UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

A meeting of the University Education Committee will be held on **Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 1:05pm**, by way of **Microsoft Teams**.

Ms Isabella Fausti, Administrative Officer
(isabella.fausti@abdn.ac.uk)

AGENDA

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Approval of the Minute of the Meeting Held on 14 January 2025 *(UEC/260225/001)*

2. Matters Arising/Actions *(UEC/260225/002, UEC/260225/003, and UEC/260225/004)*

3. MyAberdeen Courses' Rollover 2025-26 and Institutional Course Template *(UEC/260225/005)*

Members of the UEC are invited to **discuss** and **approve** the proposals for the MyAberdeen Rollover and Institutional Course Template.

4. Computer-Based and Online Assessments TFG

(i) Assessment Taxonomy *(UEC/260225/006)*

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

(ii) Online Assessment Guidance *(UEC/260225/007)*

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

5. PGT Portfolio Review update *(UEC/260225/008)*

Members of the Committee will hear an update in respect of the PGT Portfolio Review.

6. Process Review update *(Oral Item)*

Members of the Committee will hear an oral update in respect of the Process Review.

7. Student Casework Data 2023/24

(i) Appeals and Complaints *(UEC/260225/009)*
(ii) Academic Discipline *(UEC/260225/010)*

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

8. Student Withdrawals Report *(UEC/260225/011)*

Members of the Committee are invited to **discuss** the Student Withdrawals Report.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Tuesday 22 April 2025 at 1:05pm, in the Committee Room 2, University Office, or by Microsoft Teams.

10. 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.

10. FOR INFORMATION

10.1 Updates from the Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC):

(i) Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2025 *(UEC/260225/012)*
(ii) Upscaling Work Based Learning Policy Development Work Stream (*UEC/260225/013)*

Members of the Committee are invited to **note** the updates from the EEC.

10.2 Updates from the Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC):

(i) Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025 *(UEC/260225/014)*
(ii) Update on Report and Request Tool (*UEC/260225/015)*
(iii) Summary of Video Captions Support (*UEC/260225/016)*
(iv) Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (*UEC/260225/017)*

Members of the Committee are invited to **note** the updates from the SSEC.

10.3 Omnibus Resolution 2025/26 *(UEC/260225/018)*

Members of the Committee are invited to **note** the Omnibus Resolution 2025/26.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UEC)

Minute of the Meeting held on 14 January 2025

Present: Jo-Anne Murray (Chair), Waheed Afzal, Euan Bain, John Barrow, Nigel Beacham, Leigh Bjorkvoll, Jason Bohan, Stuart Durkin, Karim Hurtig, Ken Jeffrey, Kirsty Kiezebrink, Helen Knight, Colin Lumsden, David McCausland, John Mynott, Stuart Piertney, Michelle Pinard, Amudha Poobalan, Shona Potts, Miles Roetherl, Steve Tucker, Asha Venkatesh, Eddy Wifa (in place of Anne-Michelle Slater) and Joshua Wright, with Simon Bains, Scott Carle, Robin Cummins, Debbie Dyker, Nick Edwards, Tracey Innes, Rhona Moore, Sara Preston, Ian Robotham, Patricia Spence, Emma Tough, and Isabella Fausti (Clerk) in attendance.

Apologies: Harminder Battu, Lyn Batchelor, Anne-Michelle Slater, and Louisa Stratton.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2024

(copy filed as UEC/140125/001)

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members to the first meeting of 2025 of the University Education Committee (UEC). Members of the Committee considered the minute of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 and approved it as an accurate representation of discussions held.

MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

(copies filed as UEC/140125/002 and UEC/140125/003)

2.1 Members of the Committee noted the actions arising following the meeting of UEC held on 20 November 2024 as follows:

(i) The Chair and the Interim Director of Digital & Information Services, Ian Robotham (IR) reported that this action is in progress. The plan is for Digital Strategy Committee papers to be available on a SharePoint site after the meetings. Details of this will be shared with the wider university community at the next Digital Strategy Forum.

(ii) The Dean for Student Support and Experience reported that this action is in progress and that the breakdown of the data would be shared as soon as it was received by Planning. He also confirmed this would apply to data for the Qatar courses.

(iii) The Chair reported that this action was still in process and she would have an update in due course.

(iv) The Dean for Portfolio and Programme Development reported that the paper was currently with SMT and would be included at the next UEC meeting.

(v) The Dean for Quality Assurance and enhancement reported that discussions around the ITR structure are an ongoing process.

(vi) The Dean for Entrepreneurship and Employability reported that a breakdown of the response rates on the Graduate Outcomes survey had been provided as requested (see UEC/140125/003) and the action was therefore completed. He noted changes in how international students are contacted, potentially impacting on the statistics for certain schools. The UK domiciled response rates show little year-on-year change, but non-UK domiciled rates for some disciplines show significant changes, which may affect overall

Graduate Outcome statistics. It was noted that a new version of this data including a headcount as well as percentages would be circulated (**Action: JBa**)

STUDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPDATE

3.1 The Chair and IR provided an oral update to the UEC on the Student Management System. The UEC heard that the programme had received approval to proceed, with the programme board having its initial meeting to discuss composition and business case development. The first phase will concentrate on understanding the project's scope and requirements. While still in the early stage, it is anticipated that this will encompass the entire student journey, from an applicant's initial interaction with the university to graduation. The focus will be on identifying all areas of change, reviewing processes and standardising them. To ensure its success, the project will incorporate lessons learnt from other organisations that have undertaken similar initiatives. The aim is for this to be a collaborative effort, ensuring the needs of all stakeholders are addressed and the system is future proofed. Workshops and sessions will be conducted to gather detailed requirements, with an emphasis on enhancing current processes rather than merely replicating them in a new system.

3.2 The updated was received positively by UEC members, with a question asking further details on student representation in the project, given the impact it is likely to have both on the student experience and on the Students' Union operations. The Chair clarified that student representation would be included in workstreams, decision-making, and user testing.

CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN

(copy filed as UEC/140125/004)

4.1 The Deputy Director of People, Student Advice & Support, Nick Edwards (NE), started by thanking those who have worked on the corporate parenting plan, which has previously been approved by the Student Support and Experience Committee with minor adjustments. The updated plan, which is part of the corporate obligations of the university and a legislative requirement, aims to support students with care experience and will be effective from the 2024-25 academic year for three years. The goal is to simplify and make the plan more user-friendly, ensuring it is easily understood by those impacted. The action plan outlines clear, identifiable tasks for the university over the next three years. NE invited questions or queries regarding the document, the action plan, or future steps.

4.2 The plan was received positively by UEC members, with the following queries being addressed:

(i) It was asked whether personal tutors would be notified if their tutees needed an additional level of support, or if students would need volunteer this information to PTs. The response indicated that it would depend on the information provided by students at the start of their journey, as not all students with care experience disclose this information initially. However, the hope is that updates made to inclusion adjustments (previously known as disability provisions), will allow for better support to be provided when needed, including for those with care experience. A named contact within student support will assist in coordinating support and work with personal tutors as needed.

(ii) A query was raised about incorporating a dedicated contact point for careers during study, as most students are unaware of the existing provision. Additionally, clarification was sought on the term "bespoke support". The response highlighted that the

legislation required a more formalised language, but agreed that our institution already aims to provide individualised support. It was agreed to include a dedicated careers contact point in the action plan.

(iii) A question was raised about whether the plan will be reviewed by the EDI committee and if an equality impact assessment will be conducted. It was confirmed that the plan will go to Senate and Court, with the EDI committee involved in the process to ensure the EQHI is considered.

(iv) A comment was made that the plan is well-constructed but primarily focused on undergraduates, raising the need for specific considerations for the PGT and PGR communities. The response invited suggestions for any additional elements relevant to postgraduates. It was noted that some of the language around admissions may not apply to them.

(v) A point was raised about the creation of a new society for care-experienced and estranged students, noting that it should be student-led rather than coming from above. It was also mentioned that these students might prefer not to be solely identified by their care experience. The response agreed to adjust the language to reflect that the university would be actively supportive of such initiatives if students found them helpful, so that a balanced approach could be achieved.

(vi) A suggestion was made to involve care-experienced staff in positive role modelling by sharing their educational journeys, similarly to previous initiatives around disability and neurodivergence. The response acknowledged this idea, noting plans to reach out to staff and alumni across a variety of different areas supported. The aim is to create more engaging content, such as videos, to complement the current document and ensure its impact is widely understood. This approach will be integrated into the communications plan to enhance awareness and support.

(vii) A concern was raised about the absence of references to care and the corporate parenting plan in the personal tutoring section of the staff website. It was suggested that any changes impacting personal tutors should be carefully considered. It was agreed to take the paper to the senior Pastoral Support Group for further discussion and to consider a review of the personal tutor role.

4.3 The UEC approved, for its part, the Corporate Parenting Plan subject to the points addressed above.

GRADES MANAGEMENT IN MYABERDEEN

(copy filed as UEC/140125/005)

5.1 Following the previous consideration of an earlier version of this paper at both UEC and QAC, and the approval of the majority of the recommendations set-out within it, UEC members were asked to discuss the two outstanding recommendations. Following a discussion, the UEC agreed to approve the following recommendation: that where there is a course where all the assessments are graded in percentages or a portfolio assessment consisting of individual assessments graded in percentages, that a weighted average should be carried out to reflect an overall percentage grade, and that this is the grade which is then displayed as a grade point to students.

5.2 A discussion also took place around the recommendation to standardise the grading terminology, where the proposal was to update the terms “marks” and “marking” to “grades” and “grading” in our University documentation going forward, to provide more consistency in language. While it was noted that improving consistency is beneficial from a student perspective, a discussion took place on the interpretation of the meaning of the two terms and on staff time required to update the documentation and regulations.

5.3 Following the discussion, the UEC decided not to approve the recommendation on the standardisation of grading terminology at this time.

SECTOR UPDATE

(Oral Item)

6.1 The Chair noted ongoing financial pressures across UK institutions and highlighted that our university is in a stable state despite past challenges. The Chair also mentioned sector-wide efforts to review portfolios and curricula, and the need for further discussions on inclusivity and resource adjustments, confirming an alignment of our institution with common challenges faced by other institutions.

UPDATE FROM THE DEAN FOR EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

(Oral Item)

7.1 The Dean for Education Innovation informed the UEC that AdvanceHE had published the report ‘*GenAI use in higher education: stakeholder perceptions and attitudes’* and thanked all those who had been involved in producing it. It was notes that clarification from AdvanceHE would be sought in regards to the dissemination of the report to staff (**Action: SPr**). The committee heard that further funding had been awarded, which would allow the analysis to continue and for facilitated workshops to be offered to Schools.

7.2 UEC members heard that, as part of the updates being made to the current rollover process for courses on MyAberdeen, an institutional course template will be implemented in all courses from the next academic year, following a successful pilot in three whole Schools (Biological Sciences, Law and DHPA) and some individual courses or programmes in other Schools (Psychology, Education, and LLMVC) this academic year. A more detailed paper will be provided at the next meeting.

7.3 It was suggested that, if this is not already the case, the new institutional course template should be mentioned in the two-day course for new members of staff.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1 Members of the Committee noted that the next meeting of the UEC would take place on Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 1:05pm in the Committee Room 2, University Office or by Microsoft Teams.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ACTION LOG

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2025

Minute Point	Identified Action	Individual(s) Responsible	Action Status/Update
2.1	Circulate a new version of the GO data including a headcount as well as percentages.	J Barrow	**Complete** See *UEC/260225/003*
7.1	Circulate the AdvanceHE report with staff	S Preston	**Complete** See copy filed as *UEC/140125/006*

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2024

Minute Point	Identified Action	Individual(s) Responsible	Action Status/Update
3.4	Ensure greater transparency of DSC documentation and determine appropriate sequence for submitting papers (first UEC then DSC, or vice versa)	J Murray and Ian Robotham	**In progress**
4.2	Contact Directorate of Planning to request a breakdown of NSS employability data by questions and Schools	J Bohan	**Complete** See *UEC/260225/004*
6.2	Reconcile inconsistencies between processes in different committees and choose one single system.	J Murray	**In progress**
8.1	A paper on the PgT Portfolio review to be circulated.	JP Mynott	**Complete** See item 5 of the Agenda

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MYABERDEEN ROLLOVER OF COURSES

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper sets out a new approach to the creation of course areas for the start of a new academic year in the institutional virtual learning environment, MyAberdeen. This process is commonly referred to as the rollover process.

This paper is to discuss and approve the recommended changes to the rollover process following the piloting of an institutional course template during AY 2024-25.

The recommendations do not apply to the undergraduate programmes in Medicine and Dentistry, and to the Physician Associate programme, which use a customised events-driven virtual learning environment.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	**Date**
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by		

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The committee is invited to approve the following recommendations:

- For AY 2025-26 and subsequent academic years, the creation of all MyAberdeen courses areas for that academic year will use an institutional template, which will be reviewed and updated in consultation with the Directors of Education and the Education Deans prior to the start of each academic year
- Course materials and assessments from last year's course areas in MyAberdeen will not be copied across during the rollover process
- Course areas in MyAberdeen should be made available to students a week before the start of teaching so that students can access the course guide and reading lists

4. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

4.1 The institutional virtual learning environment, MyAberdeen, is where students engage with their learning materials and assessments for courses they are undertaking at the University, whether these are fully online courses, campus-based courses or courses delivered as part of transnational education activities, such as courses associated with programmes delivered in Qatar or in China. The only exceptions are undergraduate programmes in Medicine and Dentistry, and the Physician Associate programme, which have a customised virtual learning environment designed around events and timetabling.

4.2 The preparation of course areas for the next academic year in MyAberdeen typically involves the automatic copying of all the content and assessments from last year's course area to a new course area for the next academic year. This approach has resulted in cumbersome workflows, cluttered course areas, redundant materials and an inconsistent student learning experience.

4.3 The upgrade from Blackboard Original to Ultra course areas provided a more structured and consistent learning experience for students. However, the automatic copying of all content and assessments from one year to the next has subsequently resulted in cluttered course areas, outdated resources and a fragmented learning experience across Schools.

4.4 To improve the student learning experience, there is an imperative to have a more consistent, structured and student-focused approach for course areas and their preparation for the next academic year. As a university that values interdisciplinarity and breadth in the curriculum, students enrolled in courses delivered by different Schools should expect to see a consistent approach across MyAberdeen. To that end, an institutional course template has been piloted during AY 2024-25. It was designed using good practice across Schools and reflecting innovations in the course design tools in MyAberdeen. The approach taken also mirrors good practice within the sector.

5. PILOT OF AN INSTITUTIONAL COURSE TEMPLATE IN AY 2024-25

5.1 In 2024-25, the following Schools piloted the use of an institutional course template:

- Biological Sciences (SBS) – all courses
- Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History (DHPA) – all courses
- Law – all courses
- Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture (LLMVC) – new courses
- Psychology – all Level 1 courses
- Education – all Counselling skills courses and a selection of new and existing course areas

5.2 The template includes the following:

- Course Guide designed as a learning module with web pages (Ultra documents) titled: Course Essentials; Course Schedule (optional); Education policies, guidance, useful resources; MySkills (optional); Sustainable Development Goals (optional).
- Course Assessment folder with web pages (Ultra documents) titled: Academic Integrity and Use of GenAI Tools; Assessment Method, Due Dates, Grading Criteria and Feedback; Assessment briefs; Coursework Extensions and Penalties
- Link to Leganto course reading list
- A hidden guide to structuring your Course Content and Assessments
- A hidden example of an exemplar of a learning module
- A hidden folder titled: External Examiners: Moderation & Course Review

5.3 The above approach ensured academic staff had complete academic freedom in relation to how they designed the delivery of their learning materials, activities and assessments while saving staff time by providing a pre-built structure for presenting standard information that should be available in all course areas. In addition to editing relevant sections of the template with course-specific essential information, staff could use the built-in tools in MyAberdeen to copy any content they want to re-use from previous year's course. The copy functionality also enabled staff to be specific about the content they wanted to re-use, by providing them with very granular access to previous year's content.

5.4 The eLearning Team within the Centre for Academic Development provided a wide range of support, from tailored sessions at School level, to written guides, video resources, one to one sessions and just in time support. In addition, Schools were provided with additional support and detailed course readiness reports ahead of the start of each term to ensure staff were supported and, ultimately, students were provided with a consistent learning experience.

5.5 Towards the end of Term 1, the eLearning Team sent out a survey to staff and students to receive feedback on the institutional course template. The student survey had 200 respondents from DHPA, Law, SBS, some LLMVC, Education and Psychology courses. When reflecting on the layout and content within the Course Guide (e.g. Course Essentials, Education policies, guidance and useful resources), students provided the following feedback:

- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that the layout was clear
- 90% agreed or strongly agreed the content was clear

- 89% agreed or strongly agreed the content was useful.

When reflecting on the layout and the content within the Course Assessment folder, students provided the following feedback:

- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that the layout was clear
- 87% agreed or strongly agreed assessment tasks were clear
- 86% agreed or strongly agreed other content was clear.

In addition, 78% of students indicated that best time for courses to be made available was 5 business days or more prior to the start of teaching (63% indicated 5 days, 15% indicated more than 5 days).

6. RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE ROLLOVER PROCESS

6.1 For the start of AY 2025-26 and subsequent academic years, the committee is asked to approve the following recommendations to the annual rollover process in MyAberdeen:

- The creation of all MyAberdeen course areas in preparation for the start of an academic year (the rollover process) will be based on an institutional template. The institutional template will be reviewed and updated in consultation with the Directors of Education and the Education Deans on an annual basis prior to the start of the rollover process in MyAberdeen.
- All course materials and assessments from last year's course areas in MyAberdeen will not be copied across during the rollover process.
- Course areas in MyAberdeen should be made available to students a week before the start of teaching so that students can access the course guide and reading lists

6.2 It should be noted that there will be a small number of non-standard courses where the institutional template does not apply. For example, courses for all research staff and PGRs on research ethics and integrity, always-on Access courses at SCQF level 5, 6 and 7, continuous professional development courses for industry.

6.3 The benefits of using the institutional template include:

- An accessible and consistent course structure, course guide and presentation of information, as the template is developed with accessibility and usability in mind
- Ability to automatically update institutional information in all courses at the start of a new academic year
- Reduced Cloud footprint as course coordinators and lecturers can easily copy the content they need from a previous course(s) with only a few clicks resulting in course areas with less clutter and fewer or no redundant materials
- Less likelihood that students will receive irrelevant notifications, such as assessment due dates in the past as a result of the assessment being copied over from last year's course area and not updated in a timely manner.
- Reduced workload for School Admin teams as there is no need to specify where content should be rolled over from when course codes change
- Potential to automate the MyAberdeen course rollover process in the future, based on information in the curriculum management system.

6.4 As highlighted earlier, the institutional course template will be reviewed and updated in consultation with the Directors of Education and the Education Deans on an annual basis. Feedback from all staff and students will be encouraged and welcomed, and innovations in course design tools will also be considered. The template for AY 2025-26 will be improved based on the evaluation conducted by the eLearning team of the pilot during AY 2024-25, before it is finalised in May 2025.

7. SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

7.1 To ensure a smooth transition the following support will be provided to Schools:

- Comprehensive staff communications, including conducting information sessions at School-level

- Workshops tailored at School-level or Programme/Course Team-level, as well as general workshops open to all staff, to ensure staff are confident with how to edit Ultra documents (web pages) effectively, and identify and copy content from previous year's courses.
- Detailed course readiness reports leading up to and during the start of a Term, to ensure Schools can target support and communications to their staff
- A range of guides, videos and exemplars to enable staff to engage through different modalities
- Drop-in sessions and key contacts in the eLearning team, who can work with School champions

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Dr Sara Preston, Senior eLearning Adviser, (s.preston@abdn.ac.uk) Centre for Academic Development and Professor Jo-Anne Murray, VP Education (jo-anne.murray@abdn.ac.uk).

[20 February 2025]
Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION 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 UEC 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	Quality Assurance Committee (for **discussion**)	19 February 2025
Further consideration/ approval required by	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 **University Education 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

- **Invigilated:** Assessments carried out with monitoring ensure adherence to regulations
  - **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.

- **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

- **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

- **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

Extended Writing Tasks: Assessments requiring in-depth written responses (minimum 1000 words) example include:

- 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.

Brief Writing Tasks: Assessments requiring brief written responses (less than 1000 words), examples include:

- 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
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: • multiple-choice questions (MCQ) • single-best-answer (SBA) • true/false • fill-in-the-blanks • matching exercises • very short answer (maximum 10 words)
Performance-Based / Practical Assessments: Evaluations that measure students' ability to apply skills often reflecting real-world scenarios example could include • 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.
Presentations: Assessments that require students to prepare and deliver an oral or visual presentation on a specific topic. Examples include • 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.

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

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION 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 UEC 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	Quality Assurance Committee (for **discussion**)	19 February 2025
Further consideration/ approval required by	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 **University Education 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 UEC 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.

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

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

[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

• **Invigilated:** Assessments carried out with monitoring ensure adherence to regulations
  ○ **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.

• **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
• **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
• **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

Extended Writing Tasks: Assessments requiring in-depth written responses (minimum 1000 words) example include:

- 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.

Brief Writing Tasks: Assessments requiring brief written responses (less than 1000 words), examples include:

- 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

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:

- multiple-choice questions (MCQ)
- single-best-answer (SBA)
- true/false
- fill-in-the-blanks
- matching exercises
- very short answer (maximum 10 words)

Performance-Based / Practical Assessments: Evaluations that measure students' ability to apply skills often reflecting real-world scenarios example could include

- 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.

Presentations: Assessments that require students to prepare and deliver an oral or visual presentation on a specific topic. Examples include

- 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~~n 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/o~~p~~r 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.

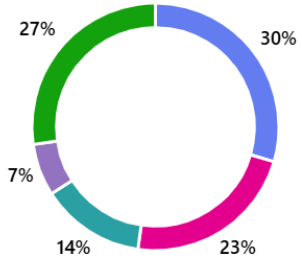
Schools reported that they felt they needed further guidance / policy on their use of digital assessments. Their concerns related to how to monitor academic integrity, ensuring that assessments were inclusive and how they should apply provisions, as well as practical issues such as dealing with technical 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

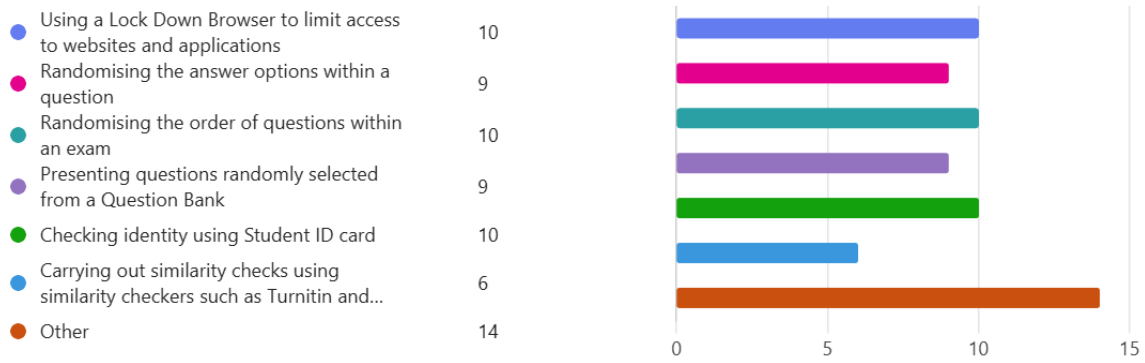


Whilst the majority of Schools used a mixture of invigilated digital assessments across their programmes that involved MCQs (30%), short/long answers (23%), or the upload of files (14%), five Schools reported that they did not currently employ invigilated digital assessments (Psychology, Law, Education,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

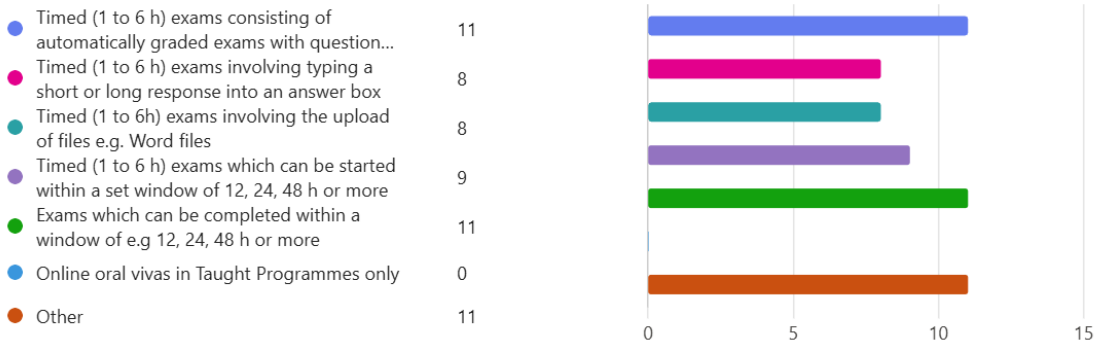
Schools were asked: Can you provide information on how you manage the provision of reasonable adjustments for invigilated digital exams and any challenges or approaches that need reviewing? (For example, identifying sufficient invigilators, adjustments requiring the use of a single room, accessing support)

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?

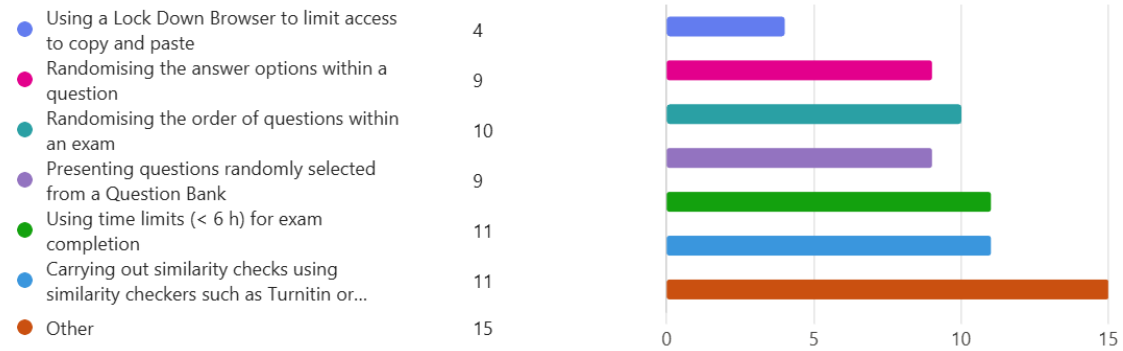
11 Schools reported the use of variety of non-invigilated digital assessments including both automated MCQs / short answers etc., that must be completed within a range of time windows. This applies to both timed exams within a short period of time (1 to 6 hour window) or open for a longer period of time (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 participants 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 advise 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.

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSTIY 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 makes 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'sdeparture 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).
- Asfar as possible, no disturbanceshould becaused 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

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

PGT PORTFOLIO REVIEW 2024 UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides UEC with an update regarding the initial results of the PGT portfolio review that was carried out in October, November and early December 2024. It provides an overview of how the review was carried out, the programmes which have been withdrawn as a result, lessons learned to date and the next steps in the on-going review process.

Please note the following key points:

- The University's PGT Portfolio has been reviewed collaboratively with all 12 Academic Schools.
- 60 PGT programmes have been identified for withdrawal.
- Multiple strengths and potential risks have been identified.

This paper is primarily **provided for information**. The recommendations provided in section 7 have been previously considered and approved by SMT. Comments/Feedback are welcome.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	**Date**
Previously provided for information to:	PMC	03.12.24
Previously provided for information and approval to:	SMT	23.01.25
To be provided for information to:	QAC	TBC
To be provided for information to:	UEC	26.02.2025

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

This paper is primarily **provided for information**. The recommendations detailed in section 7 have been previously considered and approved by SMT. Comments/Feedback are welcome.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1. On September 6th an email was circulated informing Schools that any PGT programmes with zero recruitment in 2023 and with zero expected recruitment in 2024 would be paused – an auto-pause. This paused recruitment to several programmes across the 12 Schools.

4.2. The email also informed Schools of the planned PGT portfolio review. This review would evaluate all PGT offerings across the 12 Schools.

4.3. The PGT Portfolio review was undertaken in October, November and early December 2024. Data was retrieved from the PowerBI system on admissions and individual spreadsheets on PGT programmes were generated for each School, giving the 2023 and 2024 admission numbers, and in a separate tab the factored headcount on programmes for the past three academic years.

4.4. Meetings were held with all 12 Schools (with HoS, SAM, DoE, PGT leads and other relevant key staff), to review all their current PGT programmes and specifically review any programmes that had been auto paused.

4.5. These meetings provided an opportunity to collaboratively examine the PGT data, undertake housekeeping of the PGT portfolio and identify any programmes that could/ should be withdrawn.

4.6. The meetings also provided an opportunity to talk to Schools about their PGT portfolio plans, student recruitment and development opportunities.

4.7. Following the meetings Schools were sent a final version of their PGT portfolios to check and confirm. A list of programmes identified for withdrawal was then shared with the Admissions Team to remove these from active recruitment. Please see appendix 1 for more details.

4.8. The PGT portfolio review provided an opportunity to review programmes and speak to a range of stakeholders in different Schools. In the process of conducting the review several strengths and potential risks were identified. These are detailed in section 6.

5. PGT Programmes Immediately Withdrawn as a Result of the Review

5.1. The following is a summary table of the number of programmes withdrawn following the PGT review:

School	Number of Withdrawn Programmes*
NCS	6
Social Science	1
Engineering	14
SBS	0**
Education	4
Law	8
MMSN	9
Business	10
Geoscience	3
LLMVC	2
DHPA	1
Psychology	2
Total	**60**

**Programmes vary from MSC programmes to Individual Subject Study Programmes, and some had been partially withdrawn (i.e. Sept but not Jan etc.)*

***SBS withdraw most of their PGT portfolio in AY 2023-24 as part of their PGT review*

6. Key Findings to Date

6.1 There is a need for regular portfolio reviews through collaborative meetings with the Schools and relevant Directorates.

6.2 In many Schools there is a strong understanding of their PGT portfolio and there are opportunities to share best practice and knowledge on structuring PGT programmes, so that cross population takes place at course level supporting the health of programmes generally.

There are also opportunities to learn across the University, with professional skills and industry placements being optional alternatives to dissertation courses.

6.3. There are 5 areas of potential risk that need further attention

- Naming conventions
- Marketing and Intelligence
- PGT Programme Structures
- Interdisciplinary opportunities and Finance
- Errors

6.4. Naming conventions:

Overtime names of programmes have become more complex, especially with the addition of new variants (e.g., January starts and Online delivery). These are currently captured in brackets at the end of the programme title but due to a character limit for a programme title in the relevant management information system(s) the space needed to add the variant information is made by abbreviations at the start of the programme title. E.g.:

DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIOS
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIOS (JANUARY START)
MSC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIOS (SEPT) (ONLINE)
MSC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIOS (JAN) (ONLINE)

This is an illustrative example (not a real programme) and how it might be recorded in different ways within the current system. The impact of the current naming structure means programme variants are not listed together in the admissions system and errors in their alteration, pausing/suspension and withdrawal can take place. Some of the housekeeping that has taken place as a result of the PGT Portfolio was removing variants of withdrawn programmes from live recruitment (i.e., removing programmes from active recruitment where withdrawal had already been requested (the relevant Schools) and approved (by PMC)).

6.5. Marketing and Intelligence:

Data that is specific and relevant to Schools is a challenge. Market intelligence information that is currently accessible to Schools is limited. Marketing reports shared with schools do not always get cascaded to relevant members of the school. Representatives from all schools voiced the need to have more accessible and relevant information available to help guide their planning for PGT portfolios.

6.6. PGT Programme Structures

While there is a lot of good practice across the PGT portfolio, there are instances where programmes are standalone. This can give programmes single points of failure, i.e. the moving on of a specific academic staff member, and/ or do not maximise efficiencies such as sharing literature review/ methods courses.

6.7. Interdisciplinary Opportunities and Finance

Schools expressed that one challenge to interdisciplinary programmes is linked to how they will be financially linked to schools. While parts of the current system such as headcount on courses do support interdisciplinarity, this is more likely multidisciplinary work and if a genuine interdisciplinary programme was to be created different finance models might be important to support implementation.

6.8. Errors

There were errors within the PGT portfolio. Some were linked to variants not being withdrawn but there were also errors in programme titles. Some programmes are recruiting to variants when the variant has not been given approval. While errors should be anticipated in any complex system, there is a need for regular checks on the portfolio with all stakeholders both in Schools and within Directorates.

7. FOLLOW UP RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. There are a number of possible follow up recommendations including:

7.2. **Recommendation 1:** The university needs a naming convention and programme coding systems that is applied consistently to enable any new programmes and their variants to be listed together.

Once this naming convention is established, the existing portfolio should be renamed over the next 24 months to ensure consistency of the names and codes of all programmes.

This process would enable all stakeholders internally to see more clearly programmes that are related, and this will increase visibility of programme performance and aid review processes.

7.3. **Recommendation 2:** Marketing data/ reports should be a standing item on School Executive Meeting agendas. This will enable a wider group of stakeholders in each school to review the information currently available.

The marketing data/ reports produced monthly should also come to the Dean for Portfolio and Programme Development, so that they are informed of this information to facilitate their conversations with schools around programme development and performance.

The Dean for Portfolio and Programme Development could then work with Marketing and Schools to explore opportunities surrounding market insight data, and the forms this might take for different Schools and disciplines.

7.4. **Recommendation 3:** Good practice guidance for how PGT programmes are structured should be developed. This should include showing how employability might be focused on with professional skills/ industry placements instead of a dissertation course.

7.5. **Recommendation 4:** The Dean for Portfolio and Programme Development should in collaboration with the Interdisciplinary Directors (and other relevant individuals) work with Finance and the School Administration Managers (SAMs) to explore possibilities around how interdisciplinary programmes might be structured financially. So that schools are clear on finances designing new programmes.

7.6. **Recommendation 5:** There should be an annual portfolio review undertaken on the PGT portfolio reviews to provide housekeeping and relevant scrutiny of PGT performance and to remove errors from the portfolio as they are identified.

8. NEXT STEPS FOR THE ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO REVIEW

8.1 The next step in this ongoing exercise will be to conduct a review of the University's Undergraduate (UG) portfolio. The initial stages of the review will take place in late December and January 2025.

8.2 As with the PGT review all 12 of the Academic School and other relevant departments will be consulted throughout the UG review process.

8.3 A further report will be presented to UEC, QAC, PMC, SMT, and the other relevant committees, in due course.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from Jo-Anne Murray, Vice Principal for Education (jo-anne.murray@abdn.ac.uk); JP Mynott, Dean for Portfolio and Programme Development (john.mynott@abdn.ac.uk) or Chris Sojka, Strategic Planning Officer (c.sojka@abdn.ac.uk)

APPENDIX 1: List of PGT programmes withdrawn/paused (Correct as of 10.12.24)

Psychology:

MSC PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES WITH APPLIED DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY (JAN)
MSC PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES WITH APPLIED DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY (SEPT)

NCS:

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY
MSC ADVANCED ENERGY MATERIALS: ENERGY GENERATION & STORAGE TECHNOLOGY
MSC IN INDUSTRIAL PHARMACEUTICAL CHEMISTRY: FROM LABORATORY TO MARKET
POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY
POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY
POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY

Social Science:

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND CAMPAIGNING

Engineering:

MSC IN SAFETY & RELIABILITY ENGINEERING FOR OIL AND GAS JAN
MSC IN SAFETY AND RELIABILITY ENGINEERING FOR OIL AND GAS (ONLINE)
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN TRANSPORT & INTELLIGENT MOBILITY (JANUARY START)
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN TRANSPORT AND INTELLIGENT MOBILITY
INDEPENDENT SUBJECT STUDY IN DECOMMISSIONING (ONLINE - SEPTEMBER)
INDEPENDENT SUBJECT STUDY IN SUBSEA ENGINEEERING (ONLINE SEPT START)
INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT STUDY IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT (ONLINE - SEPT START)
INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT STUDY IN SAFETY & RELIABILITY ENGINEERING (ONLINE)
INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT STUDY IN SAFETY ENGINEERING (ON CAMPUS)
INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT STUDY IN SAFETY ENGINEERING (ONLINE LEARNING)
ISS IN OIL AND GAS ENGINEERING (ONLINE - SEPTEMBER START)
ISS IN PETROLEUM ENGINEERING (SEPTEMBER START - ONLINE)
ISS IN SAFETY & RELIABILITY ENGINEERING FOR OIL & GAS (ONLINE - SEPT)
ISS RENEWABLE ENERGY ENGINEERING (SEPTEMBER START - ONLINE)

SBS:

N/A

Education:

DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION (ONLINE)
DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LEADERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS
MED IN PASTORAL CARE, GUIDANCE AND PUPIL SUPPORT (ONLINE - SEPT START)
POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN TEACHING IN THE GAELIC MEDIUM

Law:

INDEPENDENT SUBJECT STUDY IN LAW (GENERAL - QINGDAO UNIVERSITY)
MASTER OF LAWS (CRIMINAL JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS) (JANUARY START)
MASTER OF LAWS IN ENERGY LAW WITH DISSERTATION (SEPTEMBER START)
MASTER OF LAWS IN ENERGY LAW WITH PROFESSIONAL SKILLS
PG CERTIFICATE IN INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION (ONLINE - JAN START)
DEGREE OF MASTER OF LAWS IN ENERGY LAW
DEGREE OF MASTER OF LAWS IN ENERGY LAW (JANUARY START)
SHORT COURSE IN NEGOTIATION SKILLS (ONLINE) (JANUARY START)
SHORT COURSE IN NEGOTIATION SKILLS (ONLINE) (SEPTEMBER START)

MMSN:

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOTECHNOLOGY, BIOINFORMATICS AND BIO-BUSINESS
MSC IN ADVANCED RESTORATIVE DENTAL PRACTICE (BLENDED LEARNING)
PG CERT IN ADVANCED RESTORATIVE DENTAL PRACTICE (BLENDED LEARNING)
PG DIPLOMA IN ADVANCED RESTORATIVE DENTAL PRACTICE (BLENDED LEARNING)
DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY (JAN START)
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOTECHNOLOGY, BIOINFORMATICS AND BIO-BUSINESS
MSC IN MEDICAL MOLECULAR MICROBIOLOGY AND IMMUNOLOGY (JAN START)

Business:

DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN ENERGY MANAGEMENT
DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP (SEPTEMBER START)
DEGREE OF MSC (ECON) IN ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE
DEGREE OF MSC (ECON) IN ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE (JANUARY START)
EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (LONDON) SEPT START
EXECUTIVE MBA (SHANGHAI CAMPUS)
MSC IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM MANAGEMENT (SEPTEMBER START)
EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (LONDON) JANUARY START
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN ENERGY MANAGEMENT (JANUARY START)
MSC IN ENERGY, ECONOMICS AND FINANCE (ONLINE - JANUARY START)

Geosciences:

DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ARCHAEOLOGY (JANUARY START)
DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GEOPHYSICS (JAN START)
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE NORTH (JANUARY START)

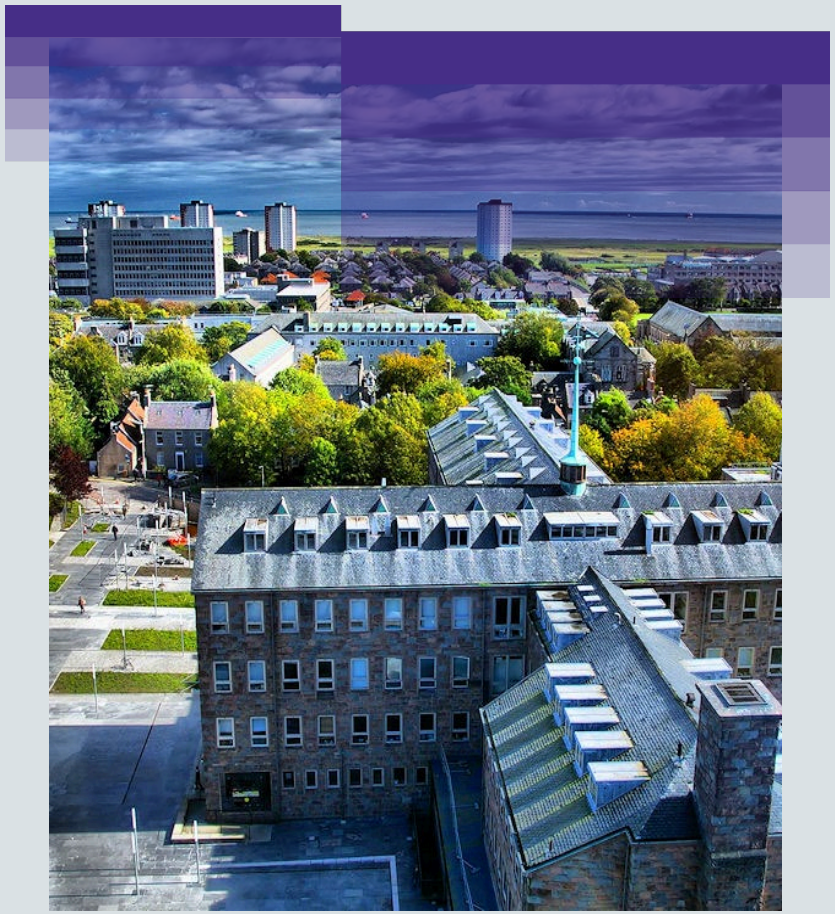
LLMVC:

DEGREE OF MASTER OF LETTERS IN ENGLISH LITERARY STUDIES (JAN START)
DEGREE OF MASTER OF LETTERS IN ENGLISH LITERARY STUDIES (SEPT START)

DHPA:

DEGREE OF MASTER OF LETTERS IN PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIETY

GO **BEYOND BOUNDARIES**



PGT Portfolio Review

JP Mynott
(Dean of Portfolio and Programme Development)

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PGT Portfolio Review

There are lots of strengths that can be seen in the PGT Portfolio. These include:

- Quality
- Plans for the future
- Cross population of programmes at course level

PGT Portfolio Review

There are 5 areas of potential areas that could benefit from attention.

- Naming conventions
- Marketing and Intelligence
- PGT Programme Structures
- Interdisciplinary opportunities and Finance
- Errors

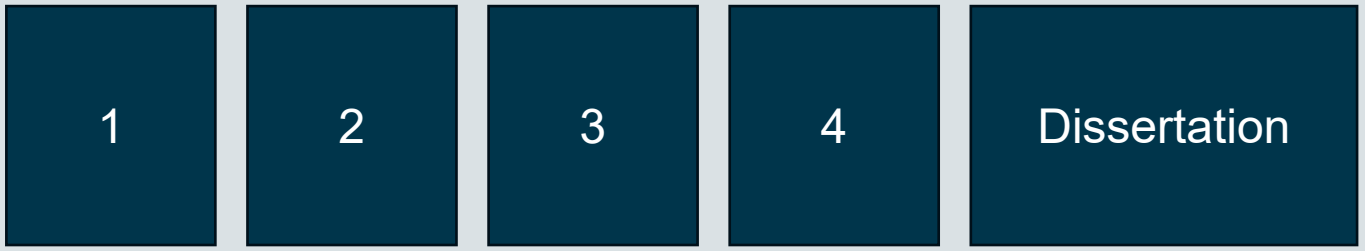
Naming Conventions

Overtime names of programmes have become more complex with the addition of variants both January starts and Online delivery. These are currently captured in brackets at the end of the programme title but due to a character limit for a programme title the space needed to add the variant information is made by abbreviations at the start of the programme title.

- DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIOS
- MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIOS (JANUARY START)
- MSC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIOS (SEPT) (ONLINE)
- MSC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIOS (JAN) (ONLINE)

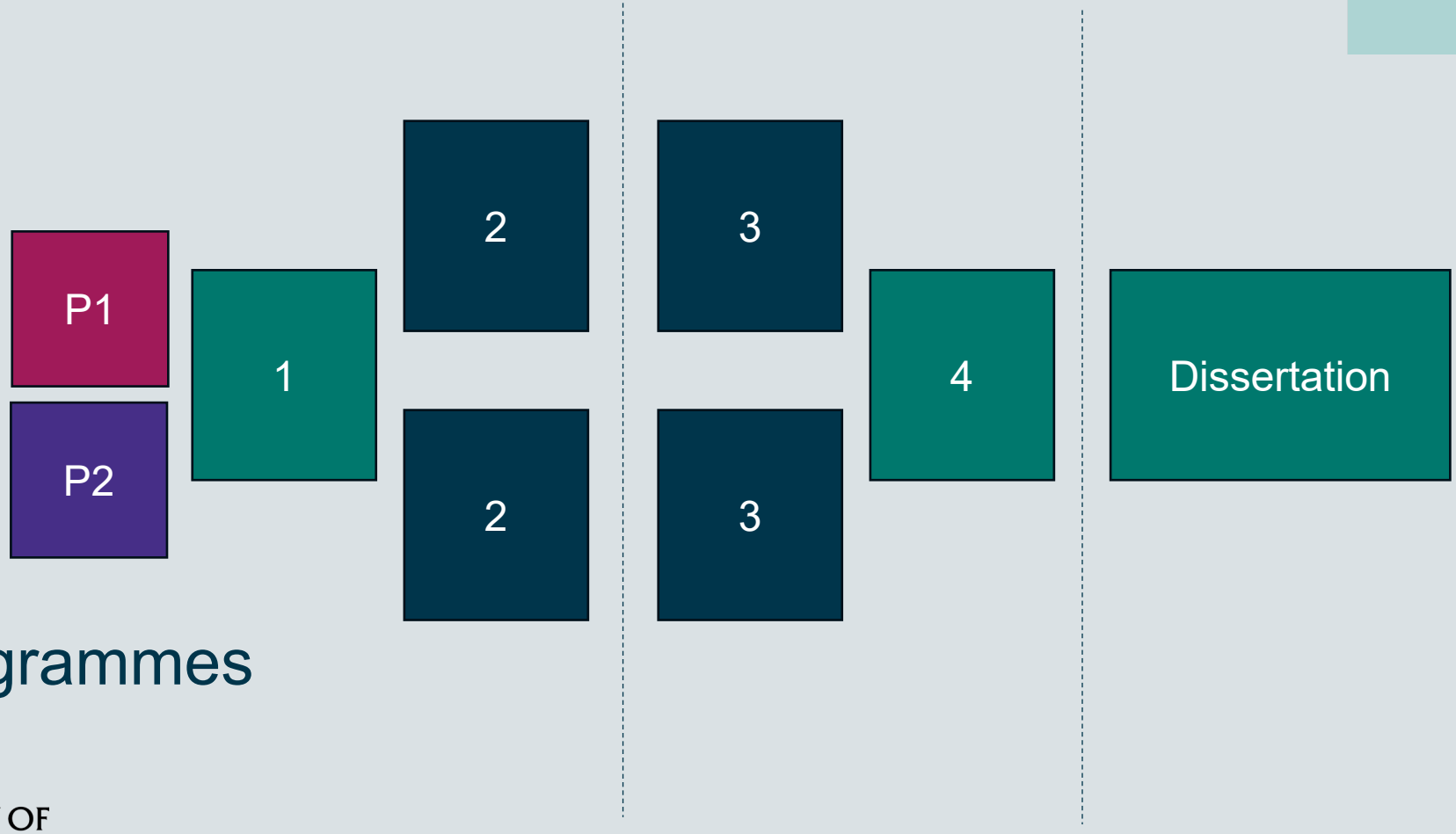
This can mean that programmes are not listed together which can then impact when changes are made.

Programme Structures



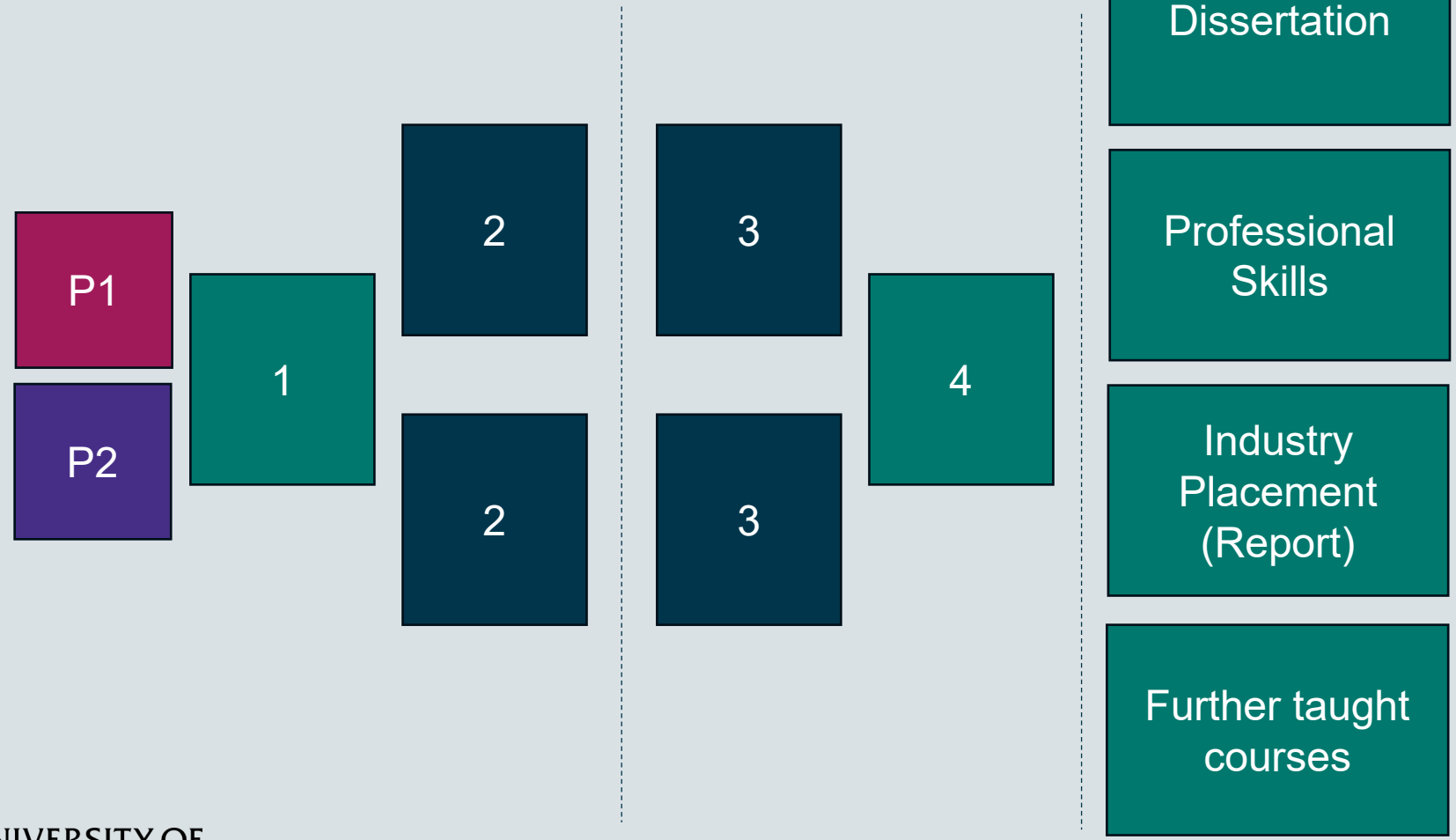
Contained programme with no cross population at course level.

Programme Structures

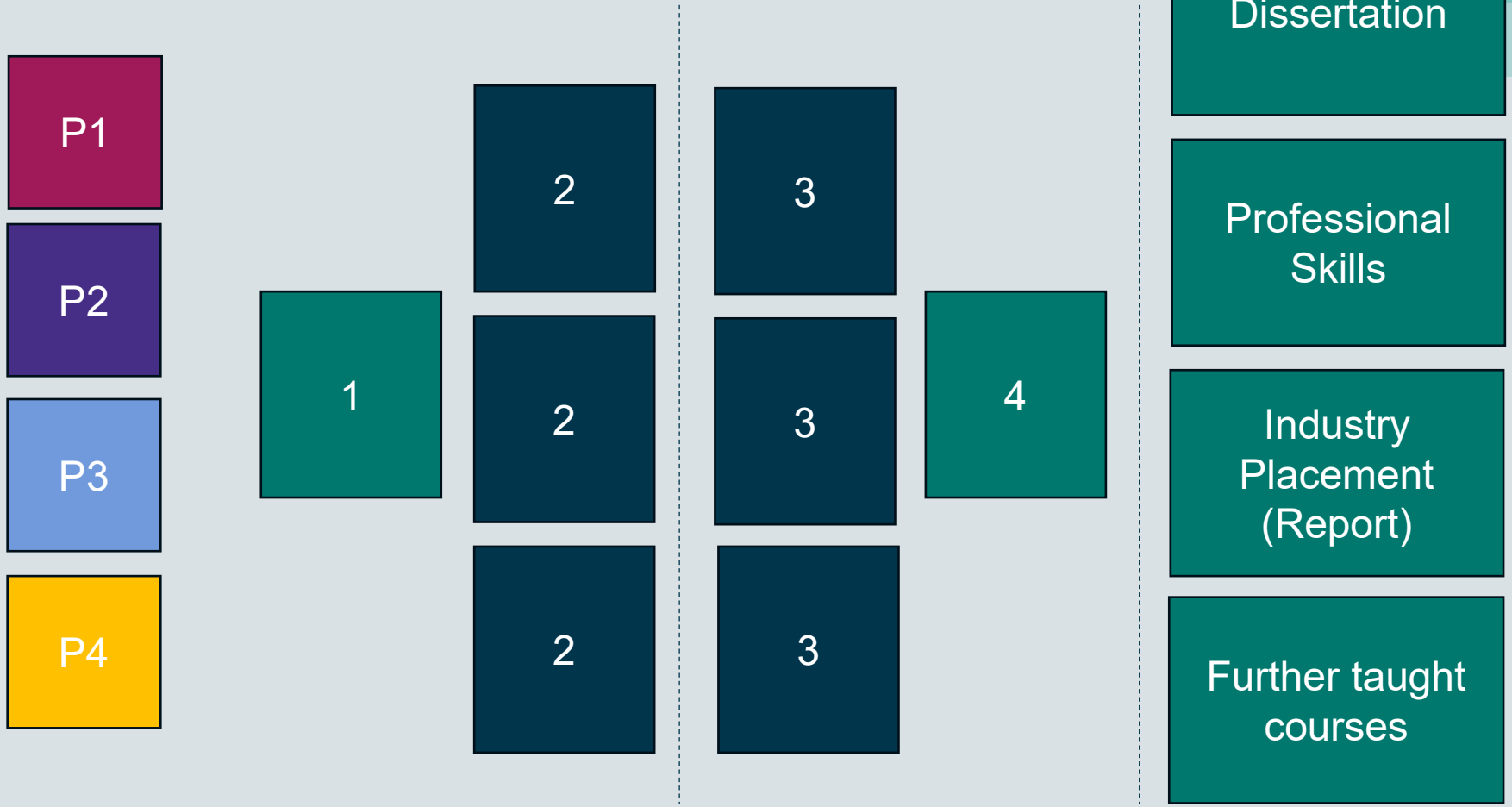


Sister programmes

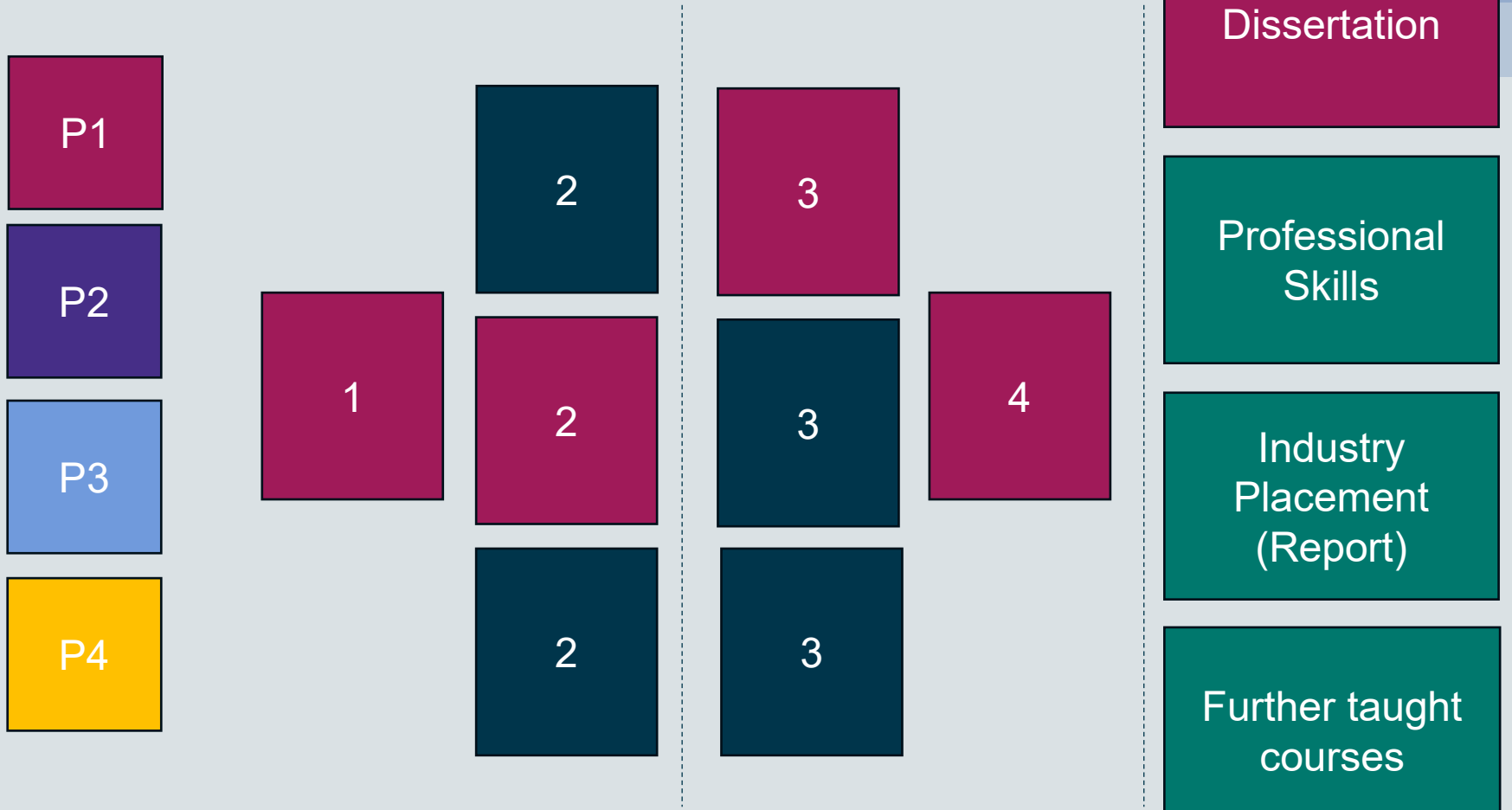
Programme Structures



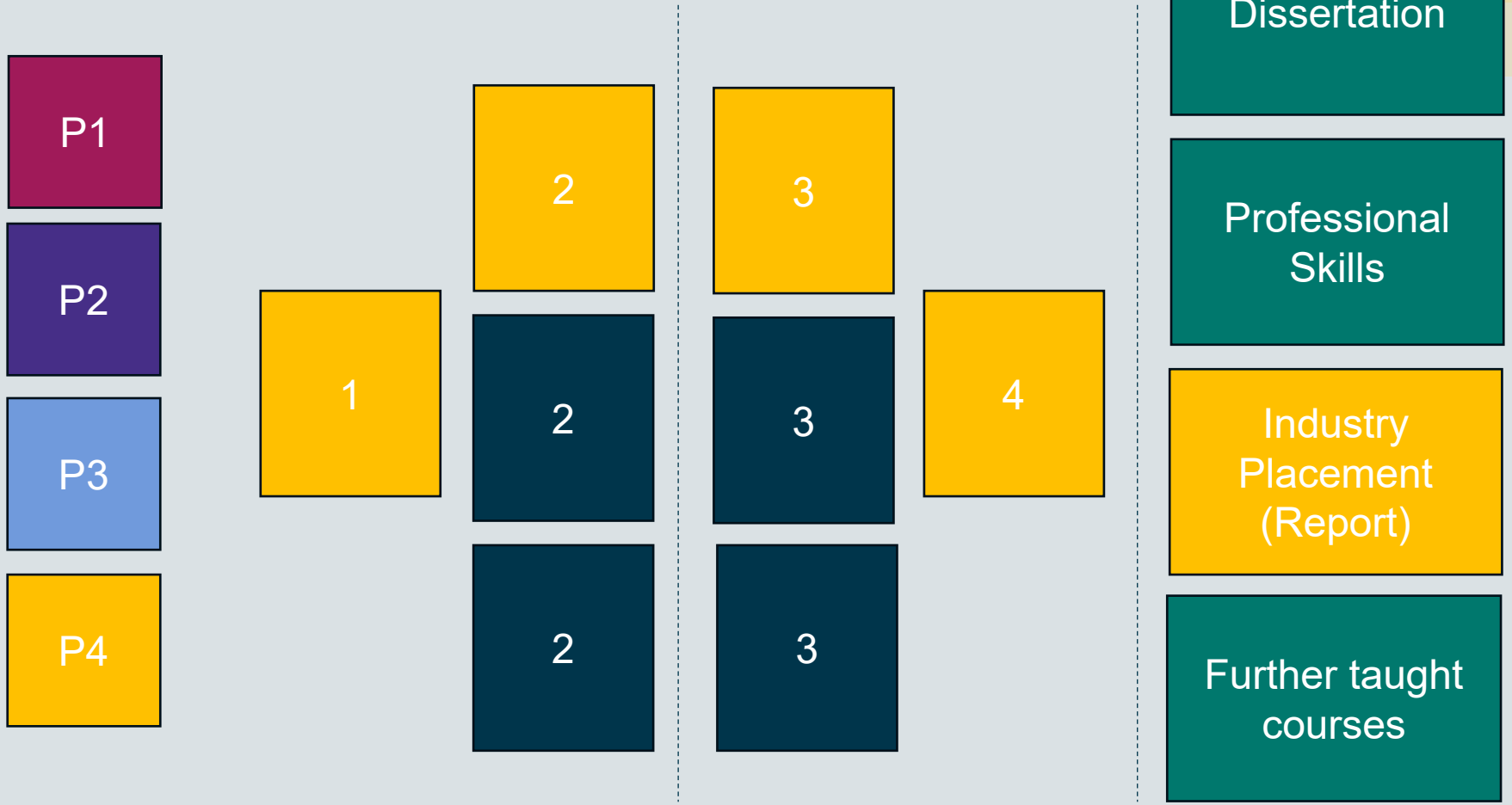
Programme Structures



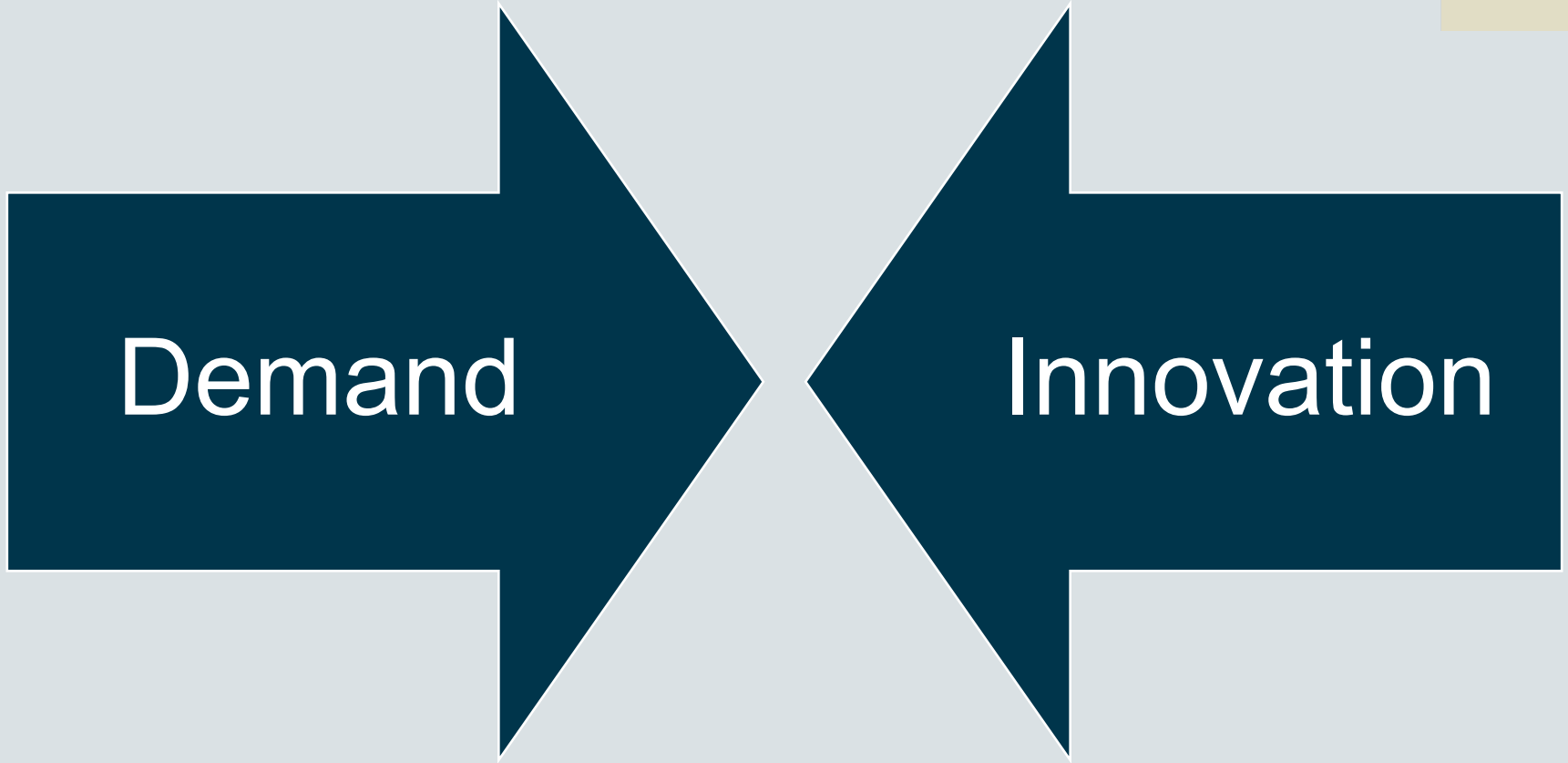
Programme Structures



Programme Structures



Considerations



Online/ Blended/ In person

01

Who is the potential applicant?

02

How might they prefer to study?

03

Do we need multiple start points?

PMC Process

- Work has started on streamlining the PMC process
- Schools will have one point of data entry
- Simpler forms (online)
- Clearer feedback systems
- More agile system (from August 2025)
- Approval with ability to market while developing (in specific cases)

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ACADEMIC APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING UPDATE (2023/24)

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper will provide members of the University Education Committee (UEC) 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 University Education Committee (UEC) are asked to **discuss** the paper.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

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

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The **University Education Committee (UEC)** 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 Jo-Anne Murray (Vice-Principal (Education)), jo-anne.murray@abdn.ac.uk, 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.*

Appendix B

	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 (O%)		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														
	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	
School/Section	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

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE UPDATE (2023/24)

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper will provide members of the University Education Committee (UEC) 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 University Education Committee (UEC) are asked to **discuss** the paper.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

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

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The **University Education Committee (UEC)** 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 University Education Committee (UEC) 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 EDUCATION COMMITTEE

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

EMPLOYABILITY & ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMMITTEE (EEC)

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday the 4th of February at 13:05.

Present: Ellen Minshull, Tracey Innes, John Barrow, Miles Rothoerl, Alisdair McKibben, Jenna Stuart, Susan Halfpenny, Ijeoma Obiagwu, Helen Pierce, Monika Gostic, Masha Shaw, Margaret Jackson, Desidre Coopasamy, Alan McCue,

Apologies: Lenka Mbadugha, Alan Macpherson, Kirsty Wilson, Christina Schmid, Danielle Grieve, Alison Young, Amir Siddiq, David Green, Stuart Durkin, Jane Melhuish, Darren Comber, Heather May Morgan, Wilfrid Flanda.

Ellen Minshull | Careers and Employability Service
ellen.minshull@abdn.ac.uk

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Opening remarks and introduction of new members (Alan McCue).

2. Approval of the Previous Minutes (EEC.040225.001)

Minutes approved following one change to the attendance record. Outstanding actions were completed ahead of time and were discussed during the meeting.

Action – EM to update to include Helen Pierce's apologies.

3. Work Based Learning (WBL) Policy Working Group Terms of Reference (EEC.040225.002)

The WBL Policy and it's history was introduced including the updated working group terms of reference document. A working group is to be established to move the project forward and gather feedback. Members were invited to volunteer for the working group or to advertise the role to their colleagues. Ideally, student and staff representatives would have had some experience or involvement in WBL activities in the past.

It was noted that there is a large pool of students who recently completed WBL with the through university schemes that could be utilised for feedback e.g. a complementary focus group.

Action – TI to check with Emma whether Senate approval is needed, including timescales.

Action – TI to contact, confirm and source additional members.

Action – EM to update policy membership table to include Masha Shaw as PGRS representative.

Action – Miles to search for a student representative with WBL experience within the Students' Union.

Action – TI/JB to draft and circulate a short description of the membership opportunities.

4. MySkills MyAberdeen Guidance Document Review (EEC.040225.003)

As part of the new University course guide module template, a guidance document about MySkills has been developed. It supports students' awareness of their skill development related to their courses and is being trialled in some schools.

Suggestions were made to mirror this work in the course catalogue, the course booking system, via the categories or description field, and the online course webpages in future. However, challenges around systems and workload were highlighted.

Action – Masha Shaw and Susan Halfpenny to contact the web team to investigate the feasibility of highlighting skills development through the course booking system.

Action – JB to share this guidance to the "MyAberdeen institutional template group" for circulation amongst schools.

Action – JB to work with Jenna Stuart to identify opportunities to highlight skills development for online course webpages.

5. **Proposal for Collaborative Work for Scholarship Research (EEC.040225.004)**
   Dr Monika Gostic
   A demonstration of a new method of teaching was shared, members were invited to reach out for opportunities to collaborate. The project focused on active learning, utilising crafting and TikTok and has resulted in improved knowledge retention, skills development and increased engagement. Feedback from the Students' Union confirmed that this project aligns with recent trends in feedback from Students that they are keen to learn in new ways.

   Action – Members interested in collaboration should reach out to Monika ASAP.

6. **PwC Employability Audit Discussion and Feedback (EEC.040225.005)**
   PwC are currently undertaking an Employability Audit review the institution's approach to Employability. This audit includes reviewing documentation and interviewing individuals who are involved in employability related activities.

   Action – TI/JB to ask what the topic of the interviews would be to support preparation.

   Action – Members to share with TI/JB whether they would be happy to be interviewed or not.

7. **Any Other Business**

- Funding has been approved for 20 internal, part-time internships to run Summer 2025. Call for proposals from departments and schools open end of week 03/02/2025. Recruitment will take place in mid-March. More information to be circulated this week.

  Action – Alisdair McKibben to share information about this and the summer virtual internship schemes.
- The ABDN Internships closed on Sunday 02/02/2025 with 862 applications for 28 internships.
- Applications for the ABDN Shadowing Scheme are currently open until 16th of February and applications for the ABDN Interns with Impact programme open on the 10th of February until 10th of March.

  Action - EM to share information about these opportunities.
- Applications for the Lightbulb Ideas Competition are currently open.

  Action – Ijeoma Obiagwu to share information about the competition.
- Information on the NSS overview will be shared at the next meeting and via the teams site in due course.

8. **Date of Next Meeting**
   Tuesday 18th March at **11:05**. **Location:** QA-AUSA Union Building Rm 101 | Microsoft Teams.

   For Information:
   Remit and Composition (EEC/100924/006)
   Graduate Outcomes data – (tbd)
   NSS overview - (tbd)

UNIVERSTIY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

UPSCALING WORK BASED LEARNING POLICY DEVELOPMENT WORK STREAM

REMIT AND COMPOSITION

(Sub-Group of the University Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC))

1 **GROUP TITLE**

Upscaling Work Based Learning Policy Development Work Stream

2 **DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT**

February 2025

3 **CHAIR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AREA**

Co-Chairs: Head of Careers and Employability | Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship
Administrative Support Area: Careers and Employability Service

4 **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

4.1 Our Aberdeen 2040 strategy commits to providing more work-based learning (WBL), through placements and volunteering.

4.2 A task and finish group in January 2022 conducted an initial scoping exercise followed by an institutional placement and WBL review report produced by external consultants Gradconsult. The report provided a set of recommendations, using an evidence-base of relevant research and sector knowledge and experience, to achieve upscaling of WBL. A vision for upscaling WBL, and short-, medium- and long-term proposals to implement recommendations to achieve our ambition to upscale WBL were approved by Senior Management Team in March 2023. The recommendations included the following infrastructure and resource requirements to upscale provision of WBL:

- 4.2.1 Establish infrastructure, systems, and processes to deliver WBL at scale.
- 4.2.2 Create a clear, concise, robust institutional placement policy.

4.3 A digital project board is currently established to develop a system to enable us to provide students with WBL opportunities at scale (recommendation 4.2.1).

4.4 A draft institutional policy was developed by external consultants Gradconsult (recommendation 4.2.2), however further work is needed to refine and complete the policy documentation, ensuring it aligns with institution structures and procedures. This work was paused due to lack of resource, an impact of the recruitment freeze in November 2023.

4.5 Further delaying development of a robust institutional placement policy presents risks to the Institution as we seek to scale WBL. This work stream is being established to develop a suitable policy which meets the needs of the Institution. This work stream will need to carefully consider an achievable timescale, maximising progress, using available resource.

5 **REMIT**

The workstream will complete the following work:

5.1 Review draft institutional policy which has already been developed by external consultants Gradconsult.
5.2 Identify and implement any required changes to draft policy to ensure fit with institution context.
5.3 Establish any connections between the draft placement policy and other institution policies, procedures and guidance notes to ensure all are fully connected.
5.4 Establish need for, route and timescales for any academic views and approvals required.
5.5 Table draft policy with EEC, UEC and other relevant committees for comment and feedback.
5.6 Submit paperwork for policy approval at required committees.

DRAFT

Members' Responsibilities:

Each member of the workstream will actively contribute to discussions and proactively feedback on discussions to and from their respective areas.

6 **COMPOSITION**:

Co-Chairs: Head of Careers and Employability Service | Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship

Membership: Selection of School representatives (comprising those currently involved/interested in delivery of WBL)
Careers and Employability Representative
Academic Services Representative
Work-based Coordinator
Go Abroad Representative
Student Support / Disability Representative
International Compliance Representative
Qatar campus representative
Deans with relevant areas of responsibility
Students' Association Representative

ACCOUNT TO BE TAKEN OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP

7 MEMBERSHIP

Representative Area	**Memberships**
Co-Chair	Tracey Innes – Head of Careers and Employability John Barrow – Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship
Clerk	Careers, TBC
Deans with relevant areas of responsibility	Steve Tucker John Mynott
Work-based Learning Representative	Peter Cross (Work-Based Learning Coordinator)
Academic Services Representative	TBC
Go Abroad Manager	Louisa Stratton (TBC)
Student Support / Disability Representative	TBC
International Advice and Compliance	TBC
Qatar Campus Representative	TBC
Student Representation	TBC
School Representatives:	1. TBC 2. TBC 3. TBC

DRAFT

8 REPORTING LINE/PARENT COMMITTEE AND INTERFACE WITH OTHER COMMITTEES

Formal reporting line:	University Education Committee (UEC) **and** Employability and Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC)
Interface with other committees:	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), Student Support Committee (SSC), School Education Committees,

9 FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS

Meetings to be at least every 6 weeks for the duration of the workstream.

10 PUBLICATION OF PAPERS

The agenda and meeting papers will be made available at least one week prior to meetings of the workstream. Where these papers are draft, this will be clearly identified

DRAFT

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

STUDENT SUPPORT & EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (SSEC)

Minutes of the meeting held on 06/02/2025

Present: Nick Edwards, Jason Bohan, Lesley Muirhead, John Cavanagh, Tim Baker, Erin Ferguson, Miles Rothoerl, Karim Hurtig, Tõnis Tilk

Online: Fiona Stoddard, Steve Tucker, Duncan Stuart, Lyn Batchelor, Susan Halfpenny, Wendy Lowe, Natalie Kinchin-Williams, Melanie Viney, Heidi Mehrkens, Madge Jackson, Jenna Stuart, Rhiannon Thompson

Apologies: Jemma Murdoch, Sara Misuri, Despoina Kaloriti

1. Welcome

Nick Edwards (NE) welcomes the committee. NE reminds the Committee that Anna Shea, the previous Head of Counselling, has now finished her employment with the University and thanks her for her service. Her successor, Lucy Arnot, will join the University on the 1st of April. In the interim, there will not be any changes in the operational delivery of the service.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the SSEC meetings held on 03/12/2024

SSEC06022025-002

Fiona Stoddard asked for some updates to the minutes, which have been actioned. The minutes are otherwise approved.

3. Actions from the previous meeting

SSEC06022025-003

- The AUSA presentation from the previous meeting is available on the Teams site (here).
- All actions have been reviewed.

4. Withdrawal report

SSEC06022025-004
To note, the data refers to students on the Aberdeen campus. Currently, there is no dedicated data for students on the Qatar campus.

Jason Bohan (JB) presenting: The *Student Withdrawal Report* has been primarily shared for information. The summary reflects data from the Academic Year 2023/24, and it demonstrates a decrease in students' withdrawals (3.9% withdrawals at an undergraduate level in 23/24; compared to the previous 4.9% in 22/23, and 5.2% in 21/22).

UG withdrawals were at their highest levels in November (AY 2023/24). This follows the same pattern as the previous academic years. Similarly, April and July see a high number of student withdrawals – coinciding with assessment periods.

Withdrawal data slightly varies across Schools, and the relevant data by School is accessible for review. The School of MMSN and the School of Law have the lowest rates of undergraduate withdrawals. In 23/24, the School of Engineering experienced the highest rates of withdrawal. Overall, however, all Schools have witnessed an improvement compared to the previous years.

The most common reasons for UG withdrawals are, in order of magnitude, 'Other Personal', followed by 'Health Reasons'. This data is indicative of more generalised fields, and should not be understood as systematic data.

In line with previous trends, the highest volume of UG withdrawals has been amongst students in their first programme year. Students in their last year constitute the lowest group of withdrawals. Home students constitute the bigger portion of undergraduate withdrawals (compared to International students).

PGT has similarly seen a decrease in student withdrawals in 2023/24 (with a percentage of 2.8%, compared to the previous 4.3%). We see variation between Schools and years in the numbers of withdrawals with no defined patterns. The data suggests that the most common cause for withdrawals is 'Other Personal' and 'Heath Reasons'. PGT sees a majority of International Students withdrawing from their studies (compared to the percentage of Home students). Overall, this can be considered a positive story across the institution, and it appears that the actions taken thus far have proven successful.

Tim Baker (TB) noticed that many students in their School seem to be interested in returning to their studies after withdrawing. TB wonders if there is any data to account for these students. JB confirms that the data presented today accounts for students who have left or have been removed from their courses. **JB will bring the non-continuation data to the next meeting**. This latter report would also account for students who intend to return to their studies.

Miles Rothoerl (MR) wonders if there may be scope to collect more information in the future to ascertain reasons for withdrawal. JB explains that currently, students must select a reason for their withdrawal in the dedicated request form. There have been discussions about the possibility of expanding the list of reasons to allow for more possible answers via ticking boxes. Karim Hurtig (KH) trusts that if these sections were to be expanded, they could prove useful in determining common causes for withdrawals, and help mitigate circumstances where possible.

Erin Ferguson (EF) wonders where 'temporary suspensions' sit within the University processes, and how they affect the information collected in the Withdrawal Report. John Cavanagh (JC) recounts that PG students used to have the option to suspend studies, but that the current process requires them to withdraw and re-enrol, which may obscure data collection.

JB to look at the current types of data collected in the Withdrawal Report and explore the possibility of accounting for students intending to suspend their studies.

Steven Tucker (ST) suggests that the committee may wish to consider setting up forums for Schools (and their representatives) to attend. These meetings would allow Schools to share and compare their practices and initiatives – ultimately aiming to further support students across the Institution and lower the number of students' withdrawals. Ultimately, a dedicated forum could help create and inform guidance about student support mechanisms and support initiatives, which can be edited and expanded upon. **JB to look at the possibility of reintroducing Retention Offices across different Schools to facilitate communication and shared practices across the institution**.

NE explains that the University does not currently offer the option to suspend studies (and rather, to withdraw and re-enrol) due to various reasons; including to allow non-registered

students to claim benefits. NE agrees that there may be scope to think about messaging around the withdrawal process. Given the high volume of students who are effectively looking to suspend studies, the University should be able to offer specific guidance about the withdrawal and re-enrolment process. **NE/JB to look at the possibility of reviewing language surrounding the withdrawal process. Messaging may be focused on the meaning of withdrawal (including temporary withdrawal), and clarify what options are available to withdrawn students (for example, highlighting the possibility of claiming certificates/degrees).**

5. Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (ASES) 2025 report

SSEC06022025-005

JB Presenting: *The Student Experience Survey* (results) paper is quite detailed. The committee will look through some of the highlights and key results.

There has been a total of 1802 responses for both surveys – highlighting an increase in interactions and response rates from the previous year. There are some slight variations across different Schools and Levels. The majority of responders were students based on the Aberdeen campus.

From the original overall report, data has also been broken down into dedicated sections.
School Reports: Schools are encouraged to explore their individual, relevant School Reports.
Campus Reports: Three individual reports have been generated to highlight the separate student experiences across the Aberdeen Campus, Qatar Campus, and Online Students.
Student Level Reports: Individual reports have been generated to highlight the different experiences of students in Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught, and Postgraduate Research Levels.
New to UoA Student Report: A report has been generated to highlight the experience of students transitioning into the university for the first time.
International Reports: Two reports have been generated to highlight the experience of International students.
Other Reports: Other Reports have been generated for four categories/services (Careers & Employability; Digital & Library Experience; Pastoral Support; Wellbeing & Sport).

Some headline results:
- School Inductions: Inductions have been well-attended (only 20% of students reported not having attended the sessions). The majority of non-attendees reported not knowing about the sessions, or not having been available on campus for the inductions. To address this, the EE team will continue to work on improving pre-arrival comms. The scheduling of the Induction sessions may be reviewed to further improve attendance. Duncan Stuart (DS) and the EE Team have been looking at the possibility of having the Inductions as part of the centralised timetable system. The committee agrees that it would be beneficial to ensure that these sessions are recorded and available for review at various stages. **DS to ensure that the materials shared during Schools Inductions are accessible to all students (incl. visually impaired persons) – and to speak with the eLearning team if appropriate.**
- Pastoral Support: Several students reported not having met their Personal Tutors/Regents/PGT Leads. The two leading causes are related to the lack of communication from the Pastoral Lead; and the lack of clarity surrounding the purpose of pastoral interactions. To address this, central messaging will be shared to encourage students to contact their tutors. Staff messaging has also been developed to remind staff to contact their assigned students.

The Senior Pastoral Support group (made of each School's Lead/Senior Pastoral Tutor/PGT Pastoral Lead) has been reviewing and promoting messaging for pastoral support figures, and encouraging active communication with students across the year. Within the group, a smaller working group has been established to monitor engagement. Amongst those who have engaged with their Pastoral Support Lead, feedback and engagement are mostly positive.
- Personal UoA Experience: Most students expressed satisfaction with the overall student experience (86%); with feeling part of the community (82%); and with being able to feel like themselves at the University (89%). The data highlights that a stronger focus should be on the messaging and promotion of the SafeZone app (64% of students expressed feeling physically safe on campus; 61% noted being aware of SafeZone).

The report highlighted that some students do not feel safe on campus. It is not possible to ascertain what specific groups of people would have reported this information, as data can only be sorted by male/female/other and UG/PGT/PGR (in line with regulations around protected characteristics & data collection).TB and MR agree that, in line with the University's EDI policy, there should be scope to collect more specific data regarding the groups of students who may feel most unsafe on campus. This would allow the University to create strategies to counteract potential issues.

DS and his team have worked and will continue to work on promoting the SafeZone app. **The EE Team to collect stats about the success of their SafeZone app campaign, and look at the possibility of collecting further (more detailed) data about groups of people feeling unsafe on campus**.

Lyn Batchelor (LB) comments on the Qatar report and wants to reassure the Committee and Schools that the feedback is being reviewed. A team has been appointed to review the current processes in Qatar.

Overall, the paper does appoint various recommended actions to be reviewed and analysed by the relevant staff members and teams. **Schools are invited to look at the reports in their Education Committee meetings, School's forums, etc.**
Schools are to look at the relevant data from their perspective, and feedback to the rest of SSEC. All Schools Reps should determine what feedback can be actioned, and highlight where external support may be needed. The relevant information will be ideally shared with Student Life to ensure that students are conscious of their feedback being valued.

6. Lecture Video Captioning update

SSEC06022025-006

JB presenting: The *Lecture Video Captioning* paper has been produced to update and inform on the current captioning process. This has been previously discussed in SSEC.
The University's Digital Accessibility policy states that video should be captioned (or an accessible alternative provided) to help the University meet statutory UK accessibility regulations.

UoA has been facing a challenge in lecture recording due to the high volume of content creation by part of the University (an estimated 13,000 hours annually). For some years, captioning was automatically generated from lecture recordings. Some Schools would additionally hire dedicated staff to review and update captioning. The project was revealed as expensive and had to be changed after a significant budget cut in 2023.

The current process can be defined as more reactive. When students with hearing impairments are identified, their courses and Schools are proactively informed of this. The University thus ensures that captioning is especially accurate in courses accessed by persons with hearing impairments.

An informal review and comparative analysis with 10-12 other institutions in the sector suggests that the University of Aberdeen is engaged in a very positive practice. Most other institutions have been relying on auto-generated captioning, thus setting apart our institution as especially inclusive.

Since January 2024, the University has been trying to support Staff and Students by:

1- Automatically enabling the auto-generated captioning on Panopto.
2- Asking Staff to check captions for accuracy.
- Where Staff identifies that further work is needed (and approaches the e-Learning Team), money has been made available to ensure accuracy is supported by other means.
3- Making clear statements available to students. Students are encouraged to inform the University when captions are not accessible for them; so that solutions can be arranged.

Overall, the process is mostly reactive but focused on ensuring students do not stay at a disadvantage. Since January 2024, reports by students about non-accurate captioning have been scarce – but the University is further investigating whether this is accurate to the overall Student's Experience.

The committee identifies some potential issues with the current captioning process:

- The feedback received thus far may not be especially accurate, as many students will likely not have reported their experiences with auto-generated captions.
- Auto-generated captioning often lacks accuracy when working with different accents. Some students (especially international) may be more perceptive of a specific accent. Accurate captioning across the institution would level the field.
- Whilst some subjects would allow for lectures to be recorded, captioned, and used across various Academic Years; some subjects do lend themselves to require a more frequent update in contents. Further, many students have reported a preference for up-to-date lectures. If one were to repurpose lecture recordings across AY, it would be important to make sure they are of high quality – as live recordings in lecture theatres often present distracting audio elements.
- A reactive process (or one based on existing study adjustments) may not be the most inclusive practice. Some students who are not identified as with a hearing impairment/disability may still require accessible captioning. Relying on student feedback and their knowledge of the process (i.e. contacting their course coordinator/Student Support) may not always realistically happen.
- As the University is trying to offer more online/blended courses; it is especially important to ensure that captions are accurate, therefore the captioning budget may be used to support Schools in this activity.
- Natalie Kinchin-Willams shares a quote from ASES: "Captions are often hilarious because they're so inaccurate, but sometimes gives the wrong idea altogether because of the mistakes. This year I didn't seek additional support for my hearing impairment because last year the funding for accurate captions with withdrawals slashed reduced and despite jumping through hoops they didn't happen".

CAD will aim to collect more information and feedback from students regarding captioning and their accuracy.

7. Report and Request Tool update

SSEC06022025-007

JB Presenting: The *Report and Request Tool* (RRT) is a newer version of the Absence Tool. As of the AY 2024/25, the tool has been rebranded and updated to include additional functionalities (submit extension requests, respond to engagement emails, report mitigating circumstances). The RRT has been operating as a one-stop-shop tool on Student Hub, thus allowing the Schools to access all the information on one site.

Feedback has been shared with JB, the School & Engagement Lead group, and an Admin Group working across various Schools. The feedback seems to be mostly positive, with many individuals appreciating the new centralised system. Some processes seem to be streamlined, and the centralised system has been positively affecting communication with students.

Schools have reported that the RRT has generated more work for their Admin teams. Previously, Academics were involved in receiving and processing some students' requests. It is now the School's admins to action all the RRT requests – thus creating more work. The Schools will consider reviewing and reflecting on the structures of their processes.

Student feedback is currently limited and mostly informal. Many students report that the new process is more straightforward. Formal feedback will be collected in the upcoming Survey Season.

Some data around the volume of requests is now available and can be sorted by School. DDIS provided data on the use of the tool as of w/b 9th December indicating the number of times students had used the Tool for each type of request for the institution and by School. As of this date, the Tool had received 51,883 submissions from students, with the vast majority reporting absence (85.31%). There were also a significant number of extension requests submitted (4,326,8.34%), as well as responses to C6 emails (2,731, 5.26%). Requests by School present some slight variations, which can be explored in the report.

After launching the RRT in the first term, the Schools have been sharing their feedback and recommendations for improving the tool. The feedback has been completed and implemented for use in Term 2. Use of the RRT will continue to be monitored. The RRT will be centralised on MyTimetable from AY 2025/26.

Fiona Stoddard (FS) reports that the new RRT has positively affected the students, and seemingly reduced the amount of C7s. FS trusts that the centralised system has facilitated the absence-reporting process; thus positively impacting student monitoring (and reducing C6/7s).

LB reports that currently, the Report and Request Tool catalogues courses by School. The team has been working on developing a process for the Qatar-based courses, to ensure these can be accessible to the Qatar staff members. The aim is to ensure that Qatar Staff can easily monitor absences and extension requests.

NE reports that Student Advice & Support has seen a dramatic increase in the number of referrals sent by the Schools' Admin Teams. This seems to be a side-effect of admins processing all requests from the RRT. Student Support has been working with some Schools to define a more specific process and reduce direct referrals to the service.

As the School Engagement Leads Group will work to standardise support and communication to ensure a more consistent experience; NE wonders if it would be possible to also account for the Student Support referral process. **JB/NE to discuss the possibility of including guidance for Schools about when/how to escalate Report & Requests to Student Support.**

JC, KH, MR agree that the University should consider a policy to formalise when C7s are issued. Some Schools have been more lenient, whilst others have followed a model whereby C7s are issued after three consecutive C6s. **JB to report this feedback to the Engagement Lead Group**.

8. AUSA Standing Item

SSEC06022025-008

Tõnis Tilk (TT) presenting: AUSA & Sport at the University. Currently, there are 62 Sports clubs registered under AUSA with 2998 individual students involved in these sports activities (making up approx. 25% of the student population). Sports are hosted over 5 on-campus venues (ASV, King's Pitches, Balgownie, Butchart, Hillhead) and 11 off-campus venues (where necessary for targeted activities, such as ice skating, surfing, golfing, rowing, etc). Additionally, there are 3269 students registered in non-sports societies (207 active in 24/25).

Participating in sports activities and societies has been recognised as highly valuable for the student body. Student surveys show that participating in sports has positive effects on an individual's sense of the self and of their community. Whilst participating in sports has had a positive impact on student's lives; "the greatest challenge to institutions [...] appears to be finding the time and institutional consensus needed to understand and act on student needs". Feedback from UoA students highlights that many have been positively impacted by attending sports events and would be happy to participate in even more activities.

Sports matters as it improves: retention, recruitment (especially for international students), sense of community, mental/social/physical health, and the ability to manage a work-life balance. AUSA also trusts that attendance in sports may save costs elsewhere in the University (such as Student Support, Admin & Engagement Alerts, Extensions,... "if students are well, admin goes down").

AUSA recognises that Sport is in a crisis. There has not been a clear vision of how to integrate sports into student life. The ASV facility budget (used by 50% of sports societies) has dropped by 22% compared to the previous AY. This has significantly impacted students and their ability to participate in sports. The increased costs of ASV membership have further reduced positive engagement in sports activities. Furthermore, it has been acknowledged that various UoA facilities are not maintained to a high standard – thus affecting sport societies and potential venues (i.e. the Game Hall floors in Butchart are not up to standard; King's pitches & Balgownie lack floodlights, etc.).

Currently, the SU has developed a Sports Strategy to present to SMT. ASV, UoA, and SU are working on an ongoing joint project to review Student Sports.

There are things that AUSA wants to change. Strategically, the SU wishes for sports to become more important in the university, and be actively considered in decision-making processes.

Whilst AUSA appreciates that Sport has been included as part of Aberdeen 2040; they wish to implement targeted strategies and funds to the cause. AUSA believes that the current existing strategy should be expanded and developed with more careful attention. Operationally, AUSA recognises that on-campus venues should be considered a priority (an extended list of recommendations can be seen in the PowerPoint presentation).

Following the papers written under the strategies discussed across the university; DS and the EE group have requested directions to form a working group and develop an appropriate action plan. The group will look for input across the university and focus on identifying priorities (recognising the work done by AUSA so far). Over the last weeks, the University was able to obtain £20,000 and use it to support some societies in need of additional funding (8-10 clubs). Overall, DS agrees that it would be beneficial to receive significant funds dedicated to improving estates and to go towards the cause.

The Committee agrees that Sports are a big drawing factor for many potential candidates. The University has proudly celebrated our Olympic athletes (and other athletes competing at elite levels). The University should therefore be able to offer good facilities – to inspire interested students and support enrolled ones.

FOR INFORMATION

9. Survey season 2025 updates

SSEC06022025-009

10. Senior Pastoral Support Group (SPSG) Minutes from 23.01.2025

SSEC06022025-010

11. AOCB

No AOCB.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Committee is Monday, 17th of March 2025, 10:05-11:55

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STUDENT SUPPORT & EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

UPDATE ON REPORT AND REQUEST TOOL

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides a summary of the use of the Report and Request Tool.
This paper is for **information**.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 The committee is invited to note the information detailed in this paper.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Report and Request Tool was launched in AY2024/25 as a central tool permitting students to report absences, request coursework extensions, respond to student engagement emails (C6/7), and report mitigating circumstances. The tool is a development of the previous Absence Reporting Tool and is sited on the Student Hub.

3.2 The Policy and Procedures on Extensions and Penalties for Unauthorised Late Submission of Coursework was approved by Senate June 5th 2024 and introduced in AY2024/25. Consultation with students suggested that a central tool for extension requests would greatly simplify the process and help manage the administrative workload for Schools. Some Schools already used the Absence Reporting Tool on the Student Hub as a central tool for students to submit requests and reported that it was effective in managing administrative workloads. Other Schools agreed to adopt the tool if it could be modified to improve functionality and a series of consultation meetings were arranged with DDIS and School representatives to identify requirements with some introduced for AY2024/25 and further improvements planned for a new tool with additional functionality and integration with MyTimetable to be introduced in AY 25/26.

3.3 In addition, School Student Engagement leads requested that the central tool be adapted to support Student Engagement procedures (previously referred to as C6/7). Student feedback indicated that engagement procedures were not ‘student friendly’ or supportive in tone. School engagement process involves monitoring attendance at compulsory classes and submission of coursework and when a student has failed to attend classes/submit coursework issuing a ‘C6’ email. However, the limitations of the system meant that it was unclear how students were meant to respond which directed them to a website to look up who they should reply to in response to the C6 email, which often resulted in a large number of follow emails to various staff member explaining the process. School leads requested that students were directed to the central tool as a simple way of responding to these emails. In addition this group reviewed the content of Student Engagement webpages and email communication to ensure that the focus is on supporting students.

3.4 Schools provided feedback and requests for enhancements were collated through various channels during term 1. Feedback was sent either directly to the Dean for Student Support or James McIntosh (Applications Manager in DDIS leading the tool development team). Additional opportunities for feedback was collated via a cross-institutional administrative group chaired by Carol Lawie (School of Law). The requests for tool updates was compiled by Rhona Moore (lead SAM) and shared with DDIS. A number of enhancements have been made to the Report and

Request based on this feedback. These updates are currently being tested by a User Group (see Appendix A for a list of members) and will be available for use in Term 2.

3.5 A meeting of the School Engagement Leads Group 20th January 2025 provided feedback on School experiences of using the Report and Request tool in term 1. Schools feedback was largely positive, with comments noting that the process was faster, reduced administrative loads (especially for those Schools whose processes had required students to complete individual forms), being able to keep track/have oversight over student requests, and centralising the process to admin teams. However, Schools noted that there was a high volume of requests which placed a burden on admin teams and one School reporting that centralising the process on to administrative teams which had previously been shared with academics in their School, had increased their workload substantially.

3.6 Additional comments made by the group was concern that School responses may be inconsistent and so the group agreed to collate school templates to agree on a common template that adopts an appropriately supportive tone. There was a request on whether more automation could be built into the tool (e.g. automatic approval for extension requests for students with disabilities) which will be taken forward as part of phase 2 of the tool development.

3.7 Central student communication has promoted the tool to students and the Student Experience team are currently with the Student Unions Vice President's for Education and Welfare to create a series of videos explaining the tool and associated policies.

3.8 Student feedback has been positive although informal to date. To gather a more comprehensive view of the student experiences in using the Report and Request Tool questions have been included in the Undergraduate Experience Survey (UES) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) allowing us to evaluate this further.

4. Use of the Report and Request Tool

4.1 DDIS provided data on the use of the tool as of w/b 9th December indicating the number of times students had used the Tool for each type of request for the institution and by School. As of this date, the Tool had received 51,883 submissions from students, with the vast majority reporting absence, 85.31%. There were also a significant number of extension requests submitted (4,326 , 8.34%), as well as responses to C6 emails (2,731 , 5.26%) (see table 1).

4.2 A similar trend is reflected in the School data which is summarised in the tables below (table 2):

- The number of Absence reports by Schools varied between 1679 (Geosciences) and 5092 (DHPAH), with the proportion of absence reports by total varied between 81.07% (Psychology) and 92.53% (Education)
- The number of C6 responses received by Schools varied between 371 (Business) and 63 (Geosciences), with the proportion of C6 responses by total varied between 2.8% (Education) and 6.97% (Law).
- The number of C7 responses received by Schools varied between 14 (SBS) and 116 (Law), with the proportion of C7 responses by total varied between 0.41% (SBS) and 2.43% (Law).
- The number of Extension requests received by Schools varied between 101 (Education) and 611 (DHPAH), with the proportion of extension requests by total varied between 4.14% (Education) and 15.07% (Geosciences).

Table 1: the number of requests submitted to the Report and Request Tool by students by type of request (total and %).

	Number of Requests (total)	Number of Requests (%)
TOTAL	51883	
Absence	44261	85.31
C6 Email	2731	5.26
C7 Email	565	1.09
Extension	4326	8.34

Table 2: the number of requests submitted to the Report and Request Tool by students by type of request (total and %) by School.

School	Type	Number of Requests (total)	Number of Requests (%)
Business School	Absence Request	5018	86.40
Business School	C6 Email	371	6.39
Business School	C7 Email	65	1.12
Business School	Course Extension	354	6.10
Business School	TOTAL	5808	
School of Biological Sciences	Absence Request	3017	88.42
School of Biological Sciences	C6 Email	177	5.19
School of Biological Sciences	C7 Email	14	0.41
School of Biological Sciences	Course Extension	204	5.98
School of Biological Sciences	TOTAL	3412	
School of Divinity, History & Philosophy	Absence Request	5092	83.45
School of Divinity, History & Philosophy	C6 Email	326	5.34
School of Divinity, History & Philosophy	C7 Email	73	1.20
School of Divinity, History & Philosophy	Course Extension	611	10.01
School of Divinity, History & Philosophy	TOTAL	6102	
School of Education	Absence Request	2278	92.53
School of Education	C6 Email	69	2.80
School of Education	C7 Email	13	0.53

School of Education	Course Extension	102	4.14
School of Education	TOTAL	2462	
School of Engineering	Absence Request	3277	86.76
School of Engineering	C6 Email	239	6.33
School of Engineering	C7 Email	60	1.59
School of Engineering	Course Extension	201	5.32
School of Engineering	TOTAL	3777	
School of Geosciences	Absence Request	1679	81.11
School of Geosciences	C6 Email	63	3.04
School of Geosciences	C7 Email	16	0.77
School of Geosciences	Course Extension	312	15.07
School of Geosciences	TOTAL	2070	
School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture	Absence Request	4840	85.91
School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture	C6 Email	201	3.57
School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture	C7 Email	38	0.67
School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture	Course Extension	555	9.85
School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture	TOTAL	5634	
School of Law	Absence Request	3966	83.06
School of Law	C6 Email	333	6.97
School of Law	C7 Email	116	2.43
School of Law	Course Extension	360	7.54
School of Law	TOTAL	4775	
SMMSN	Absence Request	4409	85.43
SMMSN	C6 Email	245	4.75
SMMSN	C7 Email	37	0.72
SMMSN	Course Extension	470	9.11
SMMSN	TOTAL	5161	
School of Natural & Computing Sciences	Absence Request	3851	85.31

School of Natural & Computing Sciences	C6 Email	300	6.65
School of Natural & Computing Sciences	C7 Email	55	1.22
School of Natural & Computing Sciences	Course Extension	308	6.82
School of Natural & Computing Sciences	TOTAL	4514	
School of Psychology	Absence Request	2655	81.07
School of Psychology	C6 Email	172	5.25
School of Psychology	C7 Email	23	0.70
School of Psychology	Course Extension	425	12.98
School of Psychology	TOTAL	3275	
School of Social Science	Absence Request	4179	85.41
School of Social Science	C6 Email	235	4.80
School of Social Science	C7 Email	55	1.12
School of Social Science	Course Extension	424	8.67
School of Social Science	TOTAL	4893	

5. **Next steps**

5.1 Updates and testing to the Report and Request Tool based on School feedback have been completed and implemented for use in Term 2. Use of the Report and Request Tool will continue to be monitored in term 2.

5.2 Student feedback will be gathered via relevant surveys during Survey Season and shared with SSEC at a later date.

5.3 The School Engagement Leads Group will work to standardise support and communication to ensure a more consistent student experience.

5.4 DDIS have formed a User Group of key stakeholders to develop phase 2 of the Report and Request Tool for introduction in AY 2025/26.

6. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

6.1 Further information is available from Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support and Experience (Jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk).

Appendix A: Project Report and Request User Group

Dean for Student Support and Experience - Jason Bohan
Lead SAM - Rhona Moore
Psychology - Kaye Taylor
LLMVC - Thomas Connelly
Geosciences - Daniela van Heerden
MMSN – Donna Maccallum and Arlene Ray
Education - Colin Christie, and Rosemond Cochrane & Sharon Smith
Law - Carol Lawie
Social Sciences - Jill Davis
DPHA - Lisa Evans
Business - Louise Mackenzie , Cherie Connon,
Engineering - Debbie Mckenzie
NCS - Sheryl Mackie
SBS - Amie Connolly

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF VIDEO CAPTIONS SUPPORT

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper summarises the support available in teaching and learning for making video more accessible. It will also outline plans for future provision of support.

This paper is for discussion.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

Board/Committee	Date
SSEC	6th Feb 2025
EDIC	tbc

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Members of the SSEC are provided with this paper for information only.

4. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The University's Digital Accessibility policy states that video should be captioned (or an accessible alternative provided) to help the University meet statutory UK accessibility regulations, introduced in 2018. This policy may also help the University meet the requirements of the European Accessibility Act (EAA) 2025, when it comes into effect in June 2025 as the University may need to meet the requirements of the EAA in order to sell digital services (online courses) in the EU.

Publicly funded websites and mobile apps are periodically audited for accessibility by Government Digital Services (GDS), which is part of the UK Government Cabinet Office; this includes internal facing web sites such as a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). In 2022, the University's main public web site failed an accessibility audit and in 2024 the University's Jobs site also failed on other criteria. Both sites were quickly brought up to specification by the hard work of colleagues but the audits demonstrate that the University must take the accessibility regulations seriously. In the event of an audit of the VLE in future year, any videos without accurate captions that require them on a page that is audited would lead to a fail also. If the University were to fail a further audit and be unable to remediate issues identified timeously, there is risk of the GDS referring the institution to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The EHRC can use legal powers against offending organisations, including investigations, unlawful act notices and court action.

The University generates 13,000 hours of video content each year which staff are not able to caption due to workload and the time required. The cost of outsourcing captioning for all video generated content is prohibitive. Advice to the sector from JISC is that videos should have accurate captions available within a reasonable time period (e.g. two weeks) in order to meet the regulations. The University of Aberdeen was held up as an example of good practice by demonstrating that while we did not have the capacity to correct the captions on all our video content, a commitment was being made to caption high priority content.

4.1 Financial commitment to providing quality assured captions

Prior to 2020, the University provided little or no video captions on pre-recorded content. The University generates around 13,000 hours of video each year, and it would be extremely time consuming for staff to check and edit all captions. The Student Support team did however support a small number of students with disabilities, using funding from the Disabled Students Allowance to provide live captions.

Following the creation of the Digital Accessibility Working Group in 2020 to oversee the progress made towards meeting the UK regulations, the Directorate of Digital and Information Services (DDIS) established an annual allocation of £100,000 within the Digital Strategy Committee budget to provide central support for improving the accessibility of pre-recorded video (live streaming video is exempt from the regulations). This coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic which also saw a huge effort of support staff, coordinated by the Centre for Academic Development (CAD), volunteering to support schools to make video content more accessible to students working online.

This budget was split between providing access to an external captioning service with a fast turnaround time and allowing schools to caption videos in-house. The external captioning service was reserved for courses considered high priority, such as those with a student with a disability provision for video captions or with a student that had declared they were deaf or had a severe hearing impairment. It was deemed there was sufficient allocation in the budget (£50,000) available to proactively offer access to the external captioning service (initially 3PlayMedia, AI Media and later Ceilo 24) to all courses in this category (approximately 300 courses in 2022/23). Coordinated by the CAD, staff were offered access to a variety of turnaround times (e.g. 24 hours or 4 days). In 2023, the external captioning service was integrated into Panopto, making the process more efficient. This service saw demand from around 36 courses each year and by 2023 was costing £80,000, double the amount originally allocated within the budget. In addition, each academic school was provided with a small allocation of the DDIS budget (£4-7k each depending on the size of the school) to offer work to PGR Demonstrators correcting captions in house, supported by CAD. However, overall, schools were unable to make full use of their allocation (33% used in 2022/23) totalling approximately £17k. Along with further £9k software purchases, the total spend was approximately £106k.

In 2023-24 the total budget was reduced from £100,000 to £50,000 due to financial constraints. However, we continued to provide proactive support for high priority courses, but selected a cheaper 4-day turnaround external captioning service to conserve funds. In spite of this, the new smaller budget was depleted by November 2023 To ensure sufficient funds were available until the end of term, CAD provided a further £8,000. In January 2024, an additional £10,000 emergency fund was provided by DDIS for term two. After a short informal review of sector-wide approaches to lecture captioning concluded that other institutions were using a mix of approaches with the most common being utilising auto-generated captions with staff correction, the decision was taken to cease the proactive model of offer support in favour of a reactive one.

4.2 Current Approach to Supporting Captioning

In January 2024 the University enabled automatic captions to be generated by default on all new media on Panopto thus removing the need for staff to turn-on captions for each lecture they delivered (staff do have the option to switch these off if required). The University acknowledges that automatic captions contain errors in accuracy and unedited, do not meet the accessibility regulations, so staff are encouraged to check and edit their captions, prioritising the content that will have the biggest impact. Since June 2024:

- Students have been able to download transcripts from videos on Panopto which helps make video more accessible and reduces the workload on staff to manually generate these documents.
- Staff are also able to add words and pronunciations to the Panopto dictionary by contacting CAD which helps improve the accuracy of the automatic captions.
- Staff also have access to tips on how to get the most out of the automatic captions.
- Central communication via the student e-newsletter alerted students to the fact that captions were auto-generated.

To help ensure that all students can access their learning material, at the start of term one and two, a report of high priority courses that have a student enrolled with a disability provision for video captions, is circulated to schools to identify high priority courses where Schools should focus their effort in checking and correcting captions.

To ensure that students are aware that captions are auto-generated, schools are requested to include a standard accessibility statement in their courses explaining how students may report any learning material that they find inaccessible including a contact email to report any concerns or issues with the quality of captions, (email: accessible-elearning@abdn.ac.uk). To date, two students have contacted e-learning to report accessibility issues whose issues were resolved by the e-learning team. Feedback from an online student with a hearing impairment was that video captions were inaccurate and support was insufficient. This student was not provided with support as the feedback was anonymous.

The Digital Strategy Committee have allocated a budget of £50,000 for 2024/25, and currently plans (subject to approvals and demonstration of usage) to allocate the same level in FY2025/26 and FY2026/27. In situations where the auto-generated captions are identified as insufficient on high priority courses by students, or if a staff member requests support for captioning on their courses, CAD provides access to the external professional captioning service. In term one of 2024/25, three courses were provided with access to the external service requiring a small amount of support costing approximately £1,000 in total. A small amount of caption credits have been requested (£10,000) for term two, with 2 further courses expected to require support.

4.3 Promoting Digital Accessibility

The University endeavours to raise awareness of digital accessibility issues as well as to provide staff with the appropriate skills and support to ensure that their learning materials are accessible for all students. Since March 2023, the University has provided staff with access to a range of online training modules on digital accessibility to raise awareness and provide skill development. To date, 229 members of staff have completed this training, with the Directorate of People and Directorate of Academic Affairs and Online Education mandating that staff complete it. The University also takes the opportunity to use Global Accessibility Awareness Day to further raise awareness in communications with staff and students. In addition, at the start of each term, a course readiness checklist is circulated to teaching staff which includes a reminder to check the accessibility of their learning materials.

4.5. Next steps

- The University currently provides a captioning budget of £50,000 for 2024/25, operated by CAD, however this is forecast to be underspent and so subject to review.
- Auto-generated captions will continue to be generated by default.
- Student communication via central comms and course accessibility statements will ensure that students are informed that captions are auto-generated and provide a central contact to report concerns with captioning quality so that we can respond quickly to ensure that student learning is not disadvantaged by poor captioning.
- CAD will continue to work closely with Schools to improve accessibility of learning materials and provide support in providing quality-assured captions on high priority courses.
- We intend to seek more detailed feedback from students to establish if automatic captions are providing the appropriate level of support.
- The captioning budget will continue to be managed by CAD and used to support high priority courses, however, any remaining budget may be used to support Schools to enhance or support for video captions in online courses and courses with large cohorts of students where investing in providing quality captions may have the biggest impact.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Professor Jason Bohan, Dean of Student Support and Experience, Dr Sara Preston, Senior eLearning Adviser (Team Lead), Gavin Innes, Senior eLearning Adviser, or Lesley Muirhead, Student Support Manager (Disability & Inclusion).

[30th January 2025]
Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Student Support & Experience Sub-Committee (SSEC)

ABERDEEN STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY
STUDENTS VIEWS ON UNIVERSITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The purpose of the paper is to provide an overview of the results of the 2024 Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (ASES) for information.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	SSEC	06-02-2025
Further consideration by	University Education Committee	26-02-2025

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The **SSEC** is invited to support the recommendations in section 7.0 and pass to UEC for **information**.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. The Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (ASES) is conducted annually to gather non-academic feedback from all registered students, except new entrants. It runs in October for undergraduate and postgraduate taught (PGT) students and in November for postgraduate research (PGR) students

4.2. The New to UoA survey is issued in the first teaching week after Welcome Week to collect insights on the student welcome experience.

4.3. From 2024, all academic-related questions have been removed from these surveys, as they are now covered in Survey Season (NSS, UES, PTES, PRES).

4.4. Surveys were developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including Digital Information Services, Library, Careers & Employability, Planning, the Online and Qatar Campus teams, the Postgraduate Research College, and the Students' Union. This collaboration ensured the surveys collected meaningful insights.

4.5. Surveys are tailored based on student type (UG, PGT, PGR) and campus (Aberdeen, Online, Qatar) to ensure relevance. Students can provide qualitative feedback on all topics. These responses remain unedited, except for name redactions where appropriate.

4.6. Surveys cover themes such as belonging, wellbeing, support services, communication, digital services, the library, careers, sports, orientation, and School induction.

4.7. In total, 1801 responses were received, achieving a 13.33% response rate, an increase of 2.33% on 2023.

4.8. Respondent breakdown:

- Student type: 70% UG, 20% PGT, 10% PGR
- Campus: 95% Aberdeen, 4% Online, 1% Qatar

4.9. The full report, including departmental and School-specific filtered reports, is available in Appendix 1 (see section 9.0).

4.10. Results have been shared with Professional Services, the Qatar and Online Campuses, and the Students' Union. Each has been asked to identify at least one key action (planned or implemented) based on student feedback. Some actions are detailed in section 6.0 - Departmental Actions on Feedback.

5.0 HIGHLIGHTS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The feedback was overall positive regarding the New to UoA and ASES survey responses and students' welcome experiences in relation to activities around pre-arrival, induction and welcome week. The summary below outlines key strengths and identifies areas for potential improvement in future years.

5.1 Pre-Arrival Communications & New Student Website

- **Good practice:** Student feedback on the New Student website was very positive, with the majority finding its content helpful. Similarly, pre-arrival communications were well received, with students stating that they effectively prepared them for the start of their academic journey.

- **Areas for improvement:** While most students found pre-arrival information useful, there is room for improvement in ensuring all students receive clear and comprehensive details about their academic programmes before starting their studies. Additionally, feedback suggests that awareness and accessibility of Students' Union resources could be enhanced. Online students reported mixed experiences with the 'Onboarding' area of the online website, indicating a need for further refinement to better support their transition.

- **Actions:**
  - Experience & Engagement Team to work with schools to enhance timely access to information available on the New Student website. The team to also work with Students' Union Induction Interns to identify ways to enhance awareness of the Students' Union.
  - Work with the Online team to undertake a review of the "Online" onboarding area.

5.2 Orientation

- The mandatory University Online Orientation was widely regarded as a useful resource, helping students understand what to expect for the academic year and increasing their awareness of available services. Importantly, the Orientation programme was recognised as inclusive for all students, regardless of background, mode of study, or protected characteristics.
- **Actions:**
  - Experience & Engagement to continue to develop Orientation.

5.3 School Inductions

- Students found the School Induction to be highly beneficial in setting expectations for the academic year, with a strong consensus that it provided clarity and guidance on what to expect beyond the initial transition period.

- **Areas for improvement:** Whist overall, students were very satisfied with their School induction, those that did not attend stated they either didn't know about it or had a schedule or timing conflict, or arrived late to campus.

- **Actions:**
  - The Experience & Engagement team will continue collaborating with Schools to improve pre-arrival communications and encourage early booking of School Welcome events, allowing earlier promotion on the new student website to boost attendance.
  - Welcome Week planning task and finish group to be set up with School Admin Managers to consider School induction schedules during Welcome Week with the aim of minimising clashes and support early room booking confirmations.
  - Experience & Engagement Team to continue to support Schools by raising awareness of and make use of the induction templates and pre-recorded presentation to facilitate inductions for late arrivals.
  - Work with Students' Union Interns to identify enhancement opportunities to induction

5.4 Welcome Week

- **Area for improvement:** The majority of students who stated that they did not attend activities and events during Welcome Week cited reasons primarily due to late arrival, scheduling conflicts, or lack of awareness.

- **Actions:**
  - Experience & Engagement team utilise Buddy scheme to increase engagement with Welcome week events
  - Experience & Engagement team to work with PGDE to align a pop-up welcome week with their start dates

5.5 Pastoral Support

- **Area for improvement:** A significant proportion of students had not engaged with their Personal Tutor or Regent, with many stating their reasons being that they had not been contacted. Similarly, a notable number of PGT students had not met with their Pastoral Support Lead, citing this due to a lack of awareness about the role or its purpose. Among PGR students, those that had not engaged with their Postgraduate Coordinator or PGR Director stating key barriers being a lack of knowledge about who these individuals were or not being informed about meetings.

- **Actions:**
  - Experience & Engagement team to continue to include messages about pastoral support in new student communications and the regular fortnightly Student Update newsletter.
  - Dean for Student Experience and Vice President Welfare to discuss results and personal tutor engagement with the Senior Pastoral Support Group.

5.6 Sport, Wellbeing & Physical Activity

- Students widely recognise the positive impact of physical activity on both their physical and mental health, reinforcing the importance of ongoing promotion and accessibility of exercise opportunities. The availability of mental health and wellbeing support was well acknowledged by students, highlighting the effectiveness of existing services in providing assistance when required.

- **Area for improvement:** The majority of students felt supported in maintaining their mental and physical wellbeing, there is an opportunity to enhance initiatives that encourage physical activity. Time constraints and cost were identified as the primary barriers to participation, suggesting a need for more flexible, accessible, and affordable options to better support student wellbeing.

- **Actions:**
  - The University, in consultation with the Students' Union and partner Aberdeen Sports Village have created a Sport and Active health strategy (2025 – 2030). At the heart of this strategy is ensuring we have the facilities, resources and opportunities to support our community to integrate sport and active health into their student life, and at a level that is appropriate for them. Delivery of the strategy will be overseen by an institutional working group.

5.7 Your University Experience

- The survey results indicate strong student satisfaction and awareness of support services at the University of Aberdeen. A high proportion of students reported knowing how to access University support services for advice and assistance, reflecting an improvement from the previous year. Additionally, students expressed a strong sense of pride in being part of the University community and reported overall satisfaction with their experience. These findings highlight the effectiveness of the University's support structures and the positive student experience it fosters.

- **Area for improvement:** The survey results indicate areas for improvement in campus safety awareness and security resources. While the majority of students reported feeling safe on campus, a significant proportion remained neutral, suggesting opportunities to enhance perceptions of safety. Additionally, awareness of SafeZone and its services remains low, with less than a third of students familiar with the platform.

- **Actions:**
  - The Experience & Engagement team will continue to refine and expand wellbeing messaging through regular drip-feed communications to students throughout the year.
  - Experience & Engagement team, Students' Union and other stakeholders to continue to work in partnership to promote SafeZone and encourage downloads.
  - Work with Critical Arc to develop and roll out more advanced SafeZone functionality.

5.8 International Student Filtered Report

Feedback from international students regarding their experience with the University's welcome and orientation processes are as follows:

- International students found the New Student section of the website and pre-arrival emails to be valuable resources, helping them understand what to expect before arriving on campus. Programme-specific information was also well received, ensuring students felt informed and prepared for the start of their studies.

  The mandatory University orientation received positive feedback for its usefulness in setting expectations for the academic year. It also played a key role in increasing student awareness of the various support services available at the University.

  Orientation was recognised as an inclusive experience, ensuring that all students, regardless of background or mode of study, felt supported. Additionally, overall

satisfaction with the welcome experience was high, reflecting the effectiveness of the University's efforts in helping students transition smoothly into university life.

- **Area for improvement:** Whilst a number of international students stated the information relating to the Students' Union was helpful, there is potential for improving information around support, activities and opportunities they afford.

- **Action:**
  - As already stated in 5.3 Actions, the University will work with Students' Union Induction Interns to identify ways to enhance awareness of the Students' Union.
  - Experience & Engagement Team to continue to develop Orientation and content, streamlining where relevant and ensuring information is up to date.

6.0 DEPARTMENTAL ACTIONS ON FEEDBACK

In addition to the action points included in section 5, the below actions were collected from other Departments across the University.

6.1. EXPERIENCE & ENGAGEMENT TEAM

- **Feedback theme:** Welcome Week - Not having anyone to attend events with
  Actions:
  - Utilise the buddy scheme groups as a reason to sign up for a buddy and meet up as a group.
  - Discuss with the Students' Union or appropriate networks about ensuring activities have information for neurodivergent students.

- **Feedback theme:** Study Decisions - Support and Wellbeing information
  Actions:
  - Opportunity to increase quality of student support and wellbeing support as a reason to study with UoA, as well as enhance information about under 18 support, and about flexibility of degree an electives

- **Feedback theme:** Wellbeing - Poor mental health
  Actions:
  - Review contributors to poor mental health (study pressure, stress/anxiety/finance) through Student Mental Health Agreement and develop suite of resources/campaigns to further support. Ensure contributors are addressed through student pressure points matrix, and feed via regular drip feed proactive support through student focused channels.

- **Feedback theme:** Prearrival Communications
  Actions:
  - Review the content of pre-arrival communications with a data-driven approach to highlight the most engaging materials.
  - Collaborate with the International Office to ensure that international students receive the emails via their Agent, so that they can effectively receive and engage with these communications.

6.2. CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

- **Feedback theme:** Students unaware of the service. 10% of students didn't know about the service. The team will work towards reducing that figure with some stating the service was "hard to access" and "not enough job opportunities that appeal to me".
  Actions:
  - Developing targeted career readiness emails appropriate to stage of study, taking into account the student journey which we have mapped from a careers perspective.
  - Increasing marketing of core provision and the service, using wider range of communication channels such as plasma screens, MyAberdeen and via academic staff.
  - Qatar campus – work on campaign to raise awareness once we understand where the gaps are RE UG/PGT. Increase targeted communication for Qatar students. Consider communication channels to suit Qatar student preferences

- **Feedback theme:** lack of awareness of ability to access the Careers and Employability Service after graduation
  Actions:
  - From November 2024 careers/next steps questions are now included in the 'apply to graduate' online form, with follow-up information emails.

- **Feedback theme:** Awareness of co-curricular development opportunities available during studies.
  Actions:
  - Change question in survey to skills development and link with new MySkills framework, audit and MyAberdeen development resources. Co-curriculum as a term is less used now as an institution with emphasis more on the wider opportunities students can take to develop skills.

6.3. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Feedback theme: Drop-in services at Student Advice**
  Actions:
  - These have been continually reviewed following feedback in the survey with changes to operating times made this term to reflect. The team also continue to maintain a flexible approach, which is well received by students, around in-person and online support across all Student Advice and Support areas and welcomed the comments highlighting disability support and its positive impact.

- **Feedback theme: Accessibility**
  Actions:
  - Collaborate with colleagues across the University to improve accessibility in both digital and physical spaces in the coming year on the issue of accessibility, which has been highlighted in the survey as a key area of concern.

- **Feedback theme: Enhancing the range of activities available**
  Actions:
  - Expand and enhance activities that received positive feedback, including weekly Chaplaincy events.

6.4. DIRECTORATE OF DIGITAL AND INFORMATION SERVICES

In addition to the action on feedback included below, the Directorate has a Customer Experience Group that is focused on ensuring a high-quality service for both staff and students. This group will continue to work through the survey feedback to identify further improvements and will report back through the year.

- **Feedback theme:** Insufficient Study Space
  Actions:
  - Conduct a study space review to explore feasible improvements across the three libraries, given funding constraints. The original plan behind the improvements to floor 2 in SDRL was a multi-year investment, unfortunately the changing financial climate led to further phases being put on hold.

- **Feedback theme: Behaviour management and noise control**
  Actions:
  - Collaborate with the EEW team and Students' Union to promote good conduct in libraries and study spaces, encouraging respectful noise levels. The zoning of floors within SDRL was designed to draw the noisier groups down from the quieter floors. This has improved the noise situation considerably, although at busy times of the year inevitably noise will travel up to the quieter floors.

- **Feedback theme:** Estates related issues including hot water, microwaves, lift reliability and cleanliness.
  Actions:
  - Progress plans for water coolers and 'zip taps' in Taylor and Polwarth libraries and trial microwave access in SDRL by the end of the academic year.
  - Work with Estates & Facilities to address lift maintenance and cleaning concerns.

- **Feedback theme:** Library opening hours.
  Actions:
  - Resource constraints may prevent reverting to previous extended library hours, however DDIS will explore alternative evening study spaces.

- **Feedback theme:** Accessibility - poor sound quality on live lecture recordings, and inaccurate captioning
  Actions:
  - Many lecture rooms on-campus have had adaptations to assist with lecture capture, but addressing room acoustics in old buildings will remain challenging.
  - Continue supporting lecture capture enhancements, with Panopto captioning available and funding (via a central fund) for accurate captions for students with additional needs. Schools can continue to access this on behalf of students via the Centre for Academic Development.

- **Feedback theme:** Accessibility - allowing night light on PCs
  Actions:
  - Upgrade remaining older PC monitors by Easter, ensuring full resolution by summer. Investigate automatic brightness adjustment solutions to suit ambient light or reset settings upon logoff.
  - Promote ClaroRead software, available on all classroom PCs, which includes screen tinting to reduce reading fatigue (details on Toolkit).
  - Implement software during the summer refresh to enable automatic screen brightness adjustment.

- Improve signage for height-adjustable desks and include them in the Study Space Review Group's neurodiversity assessment.

- **Feedback theme:** EDI - choosing pronouns within MS Teams
  Actions:
  - It is possible for users to update MS Teams profile to include a pronoun. Instructions on how to do this can be found will be promoted to the student body.

6.5. POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COLLEGE

- **Feedback theme:** PGR College website
  Actions:
  - The PGR College website has been updated to enhance access to key documents, training and development, guidance and signposting to support services.

- **Feedback theme:** interdisciplinary connections and networking
  Actions:
  - A new discussion series, That's Not Real Research, has been launched to facilitate interdisciplinary connections, networking, and knowledge-sharing among PGRs.

- **Feedback theme:** PGR development opportunities
  Actions:

  A new researcher development system, PORTAL, is currently in development and will be launched soon providing guidance on PGR development pathways and clear links to development opportunities

- **Feedback theme:** Building a supportive PGR community
  Actions:
  - *PGR CommuniTea* series has been continued for 2025, offering a dedicated space for PGRs to connect, discuss key topics related to the PGR journey, and build a supportive community.

- **Feedback theme:** Social spaces
  Actions:
  - The PGR Lounge (A04 Crombie) is now open on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday mornings (9am-12), providing a space for PGRs to relax or work.

6.6. STUDENTS' UNION

- **Feedback theme: Pre-arrival Info regarding Students' Union**
  Actions:
  - The Students' Union will review details being provided to students prior to arrival and promote specific SU services including advice and range of sports and societies available

- **Feedback theme: Induction experience**
  Actions:
  - In partnership with the University, the Students' Union is currently conducting a review of the student induction experience with a particular view to the postgraduate and international experience. Two student interns have joined the SU for this project to gather data and evaluate existing survey results (including

those from ASES) to map the student induction journey, highlight key challenges, and make recommendations for improvement.

- **Feedback theme: Welcome Week**
  Actions:
  - In response to feedback about students wanting more opportunities to meet new people and more information about societies, the SU will look to promote all SU services and opportunities e.g. class Reps, activities, advice, increase promotion about Fayres and which societies and clubs are attending.

- **Feedback theme: Factors to influence decision to study at UoA**
  Actions:
  - Continue to be involved in reimagining campus discussions while developing and implementing a Sport Strategy

- **Feedback theme: Additional Welcome Week events**
  Actions:
  - Review all feedback and suggestions of events and any areas for improvement including getting involved in 'Move in' events and promote events suitable for those under 18.

- **Feedback theme: Inclusivity of Clubs and Societies**
  Actions:
  - Ensure all activities are fully inclusive in line with all policies and procedures, investigate any feedback or areas of concern.

- **Feedback theme: Compulsory classes on Wednesdays**
  Actions:
  Review policy in partnership with University to allow students to participate in sport and physical activity.

- **Feedback theme: More study spaces required**
  Actions:
  Review existing spaces, including group spaces, improve lighting options and cleanliness.

- **Feedback theme: Room bookings**
  Actions:
  - Since this survey was conducted, the University have now updated the room booking process in January 2025, launching a more streamlined process. The SU will work with University room bookings team and the EEW team to understand the new process and if required, conduct a review. Assist in the promotion of the new study spaces and booking process to help raise awareness.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Schools to actively engage in reviewing their relevant tailored report, identifying up to three examples of how student feedback will be acted upon and used to implement improvements in your School (i.e. You Said, We Did). Schools to submit actions by emailing studentlife@abdn.ac.uk.

7.2. Actions on feedback will be included in each School's student update eNewsletter and on the Student Voice section of the Student website promoting engagement with student feedback.

8.0 Further Information

Further information is available from Morag Beedie, Marketing & Engagement Manager, Experience, Engagement & Wellbeing Team; morag.beedie@abdn.ac.uk, Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support and Experience, jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk, or Duncan Stuart, Assistant Director of People and Head of Experience, Engagement & Wellbeing; d.stuart@abdn.ac.uk.

31 January 2025
Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

9.0 Appendix 1

9.1. Schools, Qatar and Online campus reports can view via the following URL links.

- **ASES 2024 OVERALL REPORT**

- **School reports**
  - Biological Sciences
  - Business
  - DHPAH
  - Education
  - Engineering
  - Geoscience
  - Law
  - LLMVC
  - MMSN
  - NCS
  - Psychology
  - Social Science

- **Campus reports**
  - Online
  - Qatar
  - Aberdeen

- **Student Level Reports**
  - Undergraduate
  - Postgraduate Taught
  - Postgraduate Research

- **International Reports**
  - International ASES (Aberdeen campus)
  - New to UoA – (international new students only)

- **New to UoA Student Report**
  - New to UoA Welcome experience – (all new students)

- **Other Reports**
  - Careers and Employability
  - Wellbeing and Sport
  - Digital and Library experience
  - Pastoral support

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REGULATORY CHANGES FOR INTRODUCTION IN 2025/2026

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

This paper provides the UEC with an update of the regulatory changes to be introduced with effect from 2025/26.

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 University Education Committee is asked to **note** 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*

APPENDIX A

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.

DRAFT

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.

DRAFT

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

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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

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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 of 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

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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.

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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

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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,

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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.

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APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

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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:

1. 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:

   MA in Secondary Education with Biology
   MA in Secondary Education with Chemistry
   MA in Secondary Education with Computer Science
   MA 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 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.

4. Except with the permission of the Senatus Academicus, or where General Regulation 17.1 applies,

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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;

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but who, in each case, met the requirements of regulation 6, may on application by 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.

~~7~~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.

~~3~~6 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.

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