

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING & LEARNING**

**DRAFT Minute of the meeting held on 22 January 2014**

*Present:* Professor P McGeorge (Convener), Dr S Davies, Mr C Duncan, Mr P Fantom, Mr R Henthorn, Professor A Lumsden, Dr G Mackintosh, Dr J Masthoff, Mr D Philip, Dr M Pryor, Dr K Shennan, Dr R Wells, Dr R Bernard (Clerk), Ms E Hay (Minute Secretary)

*Apologies:* Dr B Connolly, Ms M Dunn, Dr C Kee

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2013**

*(copy filed as UCTL/220114/001)*

- 1.1 The Committee approved the minutes of 30 October 2013. The Committee agreed that the minutes were representative of discussions held.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

*(Oral Item)*

- 2.1 The Committee acknowledged that Health and Safety would become a standing item on future agendas.
- 2.2 Members of the Committee had no issues relating to Health and Safety to raise.

**CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT**

*(copy filed as UCTL/220114/002)*

- 3.1 The Committee considered the draft Code of Practice on Assessment produced for the purposes of addressing comments raised by Senate in November 2012.
- 3.2 The Committee noted feedback from the Conveners of each of the UCTL's sub-committees, noting overall support for the document from each. In addition, the College Directors of Teaching and Learning, while acknowledging some concern over the specific issues of honours weighting and the use of discretion, reported overall support for the proposed changes from their respective Colleges.
- 3.3 Members of the Committee noted concern as to the potential timescale for the implementation of the proposals. The Convener reassured the Committee of the acknowledgement of the work, and communication that would be required before such a change could be rolled out across the Institution. The Convener did further express to the Committee, however, the need for change, as highlighted by the recent ELIR review.
- 3.4 The Committee specifically addressed the issue of the weighting of level 3 and level 4 courses in determining degree classification. Members of the Committee noted differing views on the issue and the SCQF guidelines which stipulate that a course at L3 does not equate to one studied at L4.

- 3.5 The Committee agreed on the danger of an inconsistent approach to determining honours classification and agreed to consult Senate for a consistent and institutional view on the issue.
- 3.6 The Committee also addressed the issue of weighting more generally, specifically discussing whether all level 3 and 4 courses should be treated in the same way, or if discipline specific subjects should be weighted more highly. While some members of the Committee reported feedback to suggest discipline specific courses should have a higher weighting, the Committee agreed that a degree received from Aberdeen is done so under Curriculum Reform. The committee therefore agreed that the breadth of courses studied during students' honours year(s) should be weighted equally.
- 3.7 Members of the Committee discussed the issue of whether or not a student failing a course at honours should then be able to go on and achieve a degree of an upper second or first classification. A member of the Committee agreed that a student able to achieve a degree of that class should be permitted to do so and not further penalised for the fail.
- 3.8 Members of the Committee agreed to the inclusion of the section addressing Postgraduate students. The Committee agreed to recommend the paper to Senate for discussion and approval.

#### **STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION ACADEMIC REPRESENTATIVES REFORM PROCESS**

*(copy filed as UCTL/220114/003)*

- 4.1 Members of the Committee acknowledged the paper, submitted by the Students Association regarding their Academic Representatives Reform Process. Members of the Committee noted that the process would undergo Kaizen review in advance of the 2014/15 Academic Year.
- 4.2 Mr Henthorn presented the paper to the Committee, specifically highlighting key points to the Committee. The Committee noted the proposal to elect first half session representatives for years 2 and above in the preceding second half session. Members of the Committee expressed concern at this proposal, noting that students elected may not in all circumstances progress to the next programme year, or return to study. Furthermore, the Committee acknowledged that direct entry students could not be elected by default.
- 4.3 The Committee noted successful pilots, trialling proposed changes, had been undertaken in the Schools of Biological Sciences and Language and Literature. The Committee further noted the feedback that the representatives are highly engaged and that this system proves to be working well.
- 4.4 Members of the Committee queried how effective the system is at representing the student population and how well the system interacts with the University and its Colleges and Schools. The Committee recommended further College involvement in any review of the process, by way of the College Directors of Teaching and Learning (DoTL) and agreed that a revised paper should be submitted to the UCTL for consideration following Kaizen review.

## **MINUTES AND UPDATE REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES**

*(copy filed as UCTL/220114/004)*

- 5.1 The Committee noted the minutes of the Undergraduate and Quality Assurance Committees, noting that the Postgraduate minutes would be made available to members at a later date.
- 5.2 The Committee acknowledged that those issues raised in the minutes had largely been discussed throughout the course of the meeting.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 6.1 The Committee noted that the next meetings of the UCTL would be held on Wednesday 14 May 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

### **FOR APPROVAL**

#### **RESITS FOR POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENTS**

- 7.1 On the recommendation of the Postgraduate Committee, the Committee approved and agreed to recommend to Senate, the proposal that resits should be brought in for non-conversion programmes with effect from 2014/15. A small group will be formed to consider operational matters associated with the implementation.

### **TERM DATES**

- 7.2 The Committee approved an amendment to the term dates for 2014/15 for the BScMedSci and term dates for level 5 of the MChem:

|                    | BSc Med Sci                             | MChem level 5            |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Winter Term Opens  | Monday 1 September 2014                 | Tuesday 9 September 2014 |
| Winter Term Closes | Friday 19 December 2014                 | Friday 19 December 2014  |
| Spring Term Opens  | Monday 5 January 2015                   | Monday 12 January 2015   |
| Spring Term Closes | Friday 24 April 2015                    | Friday 17 April 2014     |
| Summer Term Opens  | Monday 27 April 2015                    | Monday 27 April 2015     |
| Summer Term Closes | Vivas held on 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2015 | Friday 22 May 2015       |

### **DEADLINE FOR THE RETURN OF RESULTS**

- 7.3 The Committee is approved the deadline for the return of postgraduate taught course and programme results in 2013/14 to be Friday 24 October 2014.

### **FOR INFORMATION**

#### **CPD FRAMEWORK UPDATE**

*(copy filed as UCTL/220114/006)*

- 8.1 The Committee noted the update on the CPD Framework in the attached paper.

## NSS 2014

(copy filed as UCTL/220114/007)

- 8.2 The Committee noted the timeline for NSS 2014 and the measures being put in place to help increase response rates as detailed in the attached paper

## SUMMER 2014 RESIT DIET

- 8.3 The Committee are invited to note, as approved by circulation, that the summer 2014 resit diet will be held from Saturday 19 July for a period of two weeks with the deadline for return of results being Wednesday 13 August 2014.

## STUDENT MONITORING REVIEW

- 8.4 The Committee noted a review of Student Monitoring processes is being planned for early 2014 and will be taken forward with the help of the Business Improvement Team. Further information will be circulated once it is available.

## ONESOURCE STUDENT LIFECYCLE PROJECT

(copy filed as UCTL/220114/008)

- 8.5 The Committee noted the update on the course information requirements to support online course selection and the tutorial / lab classes booking system as part of the OneSource Student Lifecycle Project.

## ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (ELIR)

- 8.6 The Committee noted that the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Panel visited the University in October and November 2014. The Panel met with a series of groups of staff and students from across the institution. The Panel's overarching judgement about the University of Aberdeen concluded that ***'The University of Aberdeen has effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. These arrangements are likely to continue to be effective in the future'***. This is a positive judgement, which means the University has robust arrangements for securing academic standards and for enhancing the quality of the student experience. The Panel also highlighted a significant number of positive practices. We expect to receive the Panel's report on the 17 January 2014.