UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Minute of the Meeting held on 11th October 2013

Present: Dr K Shennan (Convener), Ms K Christie, Dr M-I Ehrenschwendtner, Dr D Hendry, Mr R Henthorn, Dr S Lawrie, Professor D Lurie, Ms Emma Hay (Clerk), Ms Clare McWilliams (Minute Secretary),

Apologies: Professor G M Coghill, Ms M Dunn, Professor P McGeorge

MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 16 MAY 2013 AND 17 JUNE 2013
(copy filed as QAC/111013/001a)
(copy filed as QAC/111013/001b)

1.1 The Committee noted apologies for the lateness of the previous meeting’s minute and noted efforts were being made to ensure that going forward, minutes are distributed as early as possible.

1.2 The Committee approved the minutes of the meetings held on the 17th of June and the 16th of May, subject to minor typographical revisions. The Committee agreed the addition of the following sentence to point 7.2 of the May minute:

The Committee considered the option of allocating seat numbers for exams and whether One Source would be capable of doing this on a random basis. The Committee agreed to refer the issue to the UCTL for consideration.

Action: Clerk

REMIT AND COMPOSITION
(copy filed as QAC/111013/002)

2.1 The Committee noted that some errors in the remit had been identified. The Committee acknowledged that the remit would be circulated to members once updated.

2.2 The Committee discussed the possibility of increasing the membership of the Committee, particularly in recognition of the substantial workload. The Committee agreed to forward this proposal to the Convener of the UCTL for consideration.

Action: Clerk

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

3.1 The Committee agreed with the proposal that at least two extra meetings should be scheduled to allow the Committee to appropriately consider all annual business. The Committee agreed that these extra meetings would likely be arranged for January and May.

Action: Clerk

RESPONSE TO THE INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW (ITR) REPORT FROM THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
(copy filed as QAC/111013/003a)

Summary report available and copy filed as (QAC/281113/003b)
4.1 The Committee noted that appendices referred to in the response had not been included for their reference. The Committee was assured that these would be sought from the school and circulated to members of the Committee for their information.

4.2 Overall, the Committee was very pleased with the response provided by the School of Education and wished to convey their thanks to the Head of School and all involved in the Internal Teaching Review (ITR) process.

4.3 The Committee did note some concern with regards to the issue of lateness of marks and feedback, referred to in section 6 of the report. The Committee noted concern that the response from the School did not fully address the issues as raised by the student body. The Committee suggested that in relation to feedback, the school may wish to consider that if required, projected deadlines be extended, within a reasonable time frame, for the purposes of increased transparency.

4.4 The Committee was encouraged by action taken by the School to withdraw some of the programmes offered, in recognition of the high workload within the School. The Committee echoed concerns raised within the report regarding staff workloads and the potential implications this may have on the department’s research activities.

4.5 The Committee acknowledged the issue of student participation and potential issues concerning student awareness of class representatives. The Committee were assured that the Students’ Association was attempting to address this issue by the introduction of programme representatives within the School.

Action: Clerk

STUDENT ABSENCE POLICY
(copy filed as QAC/111013/004)

5.1 The Committee noted the changes to the policy as approved by Senate.

5.2 The Committee acknowledged the issues raised in the paper and considered whether or not students who submit a self-certificate should be entitled to register for the resit exam without charge. The Committee agreed that if self-certification was to be acceptable as an alternative to a medical certificate, then the same financial implications should apply.

5.3 The Committee agreed that students should be made fully aware when submitting a self-certificate, that this could potentially affect their progression. As in the case of medical or self-certificates, the Committee agreed the importance of making students aware that even with due cause, if they could not achieve the learning outcomes for a course, they would be required to retake it, in its entirety.

5.4 The Committee agreed that a self-certificate marker should exist on the student record to record self-certificate submissions and to differentiate them from a medical certificate (MC) or good cause (GC).

Action: Clerk

UPDATE ON ANNUAL COURSE REVIEW
6.1 The Committee noted the approved changes to the Annual Course Review (ACR) form including the introduction of the consideration of forms by the respective College Director of Teaching and Learning (DoTL). The Committee agreed with the proposal that the DoTLs should submit an analysis of their College, highlighting any issues or good practice, to the Committee for consideration.

6.2 The Committee noted that a training session on completing the ACRs had taken place during the summer months. The Committee noted that this had been well attended and that a document providing guidance on completion had been prepared and circulated to all staff involved in the process.

6.3 The Committee acknowledged that the ACR form could perhaps be more useful should it be available for completion in electronic format. The Committee agreed that this approach should be considered.

6.4 The Committee acknowledged that students, as well as staff, should be entitled to see ACRs. The Committee agreed to consider the possibility of making them accessible through MyAberdeen.

Action: Clerk

DLITT CANDIDATE – PROPOSED PANEL MEMBERSHIP

7.1 The Committee noted the request for the approval of the DLITT panel. The panel agreed with the proposed membership, however, sought clarification of the area of research before being able to nominate a member of the Committee to sit on the panel. The Clerk agreed to confirm this and report back to the Committee by way of circulation.

Action: Clerk

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

UPDATE ON ENHANCEMENT LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (ELIR)

8.1 The Committee noted that the Senior Vice-Principal had 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, prior to its submission to the QAA on 23 August 2013. The Committee noted that all documentation is available from www.abdn.ac.uk/elir. The Committee noted that the first visit of the ELIR Panel took place during 9-10 October 2013, and that the second visit would commence on 18 November 2013 for 5 days. The Committee were informed that the ELIR panel had identified topics that they would like to discuss in more detail during their return visit.

ONESOURCE PROJECT

(copy filed as QAC/111013/006)

8.2 The Committee noted the attached paper, providing an update on the OneSource project. The Committee noted some concern that students, particularly those at level 1, would not have a centrally arranged appointment with their Personal Tutor.

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW (ITR) ONE YEAR FOLLOW-UP REPORT: CHEMISTRY
8.3 The Committee noted the one year follow report provided by the department of Chemistry and as approved by way of Convener’s Action.

INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW (ITR) ONE YEAR FOLLOW-UP REPORT: DIVINITY, HISTORY & PHILOSOPHY

8.4 The Committee noted the one year follow report provided by the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy and as approved by way of Convener’s Action.

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN COLLEGE LECTURERS

8.5 The Committee noted the approval of the Staff CVs for ICC by way of Convenors action.

ITEMS UNDERTAKEN BY CIRCULATION

8.6 The Committee noted that a record of all items approved by the Quality Assurance Committee by way of Circulation and/or Convener’s Action can be found via SharePoint.

COURSE AND PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

8.7 The Committee noted that a list of all Undergraduate courses and programmes approved since the June meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee can be found at the following link: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/senastracking/ascreport/undergraduate.php. Furthermore, a list of all Postgraduate courses and programmes approved since the June meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee can be found at the following link: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/senastracking/ascreport/postgraduate.php.

AOCB

9.1 The Committee were invited to propose any items for discussion at future meetings. The Convener informed the Committee that the issue of Honours classification, particularly in light of the introduction of Enhanced Study at levels 3 and 4, would be a topic for discussion at a future meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 27th November at 2pm, in the Court Room, University Office.