission of the Senatus Academicus, or where General Regulation 17.1 applies,</u> |
|---|

candidates may not progress:

- 4.1 from programme year 3 to programme year 4 unless they have accumulated, by award or recognition, at least 360 credit points at levels 1, 2 and 3 [including by award, recognition or exemption those required to enter programme year 4 for the degree programme for which they are currently registered].
5. Candidates for the Degree of Master of Arts (Honours) in Secondary Education must successfully achieve 480 credit points and the completion of all prescribed elements, as listed in the programme prescription, to be awarded the Degree. Candidates who have failed to achieve the standard for the award of the Degree with Honours, but who have passed all required elements for the Degree as contained in the programme prescription, may be awarded the Designated Degree of Master of Arts in Secondary Education. The Designated Degree of Master of Arts in Secondary Education is recognised as a qualification which entitles the holder to be provisionally registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland.
- 6 Candidates for the Degree of Master of Arts (Honours) in Secondary Education who have failed to meet the standard for progression into level 4, in accordance with regulation 4.3, but who have successfully completed all other required elements of the programme and have achieved at least 360 credit points including 60 credit points at level 3, will normally be recommended for the award of Degree of Master of Arts in Educational Studies. The Degree of Master of Arts in Educational Studies is not recognised as a qualification which entitles its holder to be provisionally registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland.
- 7 Pertaining to the School Experience practicum placements in Year 4 of the programme:
 - 7.1 Candidates on the Master of Arts (Honours) in Secondary Education programme whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory during School Experience 1 [1A and 1B inclusive], as detailed in the programme prescription, may be allowed to progress, and make good any unsatisfactory performance in School Experience 2. If performance is judged to be satisfactory in School Experience 2 [2A and 2B inclusive], credit will be awarded for School Experience 1.
 - 7.2 Candidates whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory in School Experience 2 [2A and 2B inclusive], as detailed in the programme prescription, and whose performance was judged to be satisfactory in School Experience 1 [1A and 1B inclusive], will normally be given the opportunity to repeat that period of School Experience with the permission of the Senatus Academicus.
 - 7.3 Candidates whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory in both School Experience 1 [1A and 1B inclusive], and School Experience 2 [2A and 2B inclusive] will normally be recommended for termination of their candidature.
- 8 Candidates who are absent for five days or more during a block of School Experience placement (School Experience 1 [1A and 1B inclusive] or School Experience 2[2A and 2B inclusive]) may be required to undertake a further period of School Experience.
- 9 Except with the permission of the Senatus Academicus, candidates for the Degree of Master of Arts (Honours) in Secondary Education who either:
 - a. have failed to complete the requirements for this degree within five calendar years of the date of their first matriculation for this degree, or
 - b. can no longer do so (e.g., are deemed unfit to practise), or
 - c. have indicated in writing to the Senatus Academicus that they no longer wish to pursue a curriculum leading to the degree of Master of Arts;

but who, in each case, met the requirements of regulation 6, may on application be awarded the Degree of Master of Arts in Educational Studies.

- 10 In terms of the General Regulations for First Degrees 1, 3, 12 and 16, the function of the Head of School shall be exercised by the Programme Director/ Head of Initial Teacher Education Department.
- 11 Notwithstanding General Regulation 7, the validity of the Class Certificate for any period of School Experience shall be limited to the academic year in which it is awarded.
- 12 Notwithstanding General Regulation 1.3, candidates who accrue two or more absences from workshop attendances or more than 20% of tutorial sessions may have their Class Certificate withheld. This would prevent candidates from completing their course.
- 13 Any health, conduct, behaviour, or other issue that could bear on a candidate's suitability or fitness to practise teaching will be considered by the Fitness to Practise Committee. However, where such a case relates to academic conduct within the Code of Practice on Student Discipline, it may be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee only after procedures under that Code are exhausted and an allegation has been admitted or found to be proved. The Senatus Academicus, on the recommendation of the Fitness to Practise Committee, may suspend or terminate the studies of candidates for Degree Programmes in Education who, following a proper process of investigation, are judged not "fit to practise". In exceptional circumstances only, the University may suspend the matriculation of, or exclude from specified activities of the University, candidates whose case has been referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee pending consideration of their case. In all cases, any such suspension or exclusion shall be subject to the procedures detailed in the University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline, as these are prescribed by any resolution of the University Court in force at the relevant time.

2. SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION WITH STEM SUBJECTS

Insert new regulations as follows:

1. The Degree of Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Secondary Education may be conferred as the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Secondary Education or the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education. Within which, four programmes are offered, as follows:

BA in Secondary Education with Biology
BA in Secondary Education with Chemistry
BA in Secondary Education with Computer Science
BA in Secondary Education with Physics
2. Before being admitted to the programme leading to the degree, all candidates must, in addition to satisfying any academic requirements for admission, become a member of Disclosure Scotland's Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme, and would also normally be required to attend for interview.
3. The Examiners may recommend a candidate who has failed to achieve the standard necessary for the award of the degree of BA in Secondary Education be awarded the degree of Designated Degree of BA in Secondary Education.

- 4 In terms of the General Regulations for First Degrees 1, 3, 12 and 16, the function of the Head of School shall be exercised by the Programme Director/ Head of Initial Teacher Education.
- 5 Notwithstanding General Regulation 1.3, candidates who accrue two or more absences from ten workshop attendances may have their Class Certificate withheld. This would prevent candidates from completing their course.
- 36 Any health, conduct, behaviour, or other issue that could bear on a candidate's suitability or fitness to practise teaching will be considered by the Fitness to Practise Committee. However, where such a case relates to academic conduct within the Code of Practice on Student Discipline, it may be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee only after procedures under that Code are exhausted and an allegation has been admitted or found to be proved. The Senatus Academicus, on the recommendation of the Fitness to Practise Committee, may suspend or terminate the studies of candidates for Degree Programmes in Education who, following a proper process of investigation, are judged not "fit to practise". In exceptional circumstances only, the University may suspend the matriculation of, or exclude from specified activities of the University, candidates whose case has been referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee pending consideration of their case. In all cases, any such suspension or exclusion shall be subject to the procedures detailed in the University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline, as these are prescribed by any resolution of the University Court in force at the relevant time.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

ACADEMIC APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING UPDATE (2023/24)

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper will provide members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) with an update on academic appeal and complaint handling across the University.

This paper contains detailed data on appeal and complaint submissions (*appendices A and B refer*) received prior to and during the 2023/24 academic year, in addition to an analysis of emerging trends.

Members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) are asked to **discuss** the paper.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee	19 February 2024
	University Education Committee	24 February 2024
	Senior Management Team	TBC

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)** is invited to **discuss** the paper, in particular the data outlined in *Appendices A and B*.

4. OVERVIEW

- 4.1 The University has in place a [Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals](#), and a [Complaints Handling Procedure](#) (CHP), providing frameworks for students (or other parties, as appropriate) to formalise any concerns they may have about aspects of their academic or non-academic experience. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the use of these policies in practice.

5. ACADEMIC APPEALS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 The Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals was approved by the University Senate and the University Court in February 2011, and most recently revised in June 2024. However, for the purposes of this report, it is the previously approved Policy in August 2020 that is referred. The Policy is designed to seek appropriate, early resolution and aimed to be accessible, fair, user-focused, confidential, timely, clear, and simple. The Policy includes appeals against the outcome of disciplinary hearings under the Code of Practice on Student Discipline ([Academic](#) and [Non-Academic](#)), decisions taken by the Students' Progress Committee under the policy on [Undergraduate Student Progress](#), and decisions taken under the policy on [Fitness to Practise](#). The current version of the Appeals Policy is available on the University's webpages for [staff](#) and [students](#).

5.2 APPEALS DATA AND TRENDS

5.2.1 *Appendix A* provides a detailed analysis of appeal cases (and summary level complaint data for the purposes of comparison) since 2016/17. In summary, appeal cases received were as follows in *Table 1.1* below. Appeal submissions as a percentage of the total student population is provided in brackets.

Table 1.1:

Academic Appeals by Academic Year							
2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
491 (2.3%)	506 (2.3%)	464 (2.1%)	274 (1.3%)	198 (1.0%)	266 (1.5%)	242 (1.5%)	257 (1.7%)

5.2.2 The total number of appeals has remained largely in line with previous years in academic year 2023/24, however is slightly reduced from academic year 2022/23. However, the percentage of the student population submitting appeals remains low (2.3%).

5.2.3 The following specific trends are also noted:

- A slight decrease in the number of submissions: the number of appeal submissions has decreased by 2.96% from 506 cases in 2022/23 to 491 cases in 2023/24. In particular, the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition has seen a marked increase in the number of appeal cases (76 cases in 2022/23, compared to 99 cases in 2023/24). The Business School continues to have the largest number of cases, though this has decreased in 2023/24, from 200 in 2022/23 to 144 in 2023/24, amounting to 29.3% of all submitted cases. Further the Schools of Education (11 cases in 2022/23, compared with 17 cases in 2023/24) and Natural and Computing Science (13 cases in 2022/23, compared with 31 cases in 2023/24) have also seen increases.
- The Schools of Engineering (82 cases in 2022/23, compared with 56 cases in 2023/24), Law (33 cases in 2022/23, compared with 19 cases in 2023/24), and Social Science (46 cases in 2022/23, compared with 37 cases in 2023/24) have seen decreases in the numbers of submitted cases.
- The number of cases related to removal of a class certificate (C7) have remained in line with previous years in 2023/24, though the number of cases remains high in proportion to other cases received, comprising 47.7% of all cases received. Work remains ongoing in relation to Monitoring, Absence and Engagement in regard to reviewing monitoring procedures and improving communication with students in this regard. The Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals were reviewed in June 2024, encouraging frontline resolution for C7 appeal cases, which has already seen a marked decrease in the numbers of C7 cases being considered through the new Appeals Policy in 2024/25.
- The number of combined cases (those cases which contain elements of both appeal and complaint) have decreased significantly in the previous academic year. Cases which are combined appeal and complaint are often more complex and cover a wide range of issues. These cases are treated under the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals, so as not to disadvantage the student procedurally by allowing a further stage of appeal, but often seek input in the School response from the Senior Management team to confirm that the University is content with the response. While the student population continues to grow, cases and the issues raised therein are more complex, particularly where cases concern international students studying on a student visa.

5.2.4 As is noted above, in academic year 2023/24 approximately 2.3% of the student population appealed to the University. Of the 491 cases processed, 47.7% (234) related to student monitoring and were submitted in response to a student being issued with a 'C7' as a consequence of a lack of engagement with, or attendance at, a course. 72.7% (170) of appeal cases of this nature were upheld (or partially upheld), thereby removing one or more C7s from a student's record and reinstating them on the course(s) in question. Where cases of this nature aren't upheld, this can result in varying outcomes for the student which range from termination of studies (where multiple C7s demonstrate a lack of engagement) to the student being required to

undertake, in the following teaching period, either (i) the course again (where its completion is prescribed) or (ii) an alternative, additional course to ensure an appropriate number of credits can be achieved.

5.2.5 With regard to the appeals received in 2023/24 which did not relate to student monitoring, these most commonly referred to mitigating circumstances, disputed degree classification or CGS assessment grade, request for a further resit opportunity, and perceived poor, inconsistent or inaccurate communication and/or support. Mitigating circumstances concerns: (i) those circumstances which had not been reported by the student at the time of assessment; and (ii) those circumstances which had been reported but that the student has concerns as to whether these were taken into account by the School. Degree classification and CGS marks are disputed mainly where a student is borderline. Overall, 27.6% (55) of appeal cases which did not relate to student monitoring were upheld (or partially upheld).

5.2.6 Of the 491 appeal cases received in 2023/24, 33 cases (6.7% of the total number of appeals) were not able to be concluded within the timescales as stipulated in the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals. The 33 cases included those cases that were concluded at the initial stage (Head of School/Head of Section) and cases where students remained dissatisfied and had cases considered by Grounds to Proceed or Appeal Panels. On average, of the cases which were noted to extend beyond the timescales stipulated in the policy, cases which were considered at Head of School or Section level took 16.4 days to conclude, which is an improvement of 11.2 since 2022/23. While most cases are resolved within the stipulated timescales, the revised Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals should alleviate the issue.

6. COMPLAINT HANDLING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 The Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) follows the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) published by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), providing a consistent MCHP across all public services in Scotland. The text and procedure were largely prescribed by the SPSO, tailored only to fit the University's context where permitted. The University is required to adhere to the MCHP, which was in force from 1 April 2021. The intention of the CHP is to engage all staff members across the institution in complaint handling, whereby each School or administrative section has a nominated individual to take responsibility for the recording of all frontline (or informal) complaints received in that area. The University's CHP is available on the University's [staff](#) and [student](#) webpages. The CHP remains integral to the University's student experience and specifically to both engaging in and improving that experience.

6.1.2 The University is actively engaged with the Scottish Higher Education Complaints Forum, which meets quarterly and continues to meet to facilitate networking and the sharing of good practice on complaint handling. Anecdotal evidence regarding complaint figures (section 6.2 further refers) suggests the University does not appear to be at odds with other comparable institutions within the sector.

6.2 COMPLAINTS DATA AND TRENDS

6.2.1 *Appendix B* provides a detailed analysis of complaint cases (both informal (frontline) and formal (investigated)) since 2016/17. In summary, however, informal (frontline) and formal (investigated) cases were as follows in *Tables 2.1 and 2.2* below.

Table 2.1

Frontline Complaints by Academic Year							
2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
31	38	16	6	8	19	72	80

Table 2.2

Investigated Complaints* by Academic Year							
2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21^	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
56	57	32	22	17	39	32	23

**The above figures denote those cases regarded as complaints and therefore with little or no elements of academic appeal.*

^ In interpreting 2020/21 data, it should be noted that during the initial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the University saw a rise in the number of submissions received which have not been taken forward under the CHP. These submissions sought a refund of fees (tuition or accommodation) as a consequence of the impact of the pandemic. In these cases, an explanation was given as to why the University would not give a refund and why further investigation under the CHP was not appropriate.

6.2.2 Members of the Committee will note very few frontline complaint returns in recent academic years. Training was provided in early 2023 to Frontline Complaints Handlers to disseminate across Schools and Professional Services regarding frontline complaints to ensure better recording instances of frontline complaints. As can be seen for the data pertinent to 2022/23 and 2023/24, there is a slight increase in the numbers reported and it is hoped that this will improve further going forward. Frontline resolution is helpful for students as it enables issues to be explored and resolved in a timely manner and avoids unnecessary bureaucracy where it is possible to allay their concerns. Where this is not possible, the formal complaint route is used as a last resort.

6.2.3 Regarding formal or investigated complaint cases, members of the Committee will note that complaint cases have almost doubled between academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23, remaining high in 2023/24. Examples of submissions include issues related to course delivery and assessment, including feedback on assessment, tuition fee payment, issues pertaining to student accommodation or staff housing, admissions process, and provision of support offered by student support services.

6.3 REPORTING

6.3.1 The University is committed to reporting both internally and externally regarding complaints information. It is a requirement of the SPSO that the University report at least quarterly to the SMT and at least annually to the Senate and the Court on:

- performance statistics, in line with the complaints performance indicators published by SPSO;
- analysis of the trends and outcomes of complaints (this should include highlighting where there are areas where few or no complaints are received, which may indicate either good practice or that there are barriers to complaining in that area).

6.3.2 The data as requested by the SPSO is provided in *Appendix B*, listed alongside comparable data for previous academic years. The attention of the Committee is drawn to the outcome of cases. The outcome of a complaint is not always easily defined as 'upheld' or 'not upheld', dependent on the nature of the concern raised. Where a resolution has been sought, the case has been recorded as 'upheld', however, where an issue has resulted in the clarification of policy, or noted without further investigation, the case has been appropriately recorded but 'not upheld'.

6.3.3 Members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) / University Education Committee (UEC) are invited to **discuss** the paper, in particular the data outlined in *Appendices A and B*.

Members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) are invited to **discuss** the paper and **approve** the publication of the complaints data contained in *Appendix B*.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Emma Tough (Assistant Registrar), e.tough@abdn.ac.uk, or Liam Dyker (Administrative Officer (Academic Services)), liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk.

31 January 2025

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

	Academic Year 2023- 2024	Student Population (2/12/24)	Academic Year 2022- 2023	Student Population (12/10/23)	Academic Year 2021- 2022	Student Population (26/01/23)	Academic Year 2020-2021	Student Population (06/05/21)	Academic Year 2019-2020	Student Population (06/05/21)	Academic Year 2018-2019	Student Population (11/12/19)	Academic Year 2017-2018	Student Population (27/08/18)	Academic Year 2016-2017	Student Population (15/09/17)
Total Cases	491 (2.3%)	21074	570	21981 (2.6%)	502	23176 (2.2%)	301	21676 (1.4%)	218	20199 (1.1%)	307	16978 (1.8%)	275	16208 (1.7%)	281	15479 (1.8%)
APPEALS																
Academic (including C7)	434 (88.4%)		506 (88.8%)		464 (92.4%)		274 (91%)		198 (90.8%)		266 (86.7%)		242 (87.7%)		257 (91.5%)	
C7	234 (47.7%)		233 (40.9%)		271 (54%)		116 (38.5%)		87 (39.9%)		126 (41%)		129 (46.7%)		139 (49.5%)	
Non-Academic	1 (0.2%)		0 (0%)		4 (0.8%)		5 (1.7%)		1 (0.5%)		0		1 (0.4%)		0 (0.0%)	
COMPLAINTS																
Academic	52 (10.1%)		48 (8.4%)		22 (4.4%)		13 (4.3%)		9 (4.1%)		31 (10.1%)		20 (7.3 %)		16 (5.7%)	
Non-Academic	3 (0.6%)		9 (1.6%)		10 (2%)		8 (2.7%)		8 (3.7%)		8 (2.6%)		9 (3.3%)		7 (2.5%)	
COMBINED APPEAL/COMPLAINT																
Academic/Non-Academic	1 (0.2%)		7 (1.2%)		2 (0.4%)		1 (0.3%)		2 (0.9%)		2 (0.7%)		3 (1.1%)		1 (0.4%)	
STATUS																
Upheld	194 (39.5%)		229 (40.2%)		286 (57%)		148 (49.2%)		119 (54.6%)		153 (49.8%)		147 (53.3%)		154 (54.8%)	
Partially Upheld	52 (10.6%)		79 (13.8%)		26 (5.2%)		15 (5%)		4 (1.8%)		20 (6.5%)		21 (7.6%)		13 (4.6%)	
Not Upheld	219 (44.6%)		241 (42.3%)		164 (32.7%)		118 (39.2%)		80 (36.7%)		103 (33.4)		93 (33.7%)		93 (33.1%)	
Withdrawn	25 (5.1%)		20 (3.5%)		26 (5.2%)		20 (6.6%)		15 (6.9%)		20 (6.5%)		12 (4.3 %)		21 (7.5%)	
In Progress	1 (0.2%)		1 (0.2%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		11 (3.6%)		2 (0.7%)		0 (0.0%)	
RESOLUTION STAGE																
Initial Stage (Head of School)	406 (82.7%)		478 (83.9%)		437 (87.1%)		236 (78.4%)		175 (80.3%)		269 (87.6%)		236 (85.8%)		229 (81.5%)	
Further Stage (Grounds to Proceed)	83 (16.9%)		89 (15.6%)		64 (12.7%)		42 (43%)		30 (13.8%)		25 (8.1%)		22 (8.0%)		26 (9.3%)	
Further Stage (Formal Hearing)	1 (0.2%)		2 (0.4%)		1 (0.2%)		3 (1%)		3 (1.4%)		2 (0.7%)		5 (1.8%)		7 (2.5%)	
SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (SPSO)																
Total Cases	9 (1.8%)		7 (1.2%)		12 (2.4%)		8 (2.7%)		6 (3%)				10 (3.6%)		2 (0.7%)	
Upheld	0 (0%)		1 (0.2%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)				1 (0.4%)		0 (0%)	
Partially Upheld	0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		1 (0.5%)				0 (0%)		1 (0.4%)	
Not Upheld	9 (1.8%)		6 (1.1%)		12 (2.4%)		8 (2.7%)		5 (2.3%)				9 (3.3%)		0 (0%)	
COMPLETED WITHIN TIMESCALE																
Yes	400 (81.5%)		447 (78.4%)		420 (83.7%)		274 (91%)		188 (86.2%)		238 (77.5%)		210 (76.3%)		201 (71.5%)	
No	90 (18.4%)		122 (21.4%)		82 (16.3%)		27 (9%)		30 (13.8%)		64 (20.8%)		63 (22.9%)		71 (25.3%)	
SCHOOL/SERVICE																
Business School (inc. Qatar)	144 (29.3%)		200 (35.1%)		169 (33.7%)		59 (18.6%)		50 (22.9%)		33 (10.7%)		42 (15.3%)		31 (11%)	
Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History	25 (5.1%)		35 (6.1%)		31 (6.2%)		27 (9%)		16 (7.3%)		27 (8.8%)		18 (6.5%)		35 (12.5%)	
Education	17 (3.5%)		11 (1.9%)		16 (3.2%)		8 (2.7%)		4 (1.8%)		20 (6.5%)		3 (1.1%)		4 (1.4%)	

Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture	18 (3.7%)		19 (3.3%)		21 (4.2%)		10 (3.3%)		19 (8.7%)		21 (6.8%)		32 (11.6%)		30 (10.7%)	
Law	19 (3.9%)		33 (5.8%)		45 (9%)		11 (3.7%)		6 (2.8%)		13 (4.2%)		15 (5.5%)		11 (3.9%)	
Social Science	37 (7.5%)		46 (8.1%)		32 (6.4%)		11 (3.7%)		23 (10.6%)		27 (8.8%)		41 (14.9%)		40 (12.2%)	
Biological Sciences	4 (0.8%)		9 (1.6%)		10 (2%)		5 (1.2%)		33 (15.1%)		6 (2%)		7 (2.5%)		8 (2.8%)	
Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition	99 (20.2%)		76 (13.3%)		51 (10.2%)		37 (12.3%)		29 (13.3%)		47 (15.3%)		21 (7.6%)		25 (8.9%)	
Psychology	14 (2.9%)		13 (2.3%)		3 (0.6%)		8 (2.7%)		2 (0.9%)		4 (1.3%)		4 (1.5%)		1 (1.4%)	
Engineering	56 (11.4%)		82 (14.4%)		76 (15.1%)		72 (24%)		38 (17.4%)		62 (20.2%)		52 (18.9%)		36 (11.7%)	
Geosciences	12 (2.4%)		12 (2.1%)		4 (0.8%)		8 (2.7%)		4 (1.8%)		5 (1.6%)		11 (4%)		9 (3.2%)	
Natural and Computing Sciences	31 (6.3%)		13 (2.3%)		21 (4.2%)		19 (6.3%)		6 (2.8%)		17 (5.5%)		11 (4%)		13 (4.6%)	
Sixth Century Courses	0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		2 (0.7%)		11 (3.9%)	
Services	15 (3.1%)		23 (4.0%)		23 (4.6%)		27 (9%)		18 (8.3%)		23 (7.5%)		14 (5.1%)		27 (9.6%)	
LEVEL OF STUDY																
Undergraduate	336 (68.4%)		365 (64.0%)		312 (62.2%)		177 (58.8%)		145 (66.5%)		204 (66.4%)		213 (77.5%)		213 (75.8%)	
Postgraduate	153 (31.2%)		200 (35.1%)		190 (37.8%)		122 (40.5%)		72 (33%)		101 (32.9%)		60 (21.8%)		66 (23.5%)	
N/A‡	2 (0.4%)		5 (0.9%)		0 (0%)		2 (0.7%)		1 (0.5%)		2 (0.7%)		2 (0.7%)		2 (0.7%)	
NATIONALITY																
UK	236 (48.1%)		248 (43.5%)		239 (47.6%)		156 (51.8%)		125 (57.3%)		176 (57.3%)		171 (62.1%)		159 (56.6%)	
EU	34 (6.9%)		42 (7.4%)		36 (7.2%)		34 (11.3%)		29 (13.3%)		34 (11.7%)		39 (14.2%)		48 (17.1%)	
International	218 (44.4%)		272 (47.7%)		224 (44.6%)		106 (35.2%)		62 (28.4%)		91 (29.6%)		61 (22.2%)		69 (24.6%)	
N/A‡	3 (0.6%)		8 (1.4%)		3 (0.6%)		5 (1.7%)		2 (0.9%)		6 (2%)		4 (1.5%)		5 (1.8%)	
GENDER																
Male	250 (50.9%)		309 (54.2%)		299 (59.6%)		189 (62.8%)		127 (58.3%)		181 (59%)		164 (59.6%)		161 (57.3%)	
Female	237 (48.3%)		253 (44.4%)		199 (39.6%)		110 (36.5%)		91 (41.7%)		125 (40.7%)		111 (40.4%)		119 (42.4%)	
Not Declared	2 (0.4%)		4 (0.7%)		-		-		-				-			
N/A‡	2 (0.4%)		4 (0.7%)		4 (0.8%)		2 (0.7%)		0 (0%)		1 (0.3%)		-		1 (0.4%)	
AGE																
Under 18	6 (1.2%)		5 (0.9%)		5 (1%)		2 (0.7%)		11 (5%)		1 (0.3%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)	
18 - 20	145 (29.5%)		162 (28.4%)		140 (27.9%)		70 (23.3%)		44 (20.2%)		60 (19.5%)		83 (30.1%)		108 (38.4%)	
21 - 25	194 (35.5%)		229 (40.2%)		194 (38.7%)		124 (41.2%)		121 (55.5%)		136 (44.3%)		127 (46.2%)		99 (35.2%)	
26 +	143 (29.1%)		166 (29.1%)		160 (31.9%)		100 (33.2%)		51 (23.4%)		104 (33.9%)		61 (22.2%)		69 (24.6%)	
N/A‡	3 (0.6%)		8 (1.4%)		3 (0.6%)		5 (1.7%)		1 (0.5%)		6 (2%)		4 (1.5%)		5 (1.8%)	
DISABILITY																
Declared	381 (77.6%)		121 (21.2%)		84 (16.7%)		59 (19.6%)		30 (13.8%)		230 (75%)		59 (21.5%)		50 (17.8%)	
Not Declared	110 (22.4%)		449 (78.8%)		418 (83.3%)		242 (80.4%)		188 (86.2%)		77 (25%)		216 (78.6%)		231 (82.2%)	

* All percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

‡ Where the appellant/complainant is not an enrolled member of the student population, it has not been possible to acquire demographical information.

	Academic Year 2023/24	Student Population 2023/24	Academic Year 2022/23	Student Population 2022/23	Academic Year 2021/22	Student Population 2021/22	Academic Year 2020/21	Student Population 2020/21	Academic Year 2019/20	Student Population 2019/20	Academic Year 2018/19	Student Population 2018/19	Academic Year 2017/18	Student Population 2017/18	Academic Year 2016/17	Student Population 2016/17
Total Number of Cases	87 (0.4%)	21074	95	21981 (0.4%)	48	23176 (0.2%)	33	21676 (0.2%)	25	20199 (0.1%)	58	16978 (0.3%)	104	16208 (0.6%)	94	15479 (0.6%)
Frontline Cases	31 (36%)		38 (40%)		16 (33%)		11 (33%)		8 (32%)		19 (33%)		72 (74%)		80 (85%)	
Investigated Cases	56 (64%)		57 (60%)		32 (67%)		22 (67%)		17 (68%)		39 (67%)		32 (33%)		14 (15%)	
Frontline Cases Closed Within Timeline (within 5 working days)	11 (13%)		22 (23%)		9 (19%)		9 (27%)		8 (32%)		9 (16%)		57 (57%)		74 (93%)	
Frontline Cases Granted an Extension*	20 (23%)		16 (17%)		7 (15%)		2 (6%)		0 (0%)		10 (17%)		15 (15%)		6 (7%)	
Investigated Cases Closed Within Timeline (within 20 working days)	27 (31%)		26 (27%)		21 (44%)		20 (61%)		11 (44%)		23 (40%)		20 (19%)		4 (29%)	
Investigated Cases Granted an Extension*	29 (33%)		30 (32%)		11 (23%)		2 (6%)		6 (24%)		16 (28%)		12 (12%)		10 (71%)	
Frontline Cases Upheld~	17 (19%)		22 (23%)		6 (13%)		8 (24%)		7 (28%)		6 (10%)		27 (28%)		36 (41%)	
Frontline Cases Partially Upheld~#	6 (7%)		4 (4%)		5 (10%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		1 (2%)		16 (16%)		1 (1%)	
Frontline Cases Not Upheld~	8 (9%)		12 (13%)		5 (10%)		3 (11%)		1 (4%)		12 (21%)		29 (30%)		43 (49%)	
Investigated Cases Upheld	12 (14%)		18 (19%)		6 (13%)		6 (18%)		2 (8%)		7 (12%)		10 (10%)		5 (36%)	
Investigated Cases Partially Upheld#	11 (13%)		13 (14%)		4 (8%)		3 (9%)		1 (4%)		10 (17%)		6 (6%)		3 (21%)	
Investigated Cases Not Upheld	32 (37%)		22 (23%)		18 (38%)		12 (36%)		11 (44%)		20 (34%)		14 (13%)		5 (36%)	
Investigated Cases Not Yet Closed	1 (1%)		1 (1%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		0 (0%)		2 (3%)		2 (2%)		1 (7%)	
Average Time Taken to Resolve Frontline Cases (in working days)	14 working days		7 working days		8 working days		8 working days		1 Working day		9 Working days		7 working days		3 working days	
Average Time Taken to Resolve Investigated Cases	35 working days		27 working days		25 working days		24 Working days		24 Working days		27 Working days		17 working days		20 working days	

*The MCHP recognises that not all investigations will be able to meet the 5 or 20 day deadlines on the basis of the complex nature of some submissions which will require careful consideration and detailed investigation. Where a delay occurs, the agreement of the complainant is sought.

~The outcome of informal (frontline) cases is not always easily defined as ‘upheld’ or ‘not upheld’ dependent on the nature of the concern raised. Where a resolution has been sought, the case has been recorded as ‘upheld’, however, where an issue has resulted in the clarification of policy, or noted without further investigation, the case has been appropriately recorded but ‘not upheld’.

#Where a complaint has covered several issues, where any of these are upheld, the outcome is recorded as ‘partially upheld’.

“This figure includes cases withdrawn by the complainant or referred for investigation under a process or policy other than the CHP, such as internal HR procedures.

Complaints* by School/Section														
School/Section	Academic Year 2020/21		Academic Year 2019/20		Academic Year 2018/19		Academic Year 2017/18		Academic Year 2016/17		Academic Year 2015/16		Academic Year 2014/15	
	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated	Frontline	Investigated
Business School	1	1	1	1	1	2	4	1		1	1			
School of Divinity, History & Philosophy	0	1	0	2	0	5	1	1			5			
School of Education	0	0	0	1	0	8	2	4		3		1		
School of Language & Literature	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2		2			3	3
School of Law	1	1	0	0	0	1	9	1				1		
School of Social Science	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	2	2	1	1	1
School of Biological Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		2				
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition	0	1	0	3	0	2	0	1	6	4	1	1		
School of Psychology	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1						
School of Engineering	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	3		1	1	3	2	2
School of Geosciences	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3				2		
School of Natural & Computing Sciences	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	0		1				
Academic Affairs	0	2	0	3	0	6	3	3	3	1	9	8	12	12
Accommodation	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	1					1	1
Campus Services (incl. Commercial and Catering Services)	0	0	0	0	3	0	23	1	9		3		1	1
Careers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			1			
Communications and Events	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Estates	0	1	4	0	0	3	0	2	1	1	3		1	1
External Relations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Finance	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Human Resources	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0						
Student Life (including Infohub)	1	1	0	1	3	3	1	3	7	5	10	1	2	2
IT Services	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2						
Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					2	2
Research & Innovation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Student Recruitment and Admissions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Library	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2			4		1	1
Development Trust	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Principal's Office/Secretary/SVP Offices	1	1	0	0	9	0	27	0	48		14		31	31
Arts & Social Sciences (College Office)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
Physical Sciences (College Office)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				1		
Life Sciences & Medicine (College Office)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			2			
Totals	6	22	8	17	19	39	72	32	80	23	56	19	57	57

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE UPDATE (2023/24)

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper will provide members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) with an update on academic misconduct cases across the University.

This paper contains detailed data on academic misconduct cases (*Appendix A refers*) received prior to and during the 2023/24 academic year, in addition to an analysis of emerging trends.

Members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) are asked to **discuss** the paper.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by	Quality Assurance Committee	19 February 2025
	University Education Committee	24 February 2025

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)** is invited to **discuss** the paper, in particular the data outlined in *Appendix A*.

4. OVERVIEW

- 4.1 The University has in place a [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\)](#) (hereafter referred to as 'the Code') which defines categories of disciplinary offences and sets out the procedures to be followed in instances of academic misconduct.
- 4.2 The Code is regularly reviewed as any issues with the current Code are identified, such as the need for new categories of academic misconduct, for example, and in line with recent developments in academic integrity, with the most recent version approved in June 2024 to take account of the importance of PSRB requirements. The version used in 2023/24 was approved by the University Court in June 2023, with its use starting in 2023/24. The 2023/24 revised version of the Code incorporated the use of artificial intelligence tools as a form of plagiarism, and was used for new cases relating to the 2023/24 academic year.

5. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**5.1 DATA AND TRENDS**

- 5.1.1 *Appendix A* provides a detailed analysis of academic misconduct cases since 2016/17. *Tables 1.1 and 1.2* below provide high level summary information on academic misconduct cases. Table 1.1 details the total cases of academic misconduct (and shown as a % of the total student population headcount), and Table 1.2 provides a summary by type of case (including the percentage increase or decrease on the previous year).

Table 1.1:

Academic Misconduct Cases by Academic Year								
	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Total	154	288	409	210	166	136	77	76
% of Population Headcount	0.73%	1.28%	1.82%	1.01%	0.87%	0.77%	0.48%	0.49%

Table 1.2:

Academic Misconduct Cases by Type of Misconduct															
	2023 /24	%+ or - ¹	2022 /23	% + or -	2021 /22	% + or -	2020 /21	% + or -	2019 /20	% + or -	2018 /19	% + or -	2017 /18	% + or -	2016 /17
Plagiarism	106	-52	223	-37	356	90	187	27	147	48	99	80	55	-21	70
Plagiarism (AI)	21														
Collusion	19	-55	42	-7	45	137	19	111	9	-40	15	275	4	400	0
Cheating	7	-36	11	450	2	n/a	0	-100	6	-71	21	17	18	200	6
Contract Cheating	1	-92	12	100	6	200	2	-33	3	100	1	0	n/a	0	n/a
Ethics	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	-100	2	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	0

5.1.2 The total number of academic misconduct cases has decreased in academic year 2023/24 from those received in academic year 2021/22 and 2022/23. Case numbers have returned to a level that was seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the percentage of the student population with academic misconduct cases is low (0.73%).

5.1.3 The following specific trends are also noted:

- In any year, the majority of cases of academic misconduct relate to plagiarism. Since 2018/19, there has been a rise in the number of cases of plagiarism, with the steepest rise in 2021/22 (increase by 90% based on 2020/21). Though, this figure has fallen by 52% in 2023/24 to 106 cases. While the number of cases in 2023/24 has decreased, data has been provided for the first time pertaining to use of artificial intelligence, which is now recorded centrally.
- Cases of contract cheating, whilst still small in number, have decreased by 92% between 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- Cases of cheating (as defined in Section 3.5 of the [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\)](#)) have also decreased to 7 cases, whereas in the preceding year, there were 11 cases. This can largely be attributed to the return to on-campus exams following the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.1.4 Table 2 below shows the number of cases split by domicile group as a UK, EU or International Student. The figure in brackets is the percentage against population headcount for that domicile group.

Table 2

Academic Misconduct Cases by Domicile								
Domicile Group	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
UK	57 (0.42%)	68 (0.49%)	87 (0.62%)	54 (0.41%)	27 (0.24%)	36 (0.34%)	29 (0.29%)	29 (0.3%)
EU	3 (0.25%)	12 (0.71%)	37 (1.68%)	22 (0.79%)	15 (0.48%)	27 (0.8%)	15 (0.45%)	20 (0.65%)
Inter	94 (1.49%)	208 (3.07%)	285 (4.58%)	134 (2.81%)	124 (2.74%)	73 (1.9%)	33 (1.11%)	27 (1.07%)

¹ % + or – represents the percentage increase or decrease upon the previous year's data.

5.1.5 Most significantly, *Table 2* shows, that the number of cases for international students has fallen drastically, though it remains the cohort with the highest proportion of cases. As a proportion of the total cases in 2023/24, international students make up 61.04% of all cases.

5.1.6 The number of cases has decreased since 2021/22, however, the number of cases for 2023/24 remains high. It is important not to make assumptions about the reasons. The reasons for the high number of cases remain unclear.

5.1.7 The University has increased its support of students, particularly in relation to academic integrity, across academic year 2023/24. It is possible that this work across the University is attributable to the decrease in cases seen in 2023/24. Most notably, this support includes:

- The University's [Student Learning Service](#) (SLS) includes contextualised focus on academic integrity in assessments in its academic skills 1-1 sessions and workshops and in its online academic skills resources (Achieve and Achieve+). The Dean of Educational Innovation together with CAD and other Professional Services colleagues developed a number of short videos designed to help students avoid the pitfalls of plagiarism, including self-plagiarism and GenAI, collusion, contract cheating, and data falsification. These can be accessed on the updated and renamed Toolkit for students [Academic Integrity & Referencing \(Digital Skills Toolkit\)](#). In addition, these videos and updated guidance were embedded in PD1002/PD5006 (2023-24): Getting Started at the University of Aberdeen, a compulsory induction course for all new UG and PGT students.
- The SLS/Centre for Academic Development (CAD) have produced an [infographic on Academic Integrity](#) (for students and also for staff to use in course materials).
- Enhancement of information provided to staff and students with respect of academic integrity, led by the Dean for Educational Innovation and supported by the Centre for Academic Development. Information provided on the [Staff](#) and [Student](#) webpages, as well as targeted social media campaigns by the Experience, Engagement and Wellbeing teams, have increased awareness of matters of academic integrity to students.
- The Dean for Educational Innovation and Centre for Academic Development have also been providing opportunities for staff to engage in discussions around the importance of authentic assessment; including why it is better to redesign assessment to 'design out' opportunities for academic misconduct. These opportunities include discussion panels, the Micro-Credentials course delivered in preparation for the start of teaching, and Learning and Teaching Network sessions.

5.1.8 Members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) are invited to **discuss** the paper, in particular the data outlined in *Appendix A*.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Emma Tough (Assistant Registrar), e.tough@abdn.ac.uk, or Liam Dyker (Administrative Officer (Academic Services)), liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk.

31 January 2025

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	School of Biological Sciences
Academic Year Reviewed:	2022-23
QAC Member:	Mark Grant
Academic Services Contact:	Kyra Lamont
QAC Comments & Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) would like to thank the School of Biological Sciences for submission of the relevant undergraduate Annual Programme Reviews (APRs) and the maintenance of academic standards. The Committee notes that pass rates are relatively high (90% and above) and that these rates remain consistent with previous years. It is pleasing to note that lecture attendance for BI1511: Ecology and Environmental Science has improved, and that the fail rate decreased by at least 7.5%. As expected, following the changes made to BI2524: Comparative Physiology 1 course's practical assessments to enhance rigor, the proportion of fails has increased slightly. However, it might be advisable to monitor this going-forward. The Committee welcomes the School's efforts to provide additional support for students on the BI3010 Statistical Analysis of Biological Data course – noting that the use of 'R' software has increased the challenge and that the number of direct entry students has increased. As such, the Committee welcomes efforts to ensure that students are well-supported when faced with unfamiliar assessments and challenging courses (e.g. BI2023: Introduction to Genetics). The Committee therefore supports the creation of a pre-session set of materials that direct-entry students in Jinan can access before beginning third year. ▪ The Committee appreciates the difficulties associated with obtaining student feedback in the form of Course Feedback Forms (CFF) – noting that 44 courses (excluding field courses) had return rates of less than 20%. Despite poor return rates, it is pleasing to note that ZO4540: Sustainable Management of Marine Resources, and BI3507: Society and Environment received more positive feedback following the replacement of an unpopular assignment with a 3-minute thesis presentation for ZO3812; and a reduction in the number of assessments for BI3507 following workload concerns. QAC is pleased that students appreciated the incorporation of guest speakers into a number of courses (EV4802, ZO4540, ZO4541 and ZO4821). However, it is understood that the Applied Marine Biology, Fisheries & Aquaculture course (ZO3812) continues to receive low CFF scores – particularly in terms of clarity of assessment, and the timeliness and quality of feedback. Therefore, QAC is supportive of further enhancement in these areas. QAC understands that there are concerns regarding harsh lighting and the accessibility of devices within the Science Teaching Hub (and the limited capacity of computer rooms in general) and welcomes further discussion with the relevant teams. ▪ In terms of student employability, QAC is pleased that SBS has undertaken efforts to enhance the practical and professional skills of students across their disciplines. QAC notes, for example, that the ecology field skills course provides students with exposure to a range of techniques applicable to a career in environmental consultancy. Additionally, QAC is pleased that the implementation of an advanced lab skills course (BI35F4) has improved the confidence of Biology students in their practical abilities. In keeping with the positive feedback, the Committee notes that students have appreciated the inclusion of practical skills such as QGIS training and map-making; and it is pleasing that students on the BI3806: Conservation in Practice and ZO4541: 	

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners

Wildlife Conservation and Management course found their field trips both interesting and useful.

- Regarding the University's continual commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; the Committee is pleased that efforts have been made to decolonise the curriculum by including material on decolonizing conservation, and the involvement of local populations in conservation. Additionally, QAC welcomes the steps taken by SBS to ensure that students with disabilities are effectively supported during field trips.
- The Committee notes that SBS is a pilot school for the new institutional template for MyAberdeen which will explore the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a tool. QAC welcomes the use of an AI workshop and assessment to help students understand the common pitfalls and benefits of GenAI tools. It is pleasing that external examiners have commented on the robustness of some assessments against GenAI and encourages the sharing of good practice to ensure robust assessments across all courses.
- The Committee understands that preparations are underway for the planned reaccreditation review by the Royal Society of Biology in November 2024. Going forward, QAC looks forward to receiving the Annual Programme Review for 24-25 - including an update on the international Marine Biology field course.

Notes:

Signed:



Date: 23rd October 2024

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	Business School
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-24
QAC Member:	Lois Gall
Academic Services Contact:	Kyra Lamont
QAC Comments & Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) would like to thank the Business School for submission of the relevant undergraduate Annual Programme Reviews (APRs). The Committee is pleased that academic standards have been maintained, and that the School's undergraduate programmes continue to meet the relevant subject benchmark statements. ▪ Although Course Feedback Form (CFFs) returns remain low, it is reassuring that student feedback has been predominantly positive. In addition, QAC is delighted to note that following the results of the National Student Survey (NSS), the School was ranked 1st for Business Studies. ▪ It is pleasing that, despite a slight drop in numbers with respect to SCNU, the School's collaborative provisions are functioning well overall. Noting the recent success of a prize-winning student from SCNU. Similarly, QAC welcomes the introduction of Student Experience, Leadership Awards and Academic Excellence Awards with respect to students located in Qatar. ▪ The Committee recognises the Development Economics course as an excellent example of the School's efforts to decolonise the curriculum by integrating indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives into discussions, and considering the impact of structural inequality on economic development in different regions. ▪ In relation to employability, QAC notes that the Accountancy department will be working to accommodate the enhanced ICAS's syllabus to keep pace with advances in technology, data, and sustainability in the accountancy profession. QAC also welcomes the recent visit from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors to discuss future careers in Real Estate and RICS membership with students. Additionally, QAC notes the formal introduction of the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC). ▪ In regard to Business Management and Accountancy and Finance programmes in Qatar, QAC is satisfied that plans are underway to improve the pass rates associated with QB2501, QB3507 and QB2501. It is understood that a lack of engagement and difficulties with the English language may have contributed to lower pass marks. The Committee supports revisiting pre-requisites for MS3553, and the exploration of the link between assessment design and vulnerability to AI misuse. ▪ QAC notes that UG Finance programmes have undergone a major review in anticipation of formal QAA Subject Benchmark changes, and efforts have been made to include courses on fintech and big data. Following the planned review of the MA Finance programme, it is understood that FI4503 will be redeveloped into 	

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners

a 15cr course. It is also understood that SCNU (4.0 + 0) MA Finance programme has been approved and will commence in Sept 2025 which is hoped to attract more students. The Committee is pleased that the provision of additional support (exam technique) has notably improved student performance in relation to in-person exams.

- Regarding Real Estate, the Committee notes that the revised subject benchmark statements for Land, Construction, Real Estate and Surveying was published in April 2024 with an increased focus on sustainable development and employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship. It is understood that there was a lack of engagement and failure to adequately prepare for a number of tutorials or take advantage of Q&A sessions which is thought to be associated with the poor performance on PO2508 and PO2509. That being said, QAC is satisfied that the Real Estate department is working to address these concerns, and it is hoped that next year will show an overall improvement in attainment levels.
- In respect of Accountancy, the Committee is pleased that the decision to split AC1515 into two courses relative to whether accreditation is being sought has been positive (AC1517 and AC1516). It is also pleasing that many accountancy courses received positive feedback regarding the structure, content, and organisation of learning materials on MyAberdeen. QAC recognises the use of the audit simulator (AC3560: Audit Practice) in particular as an example of excellent practice as commended by the External Examiner. Going forward, QAC recommends monitoring fourth-year courses in response to potential grade inflation concerns, and reviewing AC3049 assessments following an unusually high number of first-class marks. QAC is supportive of efforts to ensure sufficient supervisor-student ratios with regards to dissertations and is pleased that additional 'drop-in' hours have been added for students undertaking their accountancy dissertations.
- Regarding Economics, the Committee understands that teaching has been difficult due to the different levels of numerical abilities often seen between international and UK students. However, the Committee is hopeful that the use of Mobius software and tutoring by academic skills advisors will improve attainment levels and ease related teaching challenges. QAC welcomes the transition from EVIEWS to Stata and the provision of exam technique sessions for courses with lower pass rates (EC3524 & EC2503)
- In relation to International Business Management, the Committee is pleased that the programme is going from strength to strength and that there are no areas of concern. However, QAC recommends including more detail in the APR for next year. QAC supports efforts to ensure that fourth-year placements are organised ahead of time.
- The Committee looks forward to receiving the Annual Programme Reviews for 24-25.

Signed:



Lois Gall, QAC Member

Date: 28/1/25

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-2024
QAC Member:	Will Barras
Academic Services Contact:	Christopher Weir

QAC Comments & Recommendations

Overall, QAC thanks the School for their Annual Programme Reviews and is pleased to see positive progress is being made in several areas.

- The Committee notes that all programmes have met the subject benchmark statements and received praise from their External Examiners in this regard.
- QAC notes that across all programmes, pass rates remain consistent with previous years. QAC also notes that the number of 1st class degrees awarded in Philosophy has now returned to pre-COVID-19 levels.
- The Committee commends the School overall for its achievements in the 2024 NSS Survey, with History achieving 1st place in Scotland for student satisfaction and Divinity achieving 1st place in Scotland overall.
- QAC notes that across all programmes, Decolonising the Curriculum and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is being considered within teaching material and course selection; for example, the Philosophy programme received guidance from the Society for Women in Philosophy regarding representation for women in course readings and lecture content.
- QAC also commends the Art History programme for its work regarding EDI, with courses such as “Women Writing Art History” receiving funding from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Arts.
- QAC is pleased to note that student recruitment numbers remain consistent, despite a slight drop in numbers for Art History.
- QAC notes that the Divinity programme has reduced its course number by 12 from the previous year.
- The Committee notes innovation in assessment methods across the School, with an example being shown in the 10-minute podcast recording assessment for HI4518: History in Practice.
- The Committee notes that the School has had issues with AI misconduct within assessments. The Committee will take forward these concerns and encourages the School to continue discussions around the implementation of good practice guidelines for both students and staff at both course and programme level.
- QAC notes that CFF completion rates are low but recognises that this is an issue shared across all Schools.
- QAC notes that the School has been reviewing assessments across all programmes to ensure that students are not being over-assessed, an element which was discussed as part of the TESTA review.

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners

- The Committee notes that Philosophy scored lower for clarity of marking criteria and clarity that student feedback is acted on for the 2024 NSS survey. The Committee encourages the School to continue to review its marking and feedback processes.

The Committee is pleased to see progress being made on several fronts and looks forward to seeing further progress in next year's submission.

Signed:

Date:

QAC Representative from the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	Education
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-2024
QAC Member:	Isla Callander
Academic Services Contact:	Christopher Weir

QAC Comments & Recommendations
<p>Overall, QAC thanks the School of Education for their Annual Programme Reviews and is pleased to see positive progress is being made in several areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Committee is pleased to note that pass rates remain consistent across all programmes. ▪ QAC also commends the TQFE programme for a 100% pass rate after reassessment. ▪ QAC is pleased to note that all programmes meet subject benchmarks statements. ▪ The Committee commends MA Education for achieving 1st place in Scotland and 8th in the UK for the 2024 NSS survey. The Committee also commends BA Childhood Practice for achieving a high NSS grade. ▪ The Committee is also pleased to note that the TQFE programme has retained its 1st place rank in Scotland for the APUC tendering exercise. ▪ QAC notes that, across all programmes, teaching provision is considered excellent according to CFF and EE reports. ▪ QAC notes that the CFF forms for PGDE Secondary indicate that the changes made to lecture and tutorial structure were successful in their attempt to broaden the range of live taught content. ▪ The Committee also notes that the newly implemented digital story assignment in the TQFE programme has been positively commented on by both students and External Examiners. ▪ QAC notes that BA Childhood Practice reintroduced campus visits and events to allow more students opportunities to visit the University. ▪ The Committee also notes that the MA Education programme went to great lengths to create a sense of community amongst their students with hoodies, pizza lunches, coffee and cake feedback sessions and more. ▪ QAC recognises the efforts made across all programmes regarding EDI and Decolonisation, including programme development as part of the Anti-Racism within Initial Teacher Education framework and MA Educations' piloting of 3 courses that aim to diversify course reading. ▪ QAC notes the School's concerns regarding the continued increase in students reporting mental health issues, as well as the rise in students suspending studies for similar reasons. The Committee encourages the School to continue to liaise with Student Support and continue the work they have already been undertaking to tackle this issue. ▪ The Committee also notes that the expansion of Early Years provision has placed pressure on many students within BA Childhood Practice, also leading to an increase in extensions

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners

and breaks. Again, the Committee would encourage liaising with Student Support in this regard.

- The Committee notes that students in the MA Education programme experienced difficulties with assessment timelines after placements.
- QAC notes the concerns raised by the PGDE Primary programme regarding a nationally lowering student uptake rate. The Committee agrees with the School's strategy to utilise social media and other media outlets.

The Committee is pleased to see progress being made on a number of fronts and looks forward to seeing further progress in next year's submission.

Signed: ISLA CALLANDER
QAC Representative from the School of Law

Date: 8 NOV

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	Engineering
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-2024
QAC Member:	Flora Groening
Academic Services Contact:	Christopher Weir

QAC Comments & Recommendations
<p>Overall, QAC thanks the School of Engineering for their Annual Programme Reviews and is pleased to see positive progress is being made in several areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ QAC is pleased to note that all programmes across the School meet the subject benchmark statements. ▪ QAC also notes that the External Examiners view all programmes across the School positively. ▪ The Committee recognises the School's efforts to ensure courses have more of a focus on industry standards and expectations, shown through the revamping of the Industry Advisory Board and through the final projects having an industry-led option. ▪ The Committee recognises the ongoing work within the School by the Decolonising the Curriculum School Working Group in reviewing course handbooks and arranging follow-ups with course coordinators. ▪ QAC is pleased that the School plans on introducing a level 3 course that covers EDI issues in the context of engineering, as part of the new AHEP4 accreditation. ▪ The Committee also notes that the Civil Engineering programme's partnership with Harbin Engineering University has saw the first cohort of students completing their 4th year studies on the Aberdeen campus in 2023-24. ▪ QAC notes that the overall recruitment levels appear to be healthy within the School. ▪ The Committee notes that some programmes have chosen to adopt a flipped classroom approach within some courses with mixed results. The Mechanical Engineering lead noted that the flipped classroom approach was viewed positively by students, whereas the Civil Engineering CFF results suggested that this was the opposite. ▪ The Committee notes that the School has moved back to on-campus invigilated exams due to several instances of academic misconduct within online assessments in previous years. ▪ QAC notes that in most cases, the pass rates for on-campus invigilated exams were much lower than other forms of assessment. ▪ The Committee notes that third year course pass rates across the School were below average and in some cases 50% or less. The Committee encourages the School to review their courses to ensure that assessment standards and expectations are appropriately related to students. ▪ QAC notes that another possible explanation for the lower third year pass rates may be due to a lack of engagement which is mentioned in some of the External Examiner Reports. The Committee would encourage the School to also look into ways to improve student engagement

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners

- QAC notes that NSS scores for student satisfaction are low across multiple programmes. The Committee encourages the School's programme leads to continue to liaise with students and class representatives in order to obtain feedback on teaching and learning; then act on this feedback as appropriate, communicating these changes to students through "you said, we did."
- QAC also notes that staff workload had to be reduced in some programmes due to retirements.

The Committee is pleased to see progress being made on a number of fronts and looks forward to seeing further progress in next year's submission.

Signed: 

Date: 16/12/2024

QAC Representative from the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	Geosciences
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-2024
QAC Member:	Gareth Norton
Academic Services Contact:	Christopher Weir

QAC Comments & Recommendations
<p>Overall, QAC thanks the School of Geoscience for their Annual Programme Reviews and is pleased to see positive progress is being made in several areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Committee is pleased to note that across all programmes, pass-rates and grade distribution remain consistent with the previous academic year. ▪ QAC credits the School for their achievements in the 2023-24 NSS survey. Archaeology achieved 1st in Scotland and 2nd in the UK for student satisfaction. Geography achieved 1st in the UK for Human Geography and 6th in the UK for Physical Geography. Geology achieved 1st in the UK. ▪ QAC notes that all programmes meet their subject benchmark statements and received positive reviews overall from External Examiners. ▪ The Committee is pleased to note that Archaeology has a high number of student uptake, whilst Geography has been slowly increasing student numbers after a record low four years ago. ▪ The Committee notes that Geography is making efforts to maintain assessment diversity through coordination across all courses, despite reducing the number of assessments. ▪ QAC is pleased to note that the Geology department feels that the STH is appreciated by their staff and students alike, with teething issues from previous years now resolved. ▪ QAC notes that dissertation standards are considered high by External Examiners across the School. QAC also notes the good practice done by Archaeology regarding AY3512: Archaeological Research Project Part 1, where students are tasked with researching and presenting on topics at an early stage. ▪ The Committee is pleased to note that Archaeology has maintained its CiFA accreditation. ▪ The Committee recognises the School's concern with staffing shortages as a whole and will take forward the concerns of programme delivery as mentioned by both Geography and Geology. ▪ QAC notes that the Geology department has had low student uptake numbers and encourages the programme coordinator to continue reviewing their courses, such as the mentioned field trip restructures, to continue their efforts to make their programme appealing to applicants. ▪ The Committee notes the School's concerns with the increased number of extensions requests due to poor mental health. ▪ QAC also notes that CFF Form response rates are low across the School despite efforts made to increase them. ▪ QAC looks forward to seeing the results of Geography's upcoming review by the Royal Geographical Society.

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners

The Committee is pleased to see progress being made on several fronts and looks forward to seeing further progress in next year's submission.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Norton', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Date: 29/11/2024

QAC Representative from the School of XX

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	LLMVC
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-2024
QAC Member:	Rachel Smith
Academic Services Contact:	Christopher Weir

QAC Comments & Recommendations

Overall, QAC thanks the School of Education for their Annual Programme Reviews and is pleased to see positive progress is being made in several areas.

- QAC is pleased to note that all programmes meet subject benchmark statements.
- The Committee is pleased to note that pass rates remain consistent across all programmes, with many achieving high pass-rates.
- QAC commends the School's staff members for the level of support, both academic and pastoral, that they provide to students. This is reflected within student feedback across all programmes.
- QAC also notes that the Spanish and Latin American studies programme achieved 1st place in Scotland for the 2023/24 NSS. While Linguistics achieved 1st place in the UK NSS.
- The Committee also notes that the Film and Visual Culture programme obtained 1st place in Scotland in the Complete University Guide
- The Committee notes that overall student uptake is good for the majority of programmes. However, the Modern Languages and Translating & Interpreting Studies programme recorded a lower uptake. The Committee encourages to programme lead to work alongside student recruitment services to help improve this.
- QAC commend the German programme for having two members of staff be appointed for best undergraduate lecturer.
- QAC notes that overall external examiners were very impressed with the quality of learning provision across all programmes, as well as the diverse range of assessments, despite the School facing difficult circumstances last year.
- The Committee notes that this will be the final year for the Swedish programme due to voluntary severance and restructure.
- QAC recognises the staffing difficulties placed upon the School due to the recent restructure and notes concerns raised from all programme leads. QAC will take these concerns forward as appropriate.
- QAC notes that the School is seeing the sector-wide issue of a lack of attendance at lectures, particularly at levels 2 and 3. QAC also notes that the Head of School is considering revising the non-compulsory nature of lectures.
- QAC notes the future student satisfaction concerns raised by the Film and Visual Culture programme due to outdated equipment and the reduction of the number of classes on offer to students.

The Committee is pleased to see progress being made on a number of fronts and looks forward to seeing further progress in next year's submission.

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners

Signed:

QAC Representative from the School of XX

Date:

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	School of Law
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-24
QAC Member:	Piotr Niewiadomski
Academic Services Contact:	Kyra Lamont
QAC Comments & Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) would like to thank the School of Law for submission of the relevant undergraduate Annual Programme Reviews (APRs) and the maintenance of academic standards. The Committee is pleased that External Examiners have been complementary surrounding the delivery of the undergraduate teaching and learning provision. ▪ QAC appreciates the challenges associated with low Course Feedback Forms (CFF) returns, however, it is reassuring that student feedback has been positive in general. QAC is pleased that LS2032: Public International Law will benefit from a more integrated and collaborative approach going-forward; and notes the complexities associated with the delivery of the LS2026: EU Institutions and Law due to Brexit. Additionally, QAC supports a review of LS4584: The Use of Force in International Law and LS452L: International Cybersecurity Law in response to students' concerns surrounding the complexity and volume of required reading. Going-forward, it is hoped that a new teaching team, coupled with the proposed changes to assessment, will help to improve student satisfaction in relation to LS3030: Law of Equity & Trusts. ▪ The Committee welcomes efforts to standardize online examinations with respect to the recommendations of the Law Society of Scotland and External Examiners – in particular the provision of additional time for the submission process and individual requirements. QAC notes that all level 1-3 courses were reviewed to ensure that there was a range of appropriate assessment methods in place and, in addition to online exams, students will be required to sit at least two invigilated, on campus exams. In terms of level 4, it is noted that changes have been made to assessments to incorporate student feedback which include the introduction of formative group presentations as well as timed MCQs. Additionally, QAC is pleased that adjustments have been made to ensure students are better prepared with regards to the exam for LS1536: Delict and Unjustified Enrichment and expects this will have a positive effect on pass rates going-forward. ▪ The Committee welcomes the processes introduced in 2023/24 to enhance the support available to students undertaking their dissertations, including a mandatory third consultation meeting and flexible consultation timing in order to accommodate the personal needs of students'. QAC is also delighted that the 	

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² It is recognised that low returns of Course Feedback Forms (CFFs) make it difficult to interpret overall student satisfaction at times.

interdisciplinary courses delivered last year (LS2541: Crime Theories and Concepts and LS3533: Policing & Society) were successful and that these will become electives for students on LLB programmes going-forward. Further supporting the University's 2040 agenda with regards to interdisciplinarity.

- The Committee notes that the LLB with English law programme(s) will no longer be regulated by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority (SRA) – English accrediting body. However, the School will continue to deliver the formally prescribed courses for this programme to ensure that these students have the necessary breadth of knowledge required to practise law in England & Wales. It is understood that the LLB programmes remain regulated by the Law Society of Scotland.
- QAC is pleased that there are no issues to report as far as partnerships are concerned. However, the Committee shares the disappointment that the numbers of both incoming and outgoing students on European Exchanges continues to fall. QAC encourages the School to consider ways of preventing this where possible.
- The Committee looks forward to receiving the Annual Programme Review for 24-25. A revised template which includes a section on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity can be obtained via the University's [webpages](#).

Signed:



Date: 30 Oct 2024

Piotr Niewiadomski

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

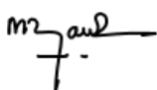
School Reviewed:	School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-2024
QAC Member:	Dr. Thangavel Thevar and Dr. Jacqui Hutchison
Academic Services Contact:	Kyra Lamont
QAC Comments & Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) would like to thank the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition for submission of the relevant undergraduate Annual Programme Reviews (APRs) and the maintenance of academic standards. ▪ In terms of the MBChB programme, the Committee is delighted that it was rated the best Medicine Programme in the United Kingdom (Guardian Guide 2024). It is understood that levels 2-5 demonstrated a relatively stable pass rate in 23-24, and that pass rates for level 2 have improved in particular. Conversely, QAC notes that the pass rates associated with level 1 of the MBChB programme were poorer than expected. The Committee understands that this may be linked to the larger number of widening access students, reduced tariffs and larger cohorts in general. Additionally, QAC appreciates that there has been significant disruption to the delivery of the programme following the RAAC closure of many teaching spaces (e.g. Polwarth Auditorium). That being said, it is reassuring that the programme continues to meet and even exceed the regulatory requirements of the General Medical Council (GMC). The Committee notes that the Medical Licencing Assessment (MLA) was implemented this year with favourable results (95.5% pass rate) and that the Clinical and Procedural Skills Assessment (CPSA) will be introduced in 24-25 as a mandatory requirement. QAC supports the subsequent re-structuring of the VLE (simplifying and consolidating resources) in response to student feedback. The Committee understands the pressures placed on resources and the challenge of growing student numbers – noting that the School is in consultation with various NHS partners (Highland & Grampian) as well as NHS Education Scotland in order to find a solution. ▪ The Committee is pleased that the Gateway to Medicine (G2M) programme and relationship with NESCol is functioning well – noting that 25/26 students were accepted onto MBChB following successful completion of the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT). QAC is pleased that practice MMIs and regular 1-1 meetings have been highly valued by students. The Committee notes that students who join the MBChB programme via this route often find first-year challenging, therefore, QAC supports efforts to introduce courses which provide students with a broader spectrum of basic science knowledge. It is also understood that a new Medical Physics course will be introduced by NESCol. ▪ The Committee understands that the Certificate in Pre-Medical Studies has an overall pass rate of 67% - noting that the cohort is very small. It is understood that students did not perform very well in regard to SX1023, a Sixth Century Course, which was marked by poor attendance. Following student feedback, the Committee welcomes the plans to alter the offering of sixth century courses by re- 	

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners

introducing the Mind Machine. It is understood that low scores in UCAT and MMI often create a barrier to progression for these students. Therefore, QAC supports the introduction of UCAT and MMI workshops, a professionalism workshop, a reflective practice workshop, and workshops tailored to the MBChB application process. It is understood that the relationship with UAE and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has now ended. However, it is reassuring that a new, successful relationship has been established with Qatar.

- QAC notes that the BDS programme is undergoing re-development to better integrate the clinical skills learned as part of the Restorative and Integrated Oral Care clinics. It is also understood that the Paediatric Dentistry course has been modified to better reflect the contemporary clinical experience of newly qualified practitioners. QAC appreciates that there remains challenges with regards to staffing. As such, the Committee supports the use of new video materials to augment the delivery of Dental Materials. The Committee notes that the programme continues to meet the regulatory requirements of the General Dentistry Council (GDC). Following the recent introduction of the Safe Practitioner Framework (SPF), the Committee notes that a 'Transition Action Plan' has been developed for implementation in AY 25/26. QAC understands that the GDC regulatory visit, completed in May 2023, was very positive. Additionally, the Committee notes that the External Examiner was pleased with the DipHE Dental Technology programme. However, due to a number of factors including geographical location, it is understood that the programme has not attracted a large number of applicants.
- In regard to the joint BSc/BSci APR, the Committee is pleased that these programmes continue to receive excellent NSS scores – noting the success of Anatomy and Physiology in particular. It is understood that pass rates are broadly in line with expectations; noting that the majority of students received 2:1 awards overall, and that students on Biomedical Science programmes, often subject to higher entry requirements, achieved a higher proportion of first-class degrees. In line with the recommendations of External Examiners, QAC would support the introduction of more coding, data handling and statistical analysis elements if resources allow. Additionally, following student feedback, QAC supports efforts to ensure the provision of consistent and timely assessment feedback to students. Furthermore, QAC strongly supports the integration of practical exams and the development of professional skills into the curriculum; and is pleased that courses are regularly reviewed to avoid duplication and to address any student workload concerns. The Committee understands that materials will be reviewed shortly with a view to receiving accreditation from the Royal Society of Biology.
- The Committee is pleased that the School continues to champion Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) with the appointment of NHS Race Equality Champion, and that efforts are underway to decolonise the curriculum via the creation of a workplan and staff involvement in seminars organised by the Decolonising Implementation Group (DIG).
- The Quality Assurance Committee looks forward to receiving the Annual Programme Review for 24-25.

Signed:



Date: 30/01/2025

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	School of Natural and Computing Sciences
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-24
QAC Member:	Selma Carson
Academic Services Contact:	Kyra Lamont
QAC Comments & Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) would like to thank the School of Natural and Computing Science for submission of the relevant undergraduate Annual Programme Reviews (APRs) and the maintenance of academic standards. It is reassuring that, despite some concerns related to the restructuring of the academic year, there are no major areas for development and subject benchmarks continue to be met across campuses (UoA, AFG and SCNU-JI). The Committee is delighted that another final year Computing student has been shortlisted for the prestigious accolade of Scotland's Young Software Engineer of the Year Awards 2024; and that two members of Physics teaching staff have been nominated for awards – this is a reflection of the School's excellent teaching and learning provision. ▪ In terms of NSS results, the Committee notes that student satisfaction was variable within Computing Science – as reflected within Course Feedback Forms (CFF)². However, NSS results for Maths were very encouraging and exceeded the sector average on a number of metrics. Conversely, despite positive feedback during SSLC meetings, the NSS results for Physics were not as positive. Therefore, it is reassuring that the department will implement a robust action plan going-forward. Additionally, QAC notes that student satisfaction with regards to assessment, feedback and student voice has fallen slightly within Chemistry. The Committee understands that this drop is thought to be associated with efforts to return to traditional assessment methods (in-person examinations) as seen pre-COVID19. QAC is assured, however, that this approach is aligned with the recommendation of External Examiners and the sector at large. ▪ The Committee supports efforts to address the courses whereby teaching effectiveness was lower than expected (e.g. CM30PS, CM2514 and CM4538); and welcomes the implementation of a 2-hour pre-lab workshop for Chemistry students in 24-25 to discuss lab report requirements and improve data analysis. The Committee appreciates that poor attendance is a sector-wide concern, and that low levels of engagement may be responsible for weaker performance in certain courses. QAC therefore welcomes greater opportunities for active learning to reduce disengagement, and the sharing of good practice (e.g. interactive quizzes) from other courses such as MX3531 and MX4545. Additionally, QAC supports the introduction of support seminars for maths during first, second, and 	

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners

² It is recognised that low returns of Course Feedback Forms (CFFs) make it difficult to interpret overall student satisfaction at times.

third year to assist weaker students, and recommends that the School raise any admission-related concerns with the admissions team directly. It is hoped that the planned reintroduction of the Maths for Computing course for 2025–26 will enhance student performance.

- The Committee is pleased that the Computer Science SCNU 2+2 partnership is progressing well and that, following review, any concerns relating to the preparedness of ISC students now seem to be addressed. It is noted, however, that students on the Qatar-based programme seem to be slightly weaker than those studying at Aberdeen. That being said, the Committee is assured that course coordinators continue to collaborate across campuses to support students and maintain academic standards.
- QAC understands that PX3512: Optics and Photonics ran for the first time this year and, unfortunately, it was affected by technical difficulties which may have been a contributing factor to low pass rates – including re-sits. It is reassuring, however, that the balance and design of assessments (50% continuous assessment and 50% examination) was considered appropriate; and that the Programme Lead is confident that the proposed changes will be effective. Similarly, the Committee strongly urges the School to address and monitor the factors contributing to re-sit failures of SCNU-JI courses (JC3509, JC2002, JC1503 and JC2506 and JC1504 in particular). The Committee notes the unique challenges associated with the delivery of PX4514: Structure of Matter and the Universe course and understands that this will not be a recurring problem. The Committee supports the efforts to enhance consistency and rigor of assessments across all disciplines – particularly with regards to level 1 & 2 Chemistry - and welcomes the use of clearer marking criteria and rubrics where appropriate. It is hoped that this will curb any lingering instances of grade inflation and, in turn, reduce the unexpectedly high number of first-class degrees.
- QAC urges the School to consider the vulnerabilities of all online assessments to Artificial Intelligence (AI) – particularly in regards to PX3511 which has higher pass rates than expected. The Committee encourages the sharing of good practice between disciplines – particularly, the use of Respondus (a lockdown browser for Blackboard) which has helped to protect the academic integrity of MCQs in Computing Science. In terms of safeguarding against academic misconduct, the Committee is pleased that students will be provided with additional information on the issue, as well as integrity training, and welcomes the inclusion of a declaration prior to the submission of work. Additionally, QAC is supportive of the use of a critical appraisal to help students identify and raise awareness of the various pitfalls of ChatGPT.
- In terms of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the Committee is pleased that Physics is engaging in the IoP Juno programme to enhance inclusion-related performance even further. QAC is also pleased that the School is focusing on the contributions of female scientists and others that may have been traditionally overlooked. It is reassuring that any concerns of this nature were effectively addressed with the help of the University's disability and student support services, and that each discipline continues to identify ways in which the curriculum can be decolonised where possible.
- The Committee looks forward to receiving the Annual Programme Review for 24-25.

Signed:



Date: 12.12.24

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	School of Psychology
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-24
QAC Member:	Mark Grant
Academic Services Contact:	Kyra Lamont
QAC Comments & Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) would like to thank the School of Psychology for submission of the relevant undergraduate Annual Programme Reviews (APRs) and the maintenance of academic standards. It is pleasing that the School's programmes continue to meet subject benchmark requirements and attract large numbers of students. ▪ QAC praises the School for the steps undertaken to decolonise the curriculum and their continued commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity – highlighting the School's innovative approach towards neuro-inclusivity in particular. It is very reassuring that students feel safe to raise any concerns and find the teaching environment inclusive. ▪ The Committee recognises the significant challenges faced by students whose secondary education was disrupted by the pandemic; and the changes in the student body following Brexit. The Committee therefore supports efforts to standardise assessment briefs for clarity and increase induction activities for direct entry students and first years. QAC hopes that the 'Student Resilience: Moving from Surviving to Thriving' course, coupled with the steps being taken to reduce level 1 assessments and enhance students' grasp of practical and research-based skills, will help to reduce non-continuation. ▪ The Committee is pleased that early indications suggest that the changes made to the supervisor allocation process has been positive. ▪ With regards to marking in general, QAC welcomes the use of rubrics to improve the consistency of the feedback provided to students across all courses. The Committee also recognises the need for further guidance regarding the use and detection of AI across the University. QAC understands that work is being undertaken by the Dean for Educational Innovation and the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) to address these concerns. Additionally, the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) has been amended to ensure that the unauthorised use of AI is penalised under the definition of plagiarism. ▪ Going-forward, QAC understands that the School is undertaking a full rebuild of their programmes with a view to enhancing their attractiveness to future applicants and strengthening the employability of graduates. QAC notes the 'Employability Networking Event' as an example of good practice in this area. ▪ QAC supports the prioritisation of resources to ensure that student to staff ratios (SSRs) meet accreditation standards and understands that steps are being taken in conjunction with the centre to address these concerns. ▪ The Committee looks forward to receiving the Annual Programme Review for 24-25. 	

Signed:

Date: 23rd October 2024

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF UNDERGRADUATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORTS¹

School Reviewed:	Social Science
Academic Year Reviewed:	2023-2024
QAC Member:	Faye Hendry
Academic Services Contact:	Christopher Weir

QAC Comments & Recommendations
<p>Overall, QAC thanks the School of Social Science for their Annual Programme Reviews and is pleased to see positive progress is being made in several areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Committee is pleased to see that pass rates remain consistent across all programmes. ▪ QAC commends the Sociology programme for achieving high Pass Rates despite concerns over staffing. ▪ QAC notes that all programmes meet subject benchmark statements and that External Examiners found that the academic standards maintained were appropriate. ▪ The Committee notes that the School has continued to innovate assessments, such as group projects and podcasts. ▪ The Committee commends the Anthropology programme for achieving 1st place in Scotland and 3rd in the UK for student positivity in the 2024 NSS survey. ▪ QAC notes the excellent practice regarding decolonising the curriculum, with Politics & IR having a working group and Anthropology holding DtC seminars twice a year. ▪ The Committee wishes the Anthropology department success as they change their UG course offerings for level 3 and 4 students in an attempt to have high class numbers in honours courses. ▪ QAC notes that Sociology has reduced the number of assessed pieces of work as part of the TESTA recommendations and following feedback from their External Examiner. ▪ The Committee notes that Politics & IR have made changes to their assessments to navigate AI concerns. ▪ QAC notes the concerns from the Head of School that student numbers on the Anthropology programme remain low and encourages the programme to explore the suggestions made for a possible expansion of the range of available programmes. ▪ The Committee recognises the serious concerns raised by the Sociology department over their ability to continue to offer optimal academic teaching, whilst being a heavily understaffed department, and will raise these concerns with the relevant parties.

Signed:

Date 19/11/24



QAC Representative from the School of Education

¹ The comments and recommendations are based on the Annual Programme Review reports submitted by Schools, incorporating the Annual Course Reviews, Course Evaluation Forms, Student/Staff Liaison Committees and feedback from External Examiners



Mapping Against the UK Quality Code

SECTION 1: ADMISSIONS, RECRUITMENT & WIDENING ACCESS

Academic Services | Quality & Policy

academicservices@abdn.ac.uk

Authored: January 2022

SECTION 1: ADMISSIONS, RECRUITMENT & WIDENING ACCESS

INTRODUCTION

The Quality Code is split into 12 themes, available online on the QAA website at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>. As part of this, *Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access* is important in governing the processes and procedures surrounding the prospective student and applicants. The Quality Code describes this theme as follows:

This Theme relates to three separate but interconnected areas, admissions, recruitment and widening Access, which are of interest to prospective students, enrolled students and their supporters (such as relatives or educators); and for the UK and devolved governments; and the public. This Theme aims to provide advice and guidance to build a framework for providers to assure quality in these areas. While the three interconnected activities are referred to separately and in further detail throughout the Theme, it is recognised that different learner journeys result in multiple and varied pathways to enrolment with a provider. The manner or order with which the prospective student and the provider connects with these activities will not necessarily be uniform. Further to this, all UK providers have legal or statutory obligations they must meet, particularly around information available to prospective students. This Theme does not seek to duplicate or interpret these.

In defining key terms that will be used frequently in this section, the Quality Code notes the following:

Admissions: Refers to the practices and processes developed and delivered by providers that relate to admitting a prospective student up to the point of enrolment on a course through an application and selection process.

Recruitment: Generally refers to a broad range of activities and initiatives undertaken by providers or their representatives prior to the point of admission. This includes outreach, events and various marketing activities, which ultimately encourage prospective students to either apply to, or start a course with, that provider.

Widening access: Within the scope of this Code, widening access refers to the process by which providers may (or may not) vary their admission or selection processes according to local or national policy guidelines and expectations.

Prospective student: Refers to all those who are applying or considering applying for any course, at any level and employing any mode of study, with a higher education provider.

Current student: Students who are registered/enrolled on any course at undergraduate or postgraduate level, with a higher education provider. An individual becomes a 'current student' at the point of registration/enrolment.

Autonomous higher education provider: Higher education providers that are independent, self-governing bodies, active in teaching, research and scholarship.

Inclusive admissions: An admissions system which seeks to minimise any unnecessary barriers in the process which may prevent some groups of applicants from making a successful application.

SECTION 1: ADMISSIONS, RECRUITMENT & WIDENING ACCESS

The Quality Code has three different sections: the expectations for standards; the expectations for quality; and the guiding principles. The relevant expectations for standards and quality are detailed below. The Guiding Principles are mapped to the University's own policies, procedures and quality mechanisms. There are two separate sections for the University's practices, detailing what the University does and has in place to support that expectation/principle, as well as the supporting documentation, which includes reference to supporting policy, procedure, website or other document.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STANDARDS & CORE/COMMON PRACTICES	EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY & CORE/COMMON PRACTICES
The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.	From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.
	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
	The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

QUALITY CODE PRINCIPLES	UNIVERSITY PRACTICES	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
GUIDING PRINCIPLES		
1. Policies and procedures for application, selection and admission to higher education courses are transparent and accessible. Policies and procedures for selection and admission to higher education should be readily accessible by prospective students and their supporters, and clearly articulate how the application and selection process	<p>We ensure that admission is based entirely on merit and on the basis to achieve as is stated in our Admissions Policy. Entry requirements are outlined transparently in all recruitment material ensuring applicants are fully appraised of these requirements.</p> <p>We have a long-standing commitment to widening access. Our Widening Access webPolicy page provides clear information on the criteria which the University will consider when making an Adjusted or Access Threshold Offer. Our Contextualised Admissions and Access Thresholds Policy provides further detail around the criteria used.</p>	<p>Admissions Policy (Policy) Widening Access Criteria (Webpage) Contextual Admissions and Access Threshold Policy (Policy) Articulation Pathways Policy (2025/26) (Policy)</p> <p>Example of programme page with entry qualifications: History Entry Qualifications (Webpage) All Entry Requirements (Webpage) How to Apply - Study Here (Webpage) Appeals and Complaints (Webpage)</p>

operates. This will include expected timescales and key milestones, what communications they will receive and through which channels, what actions they will need to undertake and when, and how to request feedback or submit a complaint or appeal.	<p>Dedicated webpages ensure that different cohorts of applicants are informed of the timescales associated with each type of application and who to expect communications to come from.</p> <p>Appeals and complaints from applicants are considered under the appropriate University's Policy on Student Appeals and Complaint Handling Procedure.</p>	
<p>2. Higher education providers use fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully.</p> <p>An effective admissions process should select students based on their potential to succeed on their chosen course of study, and assessment should be aligned to this goal. Assessment methods should be fair and reliable: consistently applied and delivering consistent outcomes. Tools used to differentiate the suitability of applicants should be appropriate to the course of study and within reasonable expectations of prospective students.</p>	<p>The admissions process is managed by a central team led by the Directorate of Student Recruitment, and selection is carried out by trained, professional admissions staff and by trained academic staff.</p> <p>Selection criteria are set out clearly on web pages managed by the Directorate of Student Recruitment, with any changes to entry criteria considered and approved by the University's Student Recruitment Committee. Following which, approval is sought on behalf of Senate from the Quality Assurance Committee. Criteria are applied by staff consistently at a programme specific level and are designed to take account of an applicant's ability to cope with the challenges of a university education in addition to academic achievement to date.</p> <p>We review our admissions policy and guidelines for admission on an annual basis to ensure that these continue to set out fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods and criteria.</p> <p>For certain degree programmes, e.g. education, music, medicine, interviews and auditions are utilised to assess prospective students in the selection procedures. Prospective students are provided with information to enable them to prepare for, and engage with, the process.</p>	<p>Admissions Policy (Policy) Student Recruitment Committee (Webpage) <i>Example:</i> Interviews for Medicine <i>Example:</i> Interviews for Secondary Education <i>Example:</i> Interviews for Primary Education <i>Example:</i> Interviews for MA Education</p>
<p>3. Higher education providers reduce or remove unnecessary barriers for prospective students.</p>	<p>We have a long-standing commitment to widening access and removing unnecessary barriers for prospective students. Our Widening Access web Policy page provides clear information on the criteria which the University will consider when making an Adjusted or Access Threshold Offer. Our</p>	<p>Widening Access Criteria (Webpage) Contextual Admissions and Access Threshold Policy (Policy) Contextualised Admissions and Access Threshold Policy (Policy)</p>

<p>The application process should be inclusive and allow all prospective students to make an application and receive a fair outcome, regardless of background. Higher education providers should aim to reduce or remove any barriers not necessary to the appropriate selection and assessment of applicants. Action should be taken to ensure that internal policies and procedures do not have a negative impact on specific individuals or demographic groups and obstruct their access to the course.</p>	<p>Contextualised Admissions and Access Thresholds Policy provides further detail around the criteria used.</p> <p>Additionally, a series of Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP) projects focused on direct entrants and articulating students. The project aimed to enhance the academic resilience of advanced entry students. It was led by academics in the School of Psychology in conjunction with colleagues in Widening Access and Articulations. The LTEP webpages provide further detail in this regard.</p> <p>We have a range of scholarships targeted at those from low- income backgrounds which are actively promoted through our webpages. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ scholarships to support students from Scotland ▪ scholarships for students from the rest of the UK from a lower income bracket ▪ scholarships for those from low/lower-middle income countries <p>In line with all university policies, those associated with admission are subject to assessment under Equality Impact legislation to ensure specific groups of individuals are not obstructed from undertaking any programme within the University.</p> <p>To build further on support measures already in place, the University of Aberdeen has committed to become a 'University of Sanctuary' and work in partnership with City of Sanctuary and other partner initiatives to inspire and support universities to develop a culture of welcome within their own institutions and their wider communities.</p>	<p>Finance and Funding (Webpage) <i>Example</i> Aberdeen Global Scholarship (Webpage) Hope Heroes: Alumni (Webpage) Universities of Sanctuary (Webpage) Equality Impact Assessment (Webpage) Refugees and Asylum Seekers (Webpage) Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP): Advanced Entry Students Project (Webpage)</p>
<p>4. Information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions.</p>	<p>We ensure that admission is based entirely on merit and on the basis to achieve as is stated in our Admissions Policy Entry qualifications are transparently set out in all relevant material. Entry requirements are outlined transparently in all recruitment material ensuring applicants are fully appraised of these requirements.</p>	<p>Undergraduate Studies (Webpage) Information Guides and Advice, Undergraduate (Webpage) Postgraduate Taught Studies (Webpage) On Demand Studies (Webpage) Widening Access Criteria (Webpage)</p>

<p>Prospective students should have confidence that information supplied to them during recruitment and widening access activities is accurate and reliable, and enables them to make informed decisions about higher education. They should be directed to sources of further information to enable them to make informed decisions at the point of application for higher education courses.</p>	<p>We provide print and digital material specifically aimed at School and College partners and offer regular events (virtual when face-to-face is restricted) to supplement this material.</p> <p>In addition to events, there are other ways prospective students can contact us when seeking information enabling them to receive tailored responses to their specific queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - email - enquiry form ("Enquire Now" option on web pages) - chat option on web pages (Unibuddy) 	<p>Contextual Admissions and Access Threshold Policy (Policy) Widening Access (Webpage) Entry from College (Webpage) Open Days, Events and Visits (Webpage) Unibuddy (Webpage)</p>
<p>5. All staff, representatives and partners engaged in the delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access are appropriately trained and resourced.</p> <p>Admissions, recruitment and widening access activities should be conducted in a professional manner, and higher education providers ensure that anyone delivering these activities has received appropriate training and support. Training and resources should be reviewed, evaluated and refreshed regularly to ensure that practice and policy are fully aligned and reflect the current landscape.</p>	<p>Processes and activities relating to admissions, recruitment and widening access are managed by a central team led by the Directorate of Student Recruitment, who receive regular and appropriate training, support, and professional development. The team's activities include engaging with College partners and sector-wide networking groups, and engagement with professional development provided by these bodies (for example UCAS policy groups and UCAS Standing Group; Higher Education Liaison Officers (HELOA), and its Scottish counterpart (SHELOA)), Access Delivery Group and Scottish Widening Access Managers Group (which the Access & Articulation Manager Chairs).</p> <p>To ensure appropriate allocation of resources, volumes of applications across the application cycle are monitored on a regular basis and resources allocated or re-directed to address any changing pattern of demand.</p> <p>All staff are required to complete Equality & Diversity and Unconscious Bias training.</p>	
<p>6. Providers continually develop widening access strategies and policies in line</p>	<p>The University's Widening Access Strategy is informed by national policy. This area of policy is overseen by the University's Student Recruitment Committee. The University's Senior Management Team considers actively the direction to be taken by the institution in this area.</p>	<p>Widening Access (Webpage)</p>

<p>with local and national guidance.</p> <p>Procedures and policies governing the purpose and scope of widening access activities and initiatives are determined by a range of local and national bodies. There are different and evolving practices reflected across UK nations and providers should respond in line with stated expectations and develop their strategies in context with relevant frameworks.</p>	<p>The University has strong regional and national links in relation to widening access, with representation on the Universities & Colleges Scotland Joint Articulation Group (JAG), Scottish National Access & Widening Access Participation Managers Group (SWANAWPMG) (With the Access & Articulation Manager Chairs, Access Delivery Group and Scottish Community of Access and Participation Practitioners (SCAPP).</p>	
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19 February 2025

QAC/190225/010

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE



Mapping Against the UK Quality Code

SECTION 5: ENABLING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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Authored: January 2022

SECTION 5: ENABLING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Quality Code is split into 12 themes, available online on the QAA website at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>. As part of this, *Enabling Student Achievement* is an important component in ensuring students are supported through their studies. Students will be able to succeed should the appropriate measures be in place to support them. The quality code describes this theme as:

Success in higher education is instrumental for the academic, professional and personal development of students. This success can be measured in part by benchmarking against set outcomes. However, it can also be measured through the approach taken to continuously developing the student experience.

An effective approach to student support should encompass curriculum design and learning and teaching, working across all areas of provision. This approach includes active engagement with students and staff from across a provider to ensure the continual evaluation and development of the student experience. Effective student support will recognise the diverse needs of the student body and mitigate the potential adverse effects associated with challenging aspects of the student experience such as complaints, retention or progression.

This theme focuses on the development of students through their educational opportunities, as well as the diverse array of support required for a diverse and growing student population. There are a range of support services across a range of teams at the University, which provide academic, professional and personal support to students who may require it.

In defining key terms that will be used frequently in this section, the Quality Code notes the following:

Transferable skills: Core skills and attributes developed from a range of experiences including education, the workplace, leisure activities, and personal and social situations, which can be applied to different settings.

Graduate attributes: Skills and qualities which higher education providers have identified that their graduates will have developed during their studies and through participation in student life.

Mental health and well-being: Mental health is a state of well-being where an individual realises their own abilities, has the resilience to cope with the common stresses of life, work productively and can contribute to their community.

Safeguarding: Safeguarding refers to higher education providers implementing and adhering to robust procedures, which ensure that their students are able to study and participate in student life in a safe and supportive environment.

Students: In relation to this Code, the term 'student' refers to all individuals studying a higher education course regardless of demographic, mode or level of study, subject area or geographic location.

SECTION 5: ENABLING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The Quality Code has three different sections: the expectations for standards; the expectations for quality; and the guiding principles. The relevant expectations for standards and quality are detailed below. The Guiding Principles are mapped to the University's own policies, procedures and quality mechanisms. There are two separate sections for the University's practices, detailing what the University does and has in place to support that expectation/principle, as well as the supporting documentation, which includes reference to supporting policy, procedure, website or other document.

EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY & CORE/Common PRACTICES
From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.
The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.
The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their education experience.
The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

QUALITY CODE PRINCIPLES	UNIVERSITY PRACTICES	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
GUIDING PRINCIPLES		
1. Strategic and operational plans for supporting students and enabling achievement to align to the student journey. The provider's commitment to student development and achievement is explicitly	The University is now well into the implementation of our new strategic plan with a longer-term strategic vision for Education and Research. <i>Aberdeen 2040</i> is comprised of four related, but distinct themes: inclusive, interdisciplinary, international and sustainable. Within the inclusive strand, there is a large emphasis on the wellbeing of our students and staff; as well as a focus on their development both personally and professionally. Alongside this, we have been progressing with an	Aberdeen 2040 Strategy (Webpage) Wellbeing Strategy (2021-2025) (Document) Wellbeing Strategy (Webpage) Student Wellbeing (Webpage) Staff Wellbeing (Webpage) Student Support & Experience Committee (Webpage) AUSA Student Mental Health Agreement (Webpage)

<p>expressed and integrated into strategies that inform operational approaches and ensure collective understanding for students and staff.</p>	<p>implementation plan, covering the first 5 years, which outlines key actions associated with the strategic goal which are reviewed and amended annually.</p> <p>Progress toward the achievement of the strategic plan is closely monitored by means of Key Performance Indicators, both linked to the Strategy and SFC Outcome Agreement.</p> <p>In line with the University's strategic commitment to inclusivity, the University drives forward the Wellbeing Strategy for both staff and students. Now in its final year, The year 2 action plan (2022/23) saw us make steadysignificant progress has been made towards meeting the aims set out in the strategy. Most notably, in the past 12 months, the launch of our suicide safer commitment, the relaunch of Safezone and the launch of the Dignity at Work and Study Toolkit. Considerable work has been conducted to enhance both staff and student Wellbeing web pages provide further resources for staff and likewise a similar web resource is provided for students.</p> <p>The Student Support & Experience Committee, a sub-committee of the University Education Committee, has responsibility for “the development and implementation of strategy and policies to enhance students’ probability of success in all aspects of their student experience and address gaps which appear more likely for specific groups of students”. The Committee has representation from every School, which allows for strategic, collaborative and cross-disciplinary discussions to be held. Its remit was recently expanded beyond Student Support to include wider experience following an internal governance review allowing us to take an even wider, holistic, view on the issues impacting our students and their wellbeing.</p> <p>The University continues to work closely with the Student Union to deliver the Student Mental Health Agreement (SHMA) Key aspects of the current action plan include conducting a student wellbeing training audit and enhancing the wellbeing training offering available. development of a student welfare committee (including representation from Doha campus);</p>	<p>Strategic Planning (Webpage) SFC Outcome Agreement (Webpage) Student Representation and Engagement (Webpage) Dignity at Work and Study (Webpage) Suicide Safer University Commitment (Webpage)</p>
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~~continued focus on a mental health awareness campaign, mental health and wellbeing learning and development opportunities and embedding wellbeing in the teaching and learning environment.~~

In terms of student-related strategic matters, [recent policy reviews have included a new Extensions Policy, review of the Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals, and Support for Study Policy.](#) Additionally, [the University has continued its work in relation to international student experience.](#) ~~recent policy reviews have included the Pastoral Support Review and the Monitoring and Absence Review, for example. The Policy on Student Absence was approved by Senate in September 2023, and implemented for the 2023-2024 Academic Year.~~ Other such strategic reviews are set up with a particular focus whenever they are required.

~~Work was undertaken in 2022/23 to review the format of the SPA—this has resulted in a new focus and process. The 2023/24~~ [The University's](#) Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) sets out the University's and Student Union's joint commitment to:

- fostering an environment for open and ongoing dialogue between students and staff, and
- embedding transparency and honesty throughout
- recognising and being respectful of different approaches to ensuring the best Aberdeen student experience.

The agreement is based on a set of core themes to support organisational objectives, continuity and allows for annual updates in line with Sabbatical priorities.

Student feedback and consultation has shaped our focus and priorities for the Academic Year 2024/25. We are committed to enhancing the inclusive environment and positive culture at the UoA, supporting students to maintain positive mental health, manage problems and support the prevention of mental ill health. We will support students' career success through a range of opportunities to exploring options, develop skills and connect with employers. This is monitored by data such as the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey.

2. Clear, accessible and inclusive policies and procedures to enable students and staff to identify when support mechanisms may be required for academic and personal progression.

Policies are consistent, accessible, easy to understand, student-centred and up-to-date. Each policy is clearly linked to appropriate procedures to facilitate seamless identification of, and access to, any academic or other student support needs. The impact of current and proposed policies and procedures on students with protected characteristics is consistently assessed to identify and mitigate barriers to student development and achievement. Effective student support will recognise the diverse needs of the student body and mitigate the potential adverse effects associated with challenging aspects of the student experience such as complaints, retention or progression.

All Education policies are available to view on the University Webpages, as part of the Academic Quality Handbook. This comprehensive set of webpages covers all aspects of teaching and learning provision, from registration to graduation. Physical copies can be requested where necessary from the Academic Services team.

In line with all university policies, those associated with student support are subject to assessment under Equality Impact legislation to ensure specific groups of individuals are not obstructed from accessing support within the University and that policies are fair and inclusive.

The University operates a Support for Study Policy, which outlines the University's approach to supporting students who may be struggling with their studies due to health and wellbeing issues. This policy ~~is~~ was recently reviewed and was updated from August 2024. ~~currently being formally reviewed to ensure it remains appropriate for the evolving needs of our students. We hope to launch our new policy later in 2024.~~ We have further enhanced our complex case management processes, supported by recently recruited a specific complex case worker to help manage such cases across our Student Support Services, and will be seeking continuing to offer training more specialist staffing to work with to staff working with -students who need enhanced support to engage with their studies in the coming months.

The University has developed an Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework which aims to enable inclusion and accessibility to be fully integrated into all aspects of the design and delivery of learning, teaching and assessment. The Framework draws together relevant guidance, policies, resources, support and specialist training relating to accessibility and inclusivity.

The Personal Tutor scheme provides general pastoral support to undergraduate students in matters such as achievement of the Aberdeen 2040 Attributes & Skills (MySkills Framework) ~~Graduate Attributes~~, Employability, Co-curricular opportunities and feedback as well as a pastoral support role. Postgraduate Taught students receive pastoral

[Academic Quality Handbook \(Webpage\)](#)
[Students – Academic Life \(Webpage\)](#)
[Support for Study Policy \(Policy\)](#)
[Support and Wellbeing \(Webpage\)](#)
[Equality Impact Assessments \(Webpage\)](#)
[Inclusion and Accessibility \(Webpage\)](#)
[Student Learning Service \(Webpage\)](#)
[Personal Tutoring \(Webpage\)](#)
[Students4Students Scheme \(Webpage\)](#)
[Dignity at Work and Study \(Webpage\)](#)
[MySkills \(Webpage\)](#)

	<p>support from their programme coordinator. Considerable work has been undertaken to enhance the information available to staff and students on the pastoral support webpages. This includes a new staff resource area.</p> <p>The Student Buddy Scheme (previously S4S) continues to evolve and in 2022/23 was opened to PGT students .</p> <p>The Student of Concern form was developed and launched in 2023 to provide an additional route for reporting wellbeing concerns to Student Support.</p> <p>The Dignity at Work and Study toolkit was launched in October. This is a really valuable resource for our community which aims to help people understand work and study mistreatment. It included guidance on having conversations, seeking support and reporting incidents</p> <p>In addition, the Student Learning Service (SLS) in the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) offers a range of individual and group options for students who may need academic skills development and support, including those who are neurodivergent incorporating students with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs).</p> <p>Staff from Registry provide an in-person support service for academic related matters, including registration, progression, appeals and complaints through the student Infohub. This service is provided alongside support from other specialist areas including student finance, accommodation and assistance with the Personal Tutor system. In addition to the in-person services, support functions operate both general and topic specific online chat services with resource supporting these services allocated as appropriate throughout the academic year.</p>	
3. Training and resources are allocated to student support services to enable effective delivery, ensure comprehensive evaluation	<p>The University has recently invested significantly in its support services, including additional resource to support students. This has increased the staffing in the Student Support team by 6FTE and the availability of staff to be able to assist with student needs. The provision of ongoing training and development for all support staff has been vital to ensuring that staff are well equipped in supporting students.</p>	<p>Staff Development (Webpage) Training and Professional Development (Webpage) Centre for Academic Development (Webpage) Counselling Service (Webpage) Cost of Living and Money Matters (Webpage) Student Learning Service (Webpage) Mental Health First Aid Network Resources (Webpage)</p>

and subsequent development.

Support services encompass all areas of the student experience outside the formal curriculum. These areas include, but are not limited to, academic, financial, housing, welfare, employability and personal development. The effective management, delivery and success of these services is crucial to the student experience and can directly impact on progression and achievement rates. A strategic approach to resourcing that incorporates full evaluation of these services and considers feedback from students and staff can ensure successful delivery of student support services.

Within Human Resources, the Staff and Organisational Development team supports the personal and professional development of staff. This includes a dedicated training budget which is allocated to various training projects and initiatives to further develop University staff. Recent sessions have included race literacy training for student-focused staff, as well as the ongoing programme of training sessions.

CAD is central in supporting the academic and educational development needs of all staff. The dedicated Educational Development team provides training and advice to staff regarding academic support. Under the wider auspices of CAD, which includes SLS, the benefits of strong interprofessional links means that materials and sessions are frequently co-designed and delivered, ensuring that the student voice is incorporated into the wide range of courses and professional development opportunities for staff which can be accessed via CAD's website. SLS offers a range of individual and group options for students who may need academic skills development and support, including those who are neurodivergent. ~~incorporating students with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs).~~

Our University Counselling Service provide proactive and reactive support to staff undertaking any role with us, introducing a ~~new~~ "debrief" service, launched in late 2021, which encourages staff to have a half hour chat with a member of the service to discuss a difficult case or seek support following a challenging encounter. The University ~~is currently focused on a pattern of events and activities designed to support the demands placed on Students linked to the Cost of Living Crisis and we have a new website collating this information, together with details of additional support being put in place.~~ [is currently focused on developing new Group work sessions within our Counselling offering to look at more proactive support to common mental health issues experienced by our students.](#)

Linked to the Wellbeing strategy, the Wellbeing and Engagement team produce an annual ~~wellbeing calendar~~ [wellbeing calendar](#) of activities. Each month is broken down into 5 themes targeting events and

[Wellbeing Resources and Training \(Webpage\)](#)
[Wellbeing & Mental Health \(Webpage\)](#)

campaigns around: wellbeing; mental health; safety; study support; and equality diversity and inclusion.

~~Following a~~ Mental Health and Wellbeing training audit ~~was conducted in Jan 2023. It identified what was currently available to staff and students, whether it was fit for purpose and what the gaps are. A new landing page of Training opportunities has been developed and a development timeline identified to~~ a dedicated wellbeing training webpage ~~has been developed with additional wellbeing related training added on a continual basis. This includes a series of practical bitesize online modules to help staff develop their skills.~~
~~enhance the suite of training throughout 2023/24. Phase two, focusing on enhancing the student training offering will commence early 2024.~~

A new Pastoral support workshop – Support you to support students” was piloted at the end of 2023 and continues to be offered to staff. This covers all aspects of pastoral support and provides an opportunity to practise skills and network.

We now have 108 MHFAiders across the University and are currently undertaking a department ratio exercise to identify the spread across each area and will then circulate an up-to-date list of MHFAiders in each location.

We have successfully delivered knowledge skills exchange sessions on the following topics:

- Signs & Symptoms
- Active Listening & Supportive Conversations
- Boundaries
- Confidentiality Vs Privacy
- Wellness Action Plans
- Effective Signposting and support overview
- Risk & Protective factors
- Frames of Reference and Taking a holistic approach
- We have also had guest speakers from Men Who Talk, NHS24, Breathing Space and our EAP providers.

We continue to produce a Monthly Digest for updates and development opportunities, as well as continuing to add to and update the MHFA online Resources Site.

We recently conducted a feedback survey on the changes within the Network, a snapshot of results can be found here, and a couple of quotes below:

"I feel my empathy has grown due to the better knowledge I have acquired via the MHFA meetings and monthly info. I am better able to put myself in others shoes in order to find the best way to support them"

"It has been very useful and reassuring for myself to have the training and discussions with the network to be able to support others, where I previously would have felt awkward doing this, both at work but also outside of work."

"Reflecting on my time since completing the training, I am happy I decided to undertake this role. Although I have not had anyone come to me in crisis, talking with both friends and colleagues in a supportive manner and signposting the resources available to them has been a big help already."

~~The review and restructure of the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Network is complete. Whilst the MHFA trained members will continue to be available as a resource, the focus of the network will be shifted to proactively enhance mental health and wellbeing understanding, knowledge, awareness of support provision and encouraging an open and supportive environment in our community (of both staff and students)~~

~~A new online resource area has been developed which provides access to resources and a programme of monthly development opportunities.~~

Prescribed online course, "Getting Started at the University of Aberdeen" for all ~~level 1~~ new undergraduate and postgraduate taught students outlines all support services, highlighting where to get assistance when needed. To further support students and underline course content, during Welcome Week, a number of events and activities are run by the Student Experience team with the aim of transitioning students to University and giving them all the essential information, they need to prepare for university life.

	<p>The inclusive, responsive and professionally accredited Careers and Employability Service provides accessible careers education, information, advice and guidance services, available to all students and graduates. Service effectiveness and professionalism is reviewed regularly (most recent submission, December 2023) against the AGCAS Quality Standard which is a condition of our continued institutional membership.</p> <p>Through the ongoing schedule of policy review, policies and procedures related to student support activities are actively considered and updated reflecting current circumstances.</p>	
<p>4. Clear, consistent and accessible communication about opportunities and support available to students from pre-entry through to completion and beyond.</p> <p>Clear, consistent and accessible communications, from pre- entry through to graduation and beyond, will ensure students are fully informed of the opportunities and support available to them. This communication should be concise, timely and structured throughout the period of study and designed to facilitate student retention, progression and achievement. Effective communication with students will recognise different modes of study, individual learning styles and preferences.</p>	<p>The University ensures clear and effective communication to prospective, current and former students. The recent implementation and review of the Student Communications Policy ensures that communications are clear, consistent and accessible to all students.</p> <p>For current students, the Experience, Engagement and Wellbeing team manage almost all student communications and ensure consistency in tone and messaging. Where communications to students are provided from the University Senior Management Team, the Communications Team develops those messages in line with the messaging from the Student Experience Team.</p> <p>For prospective students, communications are managed via the Engagement and Conversion team within External Relations. This helps to ensure consistency of key messaging to all new and prospective students.</p> <p>Social media channels are also managed via the Engagement and Conversion team, with separate accounts for dedicated widening access projects.</p> <p>The University has dedicated social media channels which communicate directly with the student population with relevant information for their studies, including academic and personal support options. These are managed by the Student Experience team.</p>	<p>Student Communication Policy (Policy) Communicating With You (Webpage) Study (Webpage) New Students (Webpage) Student Life (Webpage) Enhanced Study Options (Webpage) Co-Curricular Activities (Webpage) Career Readiness (Webpage) Student Essential Information & Support Guide (Document) Widening Access (Webpage) Advanced Entry Students from College (Webpage)</p>

	<p>The University makes use of its webpages to ensure messaging is available to students regarding support opportunities. These can be found on the study webpages, as well as the Students' pages for current and returning students. Widening Access students, and students articulating into the University from FE College, also have their own dedicated web pages with relevant information, advice and guidance. The University aims to target information to the most relevant cohorts of students, including new, prospective and returning, different campuses and online students.</p> <p>A Student Essential Information and Support Guide has been produced for the purpose of detailing all available support options to students in one place. 2022 and 2023 also saw the production and circulation of wallet size staff and student support cards.</p> <p>Regular, targeted and timely communications about careers and employability enhancing opportunities are sent based on students' responses to career readiness questions embedded annually within the online student registration process.</p> <p>A programme of regular events and pop ups are held across campus providing an opportunity to engage with members of the community about various topics.</p> <p>For University graduates and alumni, the Alumni Engagement team manage communications to ensure that graduates receive up-to-date news, information, events and support that may be available to them. Information is provided on our Careers and Employability Service which is available to all current and former students.</p>	
<p>5. Equality of opportunity for all students to develop academic and professional skills.</p> <p>Ensuring equality of opportunity requires collaboration across academic, professional and specialist services. A broad and</p>	<p>As part of the University Aberdeen 2040 Strategy, inclusivity is a key strand and incorporates equality of opportunity and accessibility for all students. The University's vision for Equality & Diversity is "To strive to create an inclusive culture which celebrates the diversity of the University's staff and students. In recognising that this diversity brings new and engaging perspectives and enriches the experience of all who work, study and visit the University, we will take a proactive approach to</p>	<p>Aberdeen 2040 Strategy (Webpage) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Webpage) Student Feedback (Webpage) You Said, We Did (Webpage) Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework (Webpage) Student Learning Service (Webpage)</p>

<p>ongoing range of academic and pastoral support will be available, regardless of location or mode of study. Providers will need to consider both the needs of the individual student and the wider student body, including anticipating their varied requirements (such as protected characteristics).</p>	<p>embedding and mainstreaming the principles of Equality and Diversity.” The EDI policy supports this work.</p> <p>The University operates Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that no group is unduly discriminated against and to ensure activities are carried out in a fair and transparent way. All new policies should be reviewed by means of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure they are fit for purpose in an inclusive environment.</p> <p>The University has developed a Framework for Accessibility and Inclusion in Education (see 2-abovesection 2). This encompasses all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion in the student experience, ensuring all students are supported to study.</p> <p>SLS within CAD offers one-to-one advice and academic skills development for all students. Specialist one-to-one support is available for students who are neurodivergent (such as for example, ADHD, or autistic spectrum condition, dyslexia); including those with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) such as dyslexia. Online skills resources for all undergraduate students are available through the University's Achieve (for Undergraduates) and for taught postgraduates through Achieve + (for Taught Postgraduates) sites in MyAberdeen and through the Toolkit webpages.</p> <p>The Student Experience team has developed a Framework for Student Feedback. The framework also outlines the importance of responding to feedback and sharing what has changed as a result of student feedback with the individual, as well as the community at large. Student feedback plays an important role in the University’s approach to enhancing the student experience and ensuring students are equally supported. In order to deliver the best possible student experience, the University gathers regular and detailed information about the University experience, which can be used to monitor, develop and improve the student experience.</p> <p>Students provide feedback about their experience at the University of Aberdeen, through a number of national and institutional surveys such as</p>	<p>Toolkit (Webpage) Gaelic Language Plan (Webpage)</p>
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the National Students Survey (NSS), Graduate Outcomes Survey, and the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (ASES). All surveys are approved by the Feedback Working Group to allow a more coordinated approach to surveying students, and to facilitate the sharing of information that has already been harnessed elsewhere.

In addition, many departments create their own ad-hoc surveys to gather non-academic feedback which are shared through their own channels. As an institution, it is essential that efforts are streamlined to avoid feedback fatigue.

The ASES is sent to all registered students asking for feedback on their University experience, belonging and facilities. The NSS asks final year undergraduates in the UK about their course experience. Feedback received through surveys should be shared with staff and students through the You Said, We Did web pages, closing the feedback loop to show the changes that have been implemented as a result of student feedback.

The Experience, Engagement and Wellbeing team also work with departments to run ad-hoc focus groups throughout the year, on a huge range of topics.

Additionally, students can send instant feedback to the University on various topics. An online feedback form is available on the student webpages for use at any time throughout the year. This is promoted in student eZines and can be accessed via the main navigation menu. Feedback submitted through this form is processed by the Student Experience Team. When necessary, the feedback will be passed to the relevant School or Professional Services Team to assist in the response. Responses are logged in an anonymised spreadsheet for future reference.

	<p>Feedback is also gathered through discussion at Staff-Student Liaison Committees, through the University's Course Feedback Forms or more informally through focus groups, mid-term student feedback or other means.</p> <p>Additionally, the University places strong emphasis on the involvement of students on committees and in decision making. Each School has an AUSA elected School Convener who is the lead student representative for each School. They work closely with the elected class representatives 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 academic matters and those relating to the wider student experience. At a University level, AUSA representatives are also full members of all Education committees including the University Education Committee and the Student Support Committee along with Senate which is the University's main academic decision-making body.</p> <p>The Graduate Attributes are a series of commitments that link teaching and research to create graduating students who will be ready to thrive in workplaces of the future. The new Graduate Attributes were approved by Senate on 14 February 2024.</p> <p>Additionally, the University is committed to Gaelic, and as such, the Gaelic Language Plan outlines a series of commitments as part of the University's efforts to promote the use and acquisition of the Gaelic language. Under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005, public bodies were required to produce a Gaelic Language Plan to assist the national effort to secure the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland.</p>	
6. Provide an accessible, inclusive and engaging community that incorporates	<p>Our Aberdeen 2040 Strategy places inclusivity at its heart and various groups and individuals are represented on the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee to champion and review our approaches to different areas including Gender Based Violence and Race. These formal meetings are supplemented by network groups for staff on</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (Webpage) Action Against Gender Based Violence (Webpage) Race Equality Strategy Group (Webpage) Equality Network Groups (Webpage) Disability Service (Webpage)</p>

staff and students to facilitate a supportive environment.

Providing students with a sense of belonging and supportive community aids retention and creates an open environment, where students can confidently seek help. Without this, students may not feel comfortable to engage with support services. An effective community can also enable students to assist each other, not only to provide support, but further develop and embed their own graduate attributes and outcomes.

various topics including disability, carers and parents and those from the LGBTQ+ community. Similar groups and liberation fora exist within AUSA for students.

Students are encouraged to be open and share details of their support needs before arriving with us (especially those with disabilities) so that our team can implement a suitable range of adjustments to maximise their opportunities to thrive. We have staff dedicated to supporting learning for students who are neurodivergent ~~including those with specific learning differences~~; facilitating access to assistive technology; and in the routine mentoring of those with long term mental health conditions. Changes ~~are were implemented in currently being progressed~~ ~~in~~ 2024 to reformat our support beyond those with disabilities with a move from “disability provisions” to “inclusion adjustments” linked to studies. This means enhanced support can now be made available to other groups, including care experienced students, carers, student parents and veterans.

Training has been rolled out to staff within Student Support Services in relation to Gender-Based Violence initiatives, such as EmilyTest (including L.I.S.T.E.N. training). EmilyTest is a Gender-Based Violence Charter, which is made up of five overarching principles with over 40 minimum standards which institutions must meet in order to pass the Emily Test. L.I.S.T.E.N is a new risk assessment tool developed by EmilyTest. The tool is designed to give staff across Further and Higher Education institutions the skills to offer in-the-moment support to a victim/survivor of sexual violence or harassment, ensure they are safe and put in place clear next steps for support. In 2024 we partnered with EmilyTest to co-develop a “train the trainer” model for L.I.S.T.E.N which we now operated and has been rolled out to other charter institutions in Scotland.

The Buddy scheme offers new students the opportunity to get support and advice help from assigned student mentors who have been in the same position as them. Buddies can share their experiences with new students and provide a safe space for the new students to ask questions at any time throughout the year.

[Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework \(Webpage\)](#)
[Tools and Resources to Support Accessibility \(Webpage\)](#)
[Peer Support, including Students4Students \(Webpage\)](#)
[Student Partnership Agreement \(Document\)](#)
[Emily Test \(Webpage\)](#)
[Gender-Based Violence \(Webpage\)](#)
[Academic Skills - Student Learning Service \(Webpage\)](#)

	<p>Pre arrival events such as the Student Panel provide an opportunity for students to hear about the reality of studying at the University directly from a student.</p> <p>CAD provides a range of workshops and accredited programmes which include and reflect inclusive practice in the course design process. Workshops which support accessibility (including captioning) are regularly available. Online resources which provide staff with guidance on inclusivity and accessibility when designing and delivering courses are available.</p> <p>Prescribed online course for all new undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, “Getting Started at the University of Aberdeen” promotes all University support services and EDI issues.</p> <p>In achieving our inclusive goals, AUSA has significant input into the work of the University, and students sit on most formal Senate and Court Committees as well as informal review/working groups. This student representation and engagement ensures transparency, while engaging students on the matters that concern them most. The University is therefore able to work collaboratively with students to review and improve services and processes.</p> <p>The EDI Events and Engagement group has been established to is to recommend and oversee an annual programme of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) events and engagement activities.</p>	
<p>7. Enable students to take responsibility for their own learning and become resilient individuals, equipped for a rewarding career.</p> <p>Students are supported while participating in experiences relating to professional development, without barriers</p>	<p>The University provides a wide range of opportunities to enable students to develop skills to support their academic, personal and professional progression. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed Online course, “Getting Started at the University of Aberdeen”, for all level 1 new undergraduate and postgraduate students (including Qatar and online campuses), and articulating students who are in their first year at the University. • MySkills framework resources such as the MySkills Portfolio, skills audit and MySkills Resources to allow students to record, reflect upon and develop their skills respectively. 	<p>Careers & Employability Service (Webpage) Your Employability (Webpage) Student Advice & Support Office (Webpage) Disability Services (Webpage) Student Learning Service (Webpage) Scholarships and Student Funding (Webpage) AUSA (Webpage) Resilient Learning Communities Enhancement Theme (Webpage)</p>

<p>resulting from location of study, protected characteristics, financial or time constraints (for example, those who are at work or carers). Inclusive course design contains embedded and contextualised learning outcomes relating to academic and professional skills development. However, some groups of students are likely to require additional targeted or specialist support interventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Achieve (for UGs) and Achieve+ (for PGTs) • The Careers and Employability Service; for example (i) co-curricular opportunities (including the new MySkills tool for students to record, reflect and develop their skills online; volunteering opportunities, career mentoring, study abroad and enterprise & entrepreneurship); (ii) degree subject specialist careers provision (delivered one-to-one and in curriculum); (iii) employer engagement opportunities to inspire and inform career choices (including internships, fairs, workshops and presentations) • Student Advice & Support Office (including Disability and Inclusion support for learning) — The Student Learning Service, which provides academic skills support to all students <u>at all levels of study, including including</u> students who are neurodivergent, incorporating those with Specific Learning Differences • Scholarships and Student Funding (including hardship funding) • The Aberdeen University Students' Association, including opportunities for students to 'get involved' • Small projects are funded through the University's Learning & Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP), which has aligned with Thematic Enhancement activities, to encourage the introduction of enhancement activities in learning, and teaching and to disseminate effective practice throughout the Institution and beyond. LTEP aligns with Thematic QAA (Scotland) Enhancement activities. Projects include the development of a zero-credit Resilience course and development of a Resilience Employability Toolkit. The new MySkills tool includes development pathways with activities for students to complete covering a range of skills, including resilience. 	<p>Learning & Teaching Enhancement Projects 2023/24 (Webpage) Learning & Teaching Enhancement Programme 2024/25 (Webpage) MySkills (Webpage)</p>
<p>8. Clearly communicate course outcomes and graduate attributes to all current and prospective students, staff and associated organisations. Course outcomes are tailored to disciplines through the process of</p>	<p>The University communicates the our Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes & Skills; to students through a variety of channels. These channels include via the Virtual Learning Environment (MyAberdeen) <u>where there are specific course areas for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students that act as a central hub for the MySkills Framework;</u> the University website; and through various social media channels. The prescribed online "Getting Started at the University of</p>	<p>Careers & Employability Service (Webpage) Your Employability (Webpage) Course Catalogue (Webpage) MySkills (Webpage)</p>

<p>development (see also Course Design and Development and Learning and Teaching Themes). Staff and students across a provider need to understand how these outcomes are identified, assessed and reviewed to enable them to achieve their desired and required outcomes. Graduate attributes should be clear and specific, and communicated to students, staff and the public. The communication of attributes should enable students to understand how they can achieve and articulate them in a wider context. The attainment of specified attributes should not be dependent on the location, mode or level of study, or the presence or absence of any specific student characteristic.</p>	<p>Aberdeen” course for all incoming Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students includes interactive and engaging activities to develop students’ understanding of the ways the MySkills Framework can be used to enhance their skills development, especially for transferable skills, and enhance their employabilityAberdeen Graduate Attributes, how they relate to their University experience and how they can plan and action their own development of attributes throughout their studies. The Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes & Skills launched in September 2024, replacing the previous Aberdeen Graduate Attributes, and were reviewed by our Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills Task & Finish Group to ensure they remain fit for purpose and take account ofdesigned to align with the University’s commitments to sustainability, interdisciplinarity, inclusivity and international as set out in Aberdeen 2040. The revised set of Graduate Attributes were approved by Senate on 14 February 2024.</p> <p>The Careers & Employability Service actively promotes the importance of skills development, reflection and articulation to students. Alongside the Graduate Attributes review work, a new MySkills development and reflection tool is being piloted, with the longer term plan being to customise the tool to align to the new Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills once finalised.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to link course Intended Learning eOutcomes to the new MySkills Frameworkand relevant graduate attributes are associated with every assessment to ensure that learning is focused and relevant to the course. These will beare detailed to students in course handbooks or the course area in the Virtual Learning Environment.</p>	
<p>9. Actively seek the feedback and engagement of students and staff to ensure continuous improvement of the learning environment.</p>	<p>Students are actively engaged with many routes for providing feedback to ensure continuous improvement within the academic and learning environments. As part of the course review process, students complete Course Feedback Forms for each individual course in their studies, as well as engaging in fora such as the Staff-Student Liaison Committees. In engagement with quality processes, each programme elects a class</p>	<p>Course Evaluations (Webpage) Class Representatives (Webpage) Feedback Webpages (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review (Webpage) Appeals and Complaints (Webpage) (Students) Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (Webpage) NSS (Webpage)</p>

<p>Feedback from students and staff informs the continuous improvement of the effectiveness of arrangements to promote student achievement. Collective and individual student feedback may be gathered in a variety of ways, depending on the context of the individual provider (see also Student Engagement Theme). Providers are encouraged to use a range of informal and formal methods. Academic and support staff play a key role in enabling student achievement and providers are encouraged to involve them in the continuous review of support arrangements to enhance the learning environment.</p>	<p>representative who engages with the School, mainly via the Student-Staff Liaison Committees, to ensure the best possible student and academic experience. The role of the elected AUSA School Convenors is also important in achieving this. Support and training for student representatives is provided by the Student's Union (AUSA).</p> <p>Students are included as full members on all Education committees, including the University Senate ensuring that student input and consultation in all Education-related decision making. Student feedback is pivotal to the success of education provision.</p> <p>The University runs an Aberdeen Student Experience Survey to seek feedback to help inform enhancement and improvement of services across the University, including education provision. Additionally, the <i>You Shape UoA</i> Initiative gives students the opportunity to raise any concerns or provide feedback that is not necessarily related to the academic environment. An academic "Survey Season" is run in the second semester, where students are given the opportunity to provide feedback on academic related matters over a specific period of time. Survey Season comprises of the following surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Student Survey (NSS) – final year UG students • Undergraduate Experience Survey (UES) – UG students Years 1-3 • Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) • Postgraduate Research Survey (PRES) <p>The National Student Survey (NSS) Steering Group, reporting to the Student Support & Experience Committee, ensures institutional oversight and action on the NSS survey results. The creation of a University Action Plan and School Action Plans are central to this work to ensure that student feedback is taken on board and actioned.</p> <p>Through our Internal Teaching Review, students are able to engage actively in the review of the provision in their School and relevant Student-Facing Professional Services, and provide meaningful</p>	<p>Sparqs (Webpage)</p>
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	<p>contributions to the pedagogic action plan for the following few years. Student feedback is valued in these fora as they often give a different and interesting perspectives.</p> <p>Student appeals and complaints are often a way of expressing feedback on a particular issue that has arisen over the course of their studies. This could be academic or non-academic related. The University takes these very seriously and uses them as an enhancement measure to ensure services are continually improving. Reports on student complaints are considered by bi-annually by the Senior Management Team while the University Education and Quality Assurance Committees are responsible for monitoring academic appeals.</p> <p>CAD regularly employs student interns to gather student feedback which informs further enhancements to the virtual learning environment. CAD also meets regularly with the School Directors of Education and the users of MyAberdeen to discuss and inform changes to the virtual learning environment.</p>	
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19 February 2025

QAC/190225/011

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE



Mapping Against the UK Quality Code

SECTION 11: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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Authored: January 2022

SECTION 11: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Quality Code is split into 12 themes, available online on the QAA website at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>. As part of the code, *Student Engagement* is an important theme, particularly in relation to ensuring students have an excellent and supportive student experience. The engagement of students in academic and non-academic feedback is actively encouraged, as students provide meaningful contributions to the enhancement and improvement of teaching, learning and student experience services. The Quality Code describes this theme as follows:

This Theme describes the meaningful participation of students in quality assurance and enhancement processes, which results in the improvement of their educational experience as well as benefiting the wider student body, institution and sector. For student engagement to contribute effectively to quality assurance and enhancement processes, it needs to capture the voices of all students, irrespective of location, mode of delivery, level of study, or discipline.

In practical terms, this means that students should have the opportunity to engage in the evaluation of education provision and that all voices should be represented by means of an equal and inclusive feedback system. It also focuses on students being the drivers of change and ensuring continuous improvement and enhancement of educational and student experience services.

In defining key terms that will be used frequently in this section, the Quality Code notes the following:

Stakeholder: Used to define and describe anyone with an interest in student engagement, and may include the following: students; students' union, association or guild; academic and professional services staff; the provider; employers; regulatory bodies, such as professional, statutory and regulatory bodies; the wider external community, for example, service users; alumni.

Student body: Used to describe the entire student population. Depending on the context, this may include: individual students; groups of students with a common experience or interest (such as a club or society); formal representatives of a group (such as students' union, association or guild), or groups of students.

Students' representative body/organisation: Used to describe a formal body that represents and promotes the interests of students. This may be a students' union, a students' association or guild.

Partnership: For the purposes of this Theme, 'partner' and 'partnership' are used to define and indicate joint working between students and staff (or the students' union, association or guild and the provider). The level of each partner's engagement will vary depending on the context and aspect of the student experience.

Co-creation: Defined as the act of bringing different stakeholders together, to jointly produce a mutually valued outcome. Students can be engaged as co-creators at different levels, ranging from curriculum design negotiated jointly with staff, to participation in policy and strategy development.

Quality system: Covers any formal or informal quality enhancement or quality assurance policy or process used by a higher education provider.

SECTION 11: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The Quality Code has three different sections: the expectations for standards; the expectations for quality; and the guiding principles. The relevant expectations for standards and quality are detailed below. The Guiding Principles are mapped to the University's own policies, procedures and quality mechanisms. There are two separate sections for the University's practices, detailing what the University does and has in place to support that expectation/principle, as well as the supporting documentation, which includes reference to supporting policy, procedure, website or other document.

EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY & CORE/Common Practices

Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES	UNIVERSITY PRACTICES	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
GUIDING PRINCIPLES		
<p>1. Student engagement through partnership working is integral to the culture of higher education, however and wherever provision is delivered - student engagement is led strategically, but widely owned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership working is a key concept for student engagement in higher education – students and staff fulfil mutually important roles in shaping the student 	<p>The University and its Students' Association Union enjoy a collaborative working relationship. The University's Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) sets out the University's and Student Union's joint commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fostering an environment for open and ongoing dialogue between students and staff, and embedding transparency and honesty throughout recognising and being respectful of different approaches to ensuring the best Aberdeen student experience. <p>The agreement is based on a set of core themes to support organisational objectives, continuity and allows for annual updates in line with Sabbatical priorities.</p>	<p>Student Partnership Agreement (Document) Student Engagement (Webpage) Student Feedback Form (Webpage) Engaging Student in Quality Processes (Webpage) Excellence Awards (Webpage)</p>

<p>experience that enables staff and students to recognise and value the impact of student engagement in enhancement and quality assurance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By fostering a culture of mutual respect, openness and sharing of information, providers can benefit from the insights, views and effective engagement of students. Where they exist, providers work with their students' representative body (such as students' union/association/guild) to set mutual goals and desired outcomes from student engagement activity at a strategic level, to orientate students and staff towards a shared understanding of success. • Providers in partnership with their student body should determine how the partnership will work in the context of their own institution. For example, in some providers the students' representative body is the primary vehicle for achieving partnership in institution-wide activities. In others, formal representative structures for partnership working may be embedded throughout. 	<p><u>Student feedback and consultation has shaped our focus and priorities for the Academic Year 2024/25</u>⁴. We are committed to enhancing the <u>inclusive environment and positive culture at the UoA, supporting students to maintain positive mental health, manage problems and support the prevention of mental ill health. We will support students' career success through a range of opportunities to exploring options, develop skills and connect with employers. This is monitored by data such as the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey</u></p> <p>The annual Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) outlines the shared priorities of both organisations for the forthcoming academic period. These agreed priorities are informed by and support both AUSA and the University's strategies, with the overarching goal of enhancing the student experience. The SPA reflects our joint commitment to the following goals and principles:-</p> <p>fostering an environment for open and ongoing dialogue between students and staff,-</p> <p>embedding transparency and honesty throughout,</p> <p>recognising and being respectful of different approaches to enhance the Aberdeen student experience.</p> <p>For The 2023/24 The University and its Students Association, AUSA, committed to a Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) sets out the University's and Student Union's joint commitment to: The agreement which was based on a set of core themes to support organisational objectives, continuity but allowed for annual updates in line with Sabbatical priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fostering an environment for open and ongoing dialogue between students and staff, and • embedding transparency and honesty throughout • recognising and being respectful of different approaches to ensuring the best Aberdeen student experience. <p>Student feedback and consultation has shaped our focus and priorities for the Academic Year 2023/24. We are committed to enhancing the inclusive environment and positive culture at the UOA, supporting students to maintain positive mental health, manage problems and</p>	
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~~support the prevention of mental ill health. We will support students' career success through a range of opportunities to exploring options, develop skills and connect with employers.~~

The University places strong emphasis on the involvement of students on committees and in decision making thus helping to shape the student experience. Each School has an ~~AUSA~~ [Students' Union](#) elected School Convener who is the lead student representative for each School. They work closely with the elected class representatives to feed any concerns about courses and programmes to the School either informally or via the Staff-Student Liaison Committee. 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. survey results) and other matters relating to the wider student experience. At a University level, ~~AUSA~~ [Students' Union](#) representatives are also full members of all Education committees including the University Education Committee and its sub-committees with Senate which is the University's main academic decision-making body, the University Court, our Governing Body and the University Management Group. Additionally, the Principal and members of Senior Management meeting regularly with ~~AUSA~~ [Students' Union](#) Sabbaticals ensuring close partnership working between the University and ~~AUSA~~ [the Students' Union](#).

[The University, Student Union and the newly appointed Rector meet regularly to identify, discuss and respond to themes arising from student interaction.](#)

The Principal's Excellence Awards are an annual celebration of the outstanding achievements of University of Aberdeen staff and students with student nominations being a core strand of these awards.

- [The Student Mental Health Agreement \(SMHA\) is on track for 2024/2025 year. The areas of focus are:](#)
 1. [Student Training Audit Review](#) – with the aim of producing a webpage that outlines all courses, workshops and development

	<p>opportunities available to students around upskilling and knowledge development in the areas of mental health and wellbeing. Also looking at peer support options.</p> <p>2. Suicide Prevention – promotion and marketing of the Suicide Safer University commitment and what this means for students. With the addition of further resources/training being added to the new webpage developed in above area.</p> <p>3. Student Consultation looking at WB & MH, which will inform the working areas for year 2 of the SMHA.</p>	
<p>2. Higher education providers, in partnership with their student body, define, promote, monitor and evaluate the range of opportunities to enable all students to engage in quality assurance and enhancement processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher education providers ensure that students and staff can define, own and promote the full range of opportunities for student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement processes. Providers regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their approach to student engagement. Students play an active role in these monitoring and evaluation activities, including identifying appropriate key performance indicators to be used to measure progress, and demonstrable enhancements to the educational experience. 	<p>Engaging students in their learning is crucial to the quality of the University's teaching and learning provision and the overall student experience. We have several formalised opportunities in which students can become involved with quality processes and provide feedback on their experience, in order to both influence their own period of study and also that of future students.</p> <p>Student feedback is also a key component of the University's processes of monitoring and evaluation. The University use Course Feedback and Reflection Forms to seek views from students on their academic experience. These forms seek feedback on what they have liked about the course and what they have not liked together with areas of good practice. This process provides valuable feedback to course coordinators to inform review of their course and to identify any changes requiring to be made for the next year. The feedback from this process informs the Annual Course and Programme Review process. Additionally, student engagement is integral to the University's Internal Teaching Review process. The Centre for Academic Development support Schools with outcomes of Internal Teaching Reviews, where necessary, ensuring the closure of the feedback loop to students. –</p> <p>Students are also offered a wide range of opportunities to provide feedback on their overall University Experience To help us make the UoA student experience even better, students are offered a wide range of opportunities to provide feedback on their overall University experience such as Filling in completing a survey, joining a focus group, coming along to an open session or filling in our online feedback form. e-</p>	<p>Give Feedback on your Courses (Webpage) Become an Academic Representative (Webpage) University Committees (Webpage) Academic Quality Handbook (Webpage) Student-Staff Liaison Committees (Document) Course Evaluation Forms (Webpage) Surveys (Webpage) Student Feedback (Webpages) Student Representation and Engagement Experience (Webpages) You Said, We Did Students The University of Aberdeen</p>

A new Feedback framework and action group is currently being developed to provide strategic leadership and guidance on student feedback relating to their non-academic experience. This group will oversee the University's non-academic feedback mechanisms for conducting, monitoring and sharing feedback. The feedback gathered is analysed and shared with the group to inform positive change and deliver the best possible student experience.

In terms of wider student feedback, the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (ASES) is run in October for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, and November for postgraduate research students collecting non-academic feedback. In addition, the New to UoA survey is run in October and January targeting all new students focusing on their welcome experience.

An academic "Survey Season" is run in the second semester, where students are given the opportunity to provide feedback on academic related matters over a specific period of time. Survey Season comprises of the following surveys:

- [National Student Survey \(NSS\) – final year UG students](#)
- [Undergraduate Experience Survey \(UES\) – UG students Years 1-3](#)
- [Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey \(PTES\)](#)
- [Postgraduate Research Survey \(PRES\)](#)

~~and the National Student Survey (NSS) are used to gauge student feedback on the wider student experience. All of these~~ The surveys allow the University to enhance and improve their services based on the feedback provided.

~~Closing the feedback loop is an important factor for student engagement in the feedback process. All of this is This is then dissolved~~ Actions on feedback is relayed to students by means of 'You Said: We Did' messaging, which helps to close the feedback loop.

	<p>Class or Academic Representatives are elected student volunteers chosen by their fellow students who function as a vital link between staff and students, fostering and maintaining open dialogue to improve the students learning experience. They work together with staff throughout the year and have the opportunity to feedback at Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings that are normally held once or twice a term.</p> <p>As noted in section 1 above, student membership of formal committees and more informal working or task and finish groups is important in the transparency and engagement of students. The University includes students on all Education Committees and has students on Committees of the highest level. Some examples include the University Education Committee and its sub-committees, Aberdeen 2040 Education Task & Finish Groups and other working groups-committees including the EDI Events and Engagement Group and the Student Communication working group. The remit and composition of these groups are reviewed regularly with student input. the Pastoral Review group and the Student Mental Health working group. Students are also integral members of panels reviewing Academic Appeals and Student Complaints.</p> <p>Students are invited to consult and feedback, through survey, focus groups and face to face interaction on a wide range of enhancement activities. Most recently the Pastoral Support Review, Wellbeing Strategy and Peer support development project.</p> <p>The Academic Quality Handbook contains the University's policies, procedures and regulations relating to all aspects of teaching and learning, including research degrees at the University of Aberdeen. This includes details of how students can engage in quality assurance and enhancement processes</p>	
3. Effective student engagement supports enhancements, innovation and transformation in the community within and	<p>As noted in section 1 above, the University works in close partnership with the Aberdeen University Students' Association Students' Union (AUSA). Agreed annual shared priorities for focus are documented in the Student Partnership Agreement. These are informed by and support both University and AUSA Students' Union strategies with the overarching goal of enhancing the student experience.</p>	<p>Student Partnership Agreement (Document) Pastoral Support and Guidance (Webpage) Surveys (Webpage) Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (Webpage) You Said, We Did (Webpage)</p>

<p>outside the provider, driving improvements to the experience of students.</p> <p>Student engagement can produce changes that help build a dynamic and inclusive learning community. A provider-wide approach will demonstrate multiple student engagement activities at all levels. Providers demonstrate how approaches to student engagement drive enhancements to the educational experience at each level.</p> <p>Within the institution, student-led approaches may look at issues and approaches to the curriculum, the wider learning environment, student service delivery and policy development. Outside the provider, student partnership activities might focus on initiatives such as widening access, or community and employer engagement.</p>	<p>The University adopts a holistic approach to feedback (see section 2 above), recognising that both academic and non-academic matters contribute to the overall student experience. Through gathering regular and detailed feedback enables us to monitor, develop and improve the student experience and gain valuable insight of our student voice. There is strong recognition of the importance of ensuring that there is closure of the feedback loop to provide assurance to the student body that the University takes their feedback seriously and that it is used to inform enhancements (see section 7 below).</p> <p>The Aberdeen Student Experience Survey survey and the New to UoA survey provides students with the opportunity to tell us about their non-academic experiences as a student at the University of Aberdeen, each academic year; what we have done well, and what we can improve on in the future. The NSS, UES, PTES and PRES surveys allows the University to collect feedback on their academic experience.</p> <p>Student membership of committees and Task & Finish Groups also ensures students are actively able to inform and contribute to decision making in regard to enhancements made to the student experience (see section 2 above).</p> <p>Data regarding student careers and employability interests and priorities (Career Readiness Survey), and regional sector insights are used to design a range of careers and employability opportunities. Examples include focused careers fairs (such as part-time jobs, energy, law, charity careers), inspiring careers networking events (such as Working with Words) and sector focused internships programmes (such as nature jobs sector and cultural/arts sector).</p>	
<p>4. Arrangements exist for effective representation of the collective student voice at all organisational levels</p>	<p>Student membership of formal committees and more informal working or task and finish groups is important in the transparency and engagement of students. The University includes students on all Education Committees and has students on Committees of the highest level (see section 1 above).</p>	<p>Student Representation and Engagement Student Experience (Webpage) Rectorial Election (Webpage) Representation at AUSA-Students' Union (Webpage) Class Representative (Webpage)</p>

<p>including decision-making bodies.</p> <p>Providers work with their student body and students' representative body (such as students' union, association or guild) to ensure there are mechanisms in place at all levels to allow for the collective view of students to inform and shape the student experience. Collective student engagement involves students considering, deliberating, and developing informed views, independent from the provider, which are representative of the wider student body. Collective engagement will happen primarily through student representative structures such as course/class/faculty representatives, and where they exist through the students' representative body.</p>	<p>The Aberdeen University Students' Association Students' Union (AUSA) elects five sabbatical officers each year to take forward a series of priorities as campaigned in their manifesto to represent students and the student voice. Sabbatical Officers work with colleagues at AUSA the Students' Union and within the University to achieve their manifesto priorities and have a role in representing students at University-level discussions.</p> <p>The role of the class representatives and School Convenors is also important in the collective student voice, ensuring that concerns are relayed to Schools, and therefore the University, by means of open forum and Student-Staff Liaison Committees. School Conveners also serve as members of School Education Committees ensuring the student voice is able to inform decision making.</p> <p>Students are invited to consult and feedback, through survey, focus groups and face to face interaction on a wide range of enhancement activities. This feedback is shared with the respective working group to inform each project.</p> <p>The Rector of the University of Aberdeen is elected by registered students. Their main role is to work closely with AUSA, the Students' Union Association to bring student concerns to the attention of University management.</p>	
<p>5. Providers recognise and respond to the diversity of their student body in the design and delivery of student engagement, partnership working and representation processes.</p> <p>Providers ensure that approaches to student engagement and representation are designed to</p>	<p>The University is fully committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. We take an innovative and proactive approach to embedding and mainstreaming the principles of equality, diversity and creating an inclusive environment for work and study which celebrates the diversity of our staff and students.</p> <p>As part of the University Aberdeen 2040 Strategy, inclusivity is a key strand and incorporates equality of opportunity and accessibility for all students. The University's vision for Equality & Diversity is "To strive to create an inclusive culture which celebrates the diversity of the University's staff and students. In recognising that this diversity brings</p>	<p>Aberdeen 2040 Strategy (Webpage) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Webpage) (Students) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Webpage) (Staff) Support for Online Students (Webpage) Qatar Campus (Webpage) University Campuses (Webpage) Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework (Webpage) Equality Impact Assessments (Webpage)</p>

<p>include the diversity of their student body, identifying and removing barriers to participation, to ensure that the full diversity of student voices can contribute to enhancement and assurance activities. Consideration is given to students' modes of study, the composition and demographic of the student population, and the different backgrounds that students have, to ensure effective engagement and representation.</p>	<p>new and engaging perspectives and enriches the experience of all who work, study and visit the University, we will take a proactive approach to embedding and mainstreaming the principles of Equality and Diversity.” The EDI policy supports this work.</p> <p>The University operates Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that no group is unduly discriminated against and to ensure activities are carried out in a fair and transparent way. All new policies should be reviewed by means of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure they are fit for purpose in an inclusive environment.</p> <p>The University has developed a Framework for Accessibility and Inclusion in Education (see 2-abovesection 2). This encompasses all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion in the student experience, ensuring all students are supported to study.</p> <p>Our fully online students, both those studying at a programme level and those taking a short course, have access to the same opportunities that on campus students do.</p> <p>We work closely with colleagues at our campus in Qatar and at our Joint Institute with South China Normal University, and other international partners, to ensure students studying at campuses overseas have the same opportunities and support.</p>	
<p>6. Student engagement and representation processes are adequately resourced and supported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective student engagement requires clearly identified resourcing at a strategic level. Students and staff benefit from induction and ongoing training and support relating to student engagement. 	<p>The University actively contributes to the induction of new Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA)Students' Union Sabbatical Officers to ensure they are appropriately appraised of University policies and procedures, their role on committees and that they can establish effective working relationships with relevant University staff.</p> <p>AUSAThe Students' Union provides comprehensive training and support for class representatives. A suite of online resources are available via MyAberdeen. Training is held in person and virtually.</p>	<p>Representation at AUSA-Students' Union (Webpage) Class Rep Training 2021/22 – AUSA Skills Hub (Webpage) Star Award (University Careers Service) (Webpage) MySkills (Webpage) Enhanced Transcripts (Webpage)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers offer and evaluate the training and support provided to ensure it is appropriate for the role. The students' representative body requires adequate resource to lead on facilitating student academic representation, and providers often work with them on the delivery of induction and training activities. Consideration is given to ensuring training supports students to develop informed views, independent from the provider, which are representative of the wider student body. 	<p>AUSA Students' Union representatives who serve on Internal Teaching Review panels or as members of Appeals, Complaints and Discipline panels are provided with training in the same way as that provided to academic staff members of these bodies. Similarly, all student members of Senate receive induction into their role.</p> <p>Students are supported to reflect on the skills developed through their roles via the MySkills frameworkMySkills tool. The MySkills tool gives students the opportunity to assess and compare their skills development, develop skills (using the activity pathways), record and reflect on experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assess their skills development (using the MySkills Audit) record and reflect on their experiences (using the MySkills Portfolio) develop their skills (using the MySkills Resources) <p>during and beyond university and export a record of their engagement and achievements. The tool is available to all students through the MyAberdeen platform.</p> <p>STAR (Students Taking Active Roles) Award is a co-curricular initiative available to students at both the Aberdeen and Qatar campuses. It allows students to assess, enhance and gain recognition for the skills they develop through any unpaid role of responsibility on or off campus.</p> <p>The University's Enhanced Transcript recognises not just a student's academic achievements but also recognises co-curricular activities such as the STAR award and AUSA Committee roles.</p>	
<p>7. Providers work in partnership with the student body to close the feedback loop.</p> <p>All stakeholders are clear about their role in the dissemination of feedback related to the student experience.</p>	<p>The University places great value on student feedback in its processes of monitoring and evaluation, both in regard to our academic provision and more widely in regard to the overall student experience. There is strong recognition of the importance of ensuring that there is closure of the feedback loop to provide assurance to the student body that the University takes their feedback seriously and that it is used to inform enhancements.</p> <p>In an academic context, discussion at Staff-Student Liaison Committees takes account feedback provided through Course Feedback Forms and</p>	<p>You Said, We Did (Webpage) Course Evaluation (Webpage)</p>

<p>Providers recognise and promote joint recognition and value of enhancements made to the student educational experience, and the contribution of students in achieving these successes.</p> <p>Providers devise effective and appropriate ways of communicating with students how, when and where their feedback has been used and acted upon. Where action is not taken in response to student feedback, the rationale for this decision should be effectively communicated to students.</p>	<p>the wider content which is used to inform Annual Course Review (ACR). Class representatives and School Convener membership of SSLCs ensures students are able to contribute to discussion and decision-making arising from this feedback. Minutes of SSLCs are made available to all students ensuring closure of the feedback loop.</p> <p><u>Additionally, External Examiners are required to submit a report annually for programmes and courses. These reports confirm that academic standards have been maintained and any observations therein. The reports also cover aspects of good practice and recommendations for quality enhancement. External reports also evaluate the quality of learning and teaching, and content of programmes/courses. Upon their final report, External Examiners are able to provide a holistic summary of their tenure as an External Examiner. External Examiner Reports are published for students to access via the University's Virtual Learning Environment in a dedicated site, <i>Acting on Feedback</i>.</u></p> <p>More informal means of feedback e.g. mid-course questionnaires or use of focus groups are used to collect early feedback. This approach provides the opportunity for changes to be made during the delivery of the course in response to this feedback enabling the current cohort to benefit.</p> <p>In regard to the wider student experience, the outcomes of the various feedback opportunities including student surveys are advised to students by means of the 'You Said, We Did' Campaign, which assists the closure of the feedback loop. A webpage provides examples of changes made covering areas including student support, digital experience and supporting your learning in response to student feedback.</p>	
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UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

TERM DATES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027***Students for all First Degrees (except MBChB, BDS and BSc Med Sci) and for Taught Postgraduate Programmes (unless otherwise specified)*****TERM 1**

Term Opens Monday 14 September 2026
 Teaching commences Monday 21 September 2026
 Term Closes Friday 18 December 2026

TERM 2

Term opens Monday 18 January 2027
 Teaching commences Monday 25 January 2027¹
 Spring break commences Monday 22 March 2027
 Spring break ends* Friday 9 April 2027
 Term Closes Friday 14 May 2027

TERM 3 (PGT)

Term Opens Monday 7 June 2027
 Teaching commences Monday 7 June 2027
 Term Closes Friday 27 August 2027

Students studying at the University's Campus in Qatar**TERM 1**

Term Opens Sunday 13 September 2026
 Teaching commences Sunday 20 September 2026
 Term Closes Thursday 17 December 2026

TERM 2

Term opens Sunday 17 January 2027
 Teaching commences Sunday 24 January 2027
 Spring break commences Sunday 21 March 2027
 Spring break ends* Thursday 8 April 2027
 Term Closes Thursday 13 May 2027

TERM 3 (PGT)

Term Opens Sunday 6 June 2027
 Teaching commences Sunday 6 June 2027
 Term Closes Thursday 26 August 2027

Students for the Degrees of MBChB**FIRST YEAR**

Term 1 Opens Monday 14 September 2026
 Term 1 Closes Friday 18 December 2026
 Term 2 Opens Tuesday 5 January 2027
 Term 2 Closes Friday 26 March 2027
 Term 3 Opens Monday 19 April 2027
 Term 3 Closes Friday 7 May 2027

SECOND YEAR

Monday 7 September 2026
 Friday 11 December 2026
 Tuesday 5 January 2027
 Friday 26 March 2027
 Monday 12 April 2027
 Friday 4 June 2027

THIRD YEAR

Monday 7 September 2026
 Friday 11 December 2026
 Tuesday 5 January 2027
 Friday 19 March 2027
 Monday 3 May 2027
 Friday 16 July 2027

FOURTH YEAR

Term 1 Opens Monday 3 August 2026
 Term 1 Closes Friday 18 December 2026
 Term 2 Opens Monday 11 January 2027
 Term 2 Closes Friday 2 April 2027
 Term 3 Opens Monday 19 April 2027
 Term 3 Closes Friday 25 June 2027

FIFTH YEAR

Monday 17 August 2026
 Friday 18 December 2026
 Tuesday 5 January 2027
 Friday 30 April 2027
 Monday 3 May 2027
 Friday 28 May 2027

Students for the Degree of BDS**FIRST YEAR**

Term 1 Opens Monday 31 August 2026
 Term 1 Closes Friday 11 December 2026
 Term 2 Opens Tuesday 5 January 2027
 Term 2 Closes Friday 26 March 2027
 Term 3 Opens Monday 5 April 2027
 Term 3 Closes Friday 2 July 2027

SECOND YEAR

Monday 24 August 2026
 Friday 11 December 2026
 Tuesday 5 January 2027
 Friday 26 March 2027
 Monday 5 April 2027
 Friday 2 July 2027

THIRD YEAR

Monday 24 August 2026
 Friday 11 December 2026
 Tuesday 5 January 2027
 Friday 26 March 2027
 Monday 5 April 2027
 Friday 2 July 2027

FOURTH YEAR

Monday 24 August 2026
 Friday 18 December 2026
 Tuesday 5 January 2027
 Friday 26 March 2027
 Monday 5 April 2027
 Friday 28 May 2027

¹ For BSc Medical Sciences programmes, Term 2 starts on Monday 11 January 2027

Students for the MSc in Physician Associate Studies

N.B. This programme is a January Start

FIRST YEAR		SECOND YEAR	
Term 1 Opens	Monday 5 January 2026	Term 1 Opens	Monday 24 November 2025
Term 1 Closes	Friday 27 March 2026	Term 1 Closes	Friday 27 March 2026
Term 2 Opens	Monday 6 April 2026	Term 2 Opens	Monday 6 April 2026
Term 2 Closes	Friday 3 July 2026	Term 2 Closes	Friday 31 July 2026
Term 3 Opens	Monday 20 July 2026	Term 3 Opens	Monday 17 August 2026
Term 3 Closes	Friday 23 October 2026	Term 3 Closes	Friday 27 November 2026
Placement Preparation	Monday 9 November 2026		

Students for the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) (Primary and Secondary)

Term 1 Opens	Monday 17 August 2026
Term 1 Closes	Friday 18 December 2026
Term 2 Opens	Tuesday 5 January 2027
Spring break commences	Monday 29 March 2027
Spring break ends	Friday 9 April 2027
Term 2 Closes	Friday 28 May 2027

Students for the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Childhood Practice

Term 1 Opens	Monday 24 August 2026
Term 1 Closes	Friday 18 December 2026
Term 2 Opens	Monday 25 January 2027
Term 2 Closes	Friday 28 May 2027

Students for the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice (DPLP)

Term 1 Opens	Monday 14 September 2026
Term 1 Closes	Friday 18 December 2026
Term 2 Opens	Monday 11 January 2027
Term 2 Closes	Friday 26 March 2027

Graduation Ceremonies

Winter Graduation Ceremonies	w/c Monday 23 November 2026
Summer Graduation Ceremonies	Monday 28 June – Friday 2 July 2027

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

DEADLINES FOR THE RETURN OF RESULTS & THE TIMING OF RESITS IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/26**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

The purpose of this paper is to seek the **approval** of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for:

- (i) the deadlines for the return of results in academic year 2025/26;
- (ii) the timing of the summer resit diet in academic year 2025/26.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/ approved by:	-	-
Further consideration/ approval required by:	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)	TBC

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members of the QAC are asked to **approve** (i) the proposed deadlines for the return of results and (ii) the timing of the summer resit diet, both for academic year 2025/26.

4. DISCUSSION: RETURN OF RESULTS ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/25

- 4.1 Members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) are asked to consider and, if appropriate, approve proposed dates for the return of results for academic year 2025/26. The dates are provided in *section 4.3* below.
- 4.2 *Appendix A* provides a more detailed analysis of the proposed dates for 2025/26 alongside those approved in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- 4.2 The deadlines provided are proposed following the Senate approval of a revised academic year structure (*SEN23:06 refers*) and with consideration given to student progression, and both staff and student wellbeing. Results deadlines have been extended, as far as possible, to enable staff to undertake marking while seeking to ensure the University can return results to students in as timely a manner as possible and, where appropriate, to allow results to inform course choice.
- 4.3 The Committee is asked to **approve** the deadlines for the return of results for academic year 2025/26 as follows:

4.3.1 Term 1 Assessments

Level	Deadline
Undergraduate Courses	Friday 23 January 2026
Postgraduate Taught Courses	Friday 30 January 2026

January Start Postgraduate Taught Programmes (for candidates commencing January 2024)	Friday 30 January 2026
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4.3.2 Term 2 Assessments

Level	Deadline
Undergraduate Courses and Programmes	Friday 12 June 2026
Postgraduate Taught Courses and Programmes (those eligible to graduate in June 2025)	Friday 12 June 2026
Postgraduate Taught Courses and Programmes (non-graduating students)	Friday 12 June 2026

4.3.3 Term 3 Assessments

Level	Deadline
Postgraduate Taught Courses and Programmes (those eligible to graduate in November 2025)	Friday 30 October 2026

4.3.4 Resit Assessments*

Level	Deadline
Undergraduate Taught Courses and Programmes	Friday 14 August 2026
Postgraduate Taught Courses and Programmes (those eligible to graduate in November 2025)	Friday 16 October 2026

*Section 5 below provides further information on the resit assessment diet and associated results deadline

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Steve Tucker, Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement (s.tucker@abdn.ac.uk), Emma Tough, Assistant Registrar (e.tough@abdn.ac.uk) or Liam Dyker, Clerk to QAC (liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk).

6 January 2025

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

Deadlines for the Return of Results

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Points of Note
Term 1: Teaching Starts	11 Sep 2023	23 Sep 2024	22 Sep 2025	
Term 1: UG Results (course)	19 Jan 2024	24 Jan 2025	23 Jan 2026	<p>UG results are due <u>3 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 1.</p> <p>Teaching for Term 2 begins on 26 January and results should be returned in as timely a manner as possible to ensure students can be aware of their results prior to this.</p> <p>A deadline of 23 January provides a short window of opportunity for students to change their Term 2 courses (they may do so, for the majority of courses, within the first 2 weeks of teaching).</p> <p>This deadline cannot be extended without the potential for significant detrimental impact on UG students and their course choices.</p>
Term 1: PGT Results (course)	19 Jan 2024	31 Jan 2025	30 Jan 2026	<p>PGT results are due <u>4 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 1.</p> <p>Teaching for Term 2 begins on 26 January and therefore prior to this deadline. Results should therefore be returned in as timely a manner as possible (and where possible, in advance of the published deadline).</p> <p>PGTs results are unlikely to impact course change given the prescribed nature of PGT programmes.</p>
January Start PGT Results (programme)	19 Jan 2024	31 Jan 2025	30 Jan 2026	As above. PGT results are due <u>4 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 1.
Term 2: Teaching Starts	22 Jan 2024	27 Jan 2025	26 Jan 2026	
Term 2: UG results (course & programme)	7 June 2024	13 Jun 2025	12 Jun 2026	<p>UG results are due <u>4 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 2.</p> <p>University Graduations will take place during w/c 29 June 2026 and, therefore, this deadline cannot be extended. This is also the latest deadline by which results can be returned to enable students required to undertake resit assessments to apply to do so.</p>
Term 2: PGT results (course & programme)	7 June 2024	13 Jun 2025	12 Jun 2026	<p>PGT results are due <u>4 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 2.</p> <p>University Graduations will take place during w/c 29 June 2026 and, therefore, this deadline cannot be extended. This is also the latest</p>

				deadline by which results can be returned to enable students required to undertake resit assessments to apply to do so.
Term 2: PGT results <i>(non-graduating)</i>	7 June 2024	13 Jun 2025	12 Jun 2026	As above. PGT results are due <u>4 weeks</u> after the conclusion of Term 1. Priority, however, must always be given to results which impact upon graduating students to ensure their completion.
Summer Graduation Ceremonies (w/c)	17 Jun 2024	30 Jun 2025	29 Jun 2026	
Resit Assessments (w/c)	1 Jul and 8 Jul 2024	7 Jul and 14 Jul 2025	6 Jul and 13 Jul 2026	
Resit Results (<i>all levels</i>)	2 Aug 2024	15 Aug 2025	14 Aug 2026	
PGT Results Deadline	1 Nov 2024	17 Oct 2025	16 Oct 2026	

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMER GRADUATION CEREMONIES

JUNE 2024

Ceremony 1 - Monday 30 June at 11.00 a.m.

School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition – Higher Degrees and First Degrees (Medical Sciences)

Ceremony 2 - Monday 30 June at 3.00 p.m.

School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition – First Degrees (MBChB, BDS and intercalated degrees*)

Ceremony 3 - Tuesday 1 July at 11.00 a.m.

School of Law – Higher Degrees

School of Language, Literature, Music & Visual Culture - Higher and First Degrees

Ceremony 4 - Tuesday 1 July at 3.00 p.m.

School of Law – First Degrees

Ceremony 5 - Wednesday 2 July at 11.00 a.m.

School of Divinity, History, Philosophy & Art History – Higher and First Degrees

School of Social Science – Higher and First Degrees

Ceremony 6 - Wednesday 2 July at 3.00 p.m.

Business School – Higher and First Degrees

Ceremony 7 - Thursday 3 July at 11.00 a.m.

School of Engineering – Higher and First Degrees

Ceremony 8 - Thursday 3 July at 3.00 p.m.

School of Education – Higher and First Degrees

Ceremony 9 - Friday 4 July at 11.00 a.m.

School of Biological Sciences - Higher and First Degrees

School of Psychology – Higher and First Degrees

Ceremony 10 – Friday 4 July at 3.00 p.m.

School of Geosciences - Higher and First Degrees

School of Natural & Computing Sciences - Higher and First Degrees

* The BSc Med Sci and other intercalated degrees can only be conferred at Ceremony 2 on those who are graduating MBChB at Ceremony 2. In all other cases, the BSc Med Sci and other intercalated degrees will be conferred at Ceremony 1.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

ACADEMIC POLICY AND REGULATIONS GROUP (APRG)

MINUTE OF MEETING

WEDNESDAY 29 JANUARY 2025

Present: Faye Hendry (Chair), Selma Carson, Oleksandr Menshykov, Mansi Utikar, with Liam Dyker and Kyra Lamont (Clerk) in attendance.

Apologies: Isla Callander, Miles Rothoerl and Steve Tucker

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(Copy filed as APRG/290125/001)

- 1.1 The Chair introduced the meeting and welcomed the new members of the Group.
- 1.2 The minutes of the meeting were approved.
- 1.3 It was noted that a timeline has not been provided in relation to the update of external documents associated with Section 9: Partnerships of the Quality Code. It is understood that these documents belong to other teams of professional services staff, as such, the Clerk will undertake to liaise with the relevant stakeholders.

ACTION: CLERK

MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LOG

(Copy filed as APRG/290125/002)

- 2.3 The Group was advised that all recent actions, with the exception of 1.3 above which requires the input of additional stakeholders, had been completed.

APRG REMIT & COMPOSITION

(Copy filed as APRG/290125/003)

- 3.3 The Group approved the APRG Remit & Composition document for academic year 24-25 – noting that the Group was now at full complement.

QAA QUALITY CODE MAPPING

- 4.1 Members of the Group were invited to discuss and approve (in principle) amendments made to the Quality Code in respect of:

(i) SECTION 1: ADMISSIONS, RECRUITMENT AND WIDENING ACCESS

(Copy filed as APRG/290125/004)

- 4.1.1 The Group discussed the proposed changes to Section 1: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access and noted the following:

- Ensure that all embedded links are working/updated as necessary
- Amend text on page 7 to read '[Widening Access] Managers' instead of 'Mangers'
- Amend text on page 4, subsection 3, to read 'Widening Access Policy' page instead of webpage.

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) SECTION 5: ENABLING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

(Copy filed as APRG/290125/005)

- 4.1.2 The Group discussed the proposed changes to Section 5: Enabling Student Achievement and noted the following:

- Remove 'new' before 'debrief session' in paragraph 3, page 8.

- Amend text on page 9, paragraph 2, to read ‘training’ instead of ‘traing’
- Amend text on page 10 and page 17, final paragraphs, to read ‘all new students’ instead of ‘all level 1 undergraduate and postgraduate students’
- Amend text on page 13 to read ‘see section 2’ instead of ‘see 2 above’

ACTION: CLERK

(iii) SECTION 11: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

(Copy filed as APRG/866781-662)

4.1.4 The Group discussed the proposed changes to Section 11: Student Engagement and noted the following:

- Amend text on page 4, first paragraph, to read ‘24/25’ instead of ‘20243/254’
- Amend text on page 6, subsection 2, paragraph 3, by inserting ‘where necessary’ between words ‘Internal Teaching Reviews’ and ‘ensuring’
- Amend text on page 7, second paragraph, by insertion of the word ‘students’ between ‘postgraduate research’ and ‘collecting’.
- Amend text on page 11, subsection 5, third paragraph, to read ‘see section 2’ instead of ‘see 2 above’

ACTION: CLERK

OMNIBUS RESOLUTION 2025/26

(Copy filed as APRG/866781-663)

5.1 Members of the Group were invited to discuss and approve (in principle) changes in respect of Omnibus Resolution 2025/26. The Group heard from the Clerk to Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) regarding the changes. Noting that if accreditation of the Master of Arts (MA) in Secondary Education programme is approved by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), the Bachelor of Arts (BA) regulations will be superseded.

5.2 The Group raised the following points:

- The Group felt it might be helpful to include additional text under regulation 16.1 of Annex A, such as ‘notwithstanding the above’, to minimise any confusion surrounding the total number of courses/credit shortfall permitted if the final sentence is read in isolation.
- Consider whether ‘Lead Supervisor’ or ‘Main Supervisor’ should be used in the context of regulation 24 on page 4 of Annex A. Similarly, the use of ‘industrial supervisor’ will be queried with respective Director of Education.
- Clarify whether subsection 7.1 on page 2 of Annex B should refer to MA ‘Honours’ programme

ACTION: CLERK/LD

6.1. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Group will be held on 20 March 2025 at 14:05 in Committee Room 2, University Office and via Microsoft Teams (Hybrid) if required.