UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Minute of the Meeting held on 27th November 2013

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

Apologies: Ms M Dunn, Professor P McGeorge

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11th OCTOBER 2013
(copy filed as QAC/271113/001)

1.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting subject to one or two minor typographical revisions.

1.2 The Committee welcomed Ms Mhairi Beaton, representing the College of Arts and Social Sciences, to the Committee. The Committee were informed that two further additional members of the Committee, representing the College of Physical Sciences and the College of Life Sciences and Medicine, are yet to be determined.

SENAS APPROVAL PROCESS

2.1 The Committee was informed that schools have been proactive in using the SENAS SharePoint site and that a number of SENAS forms awaited consideration by the Committee. The Committee agreed that the distribution of members’ responsibility would be circulated, in addition to guidance on the process. The Convener informed the Committee that further guidance on considering a SENAS form could be provided on request.

Action: Clerk

RESPONSE TO THE INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW (ITR) REPORT FROM THE SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
(copy filed as QAC/271113/002a)
(summary report copy filed as QAC/271113/002b)

4.1 Overall, the Committee was content with the response provided by the School of Biological Sciences to the Internal Teaching Review (ITR) report and in particular, the Action Plan provided. The Committee were encouraged by the many commendations that the school were afforded.

4.2 The Committee was encouraged by the clear strategy and vision that exists within the school of Biological Sciences.

4.3 The Committee acknowledged the issue raised by the ITR panel regarding the use of External Examiners with the School and the potential issues arising as a consequence of the School’s interpretation of the Academic Quality Handbook. The Committee agreed that further clarification to the School was necessary. The Committee further acknowledged the response provided by the School and agreed that the way in which advice is communicated to Schools may need to be reviewed.
4.4 The Committee agreed the need for clarification to all Schools within the University regarding the use of External Examiners, particularly in relation to the consideration of borderline results and coursework. Members of the Committee suggested that the schedule for External Examiners, in addition to the minutes of Examiner meetings should be included in future ITR documentation.

*Action: Clerk*

4.5 The Committee agreed to respond to the School of Biological Sciences, thanking them for their response. The Committee acknowledged that the School would be due to submit a follow up report in November 2014.

*Action: Clerk*

**INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN COLLEGE (ICC) AND UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLAND (UHI) ANNUAL REPORTS 2012/13**

*(copy filed as QAC/271113/003a)*

*(copy filed as QAC/271113/003b)*

5.1 The Committee acknowledged the annual reports from the International Christian College (ICC) and the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). The Committee wished to express their thanks to both institutions for the submission of these reports.

5.2 In considering the report provided by UHI, members of the Committee agreed that, overall, they were content with the response provided. The Committee acknowledged that UHI continue to work towards the validation of their Postgraduate provision.

5.3 The Committee noted that the revalidation of two areas of study, Archaeology and Marine Science remain outstanding. The Committee acknowledged that these would be circulated by email for consideration and approval.

*Action: Clerk*

5.4 The Committee noted UHI’s request for a meeting with the University and for further improvements in communication. The Committee agreed that this issue should be referred to the appropriate contact in Registry for further action to be taken.

*Action: Clerk*

5.5 In considering the report provided by ICC, while noting their thanks to ICC for the compilation and submission of the report, the Committee noted some of issues of concern.

5.6 The Committee noted comments made by External Examiners regarding teaching and expressed some concern over whether or not the approach to theology taken by ICC was academic in its content. The Committee acknowledged the financial issues affecting ICC and noted concern as to the effect this may be having on teaching quality.

5.7 The Committee further noted the College’s failure to mark anonymously or to use the plagiarism detection software, Turnitin. The Committee expressed concern over these issues and wished to encourage the College to engage with both of these University practices.

*Action: Clerk*

**STUDENT SIGNATURES ON ANNUAL COURSE REVIEW FORMS**
6.1 The Committee noted a lack of contentment amongst the student body regarding the inclusion of class representative signatures on Annual Course Review (ACR) forms. While noting the Student’s Association’s reservations on the issue, members of the Committee agreed that it was proving very difficult to obtain signatures for forms and, as such, agreed that the requirement for student signatures should be removed.

Action: Clerk

6.2 The Committee discussed the possibility of reintroducing a Heads of School summary form to remove the need for Head of School comments on each individual ACR form and to allow an overall School reflection of all courses on offer. The Committee agreed to propose revisions to the Annual Course Review procedure to the UCTL.

Action: Clerk

WORD LIMITS FOR PHDS IN GAELIC/PERMISSION TO SUBMIT A THESIS IN A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE
(cop[y filed as QAC/271113/004)

7.1 The Committee considered the proposal regarding PhDs submitted in Gaelic Language. The Committee was content to approve the proposal, however, noted in doing so that permission was granted specifically for PhD’s undertaken in the Gaelic language.

Action: Clerk

REGULATORY CHANGES

8.1 The Committee noted that the Undergraduate and Postgraduate regulatory changes for 2014/15 would be distributed for approval by way of circulation.

STUDENTS PROGRESS COMMITTEE (MEDICINE & DENTISTRY)
(cop[y filed as QAC/271113/006)

8.2 The Committee approved the remit and composition of the Students Progress Committee for Medicine and Dentistry.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE (MEDICINE & DENTISTRY)
(cop[y filed as QAC/271113/007)

8.3 The Committee approved the remit and composition of the Fitness to Practise Committee for Medicine and Dentistry.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE (EDUCATION)
(cop[y filed as QAC/271113/008)

8.4 The Committee is invited to approve the remit and composition of the Fitness to Practise Committee for the School of Education.

FOR INFORMATION

ITEMS UNDERTAKEN BY CIRCULATION

9.1 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 here.

COURSE AND PROGRAMME PROPOSALS
A list of all Undergraduate courses and programmes approved since the October meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee can be found at the following link: [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/senastracking/ascreport/undergraduate.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/senastracking/ascreport/undergraduate.php).

A list of all Postgraduate courses and programmes approved since the October meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee can be found at the following link: [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/senastracking/ascreport/postgraduate.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/senastracking/ascreport/postgraduate.php).

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

10.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday 16 January 2013 at 3pm, in Committee Room 2, University Office.