Quality Assurance Committee

Minute of the Meeting Held on 30 September 2026

Present: Steve Tucker **(Chair)**, Will Barras (from item 9), Nadia DeGama, Lois Gall, Mark Grant, Nathaniel Greene, Faye Hendry, Riazul Islam, Helen Knight, Courage Mene, Sandhya Mishra, Piotr Niewiadomski, Gareth Norton, Virtu Solano, Rachel Smith, Fiona Stoddard, with Megan McFarlane, Sharon Palla, Mary Pryor (*vice* Darren Comber), and Liam Dyker **(Clerk)** in attendance.

Apologies: Darren Comber, Nick Edwards, Natalie Kinchin-Williams, Alex Menshykov, Roy Partain, Christina Schmid, Thanga Thevar, Rhiannon Thompson, Emma Tough.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(copy filed as QAC/300926/001)

1.1 The Chair welcomed all members to the first meeting of the new academic year, in particular to the new members of the Committee. Thanks were expressed to Jacqui Hutchison for all her work on the Committee.

1.2 The QAC approved the minute of the previous meeting.

MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION LOG

(copy filed as QAC/300926/002)

2.1 Artificial Intelligence Guidance for UG and PGT Dissertations *(minute 8.2, Nov 2025 refers)*: An update was provided regarding AI guidance for UG and PGT dissertations, noting discussions were ongoing with other colleagues. It was noted that an update will be provided at the next meeting.

2.2 Guidance for Programme-Level ILOs *(minute 4.2, Dec 2025 refers)*: The Committee was advised that discussions are ongoing. The Chair agreed to meet with Mary Pryor ahead of the next meeting.

COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

(i) REMIT AND COMPOSITION

(copy filed as QAC/300926/003)

3.1 The QAC heard a summary of the changes to the remit and composition, noting changes to the remit mainly concerned the move to a Faculty structure and the disestablishment of the Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG). The Committee noted the inclusion of the new Associate Vice-Principal (Assessment & Feedback) and two new transnational education representatives, recognising the growing transnational portfolio.

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3.2 In discussion, the QAC sought clarity on the interaction between QAC and the Faculty structure. It was noted that the detail is not fully worked through, but the requirement for an institutional QAC will remain. Further, a member sought clarity regarding the prominence of approvals for PGR examiner reports in the remit. It was agreed that this would be reviewed and discussed again with the PGR College regarding the appropriateness of these approvals. **Action: Chair / Clerk**

(ii) APPOINTMENTS TO SENATE

3.3 The Committee was advised of the requirement to fill one vacancy on the University Senate, noting the requirement to be a University of Aberdeen member of staff and academic member. Members were requested to express their interest to the Clerk following the meeting.

PROGRAMME APPROVAL FRAMEWORK 2026/27 AND 2027/28

(copy filed as QAC/300926/004)

[Clerk's Note: JP Mynott joined the Committee for this item]

4.1 The QAC heard a summary of the Programme Approval Framework for 2026/27 and 2027/28. The origins of the paper were explained to the Committee, noting the Programme Management Committee's (PMC) role in reviewing programmes by Schools or Faculties. The Committee was apprised of the approval route to date, noting extensive engagement with PMC and SMT.

4.2 Discussion ensued, the tenets of which were:

- Clarity sought regarding the relationship between this paper and programmes being approved for 2026/27 noting the current timing. Responding, it was noted that some programmes for January entry in 2027 were still being approved, though these were small numbers.
- One member raised concerns regarding the proposed framework, including the confidentiality which did not allow for consultation, the finances related to teaching and research, the time period in which student numbers would be reviewed, and calculations related to the cost of programmes. Responding, it was clarified that the paper was confidential until QAC approval was received; further, clarification was provided that the paper details the programme approval processes for new programmes which includes new targets. In doing so, it was noted that a number of considerations were reflected upon, including international markets and accreditations. Additionally, it was noted Senate will discuss the paper.
- Clarity regarding the interaction between the framework and transnational education (TNE) programmes. It was clarified that TNE programmes were considered separate from the framework.
- Clarity regarding the rationale for student intake targets, noting the disparity between undergraduate and postgraduate taught. In response, it was confirmed that the numbers related to the higher credit load associated with PGT degrees and therefore, a higher cost associated.
- Clarity regarding programmes which draw upon existing courses with a few new 'unique' courses and their intersection with the framework. It was clarified that this was possible and that additional wording should be provided to include to reflect this.

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Action: GN

- Clarity regarding the timeline for the accompanying guidance. Responding, it was confirmed that the new PMC online process was embedding.
- Suggestion that training should take place with Directors of Education and Quality Assurance Committee members to support the preparation of documentation at a School-level.

4.3 The Committee approved the proposal, subject to amendment.

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW (ITR)

(i) ITR REPORT FOR SCHOOL OF LAW

(copy filed as QAC/300926/005)

[Clerk's Note: Jacqui Hutchison joined the Committee for this item]

5.1 The Committee received a summary of the School of Law's ITR report and noted the review's highly positive findings. The review commended the quality of teaching and learning, positive student experience across all campuses and TNE partnerships, and strong collaboration between academic and professional services staff. The Committee noted innovative teaching practices, effective student support and feedback mechanisms, strong employability provision, and the School's commitment to EDI and widening participation. Student opportunities were also highlighted, including the Mooting Society, however, reflection was encouraged about embedding these skills further into the curriculum.

5.2 Areas for further development included managing resource and workload pressures, increasing opportunities for oral skills development and authentic assessment, enhancing support for postgraduate teachers, and continuing to refine the School's approach to generative AI. Overall, the review was regarded as extremely positive, with particular praise given to the School's personal and pastoral support arrangements.

5.3 In discussion, a member sought further detail regarding the bring your own device scheme. Responding, it was noted that there were a range of mechanisms to resolve any digital poverty concerns, including University laptops. It was noted that this will likely decrease as an issue given the prevalence of on-campus exams and the IT support received.

5.4 The Committee was content to approve the report.

(ii) ITR REPORT FOR SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

(copy filed as QAC/300926/006)

6.1 The QAC heard a summary of the School of Social Science's ITR Report, noting the positive and welcoming visit. The collegiality between staff was highlighted, though administrative resource was challenging. The Committee noted the positive feedback and outcomes, particularly related to the growth of online provision. Key strengths were highlighted in Decolonising the Curriculum, of which students were aware and appreciated, and of team teaching, working collaboratively across courses. Challenges were noted on some combined level 3 and 4 courses regarding information applicable to one or other cohort. The School's progress in addressing AI was noted, as well as challenges in student

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engagement, particularly at sub-honours level. Student feedback suggested more detailed feedback on assessment which was reflective of the grade achieved. The good work ongoing related to EDI was highlighted, as was the engagement with Careers. Further, the School was asked to consider degree awarding gaps. Overall, the review was noted to be constructive with positive engagement.

6.2 The Committee was content to approve the report.

EXTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW

(i) TERTIARY QUALITY ENHANCEMENT REVIEW ACTION PLAN

(copy filed as QAC/300926/007)

7.1 The QAC heard an overview of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) Action Plan, developed following the TQER report was published by Quality Assurance Agency for Scotland (QAAS). The Committee was advised that the Report was published at the end of April and contained within a number of areas of good practice and recommendations. It was further clarified that the action plan requires to assign measurable actions to both recommendations and areas of good practice. In many cases, actions relate to other ongoing work, for example, in policy review or responses to NSS results. It was noted that the action plan will be returned frequently to the Committee.

7.2 The Committee was content to approve the TQER Action Plan.

(ii) SELF-EVALUATION AND ACTION PLAN THEMATIC REPORT

(copy filed as QAC/300926/008)

8.1 The QAC heard a summary of Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) Thematic Report, noting the summary of key themes arising from submissions to SFC in the previous academic year. It was noted that the University did not submit a SEAP in 2025/26 due to the TQER review. However, a SEAP would be prepared for submission in December 2026. They key themes arising were noted, including curriculum transformation, adapting governance, and employability and skills.

8.2 In discussion, some members sought clarity regarding the timeline for submission of SEAPs, noting the TQER cycle was seven years. Additionally, it was suggested that the SEAP and related documentation might give focus to the School or Faculty Education Committees. Further, it was suggested that the themes arising from the SEAP might also be useful in terms of ITR, if it is better known what is required for preparation of the SEAP and for the next TQER.

(iii) POLICY REVIEW PLAN 2026/27

(copy filed as QAC/300926/009)

9.1 The Committee was apprised of the Policy Review Plan for 2026/27 and 2027/28. Thanks were expressed to Isabella Fausti and Jason Bohan, in respect of the PGT Policy Review in 2025/26, and to Dani Thomson who worked on the Academic Quality Handbook

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reorganisation. A summary of the key areas of focus was provided, recognising the volume and workload pressures associated.

9.2 Members of the Committee expressed support for the areas of policy review and noted that some previous work in relation to External Examining may be useful in taking forward the review. In relation to assessment, it was clarified that an additional paper will be prepared which stipulates more granular detail on what the review will include, linking to the TQER Action Plan.

9.3 Clarification was sought regarding PGR policy review. Responding, it was noted that the Policy Review Plan detailed areas which were included in the Academic Quality Handbook and for which the Academic Policy & Quality Team had responsibility, primarily for taught students. It was highlighted that the PGR College is responsible for developing PGR policy which is considered by QAC.

9.4 The Committee was content to approve the Policy Review Plan.

(iv) SFC REVIEW OF NATIONAL AWARDING ARRANGEMENTS

(copy filed as QAC/300926/010)

10.1 The Committee heard a summary of the University's findings in the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) Review of National Awarding Arrangements, led by QAAS. The QAC was apprised of the phases of review, noting the University was not selected for a deep-dive review. The desk-based review was highlighted, including the documentation that was considered. A summary of the findings was provided, namely that an ongoing reflection regarding assessment and feedback approaches is evident. Further, it was highlighted that TQER clearly identified specific areas of assessment and feedback for review.

10.2 One member raised concerns regarding current systems and the ability to track students, for example, with unconsidered extenuating circumstances, noting the manual process that takes place at present. The work in relation to a new Student Record System was highlighted, however, implementation of such a system would be in the next 8-10 years. It was agreed to feedback to the Student Record team to ascertain whether there is anything the University is able to implement in the short-term. **Action: Clerk**

ANNUAL MONITORING UPDATES

(copy filed as QAC/300926/011)

11.1 The QAC was provided with a summary of updates in relation to the annual monitoring process, including Annual Course Review (ACR) and Annual Programme Review (APR). The Committee was apprised of the proposed realignment of the process, and the new stage which involved an overarching School report.

11.2 In discussion, it was suggested that TESTA is included in the APR for Schools to provide a reflection, where appropriate. Additionally, it was suggested that consideration should be given to what is provided to students on MyAberdeen, if ACRs will not be available routinely every year. Further consideration should also be given to how joint honours programmes are considered in the annual monitoring process. It was agreed that further guidance

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should be prepared regarding the tiering of ACRs, given five years is an extensive period of time.

11.3 Discussion ensued regarding the deadlines for reporting, and the Committee agreed the following: (i) ACRs should be submitted by end June; (ii) APRs should be submitted by end July; and (iii) the SAQAR (overarching School report) should be submitted by end August. Further, it was agreed that the revised approach would be reviewed after two academic years.

11.4 The Committee was content to approve, subject to amendment.

QATAR PARTNERSHIP OPERATING MODEL

(copy filed as QAC/300926/012)

12.1 Members of the Committee heard an overview of the Qatar Partnership Operating Model, which had been developed by colleagues in Qatar and with Schools in Aberdeen. The Committee noted that the document was designed to be read in conjunction with University policies and procedures, with operationalisation of policy in Qatar. The Committee was apprised that the model provides academic equivalence, while also allowing for some local autonomy where need arises. It was noted that feedback had been received in relation to the monitoring and absence processes.

12.2 In discussion, some members sought clarity regarding the role of Qatar students in ITR. It was agreed that they should be included if not already. One member sought clarity regarding the communication for accredited programmes, noting that the accreditation primarily rests with Aberdeen.

[Clerk's Note: following the meeting, it was clarified that Qatar students are generally included as part of the ITR within Schools which have programmes in Qatar. However, we will seek to ensure this is consistent across all relevant Schools.]

12.3 The Committee noted the next steps regarding operationalisation, in particular Course Leads in Qatar will liaise with Course Leads in Aberdeen to embed practices across courses and programmes. It was suggested that a Partnership Operating Model Implementation Group was established.

12.4 The Committee was content to approve, subject to amendment and feedback received. Final version will be circulated.

PERIODIC PARTNERSHIP QUALITY REVIEW

(copy filed as QAC/300926/013)

13.1 The Committee heard a summary of the proposed Periodic Partnership Quality Review process for introduction in this academic year. The Committee noted that the review intends to be as light-touch as possible recognising workloads, with a two-page narrative prepared by TNE partners, to be considered alongside existing documentation.

13.2 The Committee was content to approve the PPQR process.

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UPDATE ON THE APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCESSES FOR 2026/27

(copy filed as QAC/300926/014)

14.1 The QAC was provided with an overview of the updates relating to academic appeals and complaints processes which will be implemented in 2026/27.

14.2 Some members of the Committee expressed concern that a student was able to progress a complaint following an unsuccessful appeal. It was clarified that, while some cases have been progressed in error in the past, the intention is that students cannot resubmit the same case under both processes. The case will have been deemed to have been considered under the appeals process and therefore, not eligible for progression under the complaints process, unless substantially new evidence or matters come to light.

14.3 In relation to the Part A form submissions, a suggestion was made regarding the volume of evidence submitted by students, to add a statement on the form regarding appropriate evidence. It was agreed that this would be reviewed.

14.4 Following discussion, the Committee endorsed the proposed approach.

UNIVERSITY MAPPING TO THE UK QUALITY CODE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (2024)

(i) PRINCIPLE 1: TAKING A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO MANAGING QUALITY AND STANDARDS

(copy filed as QAC/300926/015)

15.1 The Committee approved the UK Quality Code Mapping as it relates to Principle 1: Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards.

(ii) PRINCIPLE 2: ENGAGING STUDENTS AS PARTNERS

(copy filed as QAC/300926/015)

16.1 The Committee approved the UK Quality Code Mapping as it relates to Principle 2: Engaging students as partners.

(iii) PRINCIPLE 3: RESOURCING DELIVERY OF A HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING EXPERIENCE

(copy filed as QAC/300926/016)

17.1 The Committee approved the UK Quality Code Mapping as it relates to Principle 3: Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience.

STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEE REMITS AND COMPOSITIONS 2026/27

(copy filed as QAC/300926/018 and 019)

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18.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the Students' Progress Committee Remits and Compositions as follows:

(i) Students' Progress Committee; and
(ii) Students' Progress Committee (Healthcare).

FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE REMITS AND COMPOSITIONS 2026/27

(copy filed as QAC/300926/020 and 021)

19.1 The Committee approved, by routine approval, the Fitness to Practise Committee Remits and Compositions as follows:

(iii) Fitness to Practise Committee (Education); and
(iv) Fitness to Practise Committee (Healthcare).

REPORT FROM THE STUDENTS' PROGRESS COMMITTEE

(copy filed as QAC/300926/022)

20.1 The QAC noted the report from the Students' Progress Committee (SPC).

MATTERS APPROVED BY CIRCULATION AND CONVENOR'S ACTION

21.1 The QAC noted the following matters approved by circulation and by Convenor's Action:

21.1.1 Transnational Education and Partnerships-Related

(i) Northwest University TNE Project
  a. Education Policy *(copy filed as QAC/300926/023a)*
  b. Term Dates *(copy filed as QAC/300926/023b)*
  c. Regulatory Requirements *(copy filed as QAC/300926/023c)*
(ii) Athens University of Economics and Business Cooperation Protocol *(copy filed as QAC/300926/024)*
(iii) Grade Mapping for China University of Geosciences (Beijing) (CUGB) and Northwest University (NWU) *(copy filed as QAC/300926/025)*
(iv) Qatar Campus Term Dates 2026/27 *(copy filed as QAC/300926/026)*
(v) University of Aberdeen Mumbai: Approaches to Quality Assurance and Education Policy *(copy filed as QAC/300926/027)*

21.1.2 Assessment-Related

(i) MA2509 Scaled Assessment *(copy filed as QAC/300926/028)*
(ii) Study Abroad Student Pathway *(copy filed as QAC/300926/029)*
(iii) Updates to Examining Research Degrees Guidance and PGR Code of Practice *(copy filed as QAC/300926/030)*

21.1.3 Admissions-Related

(i) Articulation Pathways 2027/28 *(copy filed as QAC/300926/031)*
(ii) Entry Requirements for BSc Data Science and BSc Computing Science Programmes

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The Chair approved, on behalf of the QAC, a proposed change as follows for the BSc Data Science and BSc Computing Science entry requirements:

- ***Current requirement**: Two Mathematics/Science subjects*
- ***Proposed requirement**: Either Mathematics OR any two Science subjects*

The proposed change;

- *Aligns our requirements more closely with competitor institutions (many of whom require Mathematics only)*
- *Supports widening the applicant pool, including key markets such as Mumbai, without compromising academic standards*

(iii) Entry Requirements for MSci Chemistry with Industrial Placement

The Chair approved, on behalf of the QAC, a proposed change to align the MSci Chemistry with Industrial Placement entry requirements with the BSc Chemistry, rather than the MChem, given the MSci is identical to the BSc with the added industrial placement as the only difference.

21.1.4 Graduation-Related

(i) Winter Graduations 2026 *(copy filed as QAC/300926/032)*

PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES

(copy filed as QAC/300926/033)

22.1 The Committee noted the matters pertaining to professional, statutory and regulatory bodies as it relates to Association for Simulated Practice in Healthcare.

MEDICAL SCHOOLS COUNCIL: APPLIED KNOWLEDGE TEST

23.1 The Committee noted that the Annual Report for the Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) 2024/25 has been published by the Medical Schools Council.

SFC GUIDANCE ON QUALITY FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES 2024-25 TO 2030-31 (REFRESH)

(copy filed as QAC/300926/034)

24.1 The Committee noted the updated SFC Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities 2024-25 to 2030-31.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGES TO THE CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (ACADEMIC)

(copy filed as QAC/300926/035)

25.1 Members of the Committee noted the update in respect of implementation of changes to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic).

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

26.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 18 November 2026 at 2:05pm in Committee Room 2, University Office.

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