

UNIVERSITY OF ABEREEN

POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING 7 JANUARY 2014

Present: Prof P. McGeorge (Convenor), Dr A. Akisanya, Prof B. Connolly, Ms S. Cornelius, Dr I. Ehrenschwendtner, Dr P. Fernandes, Prof P. Hannaford, Dr C. Kee, Dr D. MacCallum, and with Dr L. Leiper, and Mr R. Findlay (Clerk) and Mrs D. McDonald in attendance.

Apologies: Dr S. Alcobia-Murphy, Mrs K. Allan, Dr H. Battu, Dr C Bestwick, Mrs C Croydon, Prof R. Evans-Jones, Mr R Henthorn, Prof M. Jaspers, Dr A Mckinnon, Dr D Marais, Dr J Mastoff, Dr L. Philip, Prof A Sahraie and Mrs K. Slessor.,

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING ON 7 OCTOBER 2013

9.1 It was noted that Dr Donna McCallum was present during the Committee dated 7 October 2013 and that her name should be moved from the list of apologies and added to the list of those who were present.

9.2 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on 7 October 2013 subject to the above amendment.

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MATTERS ARISING

10.1 The Committee noted that Enhancement Led Institutional Review had been a success and the reviews had confidence in the procedures and processes in place. A technical report would be issued to the University of Aberdeen on the 17th January 2013. The Committee expressed congratulations to all individuals involved with the Enhancement Led Institutional Review.

10.2 An update was given regarding the Student Absence Policy that was reviewed during the Committee dated 7 October. It was noted that self-certification only applies to first and second year students and therefore was not applicable to the postgraduate committee.

10.3 The Committee noted an update on the proposal for resits at postgraduate level. The Committee agreed that resits should be made available to postgraduate students. The Committee also agreed that a small working group should be set up to identify and resolve the technical issues of this proposal with the aim that the policy would go to UCTL in May followed by Senate in May.

ACTION: CLERK

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT UNIT

11.1 The Committee was given an update on recent activities regarding the Researcher Development Unit by L. Leiper.

11.2 L. Leiper informed the Committee that a new mandatory one day programme, PhD Essentials, will run for new PhD students. This would be separate to the standard induction.

11.3 The University would also be taking part in a three minute thesis competition in which the participants would be asked to present their research projects to a non-specialist audience in just three minutes. The competition was first launched in 2008 at the University of

Queensland. The competition was an exciting initiative that provided an opportunity to showcase research and build networks.

CPD FRAMEWORK UPDATE

- 12.1 The Committee noted an update on CPD Framework.
- 12.2 The Committee noted that HESA would now require data on numbers of academic staff members who had engaged in further CPD training leading to a qualification. The Committee noted that the Centre for Academic Development had been looking at more effective promotion of staff training.

POSTGRADUATE EXPERIENCE SURVEYS

- 13.1 The Committee noted the template for PTES 2014.
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- 13.2 A discussion took place on how to advertise the survey more effectively with emphasis placed on course coordinators being aware of the surveys and the deadlines.
- 13.3 It was agreed that a focus group should be implemented to gather student views on how to promote better and on the type of questions that the University should have added to the surveys. The Business Improvement Team should be contacted to arrange a discussion on a PTES focus group.
ACTION: CLERK
- 13.4 The Committee discussed the report compiled by the Higher Education Academy concerning best practice on how to use the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey. It was agreed that this should also be included and discussed in the PTES focus group.
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CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT

- 14.1 The Committee reviewed the paper on Code of Practice on Assessment.
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- 14.2 The Committee agreed that the implementation of the new marking system would improve consistency and transparency across the institution. It was felt that the system would be suitable for postgraduate marking but asked further clarification on progression and the cross over with January start students.
ACTION: PMC

ONESOURCE STUDENT LIFECYCLE PROJECT

- 15 The Committee noted an update on the Onesource student lifecycle project.
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POSTGRADUATE TUITION FEE LOAN 2014/2015

- 16 The Committee noted recent communication from SAAS concerning the Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan for 2014/2015.
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STUDENT MONITORING REVIEW

- 17 The Committee noted that the Business Improvement Team would be running a Kaizen event aimed at improving the efficiency of the student monitoring process.

TEACHING AND LEARNING SYMPOSIUM

- 18 The Committee noted an update on the annual Teaching and Learning Symposium.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 19 Dr Kee asked for confirmation on whether CASS would be able to make offers for 4 year PhDs and, if so, how the tuition fees for this would work. It was confirmed that the current regulations would permit 4 year PhD offers to be made on an individual basis, and that offers could stipulate a requirement for students to undertake a number of taught courses as part of their training. It was also confirmed that the appropriate tuition fee would be charged for all 4 years of supervised study.