UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE  

Minute of the Meeting held on 15 February 2016

Present: Professor K Shennan (Convener), Dr M Beaton, Dr P Bishop, Dr M-I Ehrenschwendtner, Mr L Fuller, Dr W Harrison, Dr S Lawrie, Professor D Lurie with Ms K Christie and Ms E Hay (Clerk) in attendance

Apologies: Dr D Comber, Ms G Clarke, Dr M Hole

Professor P McGeorge was in attendance for items 2.1-2.5

MINUTE OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2015  
(copy filed as QAC/150216/001)

1.1 Members of the Committee approved the minute of the meeting held on 25 November 2015.

1.2 Members of the Committee agreed to the addition of ‘negative’ in regards to feedback discussed in point 4.6. Members of the Committee further agreed that this point should be referred to the Undergraduate Committee (UGC) for further discussion.

Action: Clerk

MODERATION PROCEDURES  
(copy filed as QAC/150216/009 and QAC/150216/010)

2.1 The Committee noted the circulated and tabled papers on the Moderation Procedures following the decision taken at Senate to return the process to Committee for discussion.

2.2 Professor McGeorge addressed the Committee on the issue of Moderation, noting that following the action taken by Senate, four options (as listed below) were open to the Institution:
   (i) a return to the Moderation procedures in place prior to November 2015
   (ii) a revised Moderation Procedure be developed and passed through Committee
   (iii) all scripts (at levels 3 and above, contributing to degree classification) be double marked
   (iv) all scripts (at levels 3 and above, contributing to degree classification) be single marked only

2.3 Members of the Committee agreed that point (i) could be ruled out of discussion as it represented an unfair system to students following the introduction of the use of a Grade Point Average. Members agreed that a fair and consistent approach must be taken to Moderation and, as such, this option was untenable. Professor McGeorge detailed the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and confirmed, with support of the Committee that the pre-November 2015 procedure was not fit for purpose.

2.4 Members of the Committee further agreed that point (iv) could also be ruled out of discussion on the basis that it did not represent a Quality Assured method of marking.

2.5 Members of the Committee noted option (iii) and the implications this requirement would have across the Institution. Members of the Committee agreed that a revised moderation
procedure, option (ii) was the sensible, fair and consistent approach to take. Professor McGeorge excused himself from the meeting to ensure open discussion could take place between Committee members.

2.6 Members of the Committee specifically acknowledged the paper as presented by Professor Shennan detailing changes to the paper previously considered by the Senate. Members of the QAC considered each point in turn and, as reflected in the paper as circulated to the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees (copy filed as QAC/150216/011), made small changes; largely typographical in nature.

2.7 The key changes as suggested and agreed by the Committee can be summarised as follows:

- Members of the Committee agreed to the removal of point 4.1. The Committee recognised the concerns as raised by a Senate member and the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) Teaching and Learning Committee regarding this point and noted that the grade awarded by the first marker would stand.
- Members of the Committee agreed to a revised point 4.3 (formerly 4.5) regarding isolated scripts. The QAC noted concern as raised by the CASS Teaching and Learning Committee regarding this point and acknowledged that where there is a major disagreement (two or more alphanumeric grades) in an isolated script the markers must discuss the reason for this. If it is agreed that the initial grading by the first marker of this script was flawed the grade may be changed with agreement of both markers. However, the first marker must review all non-sampled scripts to determine whether any adjustments need to be made to those grades in the light of the discussions. Further sampling (a further 10%) must then occur to ensure that this was an isolated incident.
- Members agreed that point 3.1, regarding a piece of assessment which comprises the entire assessment for one course should be kept, however, members agreed that the wording should be amended to reflect the intent that this covers independent learning (such as a dissertation or project) and not all assessments.

2.8 The Committee confirmed their approval of the paper with the changes as outlined above.  

*Action: Convener/Clerk*

**MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 The Committee noted no specific matters arising. Members were informed that all actions arising from the last meeting of the Committee were now complete.

**INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW (ITR)**

4.1 The Committee noted with concern the failure of the College of Life Sciences and Medicine Graduate School to submit their response to the ITR Report. Members of the Committee agreed that Professor Connolly, Head of the Graduate School, should be contacted in this regard.

*Action: Clerk*
ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW (APR)
(copied filed as QAC/150216/003)

5.1 The Committee noted the Postgraduate specific Summary Course and Programme Review Reports for 2014-15 as provided by Heads of Discipline/School.

5.2 The Committee agreed that the APR process as piloted for 2014/15 had been successful, prompting considered feedback across the Institution. The Committee noted that, overall, Schools and/or disciplines had engaged with the process. The Committee agreed that a recommendation should be made to the UCTL to continue with the process as piloted.

Action: Committee/Clerk

EXTERNAL EXAMINING

6.1 The Committee noted the responses to Postgraduate External Examiners reports as provided by Heads of School (copy filed as QAC/150216/004a). Members of the Committee noted no particular areas of concern and agreed to return specific feedback on the area(s) for which they hold responsibility.

Action: Committee/Clerk

6.2 The Committee noted the responses to Undergraduate External Examiners reports as provided by Heads of School (copy filed as QAC/150216/004b). Members of the Committee noted no particular areas of concern and agreed to return specific feedback on the area(s) for which they hold responsibility.

Action: Committee/Clerk

6.3 Members of the Committee identified instances where returns from Heads of School were not appropriate or complete. Members of the Committee agreed that, in instances such as these, the Head of School should be asked to reconsider their response.

COLLABORATIVE PROVISION
(copied filed as QAC/150216/005a and QAC/150216/005b)

7.1 The Committee noted the Annual Report as received from the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) for Academic Year 2014-15. Members of the Committee agreed that an appropriate response to the report should be provided.

Action: Convener/Clerk

7.2 The Committee noted the Panel Report as received from the Panel who undertook the Revalidation of the Area of Energy at UHI. No concerns were raised.

PSB REPORTS
(copied filed as QAC/150216/006)

8.1 The Committee noted the Re-inspection Report as received by the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition from the General Dental Council (GDC). The Committee acknowledged that the Convener had, on behalf of the Committee, sent a message congratulating the School on their efforts to date, and offering support, where possible, to the School in its efforts to achieve sufficiency.
ITEMS UNDERTAKEN BY CIRCULATION

9.1 The Committee noted the consideration of the following items by Convener’s action since the November meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee.

UK Government Green Paper (copy filed as QAC/150216/008)

COURSE AND PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

9.2 A list of all Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses and programmes approved since the November meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee can be found here.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 21 March 2016 at 2pm in the Court Room, University Office.

AOCB

11.1 The Committee noted the nomination of Dr Euan Bain as a replacement for Dr David Hendry as a member of the Committee representing the College of Physical Sciences. The Committee unanimously agreed to the appointment of Dr Bain.