

**UNIVERSITY OF ABEREEN**

**POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF MEETING 7 OCTOBER 2013**

Present: Prof P. McGeorge (Convenor), Dr A. Akisanya, Ms S. Cornelius, Dr I. Ehrenschwendtner, Prof I. Gibson, Prof P. Hannaford, Dr C. Kee, Mr J. Kenter, Mr T. Majchrowski, Dr D. Marais, Dr J. Masthoff, Ms S. Paterson, Prof C. Secombes and with Ms C. Croydon, 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, Dr B. Connolly, Prof R. Evans-Jones, Dr P. Fernandes, Prof M. Jaspers, Dr D. Maccallum, Dr L. Philip, Mrs K. Slessor.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING ON 25 MARCH 2013**

- 1.1 The Committee requested an amendment to the minutes to include reference to a discussion concerning postgraduate taught resits. The discussion had noted that a paper on postgraduate taught resits would be put to the committee for approval, and so it was agreed to defer the discussion until the following meeting.
- 1.2 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on 25 March 2013 subject to the above amendment.

Copy filed as PGC/071013/001

**POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE SURVEYS**

- 3.1 The Committee noted the results of the Postgraduate Taught and Research Experience surveys.  
Copy filed as PGC/071013/002 and 003
- 3.2 It was agreed that a breakdown of results for individual Schools and disciplines could be supplied as necessary.
- 3.3 It was noted that much of the positive results for the research student experience survey could be put down to the work of the Researcher Development Unit.
- 3.4 It was noted that the response rates of both taught and research surveys were poor. The Committee agreed that the results of the surveys were not meaningful due to the low response rates. A discussion took place regarding the benefit of continuing with the postgraduate experience surveys in future due to the low response rates and whether internal surveys should be used instead. It was noted that the postgraduate research experience survey that runs every two years was compulsory.
- 3.5 The Committee agreed that there were advantages to using these surveys. It was discussed that they provide a useful benchmark against other institutions and that there was no cost for participating.
- 3.6 The Committee agreed that the response rates needed to be improved and more communication needed to take place with Graduate Schools to advertise the survey to students. It was also noted that as an incentive an ipad was offered by the University. It was agreed that further discussions needed to take place to improve the response rates and it was noted that the University of Strathclyde had a best practice guide to the postgraduate research experience survey that could be utilised.

## **RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT UNIT**

- 4.1 The Committee was given an update on recent activities regarding the Researcher Development Unit by L. Leiper.
- 4.2 L. Leiper informed the Committee that engagement amongst postgraduate researchers with the research development programme had increased from 22-35% in the last year.
- 4.3 It was noted that the Researcher Development Unit, together with the Public Engagement with Research Unit led a successful submission to the Times Higher Education Awards, in the category of Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers. The submission reflected the strategic approach and the outputs of the RCUK catalyst project.
- 4.4 The Committee noted that a survey of researchers had been conducted with a view to gauging views on how well the University supported researcher endeavours. It was noted that the results of this survey would be presented to the University Management Group on November 2013.

## **ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW**

- 5.1 The Committee noted an update on Enhancement Led Institutional Review.
- 5.2 The Committee noted that the Senior Vice-Principal approved the final version of the ELIR documentation – Reflective Analysis, Case Study and Advance Information Set - on behalf of the Court on 14 August 2013. The first visit of the ELIR Panel would take place 9-10 October 2013, with a second visit scheduled for the week of 18 November 2013.

## **ONE SOURCE UPDATE**

- 6.1 The Committee noted an update on OneSource.
- 6.2 It was suggested by J.Mastoff that, because postgraduate taught programmes had a very structured curriculum, the January 2014 students could be used to test the OneSource programme ahead of the planned undergraduate trial. It was recommended that this suggestion be passed on to the OneSource team.
- 6.3 It was also noted that support and training should be given to staff before OneSource is implemented. It was recommended that this suggestion be passed on to the OneSource team.

Action: Clerk

Copy attached as PGC/071013/004

## **STUDENT ABSENCE POLICY**

- 7. The Committee reviewed the paper on student absence policy. The Committee did not feel in a position to make a recommendation and requested confirmation on the applicability of the policy to taught postgraduate students.

Copy attached as PGC/071013/005

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESSES**

- 8.1 The Committee requested an update on the proposal of resits for postgraduate taught students.  
Action: Clerk
- 8.2 The Committee noted that a form for collecting Graduate Attributes for taught postgraduate programmes was in development.